

MENU



Clockwise from top left: Fire-roasted tomatoes with burrata. Chef Nyesha Arrington of **LEONA**. Farm cheese and wild seed crackers with market cress.

VENICE

Gold Standard

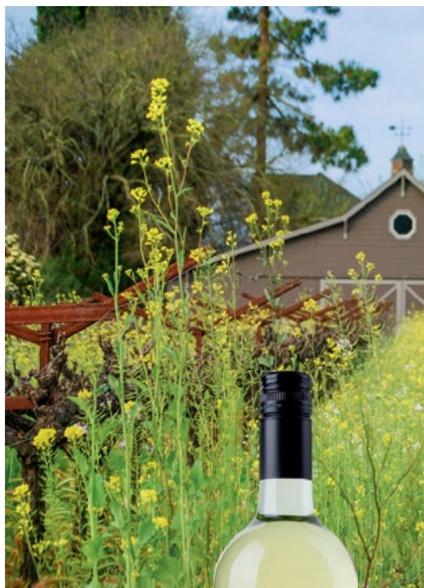
Bravo's *Top Chef* and Esquire's *Knife Fight* alum Nyesha Arrington has traded in her competitor's hat for a new culinary venture as the debut executive chef of **Leona** in Venice. Husband-and-wife restaurateurs Breegan and Kristian Vallas opened the doors to Leona this summer, staking their claim on modern California-inspired cuisine close to the beach. The trio has conceived of a cheery space paired with responsibly sourced, innovative fare. Pull up a seat at the chef's counter, around a communal table or on the outdoor patio, and savor Arrington's tasty versions of classics like bacon and eggs, prepared with a soft-cooked farm egg and wrapped in thinly sliced potato atop a smoky bacon broth. *123 Washington Blvd., Venice, 310-822-5379; leonavenice.com.*



NAPA VALLEY

Flying HIGH

When Michael Polenske's **Blackbird Vineyards** first arrived on the scene in 2005, the Napa Valley wine producer left an indelible impression with a 2003 Merlot inspired by the wines of Pomerol in France—a refreshing addition to NorCal's Cabernet Sauvignon-dominated terroir. To mark its 10th anniversary, the Oak Knoll District vintners continue their tradition of forward-thinking offerings with their first white varietal crafted by winemaker Aaron Pott. The 2014 Blackbird Vineyards Dissonance is a dry, refreshing pour in the same vein of the white wines of Bordeaux, rounding out the brand's current portfolio of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon signature blends. *1330 Oak Knoll Ave., Napa, 707-252-4444; blackbirdvineyards.com.*



From top: **BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS'** Oak Knoll House, available for invitation-only tastings. 2014 Blackbird Vineyards Dissonance, \$32.



SAN FRANCISCO

Water Works

There's plenty to Tweet about when it comes to San Francisco's cocktail-fueled newcomer, **Dirty Water**. Located on the lobby floor of Twitter's high-profile headquarters, this sleek new restaurant, bar and lounge is home to more than 100 wines by the glass, and aptly named cocktails that pay homage to the spot's Bay Area roots, from the vodka-based 140 Characters to The Long Strange Trip, complete with candy-capped mushroom-infused 1776 Rye. *1355 Market St., Ste. 180, S.F., 415-792-5101; dirtywatersf.com.*

WRITTEN BY LESLEY MCKENZIE AND DANIELLE DIMEGLIO. LEONA: COURTESY OF LEONA. BLACKBIRD: MACKENZIE REILLY. DIRTY WATER BAR: DISHERO