

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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Top 5 hot new restaurants: OC's Best Places to Eat 2020

Critic Brad A. Johnson says despite the pandemic, great restaurants have opened this year.



Osaka style pressed sushi at Sushi Ii in Newport Beach (Photo by Brad A. Johnson, Orange County Register/SCNG)

New restaurants don't just open overnight. Most involve years of planning and months of consternation. Delays are inevitable. Permits take forever. So when the doors finally open it's always a massive relief. But if you had told any prospective restaurateur in mid-2019 that a [global pandemic](#) was about to whammy the entire economy and make it next to impossible to open a new restaurant in 2020, most surely would have opted to take a gap year. If only. Once that ball is already rolling, there's often no turning back. And that's how we ended up with these five new restaurants in 2020 that not only raced headfirst into a pandemic but somehow, miraculously, became some of the hottest new restaurants we've seen in years.

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