



# AM Intel: Proposed Parking Requirements Could Imperil Al Fresco Dining for Smaller LA Restaurants

Plus, two notable Westside closures, a new queer bar opening in Downtown LA, and more

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[LA's Al Fresco](#) dining program, which was greatly expanded during the pandemic to provide a lifeline to the struggling restaurant industry and offer [safer outdoor venues](#) for diners, [has been a flashpoint within](#) LA's [City Council](#) for the [past year](#). The Council will vote later today on whether restaurants with al fresco dining areas overtaking a parking lot or spaces [will be required to add a full parking spot](#) moving forward — a change that could imperil small operators across the city that can't meet the single space requirement.

Westside Today first [reported](#) on a plea from West Adams restaurant Open Face Food Shop, which announced on social media that the new parking requirement would mean the forfeiture of its al fresco permit. In addition, Mott Smith, co-founder of [Amped Kitchens](#) and an adjunct real estate professor at USC, shared on X (formerly Twitter) that the parking requirement [would be a](#) "poison pill" for smaller operators. The proposal could be an attempt to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Two new dessert spots

[Top Chef](#) contestant and restaurateur Fabio Viviani just opened the first of up to five Southern California locations of Jars, a dessert shop serving tiramisu, salted caramel pecan pie, red velvet cheesecake, dark chocolate cake, and other layered cream-and-cake treats in glass jars. The first one is located at 27981 Greenfield Drive in Laguna Niguel, with another four coming from local franchisees, Colt and Bethany Nelms. Viviani already [debuted](#) Jars in Chicago's Fulton Market back in 2022.

Sawtelle Japantown [B Sweet](#) will be serving out of a small kiosk in the center of Westfield Century City from now through the remainder of the holidays, with hot bread pudding, ube cheesecake, and more. Normally the Sawtelle shop is open from Friday to Sunday, so this Westfield pop-up gives fans a chance to get the sweets seven days a week.

## DTLA queer bars

Q Voice News [reports](#) that Downtown LA's queer bar destination Redline will be closing [after eight years](#), though owner Oliver Alpuche coupled that announcement to promote the eventual debut of Kiso just a few blocks away. The new queer bar will open in early 2024 at 107 West Fourth Street in the [former](#) Score and Bar 107 space on the ground floor of the Barclay Hotel building. The main partner at Kiso, Brad Nitz, was previously the manager of Redline. Kiso will help maintain Downtown's history as a neighborhood with multiple queer bars, including New Jalisco and Precinct.

## Two Westside closures

[Tara's Himalayan Cuisine](#) and [Vanilla Bake Shop](#), two longtime Westside stalwarts, have closed according to Toddrickallen. Tara's, which also has a location in Culver City, expanded to Santa Monica back in 2019. Tara's is known for serving steamed momos and yak chili, among other Himalayan Indian specialties. Meanwhile, Vanilla Bake Shop served cupcakes and sweets in Santa Monica for 16 years and continues to operate a location [at LAX](#).

## **Mondays at Damian**

Modern Mexican restaurant Damian from chef Enrique Olvera is now open on Monday nights. The menu features mariscos, bar snacks, and more reasonably priced bites like shrimp aguachile, clam mollete, and grilled sirloin steak. Expect a lounge vibe with a live DJ and bar collaborations with notable mixologists. The action starts at 5:30 p.m. on Mondays; check out the menu [here](#).