

# Little PINE

At Moby's Little Pine restaurant in Los Angeles, it's not just the design that is unexpectedly good.

IT'S A CHICKEN AND EGG QUESTION. Which comes first, a restaurant's design or its concept? In the case of Little Pine, the vegan restaurant in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles owned by Moby, it was the former. The musician's curiosity was piqued by the curvaceous Art Moderne building on Rowena Avenue. "I kept driving by it, wondering 'What is this weird building?'" The previous owners had already begun the process of turning it into a restaurant—albeit one that served primarily as a location for film and television. "It is such an idiosyncratic space that the design, to an extent, had to follow that. So then the name and the aesthetic sort of went hand in hand." Like many transplants to the city, Moby had conjured up a metaphor to unravel Los Angeles's unique chaos. "When I first moved here, I was talking to a friend of mine about Los Angeles and I said that, broadly speaking, there are two Los Angeles. There's the L.A. of palm trees and the L.A. of pine trees."

It was that visual, mixed with Moby's enduring love of "clean, thoughtful West Coast aesthetic," that drove the restaurant's name and its look. To execute it, executive chef Ann Thornton suggested Tatum Kendrick of Studio Hus, who she'd worked with on a previous project. "When Ann and Tatum and I first met we just started talking about this sort of vaguely Mid-century Scandinavian aesthetic," Moby recalls. "Broadly, it was pine trees, Scandinavia, the Adirondacks, and redwoods."

Kendrick came up with a plan for transforming a space that was, in Thornton's word, "tragic." Hand-painted bicycles and ravens covered the floors and walls; the woodwork overhead was dark brown. Kendrick, whose design sensibility is strongly influenced by the two years she spent in Copenhagen, sandblasted the beams, washing the space in Benjamin Moore's Chantilly Lace, then layered in bright Tolix stools, floral pillows, and colorful tiles over a woodsy theme underscored by Moby's own photographs of pine trees. "I wanted it to be cozy," says Kendrick.

And it is. With its plaid banquettes, rust-colored vegan leather cushions, forest imagery, and raw wood tables, the space evokes a lodge aesthetic more familiar to omnivores than vegans. There's even a wooden deer's head on the wall (it provoked protests from one activist). "Part of the ethos of this was creating vegan food for nonvegans," Moby explains. Kendrick describes it as "sneaky vegan," a phrase that applies as much to the food as it does to the decor. The menu, which includes cassoulet, shepherd's pie, stuffed shells and, for dessert, a rich s'mores ganache—not to mention wine—is a far cry from the specter of mashed yeast that haunts vegan food. Thornton, a classically French-trained chef who summered in France as a child, is as passionate about the taste of the food she creates as she is about the sources of the restaurant's ingredients. —Abigail Stone



**TOP:** MOBY AND THE RESTAURANT DESIGNER TATUM KENDRICK OF STUDIO HUS  
**MIDDLE, TOP:** A TOUCH OF MID-CENTURY IN THE DINING AREA  
**MIDDLE, BOTTOM:** A VIEW OF THE MODERN CABIN-INSPIRED ENVIRONMENT  
**BOTTOM:** THE GIFT SHELVES

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