



our own here. There's a sense of freedom: to cook, to make wine, to do whatever you want. There are no rules at all."

Fauna is the flagship fine dining restaurant of Bruma, a recently completed hotel and winery that embraces the trend of high design in wine regions all over the world. It was winemaker Hugo D'Acosta, who founded a distinguished winemaking school in the Valle in addition to his labels, who alerted Fauna's Mexico City- and Monterrey-based owners to Castro's talents. The partners approached the chef with an offer, and once he saw the stunning property—which was designed by D'Acosta's brother, Alejandro—he knew to take it seriously.

The restaurant opened in 2017 and is a compelling addition to the list of "must eat" venues in the area. Many of the more established eateries serve Mediterranean-style food—something that has earned Baja California's cuisine the nickname of "Baja-Med."

"My style has nothing to do with Baja-Med, though I have nothing against it," Castro says. "I don't use olives. I cook Mexican dishes." His menu has "a ton of *tatemados*," he adds, referring to the live-fire cooking technique from Colima state, south of Puerto Vallarta, which calls for roasting and stewing meat and vegetables

"Every time we returned, there were more wineries and restaurants opening."

*Lulu Martínez Ojeda,
Bodegas Henri Lurton*

in their juices, producing intense flavors and a charred finish. Since he's from Baja California, the menu also includes an array of fresh seafood unique to this part of the Pacific—chocolate clams, sea urchins, blood clams, spot



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