

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

FOOD

Bistango comeback: Old standby gets makeover

April 8, 2015 | Updated April 21, 2015 11:14 a.m.



**BY ANNE
VALDESPINO /
STAFF
WRITER**

 FACEBOOK

 TWITTER

 EMAIL

 COMMENTS

 PRINT

 SEND PDF

He's keeping the garlic soup on the menu but he's adding small plates, game dishes and making lots of other updates.

Chef Chris Meehan has recently taken over the kitchen of Bistango and wants to breathe new life into one of Orange County's old standbys. He's even butchering his own meats in-house, "It's always been a passion of mine," he said at media event.

"I can break down a 90 pound case of filets and it's cheaper too. I'm bringing in whole ducks and using every part of them."

The restaurant has also gotten an update with lots of decor changes such as white-washed oak flooring, new booths and sofas and a renovated bar with a lighted onyx top. The lounge figures into chef's plan. He will offer a special bar menu of small plates, including downsized portions of popular entrees. Could be a hit, given Bistango, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2012, has always been a place to hang out for a cocktail with happy hour weeknight from 5 p.m. until closing. And it's great for glass of wine; it was one of the first restaurants in Orange County to offer a wide choice of premium wines with 1,000 bottles on a list recognized by Wine Spectator magazine.

But the best reason to revisit Bistango is that it's one of the few local restaurants with a live music policy. There's entertainment every night in a variety of formats: jazz, Latin, R&B and contemporary hits. Wow, think I just talked myself into going for a drink after work. Who's in? 19100 Von Karman Ave., Irvine, 949-752-5222.