

## America's most romantic restaurants

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Romantic restaurant can be an oxymoron

As the sun dips behind a tranquil seascape, enticing hors d'oeuvres kick off a dinner to whet all sorts of appetites. Bubbles in champagne glasses rise in tandem with the evening's mood - which abruptly evaporates as a boorish couple wedges into the adjoining table.

'Romantic restaurant' can be an oxymoron: a private enclave in a public space.

'The most important element of a romantic dining experience is privacy,' explains Peter Neptune, a Master Sommelier and Vice President at the Henry Wine Group, where he works as a consultant for a number of West Coast restaurants. 'A lot of places these days will try to cram people in, so that you're almost sitting on top of the person next to you. But you've got to have a sense of privacy to foster romance.'

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