

Table Talk

Susan Sarandon puts her signature spin on L.A. nightlife. | By Andrew Myers | Photography by Nigel Parry / CPi Syndication |

Susan Sarandon, Academy Award-winning actress and activist, has never been shy about bringing her opinions on social issues and causes to the table. But it's her role as a pingpong paddle-whacker that currently has the auburn-tressed star fired up. Along with Franck Raharinosy, Andrew Gordon and Jonathan Bricklin, she opened SPiN New York just over three years ago, serving up a nightclub and sports hangout hybrid. This month, table tennis and cocktails are coming to downtown L.A. for what Sarandon describes as "a community of people gathering to socialize, fantasize and exercise together." The partnership between The Standard, Downtown L.A. and SPiN Galactic—courtesy of new teammate, hotelier André Balazs—occupies the hotel's entire mezzanine level. There are custom-designed bright red tables, a center court with stadium seating, three bars, a private "trophy room" and a menu courtesy of *Top Chef* Micah Fields.

Sarandon's Hots

Dark chocolate, cashmere, travel, documentaries, books on paper

Sarandon's Nots

White chocolate, mosquitoes, delayed flights, tube tops, books not on paper

What turned Sarandon into a self-proclaimed pingpong propagandist? "Pingpong cuts across gender, age and body type; it's inexpensive and safe; and I love that you can play it forever," she says, adding that it also encompasses all socioeconomic categories, with SPiN committed to bringing the sport to contestants regardless of the size of their pocketbooks. "So far, we've managed to provide pingpong tables, equipment and instructors to 45 underserved schools in New York, with the hope of creating a pingpong nation." Plenty of bold names have taken up the sport—Sarandon has described George Clooney as a tough competitor and Edward Norton as a devotee, and confesses that she "couldn't tear Jack Kevorkian away from the table." But her best player-related dish concerns a certain nonagenarian: "I've heard Betty White has a wicked backhand." Aces.



HAVING A BALL
Susan Sarandon, co-founder of SPiN Galactic, a network of pingpong clubs