

## **Best of the East Bay: Taste**

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## DIY Burger

Create your own masterpiece at Lafayette's **Roam Artisan Burger**. 23 Lafayette Cir., Lafayette, (925) 385-0798, [roamburgers.com](http://roamburgers.com)

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## Soup for the Soul

Get authentic pho at this Walnut Creek lunch spot.

### Reader Pick: Noodle Bowl

One slurp of pho at **Kevin's Noodle House**, and you're transported to the sidewalks of Vietnam, where families gather around steaming pots of the traditional comfort food. At Kevin's, choose a small, medium, or large bowl filled with broth, rice noodles, and herbs, and your choice of steak, beef balls, tendon, tripe, or chicken. Add green onions, a squeeze of lime or lemon, Thai basil,

Cedric Glasier

chili peppers, bean sprouts, and cilantro, and fish, hoisin, or Sriracha sauce. Quick, affordable, and tasty—just like in Vietnam. 1833 Willow Pass Rd., Concord, (925) 677-2131; 1402 E. 12th St., Oakland, (510) 533-0549; 2034 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, (925) 933-4746, [kevinnoodlehouse.com](http://kevinnoodlehouse.com).

—**Stacey Kennelly**

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## Pit Masters

*This family-owned restaurant is still smokin' hot.*

**Reader Pick: Barbecue Spot**

Walnut Creek–based **Kinder’s Meats and BBQ** opened its first meat market in San Pablo in 1946. And while its most popular item remains the ball tip sandwich with mild sauce developed by Grandpa Kinder, a lot has changed in 68 years.

Kinder’s is now a \$50 million operation with 17 restaurants. It has launched a national line of spices, and its sauces are sold in 4,000 locations along the West Coast, including Safeway and Costco.

One thing that hasn’t changed is that it remains family run, with roots planted firmly in the East Bay. Multiple locations, [kindersmeats.com](http://kindersmeats.com).

—**Ethan Fletcher**



Samantha Schneider

the chest, warming you from the inside out.

**Bombay Nick’s** is an other-worldly addition to a Starbucks-less strip mall in Livermore. There are just a couple of tables inside and out, but the shop is a veritable shrine to tea—both hot and iced.



Erika Pino

## Extreme Tea

*Head here For the perfect balance of spicy and sweet.*

### Editor Pick: Chai

Nick Sabharwal—aka Bombay Nick—knows chai. He imports and grinds small batches of cardamom, cinnamon, and star anise. These and other powerful aromatics are infused into creamy brews sweetened just enough to offset the tongue-numbing quality of black pepper and cloves. With each swallow, a spicy hot sensation moves from the back of the throat down through

Expect a visual and auditory feast of brilliant colors, exotic adornments, meditative music, and the rich, sonorous voice of Sabharwal himself, who is sure to extend to you a welcome fit for an Indian deity. 4010 East Ave., Livermore, (925) 493-7044, [bombaynickschaibar.com](http://bombaynickschaibar.com).

—**Nicholas Boer**

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## The Baker

*Her shop offers sweet satisfaction—without the gluten.*

### Reader Pick: Gluten-Free Treats

Katie Ortiz's first happy customers were kids with celiac disease at Camp Arroyo in Livermore. Her cupcakes were so popular, she soon opened a shop called **Miglet's**, in Danville. The rest is gluten-free history.

If you think gluten-free diets involve deprivation, a visit to Ortiz's shop is likely to change your mind. Donuts? She's got 'em. Mac 'n' cheese? Dig in. And who can resist the bounty of yummy baked goodies made daily?

"I've had so many people cry for happiness," says Ortiz, referring to parents who discover her birthday cakes. "Their days of sticking candles in Rice Krispies Treats are over."

There is a youthful spirit to Miglet's: Ortiz is 26 years old, all of Miglet's key players are under 30, and Miglet is Ortiz's childhood nickname—an amalgam of monkey and piglet.

While Ortiz concedes going gluten-free has become a fad diet, she says it's a "really clean" way of eating—providing you're not eating highly processed gluten-free supermarket products, which have a nutritional value Ortiz compares to Cheez-Its. More and more people, however, are being properly diagnosed as having celiac disease, a serious gluten-intolerant condition that runs in Ortiz's family.

What's more, Miglet's gluten-free goodies remind customers of childhood favorites they may otherwise have



Illustration by Adam Nickel



Shannon McIntyre

to go without.

“You’re feeding people’s memories and their happiness,” says Ortiz. “You’re giving them the things they can no longer have.” 480 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville, (925) 831-9016, [migletsgf.com](http://migletsgf.com).

—*Nicholas Boer*

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## Every Occasion

*One spot satisfies around the clock.*

### Reader Pick: New Restaurant

**The Cooperage American Grille’s** five dining venues provide the perfect spot—and menu—for every stage of a relationship.

Meet up (drinks and small plates): A classy, cherrywood horseshoe bar has sight lines to the restaurant’s entrance. Once you connect, slide

into a cozy booth.

First date (brunch): To see and be seen, choose the smaller patio facing La Fiesta Square. More secluded is the main patio—in earshot of Lafayette Creek.

Intimate (lunch): Reserve the corner table in the quiet Rotisserie Room. You can even plan to hold your rehearsal dinner here. (The room seats 24.)

With the kids (dinner): The perfect time for a family-sized booth in the handsome main dining room.

Twenty-fifth anniversary (supper): The back Boardroom, with its high wingback booths and clubby chairs, is an ode to English pubs. 32 Lafayette Cir., Lafayette, (925) 298-5915, [thecooperagelafayette.com](http://thecooperagelafayette.com).

—*Nicholas Boer*

## Eat, Listen, Repeat

*These East Bay hot spots serve up quality chow and sounds.*

### Editor Picks: Food and Live Music

#### Central Contra Costa

##### Classic Rock at Pyramid Alehouse

Relive the glory days in Pyramid Alehouse's outdoor beer garden while chowing down on a burger and fries. Thursday–Sunday during summer. 1410 Locust St., Walnut Creek, (925) 946-1520, [pyramidbrew.com](http://pyramidbrew.com).

##### French Jazz at Chevalier

Enjoy French jazz on the garden patio, with French onion soup, moules marinières, escargot, and other classic dishes. Twice monthly during summer. 960 Moraga Rd., Lafayette, (925) 385-0793, [chevalierrestaurant.com](http://chevalierrestaurant.com).

##### Blues at E.J. Phair

Nosh on wood-fired pizzas while listening to everything from tribute bands to stand-up comedy at the Concord location, or at the new Pittsburg taproom. Saturdays. 2151 Salvio St., Concord, (925) 691-4253; 300 Cumberland St., Pittsburg, (925) 427-7204, [ejphair.com](http://ejphair.com).

##### Surfer Rock at Tiki Tom's

For a tropical escape in the middle of downtown Walnut Creek, Tiki Tom's hosts island-inspired music to go along with its menu of Polynesian (and some Mexican) fare. Most weekday nights and weekends. 1535 Olympic Blvd., Walnut Creek, (925) 932-9202.



Shannon McIntyre



M. June Photography

## Tri-Valley

### **Acoustic at The Vine at Bridges**

Mellow acoustic, Latin, and light rock tunes complement the elegant vibe at The Vine, which offers small plates from Bridges Restaurant. *Thursday–Saturday. 480 Hartz Ave., Danville, (925) 820-7210, [thevineatbridges.com](http://thevineatbridges.com).*

### **Soul at Double Barrel Wine Bar**

Blues, soul, and jazz can be enjoyed inside or on the oasislike back patio lounge. Small plates include wild boar meatballs and sweet potato fries with spicy habanero aioli. *Tuesday–Sunday. 2086 First St., Livermore, (925) 243-9463, [doublebarrelwinebar.com](http://doublebarrelwinebar.com).*

### **Country at Sauced BBQ and Spirits**

Catch rockin' tunes and touring country acts on Sauced's center stage. The sampler plate offers a mix of this hot spot's tasty 'cue. *Friday–Saturday. 2300 First St., Livermore, (925) 961-1300, [sauceddbqandspirits.com](http://sauceddbqandspirits.com).*

### **Cover Rock at Handles Gastropub**

The BBQ pork nachos go well with the rotating selection of rock cover bands that play on Handles' spacious outdoor patio. Friday–Saturday during summer. *855 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 399-6690, [handlesgastropub.com](http://handlesgastropub.com).*



Rae Williams

### **West of the Caldecott**

#### **Experimental Jazz at Duende**

Some big names, including noted avant-garde guitarist Charlie Hunter, play at this Uptown Oakland hot spot that serves similarly experimental tapas fare. *468 19th St., Oakland, (510) 893-0174, [duendeoakland.com](http://duendeoakland.com).*

#### **Legendary Jazz and Blues at Yoshi's**

Dizzy Gillespie, Diana Krall, McCoy Tyner, and Harry Connick Jr. are just a few of the internationally known acts to play at this Jack London Square jazz and blues club. The celebrated Japanese fare isn't too shabby, either. *510 Embarcadero W., Oakland, (510) 238-9200, [yoshis.com](http://yoshis.com).*

**—Ethan Fletcher**



## Berry Good

*The açaí craze just got bigger.*

### **Reader Pick: AÇai Bowl, New Smoothie Place, Vegetarian Destination**

The açaí trend is sweeping the East Bay in the form of Vitality Bowls. Even those skeptical of fads will be hooked after trying one of these refreshing concoctions. Start with the classic Vitality Bowl, filled with açaí blended with soy milk, apple juice, bananas, strawberries, and flax seed, and topped with fruit, granola, and honey. Tip: Place your order online, so you don't have to wait. 2473 Stoneridge Mall Rd., Pleasanton, (925) 463-2224; 211 Market Pl., San Ramon, (925) 804-6012; 1528 Locust St., Walnut Creek, (925) 464-7607, [vitalitybowls.com](http://vitalitybowls.com).

**—Caitlin McCulloch**

Cedric Glasier

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## Reader Picks

Artisanal Hamburger

**Roam**

23 Lafayette Cir., Lafayette, (925) 385-0798, [roamburgers.com](http://roamburgers.com).

Artisanal Pizza

## **Patxi's**

3577 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, (925) 299-0700; 2470 First St., Livermore, (925) 371-1000, [patxispizza.com](http://patxispizza.com).

## **Bakery**

### **A Sweet Affair**

190 Hartz Ave., Danville, (925) 837-1911; 1815 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, (925) 944-1910, [asweetaffairbakery.com](http://asweetaffairbakery.com).

## **Breakfast Joint**

### **Millie's Kitchen**

1018 Oak Hill Rd., Lafayette, (925) 283-2397, [millieskitchen-hub.com](http://millieskitchen-hub.com).

## **Brunch Spot**

### **Scott's**

2 Broadway, Oakland, (510) 444-3456, [scottsjls.com](http://scottsjls.com); 1333 N. California Blvd., Walnut Creek, (925) 934-1300, [scottswc.com](http://scottswc.com).

## **Chef**

### **Rodney Worth**

The Peasant and the Pear, 267 Hartz Ave., Danville, (925) 820-6611, [thepeasantandthepear.com](http://thepeasantandthepear.com); also, The Peasant's Courtyard in Alamo; and Ferrari's Cucina Italiana, The Little Pear, and The Prickly Pear Cantina in Danville, [rodneyworth.com](http://rodneyworth.com).

## **Chinese Restaurant**

### **Uncle Yu's**

999 Oak Hill Rd. Ste. 3, Lafayette, (925) 283-1688; 39 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore, (925) 449-7000; 2005 Crow Canyon Pl., San Ramon, (925) 275-1818, [uncleyus.com](http://uncleyus.com).

## **Coffee House**

### **Sideboard**

90 Railroad Ave., Danville, (925) 984-2713, [sideboarddanville.com](http://sideboarddanville.com).

## **Deli**

### **Genova's Delicatessen**

1105 S. California Blvd., Walnut Creek, (925) 939-3838; 2064 Treat Blvd., Walnut Creek, (925) 938-2888, [genovadeli.net](http://genovadeli.net).

## **Food Truck**

## **The Melt**

*Locations vary, [themelt.com](http://themelt.com).*

## **Indian Restaurant**

### **Swad**

*3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, (925) 962-9575, [theswadindia.com](http://theswadindia.com).*

## **Italian Restaurant**

### **Prima Ristorante**

*1522 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, (925) 935-7780, [primawine.com](http://primawine.com).*

## **Mexican Restaurant**

### **El Charro**

*3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, (925) 283-2345, [elcharro1947.com](http://elcharro1947.com).*

## **Middle Eastern Restaurant**

### **Silk Road**

*1440 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, (925) 932-9090, [silkroadwalnutcreekca.com](http://silkroadwalnutcreekca.com).*

## **New Ice Cream Shop**

### **Cream**

*2399 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, (510) 649-1000; 1372 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, (925) 891-4041, [creamnation.com](http://creamnation.com).*

## **Outdoor Dining/small plates**

### **Va de Vi**

*1511 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Walnut Creek, (925) 979-0100, [vadevi.com](http://vadevi.com).*

## **Place for Dessert**

### **Esin**

*750 Camino Ramon, Danville, (925) 314-0974, [esinrestaurant.com](http://esinrestaurant.com).*

## **Romantic Restaurant**

### **Postino**

*3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, (925) 299-8700, [postinorestaurant.com](http://postinorestaurant.com).*

## **Salad Spot**

### **Lettuce**