

FOOD ISSUE

4 AWARD WINNERS, 7 READERS' FAVORITES, AND WHAT'S NEXT ON YOUR PLATE

diablo

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The Far Eats

A SURGE IN RESTAURANTS REFLECTS A GROWING APPRECIATION FOR ASIAN FOOD.

YO'S ON HARTZ



TIPPING POINT

Special Request

“For families with kids who love to eat out, call the restaurant, and ask to be seated with a server who is great with kids. If you’re celebrating a special event, e-mail the restaurant or general manager early on. That gives us a chance to establish communication and ensure a unique experience.”

—Grant Johnson,
general manager,
Blackhawk Grille,
Danville

The stylish, Vegas-sized **MayFlower Seafood** in Dublin, with its daytime dim sum and spectacular fish tank (try a succulent spot prawn) is the Cantonese counterpart to China Lounge (see page 40). MayFlower’s menu is broad, with refined takes on Chinese classics, such as an eggplant clay pot. At Pleasanton’s cozy **Blossom Vegan**, the curried eggplant, fresh green papaya salad, and—stay with us here—kale and date smoothie make meat irrelevant and Vietnamese cuisine shine. **Sri Venkatesh Bhavan** is cavernous compared to Blossom, but it’s also lively and strictly vegetarian. Try the *vada* (light and delicious lentil donuts) or the multidish tiffin lunches served with fresh raita and coconut chutney to tame the spice. **Yo’s on Hartz**—an Asian-fusion hot spot in

Danville—has glitz (a glowing cocktail bar), à la carte dim sum (go for the crisp pork buns) and sushi (how about a shrimp tempura/tuna/avocado “girly man” roll?). Pleasanton’s **Taste of Sing-Ma** (Singapore-Malaysian) specializes in presentation: fried rice in a half pineapple, chicken stir-fry in mango boats, and chilled juice in a whole young coconut. An order of Sing-Ma’s buttery roti (crispy crepes), served



SUSHI YOKOHAMA

with a curry dipping sauce, is a must. A pair of new chef-owners has given **Sushi Yokohama** in Danville a much-needed makeover, including the menu. One chef hails from the Drunken Fish in Oakland (hence, Yokohama’s sinful drunken fish roll), the other from Kauai (hence, killer ahi poke). Modern Asian classics are served with Chipotle-like efficiency at San Ramon’s sustainably focused **Spice Kit**. Try the vibrant Vietnamese sandwich with Niman Ranch pork and house-made pâte, a Korean rice paper wrap—the size of a burrito—with organic tofu, or a brown rice bowl with kalbi-style grass-fed beef cooked sous vide. And make sure to get a side of pork belly buns and coconut juice fresh squeezed on the spot. Whew. Hamburger, anyone?



PICCOLO NAPOLI Nestled in Orinda's Theatre Square, discover mouthwatering thin-crust Neapolitan pizza featuring flavorful ingredients in tantalizing combinations like Pietro's—with silky smooth mozzarella, prosciutto di Parma, sweet basil, and truffle oil—or Carne Calzone, laden with pepperoni, sausage, house-made ricotta, and six-blend cheeses. Don't miss the delicious eggplant Parmesan, unique bruschetta (pictured above), and delicious gluten-free options. Lunch Wednesday-Sunday 11:30 a.m.–4 p.m., dinner nightly 4–9 p.m. and until 10 p.m. Friday–Saturday.

2 Theatre Square, Orinda (925) 253-1225
www.piccolo-napoli.com



THE CLAREMONT HOTEL CLUB & SPA is where family memories are made. This November is all about holiday cheer and what better way to celebrate than our holiday traditions—including East Bay's best Thanksgiving Brunch and a special menu at Paragon on Thursday, November 27, and of course our annual Holiday Faire on Sunday, November 30! Festive fun for the entire family! Visit www.claremont-hotel.com for details and reservations.

41 Tunnel Road, Berkeley (800) 551-7266
www.claremont-hotel.com



BLACKHAWK GRILLE A quintessential neighborhood tavern, Blackhawk Grille takes a modern approach to American classics, serving a true taste of the frontier in the form of upscale comfort food. Experience diverse and satisfying choices such as fresh salads, skillet-roasted seafood, artisan sandwiches, flame-kissed steaks, oak-grilled chicken and gourmet burgers, paired with craft brews and friendly service distinctive of the Golden State.

3540 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville (925) 736-4295
www.blackhawkgrille.com



YANNI'S TAVERNA Hospitable owners Anthony and Voula, heralding from Piraeus, serve up fresh delicious Greek food made to order. Menu items include zesty dolmas, fresh baked pita, classic gyros, well-seasoned flavorful tender meat skewers, and falafel wraps to name a few. Casual, elegant, and unpretentious dining room with an outdoor patio offers views of a picturesque boutique-lined alley. Sip wine from an extensive list while enjoying expertly executed Greek fare. Open for lunch and dinner Monday–Saturday.

120 East Prospect Avenue, Danville (925) 820-7700
www.yannistaverna.com



THE COUNTER Winner of *Diablo* magazine's Reader's Pick for Best Burger in the East Bay. You're in charge at The Counter®. Choose between five different proteins (antibiotic and hormone free beef, all natural turkey and chicken, vegan veggie, and a Market Select), 12 cheeses, 32 toppings, 23 sauces, and 7 buns. Each burger is as unique as the guest. With choices including gluten-free buns, vegetarian-friendly toppings, burgers in a bowl, and more, the "exception" is our standard.

1699 North California Boulevard, Walnut Creek (925) 935-3795
www.thecounterburger.com



KANISHKA'S "Kanishka's, Neo-Indian Gastropub food {is} flat out delicious!" (*SF Chronicle*). Kanishka's is a chic, social gastropub located in downtown Walnut Creek. Executive Chef Paramita Roy brings global inspired Indian cuisine served as sharable small plates with craft beers and wines. The gastropub features a seasonally changing menu. Bay Area Foodies rave about shikampuri lamb sliders and chef's 3-hour braised kosha goat. Open for private events/catering. Open for dinner Mon.–Sat. 5 p.m.–10 p.m. Lunch Mon.–Sat. 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Closed Sun.

1518 Bonanza Street, Walnut Creek (925) 464-7468
www.kanishkagastropub.com