

THE RESTAURANT ISSUE

San Francisco

WHERE TO
EAT TONIGHT:
THE 33
BEST NEW
SPOTS IN THE
BAY AREA

FEATURING:

IS YELP
GUILTY OF
CHEF ABUSE?

LUNCHBOX
ENVY: WHAT
THE PROS PACK
THEIR KIDS

THE \$15
APOCALYPSE:
WHY
RESTAURANTS
FEAR A NEW
MINIMUM WAGE

COOKS WHO
SLEEP ABOVE
THEIR OWN
RESTAURANTS

CHEFS RUN WILD

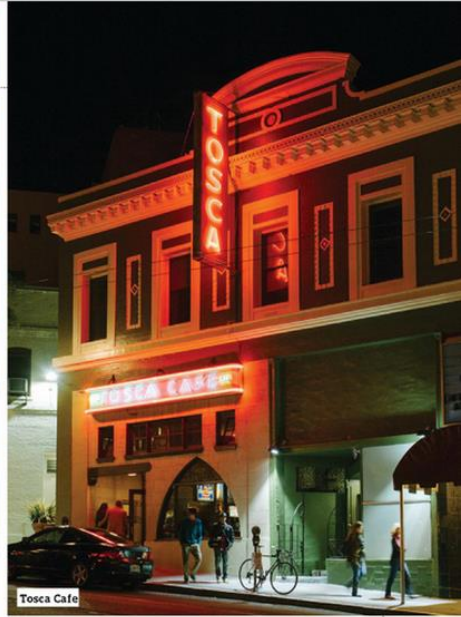
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MODERN LUXURY



JOLEN BELLA



Tosca Cafe



**SO TRENDY
DAIQUIRS**

Spring break has little to do with today's daiquiris. Old-school simplicity is the common denominator in the classic recipes stirred up at **Tosca Cafe** and **Urban Putt**, where you drink while playing indoor miniature golf. But for a sip of endless summer, hit the **Palm House**, where the selection of daiquiris includes a prickly pear flavor, served frozen and topped with an umbrella.

vored versions of your favorite staples—ribs, sausage, chicken, and brisket, along with all the fixings. Ryan has a refined culinary background (he helped the Fifth Floor earn a Michelin star), and the care he takes comes through in everything from the clean, hot kiss of his vinegary sauces to the chimichurri that he spills over his spicy fries. The pulled pork sandwich, topped with slaw and pickles, is a cut above any other I've had in the city, and there's an outdoor patio with picnic-style seating where it can be enjoyed in relative peace.

COOKING WITH FIRE

There's barbecue—which involves a lot of smoking—and then there's open-fire cooking, with wood or charcoal heat applied directly to the grill. That it's an ancient technique doesn't mean it can't be cutting edge.

Charlie Hallowell, Oakland's crown prince of rustic Cal-Med cooking (Pizzaiolo, Boot and Shoe Service), has

fanned the flames with his latest restaurant, **Penrose**, where the chef's characteristic high energy has been cranked up to near-maniac levels. If you like Middle Eastern flatbreads and farm-fresh meats and veggies fired over wood-fueled flames and treated to smart, unfussy touches (Monterey squid with zesty kumquat kosho as the condiment), you'll enjoy the cooking. Just brace yourself for noise, a chaotic ambience, and an interior that looks as if a designer's head had exploded, scattering shabby-chic decor around the room.

TBD, AQ's casual sibling located just a few doors down from it in SoMa, also has a wintry fire that burns in the summer, too. Working with those charcoal flames, the kitchen turns out inventive, earthy dishes such as grilled pork with fennel and macerated strawberries. The roasted lamb with tahini-like sunflower seed sauce was so sublime that I nearly spilled my syrah. A seat at the chef's counter, overlooking the hearth, lends your meal the comfy warmth of campfire dining, all the more

so when the amazing chocolate ganache s'mores arrive.

But of all the wood fire-driven restaurants, **Molina** is this year's biggest hit. Located in Mill Valley, the little restaurant—which cooks with nothing but a wood-fired oven and a fryer—was designed by Doug Washington, the co-owner of Town Hall and Salt House.

It's a stylish and pretty space: Think Scandinavian ski lodge (sheepskins thrown over chairs, a ceiling of rafters) crossed with a third-wave coffee bar (record albums displayed on the white, hexagon-tiled wall of the bar are switched out on the turntable by the cooks themselves). The food is California at its finest: ingredient-centric dishes like a bowl of clams with shucked peas and thin, slippery ribbons of lardo, or a stunning take on cioppino full of shrimp, chunks of salmon, fresh corn, and mussels in barely more than a smattering of broth. Easy-to-find street parking is a bonus—one for which San Franciscans might consider giving the restaurant an extra star.

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★ THE RESTAURANT ISSUE Top 33 New Spots RESOURCES



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4505 Burgers and BBQ, 705 DIVISADERO ST. (AT GROVE ST.), 415-231-6993

Alembic, 1725 HAIGHT ST. (NEAR SHRADER ST.), 415-666-0822

Alta CA, 1420 MARKET ST. (NEAR FELL ST.), 415-590-2585

Bartlett Hall, 242 O'FARRELL ST. (NEAR CYRIL MAGNIN ST.), 415-433-4332

Boulettes Larder and Bouill Bar, 1 FERRY BLDG. MARKETPLACE, EMBARCADERO (AT MARKET ST.), 415-399-1177

The Cavalier, 360 JESSIE ST. (NEAR 5TH ST.), 415-321-6000

Chino, 3198 16TH ST. (NEAR GUERRERO ST.), 415-552-5771

Commissary, 101 MONTGOMERY ST. (NEAR BUSH ST.), 415-561-3600

Dirty Habit, 124TH ST. (NEAR MARKET ST.), 415-348-1555

Hog & Rocks, 3431 19TH ST. (AT SAN CARLOS ST.), 415-650-8627

Ichi Sushi + Ni Bar, 3282 MISSION ST. (NEAR 29TH ST.), 415-525-4750

Kin Khao, 56 CYRIL MAGNIN ST. (NEAR EDDY ST.), 415-362-7456

Maruya, 2931 16TH ST. (NEAR CAPP ST.), 415-503-0702

Nico, 3228 SACRAMENTO ST. (NEAR LYON ST.), 415-359-1000

Palm House, 2032 UNION ST. (NEAR BUCHANAN ST.), 415-400-4355

Porcellino, 1550 CHURCH ST. (AT DUNCAN ST.), 415-641-4500

Smokestack, 2505 3RD ST. (NEAR 22ND ST.), 415-864-7468

The Square, 1707 POWELL ST. (NEAR COLUMBUS ST.), 415-525-3579

TBD, 1077 MISSION ST. (NEAR 7TH ST.), 415-431-1826

Tosca Cafe, 242 COLUMBUS AVE. (NEAR JACK KEROUAC ALLEY), 415-986-9651

Trou Normand, 140 NEW MONTGOMERY ST. (NEAR NATOMA ST.), 415-975-0876

Urban Putt, 1096 S. VAN NESS AVE. (AT 22ND ST.), 415-341-1080

Verbena, 2323 POLK ST. (NEAR GREEN ST.), 415-441-2323

EAST BAY

Great China, 2190 BANCROFT WAY (NEAR FULTON ST.), BERKELEY, 510-843-7996

Haven, 44 WEBSTER ST. (AT HERMAN ST.), OAKLAND, 510-663-4440

Hawker Fare, 2300 WEBSTER ST. (NEAR 23RD ST.), OAKLAND, 510-832-8896

Hog's Apothecary, 375 40TH ST. (NEAR OPAL ST.), OAKLAND, 510-338-5847

Homestead, 4029 PIEDMONT AVE. (NEAR GLEN AVE.), OAKLAND, 510-420-0962

Penrose, 3311 GRAND AVE. (NEAR ELWOOD AVE.), OAKLAND, 510-444-1649

Perdition Smokehouse, 2050 UNIVERSITY AVE. (NEAR SHATTUCK AVE.), BERKELEY, 510-900-5858

Shakewell, 3407 LAKESHORE AVE. (NEAR LONGRIDGE RD.)

Ume, 2214 BROADWAY (AT GRAND AVE.), OAKLAND, 510-444-7586

NORTH BAY

Molina, 17 MADRONA ST. (NEAR THROCKMORTON AVE.), MILL VALLEY, 415-583-4200