

AQUA MAN
Our Ultraswimmer

9/11 MEMORIAL
Oakland Remembers

COZY GRAFFITI
Yarn Bombing Explodes

diabolo

101 DISHES*

*to try before you die



AUGUST 2011 \$3.95



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taste central

Central Contra Costa

eat your way through walnut creek and points north



Spotlight:

1 | Linguine al Tutto Mare

PRIMA We could inhale this whole plate with just a drizzle of olive oil (at least some of us could...), but that's not good enough for Chef Peter Chastain. His house-made linguine—soft, buttery egg noodles—sits in a briny stew of shrimp, clams, mussels, calamari, and black bass, all swimming around in a garlicky tomato-based soffritto (an Italian aromatic sauce base) spiked with a hint of chili pepper flakes. Breathe deeply. This is as close to being in Italy as you can get in this time zone. *Walnut Creek, primaristorante.com.*

2 | Ball Tip Steak Sandwich

KINDER'S BBQ & DELI Anyone who has eaten this legendary sandwich will keep coming back for more of its salty, smoky goodness. *Multiple East Bay locations, kindersbbq.com.*

3 | Garlic Naan

SARGAM INDIAN CUISINE This subtly spiced naan is so pillowy and tender, we could have curled up in it to nap. *Walnut Creek, (925) 937-2700.*

4 | Cedar-Planked Bourbon and Orange Salmon

SCOTT'S Salmon gets deliciously boozy here, with the moist fillet topped with a smoky bourbon glaze and candied orange zest. *Walnut Creek, scottseastbay.com.*

5 | Lamb Tagine

EL MOROCCO The sweet-and-spicy punch of lamb tagine with veggies, garbanzo beans, raisins, olives, and lemons will take you to Morocco. *Pleasant Hill, elmorocco.net.*

6 | Pop-Tart

TENDER GREENS Tender Greens' Pop-Tarts—with seasonal fruit fillings—turn a kiddie favorite into a gourmet treat. *Walnut Creek, tendergreensfood.com.*

7 | Shaking Filet Mignon Salad

VANESSA'S BISTRO 2 Shake your head in wonder at tender cubes of beef with fresh greens and a mouth-puckering lime dipping sauce. *Walnut Creek, vanessasbistro2.com.*

8 | Bohemian Sauerbraten

DJ'S BISTRO Served with dumplings and cream sauce, this sweet-sour beef roast brings us back for more Eastern European classics. *Concord, djsbistro.net.*

9 | Dark Honeycomb Chocolate

RACHEL DUNN CHOCOLATES This boutique candy-maker's dark chocolate-enrobed hunks of sweet, natural honeycomb are addictively good. *Concord, rachedunnchocolates.com.*

10 | Tamale Pancake

LARK CREEK WALNUT CREEK On a seasonal menu, it's a good thing the shredded barbecue chicken, avocado, cilantro crème fraîche, and tortilla strips served on a corn and bell pepper pancake is available year-round. *Walnut Creek, larkcreek.com.*

11 | John Jawad's Pepper Steak

MORESI'S CHOPHOUSE A superior cut of New York steak seasoned and grilled to perfection, topped with applewood bacon. *Clayton, mories chophouse.com.*

Chef Pick:

12 | Tagliatelle

OTTAVIO "I think the tagliatelle with Speck, porcini, and arugula might be the perfect pasta dish." *Walnut Creek, ottavio-osteria.com.*
—MICHELE NGUYEN, ÉLEVÉ RESTAURANT

13 | Orange Kush

ALE INDUSTRIES Spiced with coriander, chamomile, and orange peel, this wheat beer is smooth as a summer's breeze. *Concord, aleindustries.com.*

14 | Mussels

WALNUT CREEK YACHT CLUB Not just a dish but a happening: The savory garlic-parsley-butter-white wine sauce will have you dipping bread until the last drop. *Walnut Creek, wcyac.net.*

15 | Chicken Shawarma

BABALOU'S MEDITERRANEAN A hunk of burning love from the vertical grill, this Lebanese version of a Greek gyro is slathered in garlicky yogurt sauce and wrapped in warm flatbread. *Walnut Creek, babalous.com.*

16 | Napa Salad

LETTUCE Summer on a plate: fresh lettuce and field berries tossed with rosemary chicken, candied walnuts, and honey balsamic dressing. *Walnut Creek, lettuce1.net.*

**17 | Honey Toast**

SASA Honey poured onto squishy toast with yuzu-macerated strawberries, whipped mascarpone cream, balsamic reduction, and vanilla bean gelato—your sweet tooth will scream and shout. *Walnut Creek, sasawc.com.*

Reader Pick:

18 | Burger

FLEMING'S "Especially during happy hour while the burger is still \$6. Your hands will literally be covered in juice, and I've gone with groups of people who fall silent until the burgers (and gigantic onion rings) disappear." *Walnut Creek, flemingssteakhouse.com.*
—KRISTEN HANEY, WALNUT CREEK

19 | Chicken Salad Sandwich

A SWEET AFFAIR A wonderfully huge helping of chicken salad made with house-roasted chicken, cream cheese, avocado, and sprouts, on fresh-baked multigrain bread. *Walnut Creek, sweetaffairbakery.com.*

20 | The Brooklyn

ÉLEVÉ This cocktail is a beautiful mix of complex flavors—rye, vermouth, amaro, bitters—to be savored before enjoying Vietnamese specialties. *Walnut Creek, eleverestaurant.com.*

21 | Hot Pork Bowl

KOREANA KITCHEN Sweetly marinated pork atop rice and slippery noodles—this is comfort in a bowl. *Walnut Creek, (925) 938-5959.*

22 | Sungta Chi Kodi

MONSOON MASALA Shrimp simmered in coconut milk with herbs and spices will have you singing Bollywood style. *Pleasant Hill, monsoonmasala.com.*

23 | Ahi Tartare

VA DE VI The wasabi-spiked tobiko's lingering heat contrasts with the cool, tender sashimi-grade tuna. *Walnut Creek, va-de-vi-bistro.com.*

24 | Spinach Bolani

EAST WEST GOURMET AFGHAN A farmers market favorite: spinach-stuffed flaky flatbread made zesty with a side of tangy cilantro pesto. Made in Concord. *bolaniansauce.com.*

25 | Hot Dog

STADIUM PUB Served Chicago style with mustard, relish, onions, fresh tomato, and a dill pickle spear, these dogs always hit the spot. *Walnut Creek, thestadiumpub.com.*