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Call Petar's at 925-284-7117 for reservations.

Petar's Restaurant is located in the heart of Lafayette at 32 Lafayette Circle.

Petar's is open for lunch Monday through Saturday from 11:30 to 4:00 and open for dinner nightly.



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Gigi's, The Spirit of Sophisticated Lafayette on Your Plate

By Sophie Braccini

Getting a table at Gigi's for dinner, even just for two, requires some planning ahead. When I called on a Friday afternoon for a table that same evening, nothing was available until 9:00 pm. But my date and I were hungry and decided to head over at 8:15, just in case.

I used to know the small cottage on Brown in Lafayette as the home of a quaint European place. That rainy evening, the atmosphere was quite different. Owner Jeff Amber remodeled it in a simple, modern and elegant way. The young chef moved to Lafayette from San Francisco four years ago, looking for a great place to raise his family. He had run Moose's and XYZ in San Francisco as well as the three Chow's. He started working in restaurants at age fourteen, working his way up the ladder.

When we arrived, the main rooms and small covered terrace were full with a baby boomer crowd. We sat at the bar, a bit crunched in the hallway, waiting for a table to open. We were offered a very interesting choice of drinks. I had a glass of Macon Village and my companion a Californian beer. The wine and beer list is extensive and diverse. As Jeff Amber explained later "for

beer, we look for local small breweries, the wines are more international and the French and Italian we have are lighter, affordable and go well with our food." As we waited for a table, we could observe part of the kitchen where Amber works side by side with



chef Sebastian Miller.

A table first became available for us on the covered terrace, but the atmosphere there was a bit cold and isolated. We moved to one of the main rooms for a warmer feel. The servers were quite busy, but very amicable and took our every request with the best disposition. The menu is seasonal and claims use of local ingredients. I started with figs stuffed with goat cheese on a baby arugula salad with fennel. The taste of the salad was much milder and more subtle than the usual arugula. I later learned that it was harvested very young and mixed

with watercress. Amber buys it from Sausalito Springs, a local Bay Area organic farmer. My companion had roasted chicken liver with green apple and arugula. The livers had a pleasant distinctive scent that came from a mix of herbs and spices including dried celery seeds and a "secret ingredient" from the south called old bay; the greens were extremely tender and tasty.

My main dish was cod with butter-nut squash. The fish was perfectly cooked and the vegetables were just the right combination. My companion chose pork tenderloin that was served with small vegetables and faro. The taste of the sauce was refined and savory; we asked the composition and were answered that it was a beef and red wine reduction that incorporated some 20 other ingredients, including apple cider and maple syrup.

The restaurant places an emphasis on treating seasonal vegetables as an important focus of the dishes. Amber confirms, "I get my inspiration from seasonal local ingredients. For example we are now serving a roasted coings salad with honey vinaigrette. This is a fruit that is often overlooked but gives great results." Another key element is the research of interesting flavors without the need for overstatement. "Yes," says Amber, "we make everything but the bread and we try to keep our cooking elegant and simple."

We were quite satiated after the entrees, but couldn't ignore the dessert menu. We gave in to poached pears with vanilla mascarpone and a perfect butterscotch crème brulee with shortbread cookies. The total price, with gratuities, drinks and dessert came to \$100 for two. As the evening came to a close, Amber worked the room and greeted all of the diners to make sure everyone had enjoyed their visit to Gigi's, one of the most interesting dinner experiences in Lamorinda.

Gigi's, 1005 Brown Ave., Lafayette 962-0882

Lamorinda Helps Feed the Hungry through Loaves and Fishes

There were even two young children with their grandparents. Many folks walked right past the food line and went straight to the back of the lunchroom to pick out much needed new clothes and bread that had been donated. With their choices in hand, they returned to the food line and joined the others for lunch.

One fellow has eaten at Loaves and Fishes for 25 years and lives in a local park. The night before, he was stabbed in the thigh and his jacket and shoes were stolen. He had 30-40 staples in his leg and was walking with a limp. When asked how he was feeling, he replied "Yeah, it hurts. I guess I'll get the staples out in a couple weeks." He then walked to the back to pick out a new jacket before returning for his meal. He was well known by the staff, workers and many of the patrons. There was a lot of camaraderie, laughter and hugs of recognition among the patrons and staff. The employees also function as "quasi social workers" according to McClintick, checking in with the folks from day to day to see how they are doing and making program recommendations that could help them out.

McClintick said about 50% of the patrons are the working poor, 25% are homeless and 25% are seniors. In the summer,

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there are also a lot of children since they're not in school. The policy of Loaves and Fishes is to serve whoever walks through the door, regardless of their relative need. McClintick said "One of the premises of Loaves and Fishes is to be a non-threatening, low-key place to eat." For some folks, this is their only meal of the day and they are welcome to have as many servings as they want. The facilities tend to get busier toward the end of the month when money starts to run low at home.

Loaves and Fishes has an annual budget of roughly \$1,000,000. \$500,000 of that comes from food donations from grocery stores such as Diablo Foods in Lafayette. The other \$500,000 comes from various donors. Volunteers are also vital to the operations. Currently, there are about 1,200 regular volunteers that serve each month and a number of them are from Lamorinda. Some of the Lamorinda organizations with regular volunteer groups are the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Temple Isaiah and the Rossmoor Community. There is plenty of room for more volunteers and donations. Further information on becoming a volunteer or making a donation can be obtained at www.loavesandfishesofcontracosta.org.

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My visits started when we moved to Lafayette in 1948. We started coming at least once a month. Remember Loretta Jones as favorite waitress. Emily and Blair Akey

3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette ☎ 925-283-2345

LAMORINDA's Restaurants			
•• updated November 28, 2007 ••			
American			
Bistro	3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7108	
Chow Restaurant	53 Lafayette Cir, Laf	962-2469	
Hungry Hunter	3201 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	938-3938	
Quiznos	3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0200	
Ranch House	1012 School St, Mor	376-5127	
Terzetto Cuisine	1419 Moraga Way, Mor	376-3832	
The Cheese Steak Shop	3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-1234	
BBQ			
Bo's Barbecue	3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7133	
Burger Joint			
Flippers	960 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-1567	
Nation's Giant Hamburgers	400 Park, Mor	376-8888	
Nation's Giant Hamburgers	76 Moraga Way, Ori	254-8888	
Café			
Express Cafe	3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd #170, Laf	283-7170	
Ferrari-Lucca Delicatessens	23 Lafayette Cir, Laf	299-8040	
Geppetto's cafe	87 Orinda Way, Ori	253-9894	
California Cuisine			
Gigi's	1005 Brown St., Laf	962-0882	
Metro Lafayette	3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-4422	
Shelby's	2 Theatre Sq, Ori	254-9687	
Chinese			
Asia Palace Restaurant	1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor	376-0809	
Chef Chao Restaurant	343 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-1740	
China Moon Restaurant	380 Park St, Mor	376-1828	
The Great Wall Restaurant	3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf	284-3500	
Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine	1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori	253-9852	
Lily's House	3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf	284-7569	
Mandarin Flower	581 Moraga Rd, Mor	376-7839	
Panda Express	3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0288	
Szechwan Chinese Restaurant	79 Orinda Way, Ori	254-2020	
Uncle Yu's Szechuan	999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf	283-1688	
Yan's Restaurant	3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-2228	
Coffee Shop			
Millie's Kitchen	1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf	283-2397	
Squirrel's Coffee Shop	998 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-7830	
Village Inn Cafe	290 Village Square, Ori	254-6080	
Continental			
Petar's Restaurant	32 Lafayette Cir, Laf	284-7117	
Vino Restaurant	3531 Plaza Way, Laf	284-1330	
Duck Club Restaurant	3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7108	
Hawaiian Grill			
Lava Pit	2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori	253-1338	
Indian			
India Palace	3740 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-5700	
Swad Indian Cuisine	3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-9575	
Italian			
Giardino	3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-3869	
La Finestra Ristorante	100 Lafayette Cir, St. 101, Laf	284-5282	
La Piazza	15 Moraga Way, Ori	253-9191	
Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria	975 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-3081	
Michael's	1375 Moraga Way, Mor	376-4300	
Mondello's	337 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-2533	
Pizza Antica	3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-0500	
Postino	3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-8700	
Ristorante Amoroma	360 Park St, Mor	377-7662	
Japanese			
Asia Palace Sushi Bar	1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor	376-0809	
Blue Ginko	3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-9020	
Kane Sushi	3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-9709	
Niwa Restaurant	1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori	254-1606	
Serika Restaurant	2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori	254-7088	
Tamami's Japanese Restaurant	356 Park St, Mor	376-2872	
Yu Sushi	19 Moraga Way, Ori	253-8399	
Jazz Dinner Club			
Joe's of Lafayette	3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Laf	299-8807	
The Orinda House	65 Moraga Way, Ori	258-4445	
Mediterranean			
Alex's	2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori	254-5290	
Nino's Bay	#2 Theater Square, Ste. 153, Ori	253-1327	
Oasis Cafe	3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-8822	
Per Tutti Ristorante	3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-5225	
Mexican			
360 Gourmet Burrito	3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1270	
El Charro Mexican Dining	3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-2345	
El Jaro Mexican Cafe	3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-6639	
La Cocina Mexicana	23 Orinda Way, Ori	258-9987	
Mucho wraps	1375-B Moraga Way, Mor	377-1203	
Baja Fresh Mexican Grill	3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-8740	
Celia's Restaurant	3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-8288	
El Balazo	35180 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-8700	
Maya Mexican Grill	74 Moraga Way, Ori	258-9049	
Numero Uno Taqueria	3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1333	
Pizza			
Aladino's Pizza	3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-6363	
Mountain Mike's Pizza	504 Center St, Mor	377-6453	
Pennini's	1375 Moraga Rd, Mor	376-1515	
Round Table Pizza	361 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-1411	
Round Table Pizza	3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-8404	
Village Pizza	19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori	254-1200	
Zamboni's Pizza	1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori	254-2800	
Sandwiches/Deli			
Bianca's Deli	1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor	376-4400	
Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub	64 Moraga Way, Ori	254-7202	
Gourmet Bistro Cafe	484 Center St, Mor	376-1551	
Kasper's Hot Dogs	103 Moraga Way, Ori	253-0766	
Noah's Bagels	3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-0716	
Orinda Deli	19 F Orinda Way, Ori	254-1990	
Subway	396 Park St., Mor	376-2959	
Subway	3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf	284-2627	
Subway	Theatre Square, Ori	258-0470	
Singaporean/Malaysian			
Kopitiam	3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1653	
South American			
The Patio Tapas and Restaurant	960 Moraga Road, Laf	299-6885	
Steak			
Casa Orinda	20 Bryant Way, Ori	254-2981	
Tea			
Patisserie Lafayette	71 Lafayette Cir, Laf	283-2226	
Tea Party by Appointment	107 Orinda Way, Ori	254-2206	
Thai			
Amarin Thai Cuisine	3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd # B, Laf	283-8883	
Baan Thai	99 Orinda Way, Ori	253-0989	
Royal Siam	512 Center St, Mor	377-0420	
Siam Orchid	23 Orinda Way # F, Ori	253-1975	

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