

Valentine's Treats

By Susie Iventosch



Lafayette Store manager at the Teacake Bake Shop, Chi Hoang, right, and Kelly Tong, left, display the wide assortment of cupcakes and cookies available. Photos Susie Iventosch

Tucked neatly into a corner at 35 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette, the inviting kitchen and store front of Teacake Bake Shop is open to satisfy even the most demanding sweet tooth. Here one can purchase, or special order, cupcakes and cookies for everyday... or special occasions such as Valentine's Day, special anniversaries or birthdays!

The selection includes cookies such as Coffee Toffee Chocolate, Apricot Almond, Chai Latte White Chocolate, Tickle Me Pink (made with cranberries and white chocolate), Lemon Pout and my personal favorite, Oatmeal Coconut Chocolate. Cupcake fantasies range from chocolate to vanilla with daily specials of key lime toasted coconut, honey tangerine, carrot and coffee bean in between, each with a complementary butter cream frosting.

Agnes and Tim Hsu, husband and wife proprietors, opened the first of the three Teacake Bake Shops in Emeryville in 2005 to bring full circle Agnes' academic training in nu-

trition and lifelong passion for baking. Ever since she was a little girl growing up on the outskirts of Paris, she enjoyed diving into buttery Parisian croissants, crusty baguettes and of course, pain au chocolate.

When she was two years old, her family left Vietnam to start a new life in Europe, where she and her three sisters settled into St. Charles, a boarding school run by strict nuns who expected high standards of personal performance of the girls. Here Agnes fell in love with French pastries and cuisine. And, because the convent was self-sustaining, the nuns raised vegetables, chickens and rabbits to provide for the students. Though some might complain of hard work and a stark environment, Agnes credits her experience there for instilling in her a formidable work ethic and a love of scratch baking with the highest quality ingredients and a keen attention to detail.

In fact, when Agnes was five years old, she remembers her mother asking her what she wanted

to be when she grew up, and Agnes replied, "I want to open a boulangerie (bakery)."

Agnes and her family relocated from Paris to the United States in 1983, and Agnes earned a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences from UC Berkeley in 1997 and followed up with a Master's in Nutrition in 2000 from the University of Washington.

Due to have their first child any day now, Agnes and Tim will be nurturing both a newborn baby girl, and three Teacake Bake Shops.

When asked about future plans, Agnes says she'd love to expand the number of stores, but for the near term, given the current economy and the expectation of a new baby, she and Tim are keeping their focus on the three established stores in Lafayette, Emeryville and Corte Madera.

"The Lafayette area is a close-knit community and we've really enjoyed being a part of it," she said.

Store manager, Chi Hoang, says a lot of families frequent the

store. A lot of moms bring their kids into the Lafayette store to pick out a treat," she remarked. "Cupcakes seem to have a special appeal to them. I come from a big family of six kids, so it's really fun for me to see how excited they are when they come in."

In addition to the basic flavors, customers can enjoy daily cookie and cupcake specials as well as shortbread and two types of brownies. Agnes was kind enough to share with readers the recipe for her very special rich and moist brownie bites, made it miniature cupcake tins.

Cupcakes are \$3 each, and cookies are \$2. There is a special Valentine's assortment, packaged in a darling red and white box.

For more information or to place special orders, please call or visit the Lafayette store at 35 Lafayette Circle, phone, 283-9900, or visit www.teacakebakeshop.com.



These recipe is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Teacake Bake Shop Brownie Bites

*I converted this from metric into U.S. measurements, so the result may be just slightly different from those you can purchase at the stores.

Ingredients

- 1 1/8 cups granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla (good vanilla such as Nielsen Massey Madagascar Bourbon vanilla)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 ounces semisweet chocolate (Guittard or Callebaut quality)
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate (same type)
- 1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter

Directions

Melt chocolate and butter in microwave for a few minutes until melted. (Time may vary depending upon your microwave speed.) The chocolate and butter mixture should be warm to the touch, not hot, when added to the remaining ingredients, so cool slightly before using. Place sugar in mixing bowl. Add eggs to sugar, one at a time, mixing on medium speed of electric mixer or by hand mixer for about 30 seconds after each, until light and fluffy. Mix in vanilla and scrape down sides of bowl. Mix dries together and set aside. Add melted chocolate/butter to sugar/egg mixture on low-medium speed until well blended. Be careful to not over mix. Scrape down sides of bowl. Add dries by hand and stir just until blended. Grease or line mini-muffin tins with liners and scoop about 2 tablespoons of batter into each cup. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20-25 minutes. Tops should be shiny and inside of brownie bites should be moist and fudgy.

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* Regular menu only, not valid with daily board specials, early dinner menu or with any other specials or promotions. (soup & salad sides are not considered entrees) - Exp. Feb. 12, 2008 -

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Shop online: www.teacakebakeshop.com

LAMORINDA's Restaurants		
... updated November 26, 2008 ...		
American		
Bistro	3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7108
Chow Restaurant	53 Lafayette Cir, Laf	962-2469
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
Rising Loafer	3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf	284-8816
Susan Foord Catering & Cafe	965 Mt. View Drive, Laf	299-2469
California Cuisine		
Gigi's	1005 Brown St., Laf	962-0882
Metro Lafayette	3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-4422
Shelbys	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 Café	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
French		
Chevalier Restaurant	960 Moraga Road, Laf	385-0793
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
Knox Restaurant, Lounge	3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-5225
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	100 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		
Petra Café	2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori	254-5290
Oasis Café	3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-8822
Turquoise Mediterranean Grill	70 Moraga Way, Ori	253-2004
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	3518 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		
Mountain Mike'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	283-4004
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 Café	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
Seafood		
Yankee Pier	3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-4100
Singaporean/Malaysian		
Kopitiam	3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1653
Steak		
Casa Orinda	20 Bryant Way, Ori	254-2981
Tea		
Patesserie 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 Street, Mor	377-0420
Siam Orchid	23 Orinda Way # F, Ori	253-1975
Vietnamese		
Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta	578 Center Street, Mor	376-7600

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