

Lamorinda's Specialties of the House

Afternoon treats for Mother's Day – or any day at all

By Amanda Kuehn



Mango Italian ice at Chillers in Orinda Photos Amanda Kuehn

nation of cream and caffeine. SiSi's is located at 910 Country Club Drive, Moraga. For information, call (925) 377-1908.

When the weather is warm, Chillers in Orinda is the place to go for an afternoon cool off. Chillers specializes in smoothies, the most popular of which is the Rockin' Raspberry, a cool combination of raspberry juice, bananas, strawberries and orange sherbert. The Tropical Passion is a personal favorite of owner Mark Callahan. They also serve Italian water ice, a crisp, refreshing treat made purely of fruit juice and water. "It's sort of a novelty in the area," Callahan said of the East Coast specialty that contains half the sugar of normal sorbet. Chillers' water ice comes from Flavor Brigade in Oakland and comes in six flavors, including mango, strawberry lemonade and rootbeer. Chillers is located at 21 Orinda Way. For information, call (925) 254-3233.

Panache owner Young Yoon cuts no corners when it comes to the quality of her ingredients. "We are the best," attests the Korean native and former pastry chef. "We buy only Italian ingredients." Since Yoon took over seven years ago, Panache has served Umbria coffee and Illy espresso, high quality ingredients that make for rich and smooth specialty drinks. The most popular is the vanilla latte, which is served with the flair of a creamy foam leaf or a latte art heart. Panache also serves boba, or bubble tea, a Taiwanese tea-based drink that comes in various flavors and consistencies and features round chewy balls of tapioca. "It's my family drink," said Yoon, who first began serving boba at a French bakery in Walnut Creek. There have been a handful of boba places in the Lamorinda area, but Panache is the only one left. Unlike the powdered mix you find in other bobas, Panache brews their tea and cooks fresh tapioca every hour. Their most popular variety is the vanilla black tea milk boba, though you can also get your boba drink blended or over ice. This reporter's taro almond milk boba made for a special treat that was simultaneously sweet and silky, cool and chewy. Panache is located at 3653 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. For info, call (925) 284-7232.

Look for more Specialties of the House features in upcoming issues. Buen apetito!

Many think of brunch as a great way to give mom a break around Mother's Day, but an afternoon treat could be equally fun, giving mom a quick pick-me-up or a break between school pickup and supper time. From iced lattes to ice cream sundaes, hibiscus lemonade to the perfect pastry, the Lamorinda area offers plenty of options when it comes to delicious treats. This week we're highlighting just a few.

At Papillon Quality Gourmet Coffees in Lafayette, there are dozens of delicate teas and specialty coffee drinks of all types and flavors. Their signature drink is the Papillon mocha—European chocolate and espresso blended with steamed milk and topped with real whipped cream and ground chocolate. I had my creamy concoction poured over ice. Not as sweet as a traditional mocha, the flavor is richer and smoother, making it a great afternoon treat. Papillon is located at 67 Lafayette Circle. For information, call (925) 283-0466.

If you're in the mood for something sweet, Cake is your answer to indulgence. From a butter cake with lemon-infused buttercream frosting to chewy layers of macaroon layered with chocolate ganache, Cake specializes in using organic, local, fresh ingredients. Their most popular item, though, according to Patrick Quinn, husband of pastry chef Andrea Quinn, isn't a cake at all, but their signature coconut macaroons, which are sold in retail stores from Capitola to San Helena and at Diablo Foods. You can purchase a six-pack of these sweet treats straight from the source in La Fiesta Square. Cake is located at 35 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette. For info, visit cakelafayette.com or call (925) 385-0202.

Sisi's Caffe in Moraga has "the best latte in town" according to their business cards. They also offer a variety of ice creams, smoothies, lemonades and milkshakes, which are popular with local children, according to 3-year-barista Megan Verrips. "I'd say 80 percent of our customers are regulars," said Verrips, who has tried nearly every beverage the neighborhood cafe has to offer. "I come here on my days off just to get coffee," she remarked. Though tempted by the green tea matcha frappe, I opted for a vanilla almond milk iced latte, which was smooth and slightly sweet, a perfect combi-



Iced mocha from Papillon in Lafayette



Coconut macaroons at Cake in Lafayette

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