

T's Firehouse Indian Cuisine Offers Unique Combinations

By Amanda Kuehn



Creamy chicken tikka masala, spiced lamb in Rogan Josh, garlic naan and cardamom-infused basmati rice. Photos Amanda Kuehn

When you first arrive at T's Firehouse, you may question if you've come to the right place. Located in the former home of Fuz, adjacent to a large parking lot behind Kelly-Moore Paints, the new Indian restaurant and sports bar is easy to miss.

Enter the tan double doors and you're greeted by an exhibit of colorful hanging lanterns and mannequins clad in traditional Indian clothing. "Each [of them] represents something else," said owner Harinder Singh Tiwana. One mannequin is grinding flour, another spinning cotton, a third figure doing a traditional dance. Tiwana hopes the foyer decor will "give a feel of India" to his establishment.

Pass through a short hallway and you get to the restaurant itself—a single open room with low and high top tables decked with white table cloths

and folded napkins. There is also seating at an extensive and impressive bar, the feature around which T's is arranged.

"We wanted to be different from other Indian restaurants," said Tiwana, who hopes to attract multiple demographics with his unique combination of formal dining, authentic Indian cuisine and a sports bar atmosphere featuring six big screen TVs.

Purchased in 2012, T's has been two years in the making. Tiwana, who has lived in the area for some 25 years and has worked a wide array of jobs from transportation to agriculture, has done much of the work himself, including the design and construction of a backlit glass cabinet that flashes the bright colors of a Bollywood film.

Whereas other Indian establishments often feature buffets, T's is made to order. The daily lunch spe-

cial allows you to choose two of six entree options (four of which are vegetarian), served with your choice of cardamom-infused basmati rice or puffy, crisp naan bread for \$9.95. There are also four wrap options (two vegetarian and two meat). The dinner menu is more extensive, with both vegetarian and meat options that range from the lingering spicy cinnamon of lamb chunks simmered in Rogan Josh sauce to the creamy tomato-onion sauce of the Chicken Tikka Masala. The signature appetizer is a thin crisp lentil papadum speckled with fennel seeds and wrapped around large tender prawns in a warm spiced sauce sprinkled with cilantro. One serving includes two papdums.

T's officially opened on May 10. Happy hour happens every day from 3 to 5 p.m. In addition to sustainable wines from Banrock Station and eight beers on draft, T's also features seven specialty cocktails, ranging from the refreshing Yerba Buena to the fruity Wicked Sparkler.

If you're looking for friendly service and authentic Indian flavors, a new destination for dinner and drinks or a place to grab a beer and watch the game, T's might be just the right combination.

T's Firehouse

3709 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Lafayette
(925) 298-5981
info@tsfirehousebar.com
www.tsfirehousebar.com
Open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.



T's bar featuring backlit glass cabinet.

business briefs

La Finestra Ristorante Named Lafayette Small Business of the Year

100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 101, Lafayette

(925) 284-5282, www.lafinestraristorante.com

La Finestra Ristorante was honored as Lafayette's 2014 Small Business of the Year by the East Bay Leadership Council's Small Business/Entrepreneurial Task Force in May. "Jeff Assadi has been the owner/chef of La Finestra since 2003," said Jay Lifson,



Jeff Assadi, the owner of Lafayette's 2014 Small Business of the Year, La Finestra Ristorante, with Supervisor Candace Andersen. Photo provided

executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. "He is committed to providing a great dining experience and has given back to our community in many ways. La Finestra supports all the schools each year with gift certificates and hosted dinners. He is a proud participant of Taste of Lafayette since the event began, and he gives of his time for special events like the annual Loaves and Fishes fundraiser." La Finestra is centrally located in Lafayette, but secluded among large eucalyptus trees, giving the place a unique charm. Assadi has a great reputation as a passionate cook who makes most of his plates to order with the finest ingredients. His Italian cuisine with a Sicilian accent has been celebrated for years.

Artists' Market

Lafayette Art Gallery

3420 Mt Diablo Blvd., Suite A, Lafayette

(925) 284-2788, www.lafayetteartgallery.com



First Artists' Market at The Forge in Lafayette. Photo provided

The first of a summer series of Artists' Markets was held in the courtyard of The Forge, the new home of the Lafayette Art Gallery, at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Brown Avenue in Lafayette on May 17. It was the first such event for new member Karin Lechner, a bead artist, who recently joined the gallery; while photographer Warren Rice participated for many years in the summer shows the gallery held in its former location on Lafayette Circle. "The new location for the market has a Carmel feel to it," said Rice. "It is a lovely setting, with a fountain, and we enjoyed very much displaying our art there." The Artists' Market will be open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on three more Saturdays, June 21, July 19 and Aug. 16. "We have about 15 artists coming to the events, including some invited artists who are not members of the gallery," said Rice. "We strive to offer a wide variety of artistic productions." Although foot traffic is not as developed as it was on Lafayette Circle, both Rice and Lechner say they enjoy the new location of the art gallery—a wide, luminous space they moved into last October. "It's also a great place to hold our wine reception, every second Friday of the month," added Lechner, who is one of three artists featured in June.

Moraga Employee of the Month for May

Chris O'Connell, Los Perales Elementary School's secretary and front office manager, was named the Moraga Employee of the Month for May. O'Connell first started working at Los Perales in 1999 as a substitute teacher, then became a teacher's assistant and eventually was hired as the school secretary in June, 2001. She has been described as the glue that makes the school run so efficiently. "Every person who walks through our doors is greeted with a warm, genuine smile from Chris," said Los Perales principal Amy Black. "She is the first one here and the last one to leave. Her attention to detail is unparalleled. She never gets flustered, never misses a beat. LP would be lost without her." O'Connell is the 28th recipient of the monthly award sponsored by the Rotary Club of Moraga and the Chamber of Commerce. She will be presented with her award, and gift cards to Safeway and Massage Envy, at the Moraga Rotary luncheon on Tuesday, June 3.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Rock the Plaza at 6:30 p.m. on Fridays with Azure Moon, June 6, and The Floorshakers, June 13; at Plaza Park (corner of Moraga Road and Mt Diablo Boulevard) in Lafayette.

Chamber Mixer at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 11 at The Mechanic, 3328 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Entrepreneur's Club at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 19 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 19, Lily Dong Photography, 3506D Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga

Save the date for the all-day 3rd annual Moraga Chamber Golf Tournament on July 14. The event is the chamber's largest fundraiser of the year. Proceeds support the chamber's many community and business-based programs. The cost is \$175 per player and includes golf, dinner (starts at 4:30 p.m.), refreshments and prizes. For more information or to sign up, visit www.moragachamber.org.

Orinda

First Chamber Brunch on from 8 to 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 17 at Barbacoa in Theatre Square. Enjoy delicious brunch food while meeting with the board of directors and ambassadors, hear the annual report presentation, and get the latest chamber news. RSVP to Candy Kattenburg at info@lamorindachamber.org; the cost is \$10.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com



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