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## Lamorinda's Specialties of the House

By Amanda Kuehn



The Ranch House Caf  in Moraga Photos  
Amanda Kuehn

The days are longer, the sun is brighter. Summer is nearly here and with it comes added incentive to spend time outdoors, even while eating. Dining al fresco is one of summer's great pleasures, and from a morning egg scramble with hot black coffee to an afternoon luncheon over curry chicken salad, specialty cocktails and jazz-inspired wine tastings to heirloom tomato salad and sustainable smoked short ribs, the Lamorinda area has plenty to offer. The following is a sampling of some of the breakfast and lunch outdoor dining available in this first of a two-part series:

At the Ranch House Caf  in Moraga, summer locals can sip their coffee and enjoy their breakfast burritos and eggs rancheros on one of six red picnic tables situated on the front lawn under the apple tree of the 100-year-old building. The cafe, which is located by Safeway and right along the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail, has been making their own salsa and serving up fresh crab dishes for 17 years.

Manager Lori Bilecci recommends the fresh corned beef hash with eggs and toast. "We have a very regular clientele," said Bilecci. "A lot of families and retired and widowed customers come in to visit with each other. You can see some of the same people every day." The cafe serves breakfast and lunch and features daily specials and homemade soups. The Ranch House Caf  is located at 1012 School St. in Moraga. For information, call (925) 376-5127.

"Regular" is the word of the day every day at Geppetto's Cafe. Originally opened in Lafayette in 1984, owner Sue Fitzsimons moved the establishment to Orinda's Country Club Plaza in 1992. "I didn't realize how small and nice this community is," said Fitzsimons. "We get the same people day in and day out." Geppetto's lunch menu is tried and true as well. "Our clientele really like continuity," Fitzsimons noted. A long-standing favorite is the chicken curry sandwich on sunflower wheat bread. Another is the chicken brie and pesto. For the morning crowd, Geppetto's serves breakfast sandwiches made to order and standard coffee and espresso drinks. The outdoor seating has the ambiance of a European sidewalk caf  and is a great place to sip a house-made lemonade or indulge in a scoop of caramel sea salt gelato. Geppetto's is located at 87 Orinda Way. For info, call (925) 253-9894.

For over 20 years, Bill and Marcy Sheldon have been crafting sandwiches for the patrons of Bianca's Deli in Moraga. "I have an incredible memory," remarked Bill Sheldon, who claims he can recall the orders of nearly all his regular customers. "Everybody knows everybody here." Sheldon recommends the grilled chicken and jack, as well as the roasted turkey and homemade salads. The chicken salad, made with boneless skinless chicken breast, is particularly popular. "Almost everything is done here," Sheldon added. Bianca's offers covered outdoor seating that opens to the Moraga Shopping Center. Bianca's is located at 1480 Moraga Rd. For information, call (925) 376-4400.

Orinda's Theatre Square offers a few great patios, the largest of which belongs to Barbacoa. Authentic Mexican at its tastiest, Barbacoa features dishes that are "off the beaten path," according to manager Rickey Dobbs. From fried plantains to chipotle-rubbed rotisserie chicken, you're sure to find something you've never tried, as well as traditional tacos, burritos and enchiladas. Barbacoa has recently opened for lunch from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. They offer an express menu where can build

your own burrito, nachos, rice bowl or salad, and an all-day happy hour running from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. Jason Yerbick (Chef Jay) is in the process of creating new menu options, including a Mexican Hot Chocolate Cake and Happy Hour snack options that are sure to please outdoor diners. Barbacoa is located at 2 Theatre Square #145, Orinda. For information, visit [www.barbacoaorinda.com](http://www.barbacoaorinda.com) or call (925) 254-1183.

Lamorinda Weekly will feature part two, drinks and dining al fresco, in its July 2 issue. Buon appetito!



Geppetto's Cafè in Orinda



Bianca's Deli in Moraga



Barbacoa in Orinda's Theatre Square

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[back](#)

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