

Holiday Shopping Spree in Lafayette

Olive oil, gentlemen's treat, home decor and doggie day care

By Sophie Braccini

Downtown Lafayette boasts the perfect setting for a shopping spree this season; the city that is already known for the variety of its restaurants is brimming with opportunities for high-end shopping. In addition to existing favorites, a few new businesses recently opened that add color to the experience.

Your first stop may be The Tail Haven Hotel and Day Lounge – that is unless your pooch prefers mingling with crowds of shoppers over frolicking with its peers. Local dog trainer Emily Ronnow, a third generation Lafayette entrepreneur, opened her doggie day care in Lafayette this autumn. The young professional, who lost her software sales job a few years ago, decided to develop her passion for dogs as a business and became a trainer. “My clients kept asking me if I knew of a place in Lamorinda where they could leave their dog during the day while at work, or when they go away,” she says, so she looked for a site and found it on Mt. Diablo Boulevard next to Wine Thieves. The space is inviting, clean and odor free. Dogs of all sizes run around and interact gently in the open space. Downstairs a garden area is also available. When this reporter visited, three small pooches were relaxing in dog baskets under the reception desk, undisturbed by their more boisterous mates who greeted us joyfully. There is a separate space for timid dogs. “I’m a dog trainer first,” adds Ronnow, “so if a dog comes here and we notice some behavior problems, we’ll recommend training actions to its parents.” In addition to the day lounge, Ronnow offers boarding, training and adoptions.

With your best friend happily occupied, head over to Fiesta Lane and visit Amphora Nueva, a new business



From left: Nate Bradley, Shana Gilman, and Mira Beyeler at Amphora Nueva.

that sells olive oils freshly pressed from all over the world. In the beautiful store set as an elegant tasting room, patrons can taste each of the oils available that day, in their natural form or as delicate blends often obtained by pressing the added ingredients – such as lemon, rosemary, garlic or cayenne – with the olives. “This is the only place where you can buy olive oil that was pressed 10 days ago year round, and where you can see the chemical analysis of the oil,” explains owner Nate Bradley. Why bother? Because it is those polyphenols (anti-oxidant substances found only in very good olive oils), and oleic acids (the good fat in olive oil) that are highly touted for their health benefits. “The higher the polyphenol content the more benefit,” says Bradley, a third generation olive oil dealer. The young man opened Amphora Nueva in Berkeley a few years ago – it was his grandfather who first brought his love for olive oil from Italy. The business expanded and now includes Veronica’s Food that distributes to 650 specialty stores, and an olive farm in Tunisia.

“We also sell vinegars,” says Bradley, pointing to a display of dark and white balsamic vinegars. Plan to spend some time here, challenge your taste buds and take the time to sample before you choose the size container you want and purchase it at a quite reasonable rate.

Men can be pampered at the 18/8 salon that also just opened on Fiesta Lane – get a facial, haircut with shoulder massage, a shave, manicure, or even a waxing. 18/8 refers to a grade

The Tail Haven
3399 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette
(925) 298-5200,
www.thetailhaven.com

Amphora Nueva
7 Fiesta Lane, Lafayette
(925) 310-4681,
www.amphoranueva.com

18/8
15 Fiesta Lane, Lafayette
(925) 297-5127, www.eigh-
teeneight.com/locations/lafayette

Indigo & Poppy
1009 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette
(925) 962-9201,
www.indigoandpoppy.com



The Tail Haven's Emily Ronnow (right) and staff member Amber Plumley have fun with their clients.

Photos Sophie Braccini of stainless steel, the idea being that the salon will turn ‘rough’ men into polished gentlemen. 18/8 is a franchise that originated in Southern California, and Kara Davidson and her husband Samer Alami decided to open the first one in Northern California. The young Lafayette mom hired a staff of competent beauticians and greets clients with a glass of wine or beer.

Finally, spruce up your home for the holiday entertaining season at Indigo & Poppy, where you’ll find unique furnishings, accents and gifts. More than just another retail store, they are interior specialists who will help you create a unique home atmosphere.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs



Photo A. Scheck

Learning Express Opens
3568 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
(925) 385-7135, www.learningexpress.com/store/lafayette

Learning Express is a nationwide franchisor of educational toy stores. The new Lafayette franchise had its grand opening in November. To date, there are more than 130 locations across the country. Learning Express sells toys from infants to tweens. Some of their favorite toys of 2014 include Snap Circuits, Boogie Boards, Plushcraft and Magformers. Store hours: Monday-Saturday 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

New Personal Training in Moraga
1605 School Street, Moraga, (510) 759-1281

Tommy Au and his cousin and partner Danny Ma have started a new personal training and nutrition studio in Moraga, at 1605 School Street (behind Si Si Caffè). The two young men are certified trainers; Au has a background in Taekwondo and worked as a trainer for athletes as well as ordinary folks wanting to get back in shape at Living Lean in Orinda. Ma graduated from Cal in nutrition



Tommy Au with client Eliana Cordero in his new studio in Moraga. Photo provided

before becoming a trainer. “Our objective is to help people live stronger and healthier, and prevent injuries,” says Au. “We work with clients that have lower back problems and want to get back into shape, with people who want to lose weight, with teenagers who want to achieve a higher degree of fitness.” The two often practice compound or functional exercises with their clients, such as picking up and transferring weights on a shelf without injuring the back or the shoulder. “We want people to realize their full potential, whatever their age,” adds Au. The two trainers work with people individually or in small groups of up to four people.

Business Anniversary

Reflexion Salon's 15th Anniversary
508 Center Street, Moraga, (925) 376-7222

Reflexion Salon recently celebrated its 15th anniversary at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. The salon, owned by Shirley Takeuchi, specializes in teenage acne, anti-aging treatments, including peels and microdermabrasion, and waxing. Reflexion Salon also offers relaxing customized facials with a “reiki” touch. The hair stylist specializes in styled cuts, color, and perms. Reflexion Salon wishes to thank all of its Lamorinda clients for their continuing patronage and support.

News from the Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon cutting for Bay Sotheby's International Realty at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4, 3725 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Annual Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10 at Mechanics Bank, 3640 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Food, fun, beverages and a big holiday raffle. The mixer is \$10 for members; bring at least three canned items for the Food Bank and admission is free.

Ribbon cutting for 18/8 Fine Men's Salon and Amphora Nueva at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11, La Fiesta Lane.

Moraga

Holiday Mixer at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11 at Moraga Royale, 1600 Canyon Road. The mixer is \$15 at the door; for reservations email Kathe@moragachamber.org.

Orinda

Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11 at Oak Springs Pool Clubhouse, 39 Spring Road. For more information call (925) 254-3909.

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

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www.AlexGailas.com

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Happy Holidays

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