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Find Your Friends and Food at Sideboard Neighborhood Kitchen

By A.K. Carroll



Lafayette's Sideboard offers breakfast, lunch and dinner. Photos A.K. Carroll

It's 11 a.m. on a Friday morning when I walk into Sideboard Neighborhood Kitchen and Coffee Bar, located next to A Runner's Mind, just across from Lafayette's Plaza Park. I take my place in the bustling line of customers and admire the eclectic décor — an antique scooter, mounted deer heads, an array of vintage glass — as I wait to order a cup of light-roast coffee from the woman at the register.

"Would you like anything else?" she asks, as co-owner and chef Erin Andrews, clad in a bright pink chef's jacket, pops out of the kitchen to check on her customers.

"What do you suggest?" I ask.

Andrews opens a case of house made pastries and reaches for a maple scone, then on second thought selects an English muffin. I'm skeptical of her choice, but game to try it. The muffin arrives hot from the toaster and crisp on both sides. Served with homemade preserves, it is thick, dense and flakey, more like a crumpet or British scone.

"No matter how many I make, we always sell out," says Andrews. I can see why.

Sideboard opened its doors and its heart to the people of Lafayette on May 15. The second location for owners Erin and Ford

Andrews (their first is in Danville) this homey New American hot spot offers a friendly local meeting space that serves quality coffee and three square meals a day in a building that dates back to the 1860s and carries a history as old as the city itself.

Customers order at the counter and take a number, or rather a staple — butter, fudge, pastries, and artichokes are just a few of the ingredients listed on table tags. Orders are delivered fresh from the kitchen and water, silverware and condiments are all self-serve from one of two side stations (sideboards).

"When I was a kid my grandma used to put everything on a sideboard," said Andrews. "I'd say, 'Grandma why'd you do that?' And she'd say, '[Because] it makes everyone talk to each other.'"

You'll find that same sort of sensibility here, in a neighborhood sort of place that is anything but pretentious. An odd assortment of large communal tables, which range from vintage 1960s to hand-painted wood, are great for larger parties or for meeting new friends. One back-corner high-top is particularly special. The first community table from Sideboard's Danville location (which moved in 2014), the table came to Lafayette as a sort of good omen.

"More people have met and become friends at that table [than anywhere else in the restaurant]," said Andrews. She has customers that trek all the way out from Danville just to sit at the table with the people they met years back.

Sideboard may not offer table service, but there's still plenty of attention to detail, from the twine-wrapped utensils at the take away station to the quilted picnic blan-

kets on the front porch, where mosaic patio tables and bright turquoise umbrellas accommodate for morning sunshine and pet-strolling customers. Strung lights and heat lamps convert the space into a romantic evening spot.

Sideboard's coffee bar offers a selection of local small-batch coffees (Sightglass, Temple and Four Barrel) and hand-crafted espresso drinks. The fare, which is described as "handcrafted rustic comfort food," features ingredients that are natural, local, organic, seasonal and sustainable.

"We make everything from scratch down to the ketchup, aioli and potato chips," said Andrews.

Breakfast fare ranges from pastries and house-made granola with fruit and yogurt to veggie and bacon scrambles. An extended weekend menu includes made-to-order chilaquiles, French toast, huevos rancheros and shirred eggs, a gluten-free alternative to eggs benedict.

The lunch menu, which features seasonal specials and changes regularly, is heavy on fresh creations, like the shrimp ceviche salad made with hand-squeezed limes and loaded with mango salsa, plump tomatoes, crunchy tortilla strips and fresh guacamole. An array of gourmet sandwiches are served on ACME bread and accompanied by house made potato chips. Try the soft-shell crab sandwich, slow-roasted pork or a Prather Ranch cheddar burger. Sideboard also serves up a hearty mac'n cheese, a variety of savory sides and the best meatloaf Andrews has ever had. Dinner is much the same, with a few additional pastas and entrées.

Most dishes can be served family style and all are eligible for picnic service in the park, which is a

great option for diners who have children, pets or an inkling for the outdoors. Fried chicken, which is served by the bucket, is ideal for such a situation.

There is a small selection of beers and variety of local wines, two of which are served on tap. They also do wine margaritas, sake-based Vampiros and house-made refreshers and shrub sodas, which come in flavors like watermelon mint and sparkling orange mango. Other kid-friendly beverage options include hot chocolate and root beer floats.

Eating indoors, under the original wood ceiling and among the mismatched furniture is a little like eating in an antique store—albeit a casual, clean and spacious one.

"It's a neighborhood place," said Andrews. "That's why we don't have a sign. If you hear about [us] and it sounds good to you, it's going to be your kind of place."

Though you're sure to be taken care of, don't expect to be waited on hand and foot. Anything you need, you're likely to find on the sideboard.

3535 Plaza Way, Lafayette, CA 94549, (925) 310-4773, Open Monday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.



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

Business Bites

From Steaks to Fitness to Style, Lots of Openings in Lamorinda

By Vic Ryerson

Relax and Recharge

Studio E, the workout spot next to SiSi Café in Moraga, now offers a meditation class on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m.. Led by Orinda resident Susie Romak, the class is not restricted to Studio E members, but is open to the public.

Meditation is a peaceful, relaxing, rejuvenate practice that is an antidote to Lamorindans' busy lifestyle, according to Romak. She has many years of experience in meditative and spiritual practice, including study in India.

Further information about the class is available at susieromak@gmail.com, or (925) 250-1332.

Redefine Your Image

Amy Humann, former store manager and stylist at Specialtees Boutique in Lafayette, has started **Wardrobe EditHer**, a new business to help clients change their style and redefine their personal image.

Humann goes to her clients' homes by appointment to edit and organize their wardrobes. She also assists with donation or consignment of unwanted apparel and accessories, and offers styling and personal shopping services.

"I started my business in January because of the growing demand for assistance from my customers," says Humann. "People just started asking me if I could come to their homes to help them with their closets because they were so pleased with the experiences they'd had

with me in a store environment... [M]any people are reluctant to invite someone into their homes to rummage through their clothing. I understand that your wardrobe is a very personal thing, which makes trust the key to my business."

Find out more at www.wardrobe-edither.wordpress.com, or contact Humann at amyhumann82@gmail.com or at (925) 878-1275.

From Flatbread to Philly Steaks

Reem's Steaks, which offers a full line of beef and chicken Philly cheese steak sandwiches as well as burgers and other fare, has opened under new ownership in the former Turquoise space on Moraga Way in downtown Orinda. Now owned by Alex Masaraweh, who also owns **Petra**, the Greek restaurant next to the Orinda Theater, the little restaurant features a bright new interior, as well as a totally new menu.

Reem's Steaks is open for dine-in or carryout items Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. Call ahead at (925) 253-2004

Run, Rock, and Soak Up the Vibe

A Runner's Mind, a locally owned company that opened its newest store May 17 on the Plaza in Lafayette, is reaching out to the community with free running, walking, and other events as part of its ongoing effort to become "the running, walking and fitness hub for the Lamorinda area," says owner Monte Keleher. A Runner's

Mind also has stores in Burlingame and San Francisco.

The attractive new store, which features athletic shoes, apparel and related items, was decorated by Keleher and his partners, Dawson Montoya and Kyle Ballard. It is local and independent, he emphasizes, and has big plans to connect with the community as it gets established.

Partnering with local fitness business **Body Zing!**, a program of free group runs called Rock the Run is offered from the store at 5 p.m. each Friday afternoon in June, before the Rock the Plaza concerts. Body Zing! will start with a fifteen-minute core warm-up, followed by a 5 to 7 k group run led by A Runner's Mind on a course determined by the composition and desires of the group. A Runner's Mind also offers additional free group runs three times a week.

Plans are also in the offing for walking groups, and Zumba and yoga classes are planned to start in July. Classes will be held either on the Plaza or inside the store.

More information is available at runnersmind.com, or by emailing Shannon@runnersmind.com. The phone number for the Lafayette store is (925) 310-4312.

Don't Throw Stones at Glasshouse

Every homeowner who has experienced the aggravation of a plumbing failure or postponed a maintenance project until it was too

late will be interested to know that Glasshouse, a professional home management service, is expanding to Orinda and Lafayette.

The company, which launched in Oakland, Berkeley and Piedmont in March 2015, offers preventive maintenance to help a homeowner stay ahead of home maintenance issues by having a home manager visit the home quarterly to perform a comprehensive two-hour checkup. The goal is to keep the house running in tip-top shape. Additional home maintenance and repair service is available between service visits.

The subscription service for the quarterly visits costs \$50 per month. The cost of additional maintenance and repair tasks is \$75 per hour. Additional information is available at glasshouse.com.

Chamber Music

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce www.lafayettechamber.org, (925) 284-7404

Rock the Plaza, the free Friday summer concert series at Lafayette Plaza, will continue with concerts by The Big Jangle on June 7 and Lamorinda Idol Finalists on June 24. The two-hour concerts start at 6:30 p.m.

The Chamber's June Mixer will be held 5:30 – 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, at Capital Advantage, 3708 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 200.

Lamorinda Small Business Forum will present a program on protecting your business: robbery/

recovery/emergency. 5:30 – 7 p.m. Thursday, July 14, Bank of the West Lafayette Branch.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

www.moragachamber.org, (925) 323-6524

A **Mixer** will be held 3 to 5 p.m. on Friday, June 24, at St Mary's College, Filipi Hall #205. The Five-year Plan and a tour the Sports Center will be featured.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

www.orindachamber.org, (925) 254-3909

The new **Orinda business blog** is now online. Check it out at orindachamber.org. The first post includes a short documentary of Orinda 2016 restaurant tour. It was filmed and edited by Chamber member Susan Garell. The Chamber is eager to publish members' stories in the blog. Send your ideas to info@orindachamber.org.

A **"Get Into Summer Mixer"** will be held from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on June 23 at Sutter Health Urgent Care Clinic, 12 Camino Encinas in Orinda.

During the month of July members of the **Orinda and Moraga** chambers of commerce will be able to access an online training series called Hot Small Business Marketing Trends You Need to Know. Contact your chamber directly to be sure to be included in this opportunity. The series will be accessible anytime in July to those part of the chambers' network.