

Published June 9th, 2021

First of Lafayette's large events already a sold-out success

By Lou Fancher



Postino will be one of 33 participants in this year's sold-out Taste of Lafayette event. Photo J. Wake

Liberated by the lifting June 15 of California's COVID-related public safety capacity regulations and color codes restricting large gatherings, the 2021 Taste of Lafayette is already a sellout affair. Tickets to this year's annual restaurant stroll were snatched in record time as has been true in past years, but event host and sponsor Lafayette Chamber of Commerce invites community members without tickets to participate in the celebration. Anyone can purchase food from any downtown restaurant and join with Taste ticket holders and others at Plaza Park on June 22 to enjoy free live music and a no-host bar from 5 to 8 p.m.

At the May 24 Lafayette City Council meeting, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson told council members the popular gathering qualifies as a "Mega Event." Defined by the State of California and Contra Costa County as any indoor gathering with more than 5,000 people or outdoor events with more than 10,000 people in attendance, Taste of Lafayette will comply with mega event safety recommendations. To follow current standards issued before and beyond June 15 by the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board (Cal/OSHA), certain restrictions will apply.

Lifson said indoor events require that people show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test taken within the last 48-72 hours. Although a vaccine or test "passport" is not required to attend outdoor mega events, he said the

Lafayette dining stroll would operate on "the honor system." The Chamber and its members encourage people, especially people not yet or not able to be vaccinated and children under age 12, to wear masks. "We feel we can do our event and do it safely," Lifson told the council.

Note that activities operating under California's Blueprint Activities and Business Tiers Chart are subject to shifting Center for Disease Control or California Department of Public Health masking and other requirements, so checking the CDC website for updates is recommended.

Other than the masking recommendation and reminders to practice safety protocols when parking and moving through the downtown core, the evening is open for unrestricted celebration. A promising sign that the community is eager for relief and regaining a sense of "normal" after 15 months of lockdown and dining restrictions is the number of participating establishments. Approximately 33 restaurants and business are participating. Among the restaurants and bars are longtime favorites such as Uncle Yu's, Postino, Metro Lafayette, Mangia Ristorante & Pizzeria, Amphora Lafayette, RoundUp Saloon, REVE and others. "Intermediate" or "newer" entries include Locanda Positano, Batch & Brine, Amarin Thai, Vitality Bowls and many more.

At Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery, which occupies a prominent corner at the intersection of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road just opposite Lafayette Plaza, harpist Wendy Tamis will perform. Other music will include the Tune Riders (Plaza Park) Pat Nevins (between The Coop and Lafayette Public House), Mari Sitzman (Lavash Mediterranean Restaurant), UnConcord (in the Mercantile near Social Bird), M. Fearless (RoundUp Saloon) and Flute duo, Gold Coast Chamber Players, in a location to be announced.

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