

VISIT



INSPIRATION GUIDE 2019

Local California

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TRAVEL

HAPPY HOUR

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GOLF

WINE TROLLEY

Trails

OUTLETS

SWIMMING

the centennial

LIGHT

PARKS

Pleasanton

FESTIVALS

FAIRGROUNDS

Tours

DOG FRIENDLY

BREWERIES GETAWAY

Scenery

BEER TRAIL

LIVERMORE

TRIVENTURE

WINE

LIVE IT UP

PICNICS

PLAY

Family

HISTORY

Vineyards RELAX

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TRI-VALLEY

INSPIRATION GUIDE 2019



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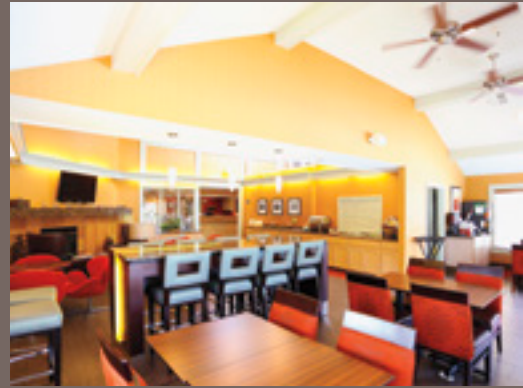
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There's a New City in Town

Whether you've come for a blockbuster and a beer on the patio of **The LOT** or an afternoon of fun and fashion at **Alys Grace**, you'll discover an infinite number of ways to do more of what you love at City Center Bishop Ranch— the ultimate entertainment destination in the East Bay. From live music on The Square to dinner and drinks at **The Slanted Door**, every visit to City Center offers up new moments to elevate and enjoy.



From wine tasting in the Livermore Valley to street fairs in Pleasanton, there are plenty of wonderful things to enjoy in the Tri-Valley area.



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FEATURES

16 BEST BITES A meal-by-meal guide to some of the Tri-Valley's most tantalizing dining options—with suggestions for a variety of budgets, tastes and vibes.

26 LIQUID ASSETS Livermore Valley is well-known as one of California's leading wine regions, but the Tri-Valley is also making its mark with craft beers, hip bars and trendy taprooms.

42 TIME OUT Whether you're an outdoors enthusiast, a culture vulture, a car lover or a consummate shopper, there's no shortage of appealing diversions in the Tri-Valley.



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TOP: DEREK GAUMER; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF VISIT TRI-VALLEY

DEPARTMENTS

5 GETTING ORIENTED

Check out our quick overview of the Tri-Valley's four distinct and vibrant towns.

6 THEN & NOW

From the historic to the practical to the downright quirky, the area has countless stories to tell.

54 BLISS

It's no surprise that the Tri-Valley has become a leading wedding destination thanks to its idyllic venues and landscapes, welcoming hotels and inns, and many activities for friends and family to enjoy.

60 WAYFINDING

Where to wine, dine and stay. Plus: How to get here—and get around once you've arrived.



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TOP: COURTESY OF VISIT TRI-VALLEY. BOTTOM: COURTESY OF K1 SPEED



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Getting Oriented / WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE TRI-VALLEY, THE EMBODIMENT OF "LOCAL CALIFORNIA!"

Why "Local California?"

Because here, you can enjoy a classic Main Street experience, browsing shops, dining alfresco and saying hi to those you pass.

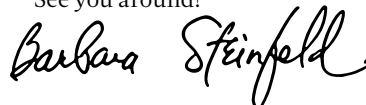
As you enter the Tri-Valley from any of our four communities—Danville, Dublin, Livermore or Pleasanton—you'll find yourself slowing down just a notch, relaxing a little bit and taking some time to stroll. Or you can go five minutes outside of any of our towns and immediately be in the countryside: Livermore Valley Wine Country, Mount Diablo, Pleasanton Ridge, Lake Del Valle and Shadow Cliffs, all with plenty of walking, hiking or biking trails.

Explore our newest trail: the award-winning Tri-Valley Ice Cream Trail. We are still proud of the Tri-Valley Beer Trail, which ties our four cities together

and links us to our hop-growing past, but we are having a lot of fun with the Ice Cream Trail as it spreads its sweetness throughout the Tri-Valley!

Whether you are into wine (we've got almost 60 wineries) or beer (we now have 24 stops on the beer trail) or ice cream or just fresh food at one of our farm-to-fork restaurants, bring your dog, your bike, your friends and your family, and experience Local California in the Tri-Valley.

See you around!



BARBARA STEINFELD
PRESIDENT & CEO, VISIT TRI-VALLEY

P.S. Our theme for 2019 is Tri-Valley Trailblazers. Come Find Your Trail! Be sure to tag us using #VisitTriValley during or after your stay, and we will return the love!



The Visit Tri-Valley team, from left: Amber Birdwell, Nicole Henninger, Susan Bolt, Leigh Cranor, Robin Fahr, Barbara Steinfeld and Todd Dibs.

WELCOME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

A quick primer on our extraordinarily well-located towns.



DANVILLE DELIGHTS

With its specialty shops, art galleries, wine bars and booming restaurant scene, Danville's charming downtown combines nostalgia with modern sensibilities. Venture away from the hub, and you'll find that Danville is also home to Tao House (the onetime residence of playwright Eugene O'Neill, where his plays live on during the annual Eugene O'Neill Festival in September), along with numerous hiking trails, parks and open spaces.

DISTINCTIVE DUBLIN

The second-fastest-growing city in California, Dublin is bursting with appealing restaurants, shops, nightlife and activities. It has the only IMAX movie theater in the Tri-Valley and a wealth of other recreational opportunities, including golf, bowling, laser tag, ice-skating, go-kart racing, and even a water park and trampoline park. There's history here, too: Witness Dublin's annual St. Patrick's Day Festival, which celebrates the Irish heritage of the city's founders.

LIVE IT UP IN LIVERMORE

California's oldest wine-growing region, Livermore remains a world-class destination with dozens of wineries—most of which have been family owned

and operated for generations. Livermore is not just for wine aficionados, though: The San Francisco Premium Outlets (with 180 name-brand stores) and a lively downtown make the city an attraction for avid shoppers as well. Sample Livermore's rich cultural scene by catching a show at the Bankhead Theater.

THE PLEASURES OF PLEASANTON

With 1,200 acres of parks, open space and trails, Pleasanton invites visitors and locals alike to head outdoors and take in the sights of the Tri-Valley—though there's no shortage of indoor activities to enjoy as well. Shopaholics can browse Stoneridge Shopping Center and Pleasanton's downtown boutiques, while food lovers have their choice of more than 220 different restaurants, cafes, dessert bars and more. Performances at the Firehouse Arts Center entertain year-round.

THEN & NOW

The distinctive culture of the Tri-Valley area dates back centuries. Its history, filled with frontierspeople and immigrants, has fostered a unique spirit of local pride, collaboration and innovation that lives on to this day.



HISTORY COMES ALIVE

IN THE TRI-VALLEY, EVERYTHING IS DEEPLY CONNECTED TO THE PAST.

Historical insights can be gleaned in every town throughout the Tri-Valley. For instance, Dublin's **Heritage Park and Museums** are made up of **Pioneer Cemetery**; the region's oldest Catholic church, **St. Raymond** (1859); the **Murray Schoolhouse**; and the **Kolb House**, a 1911 Craftsman bungalow that now operates as a museum. **Dublin Camp Parks Military History Center** preserves the old military base, which was known as Fleet City during World War II.

In Danville, an oak tree thought to be 350 years old stands on Diablo Road, and its likeness serves as the town's logo. The historic **Railroad Depot** nearby houses the culturally rich **Museum of the San Ramon Valley**.

In Pleasanton, sign up for a historic walking tour with the **Museum on Main**. Don't miss **Alviso Adobe**, a community park that offers a rich interpretive history of the Amador Valley, from its Native American roots to the present day.

Even the wines here are steeped in tradition. **Wente Vineyards**, which started in 1883, produced the first labeled Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon in the country. Today, most of the Chardonnay grapes in California descend from Wente clones. **Concannon Vineyard**, founded the same year, made one of the first Bordeaux-style wines in California. Clones of its California Cabernet provided the basis for the Cab frenzy of the past 40 years.

In addition, the area boasts numerous historic homes, such as **Ravenswood** in Livermore and Pleasanton's **Century House**, both of which are available for weddings and special events.



Livermore Train Depot



MADE IN THE TRI-VALLEY

TAKE HOME UNIQUE PRODUCTS FROM THESE LOCAL PURVEYORS.

DANVILLE CHOCOLATES

Locals rave about the delights cooked up by Terri Vollmer, who opened her shop after 25 years in the confectionery industry. Indulge in the famed dipped goods (fruit, nuts, pretzels and more). danvillechocolates.com

GERARD'Z HONEYBEES

The century-old family business is based out of Livermore, with hives throughout the Bay Area and Central Valley. The raw, natural honey comes in flavors from wildflower to blackberry. gerardzhoneybees.com

LUNA TEA COMPANY

Jenni Curtice has a message for those who love her fragrant blends: Slow down and smell the tea leaves. Curtice's mixes, with names like Study Sesh and Lady Wednesday, are sold online and at her Livermore tea lounge. In the evening, Luna Tea's lounge offers unexpected cocktails made with strong tea and fermented spirits. lunatea.co

NUUBIA SAN FRANCISCO

This Pleasanton-based artisan chocolatier is the world's first confectioner to commit to sourcing wildlife-friendly ingredients—and its chocolates are award-winningly good, too! At the small shop, customers can pick up chocolates purchased online or browse and buy on a whim. nuubiasf.com

OLIVINA

Olivina is the region's largest olive orchard and olive oil producer. The orchard's first trees were planted in the 1880s; in 2000, Charles Crohare decided to dedicate his retirement to cultivating the neglected trees. Monthly tours introduce visitors to the orchard and mill. The oil is sold at the tasting room and local shops and farmers markets. theolivina.com

PLEASANTON'S URBAN LEGENDS

EXAMINING THE TRUTH BEHIND SOME OF THE TOWN'S TALL TALES.

BANDITS HIT THE STREETS

Dubbed the "most desperate town in the West" when it was called Alisal, the area (later renamed Pleasanton) was a refuge for desperados in the 1850s and 1860s. But according to Ken MacLennan, curator of the Museum on Main, "The degree to which bandits would come and drink with the ladies is questionable." Conclusion: The lawbreakers laid low.

IT'S A GHOST TOWN!

Locals have long told of strange happenings in the historic buildings on Main Street. "People report hearing strange noises," says MacLennan, "and there are stories of hauntings at the Pleasanton Hotel" (pictured below), including a 19th-century murdered prostitute. Investigate on the museum's annual Ghost Walks.

A NETWORK OF TUNNELS LIES BENEATH THE STREETS

"It's not very likely that they ever existed," says MacLennan. While there are basements with excavations (including in Gay Nineties Pizza, which was once the stagecoach station), a city engineer investigated in the 1970s and found no tunnels downtown. Conclusion: False.





THE LOT City Center

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THE LOT

WHERE THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYS.



LOCAL TIP

Drink and be driven: The **Livermore Wine Trolley** tour takes visitors to three wineries, with a stop for lunch. And during spring and summer, the trolley's hop-on, hop-off wine shuttle provides a customizable option, hopping among multiple wineries for the independent at heart. livermorewinetrolley.com

DESIGNATED (BUS) DRIVER

With 24 breweries, taprooms and alehouses, the Tri-Valley is making a name for itself in craft beer. Hop aboard the **Blue Brew Bus** to ensure a safe tasting experience. The tour offers stops at three breweries (with tasting fees covered), one facility tour, a souvenir beer glass and a drink on the bus. bluebrewbus.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF VISIT TRI-VALLEY (2); COURTESY OF PEDEGO

TOUR THE TERRAIN

EXPERIENCE THE
TRI-VALLEY AT YOUR
OWN SPEED.



2 MPH

All you really need for exploring the region is a pair of comfortable shoes and a game plan. Check out Livermore's scenic **Greenville Road**, which boasts six vineyards within an easy, milelong stroll, or **Tesla Road**, home to **Wente**, **Concannon**, **Steven Kent** and other well-known wineries. For a dark glimpse into the region's history, the **Museum on Main** in Pleasanton offers spooky **Ghost Walk** guided tours of downtown Pleasanton's most haunted sites in October for Halloween. museumonmain.org

12 MPH

Zip along the grapevines on electric bikes from **Pedego Electric Bikes** in Livermore and Danville. Livermore's Jim Buck recommends this ride from the storefront: "Head east on Patterson Pass, alongside the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. On Greenville Road, turn right and head up the gradual hill. As you peak, you can see the Livermore Valley Wine Country as it opens up to you. At the crossroads of Tesla and Greenville, head straight across Tesla toward McGrail, Charles R, Bent Creek, Big White House, Caddis and 3 Steves tasting rooms." Check out visittrivalley.com for three more self-guided bike routes. pedegoelectricbikes.com

40+ MPH

Black Tie Transportation offers luxury sedans and SUVs, limovans and executive coaches to give you a feel for the region without the hassle of driving. Custom tours of Tri-Valley wineries (and breweries) come with recommendations from its in-house wine specialist. blacktietrans.com



EPICUREAN ADVENTURES IN LIVERMORE

Downtown Livermore boasts an array of eateries, cafes and tasting rooms—so many, in fact, that you'll want to return time and again to try them all. Thanks to **Livermore Food Tours**, you can get an appetizer course at some of the area's best culinary destinations. The three-hour walk stops at restaurants to sample menu items and local wines and beers. Each excursion is a mix of ethnic eateries, sweet shops and award-winning restaurants. Says Keven Hempel, the tour company's owner and guide, "This is a city that allows a visitor to taste flavors from all around the world within a 1-mile radius." livermorefoodtours.com



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SAN FRANCISCO BERKELEY SACRAMENTO SAN DIEGO NEWPORT BEACH LONG BEACH MARINA DEL REY NEW YORK

THE LONELY MOUNTAIN

It's hard to miss Mount Diablo, rising over the Tri-Valley to 3,849 feet. Hikers, bikers or plain old drivers can explore the mountain on the trails and roads in **Mount Diablo State Park**. You can get up the mountain via the South Gate in Danville, which takes you all the way up to the summit. Don't miss the view from the summit: On clear summer days, you can see not only the three valleys that come together to create the Tri-Valley but also the Sierra and sometimes even Half Dome in Yosemite! parks.ca.gov



BRIGHT IDEA

The planet's longest-burning light bulb, according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, is a humble bulb inside Livermore Fire Station No. 6 on East Avenue. Turned on in 1901, the bulb—nicknamed the **Centennial Light**—has been switched off only four times since then. Originally a 60-watt light, it's dimmed but still hanging on at 4 watts. Visitors are welcome, depending on the availability of firefighters to let them inside; the bulb is also visible through one of the station's windows. centennialbulb.org



THE NAME GAME

FROM HISTORICAL NODS TO HOMAGES, THE NAMES OF THE TRI-VALLEY'S CITIES TELL A STORY.

- > **Danville**—The California Gold Rush brought Daniel and Andrew Inman to the Danville area in 1854, where they used their mining earnings to buy 400 acres of what's now Old Town Danville. The name Inmanville was considered but ultimately rejected. Although the name chosen appears to reference Daniel, it was actually an homage to Andrew's mother-in-law, who was born and raised near Danville, Kentucky.

- > **Dublin**—Over the past couple of centuries, Dublin has changed its name not once but twice. In 1854, it was dubbed Murray, after Irish immigrant Michael Murray, who, along with fellow Irishman Jeremiah Fallon, had purchased 1,000 acres of land in the area in 1850. In the late 1800s, the city became known as Dougherty's Station because all mail was delivered to Dougherty Station Hotel. Soon after, it adopted its current moniker, Dublin. The origin of the name is unknown, but most believe it to be a nod to the Irish ancestry of the initial European settlers.

- > **Livermore**—In 1839, Robert Livermore and Jose Noriega secured a land grant of what would become present-day Livermore. When the Gold Rush hit, their ranch became a popular rest stop for people on their way to Sacramento and the Sierra. Livermore became known as an excellent host, and in 1849, he used his profits to purchase a two-story home—believed to be the area's first wooden structure—for his family. He died in 1858, but his legacy lives on in the town's name.

- > **Pleasanton**—Originally known as Alisal, the town underwent a name change when settler John W. Kottinger decided to rename it after a distinguished Civil War general, Alfred Pleasanton, in the late 1860s. Allegedly, a recording error by a clerk in Washington, D.C. had far-reaching consequences and led to the current—and more fitting—spelling of the name.

SAVE THE DATES

A year's worth of can't-miss events in the Tri-Valley.

FEBRUARY

Celebrate SF Beer Week with the Blue Brew Bus at the annual **Livermore Downtown Brew Crawl**.

MARCH

The annual **St. Patrick's Day Festival and Parade** in Dublin is a weekend full of traditional Irish jigs, beverages and entertainment, with a 5K fun run/walk.

At the **St. Patrick's Day Brew Crawl** in downtown Pleasanton, sample craft beers, ciders and tasty bites at more than 30 downtown locations.

During **Barrel Tasting Weekend** in Livermore, participating wineries allow visitors to taste straight from the barrel.

U.S.-made hot rods steal the show at the **Goodguys All-American Get-Together** at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Run the **Livermore Half Marathon** and earn wine, beer and music at the finish.



APRIL

The **Dublin Spring Eggstravaganza** features a petting zoo, carnival games, arts and crafts, and an Easter egg hunt.

Wander through the streets of downtown Danville while enjoying local wine, art and live music at the **Art & Wine Stroll**.

MAY

Raise a glass at the **Livermore Wine Country Downtown Street Fest**, the East Bay's largest celebration of wine, beer, crafts, shopping and dining.

Celebrate the **Livermore Valley Craft Beer Festival** with unlimited pours and food, giant beer pong, and live music.

JUNE

The **Goodguys Summer Get-Together** is another chance to check out a vibrant fleet of hot rods and muscle cars.

The annual **Livermore Rodeo** is a weekend full of bull riding, barrel racing and cow milking.

Ferris wheels, funnel cake and horse racing delight at the **Alameda County Fair** in Pleasanton. (Into July.)

Tap into the **Red, White & Brew Fest** within the Alameda County Fair for the ultimate brew experience.

Wine & Wags celebrates dog-friendly wineries and local animal rescues. Adoptions available.

JULY

The **Fourth of July with Fireworks** is a family-friendly pyrotechnic spectacle in downtown Livermore.

Kick off Independence Day with the annual **Danville July Fourth Parade**.



Livermore Valley's premier food and wine affair, **Taste Our Terroir**, features cooking classes, seminars and vineyard tours.

Enjoy theater, wine and a gourmet picnic under the stars at Wente Vineyards with the **Livermore Shakespeare Festival**. (Into August.)

AUGUST

Check out more than 3,000 hot rods, customs, classics, muscle cars and trucks at **Goodguys West Coast Nationals**.

Celebrate Scottish culture, competition and entertainment at the **Scottish Highland Gathering and Games**.

SEPTEMBER

Enjoy 15 perfect bites of both sweet and savory culinary delights at downtown Pleasanton's **Forkful**.

Revel in the exciting crush season during the **Harvest Wine Celebration**, featuring 40 Livermore wineries.

Celebrate the end of summer at the **Dublin Splatter Festival**, where water, art, music and wine are colorfully combined.

Honor one of Danville's most famous residents at the **Eugene O'Neill Festival**. See live renditions of two of O'Neill's plays.

OCTOBER

Experience innovative arts and technologies at **Ignite!** in Pleasanton. The free



family event features hands-on activities, entertainment and food.

Get your thrills at **Pirates of Emerson**, the yearly theme park at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Halloween-themed girl power prevails at Livermore's **Witches Night Out**, with shopping specials and martini tasting.

Meet the ghosts of Pleasanton's past at Museum on Main's **Ghost Walk**, a guided tour of haunted sites on Main Street.

Join downtown Pleasanton's **Halloween Brew Crawl** for adult trick-or-treating, with tastings at more than 25 locations.

More than 200 artists fill the city of Livermore with art during **Artwalk**.

NOVEMBER

Check out the **Goodguys Autumn Get-Together Car Show and Demolition Derby** at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Kick off the holiday season with Danville's annual tradition, the **Lighting of the Old Oak Tree**.

Ride through Niles Canyon at night during the holiday season with the **Train of Lights** on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. (Into December.)

DECEMBER

The **Lights of Livermore Holiday Tour** offers a wine and small bites reception followed by a one-hour trolley tour of Livermore's best holiday light displays.

Save your spot for downtown Pleasanton's **Hometown Holiday Parade**, a tradition featuring marching bands, floats and an appearance by Santa.

Downtown **Livermore's Holiday Sights & Sounds Parade** has more than 50 floats and ends with a tree lighting.

Livermore Valley tasting rooms go holiday-themed with both cheery decor and festive offerings at **Holiday in the Vineyards**.

For a full listing of events, visit VisitTriValley.com.





DANVILLE

Discover Danville's historic downtown steeped with small town ambience. Plenty of free downtown parking means more time to take in the specialist shops, boutiques, spas, and art galleries. You'll find epicurean adventures around every corner along with wine bars and craft breweries. Lose yourself outdoors in miles of dedicated open space, take a hike or hit the biking trails. Get grounded by arts, culture and history at the Village Theatre and Art Gallery, The Museum of the San Ramon Valley, and the Tao House—once home to America's only Nobel Prize winning playwright Eugene O'Neill. Download our Live Locally guide and start planning your visit.

Visit www.danville.ca.gov



DUBLIN

Bring the family and come hang out in Dublin's backyard. Family-friendly amenities include Dublin's state-of-the-art recreation and aquatic complex, The Wave. Take a round of golf at the Dublin Ranch Robert Trent Jr. golf course or savor an impressive selection of international cuisine and excellent shopping. Energetic enthusiasts can explore our 20+ parks, hiking trails, and dedicated open space or enjoy go-karts, bowling, laser tag, ice skating, a trampoline park and an IMAX theater. Of course, Dublin is THE place to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Come and join us! Everything you want, right here in our New American Backyard.

Visit www.dublin.ca.gov



GUESTS



LIVERMORE

Well known for its world-class innovation, rich western heritage and as one of California's oldest wine growing regions. Livermore is home to a thriving wine industry with more than 55 local wineries and many craft breweries. Local wineries host events throughout the year and offer welcoming tasting rooms showcasing award-winning wines. Explore Livermore's nationally acclaimed Historic Downtown or the San Francisco Premium Outlets for an outstanding shopping and dining experience with over 180 luxury brand name stores. Come to taste, savor and relax in this truly unique destination.

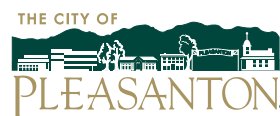
Visit www.cityoflivermore.net



PLEASANTON

With 1,200 acres of parks and open space and 24 miles of trails to explore Pleasanton is the ideal escape for active individuals and families. Enjoy a round of golf at the award-winning Callippe Preserve or experience outstanding local produce at the year-round Farmers' Market. Soak up the small-town vibe in downtown Pleasanton with specialty shops and outdoor dining or sit back and be entertained with a full schedule of festivals, concerts and performances at the elegant Firehouse Arts Center. Encounter echoes of the past at Alviso Adobe Community Park, history comes to life at this fully restored 1854 Adobe home. Come and experience an Extraordinary day!

Visit www.cityofpleasantonca.gov



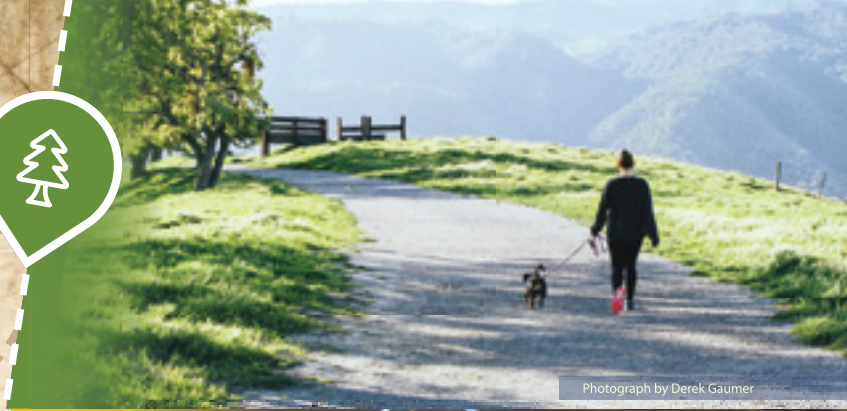


NICOLE FRANZEN



BEST BITES

With restaurants, cafes and sweet shops galore, dining in the Tri-Valley is a culinary adventure. In the following pages, you'll find meal-by-meal suggestions—from upscale venues to down-home diners, from farm-to-table dishes to ethnic eats—that will have you wishing there were more chances to eat in the day.



Photograph by Derek Gaumer

tri·vall·ey trail·blaz·er

noun

a weekend wanderer in pursuit of the best food, places and experiences; lives to satisfy a thirst for adventure and appetite for exploration; seeks out the undiscovered and puts it on the map; paves the way for future Tri-Valley Trailblazers



Find your trail.

#trivalleytrailblazers

VISITTRIVALLEY.COM

Pleasanton • Livermore • Dublin • Danville



Follow the locals to Danville's **Sideboard**, a premier coffee bar that features deluxe brands such as Four Barrel, Sightglass, Temple and more. Indulge yourself with an order of beignets to go.



@MAKENNA_KALANI

BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO START YOUR DAY THAN WITH A DELICIOUS, ENERGIZING MEAL AT ONE OF THESE TRI-VALLEY RESTAURANTS.

THE CLASSICS

Livermore's **Riata Diner & Tavern** reflects the area's pioneer past with Wild West-inspired decor and memorabilia—and offers hearty breakfast dishes. For more quirky furnishings and no-frills food to start your day, check out **Jim's Country Style** in Pleasanton. The intensely popular diner (there can be a line at the door on weekends) features wood-paneled walls, street signs as art and mouthwatering all-day breakfast items.

For breakfast like mom used to make, look no further than **Denica's Real Food Kitchen** in Livermore and Dublin for decadent offerings of favorites like waffles and omelets. If you want a breakfast straight out of the French countryside, fill up at Danville's **Basque Boulangerie**. The bakery and cafe mixes melt-in-your-mouth baked goods with local, seasonal fruit and healthy, savory items.

BRUNCHING OUT

Take your morning meal to the next level at **The Press** in Pleasanton and Livermore, the perfect hipster hideout. Tasty dishes such as an avocado and egg toastini are served up on a wooden plank; be sure to note the display of antique coffee makers. Work on your Great American Novel over a mug of Big House Beans coffee, roasted in Antioch.

Open early on the weekends (take advantage to avoid the crowds), **Mayflower Restaurant** in Dublin creates a transporting experience with its inviting atmosphere and authentic dim sum menu. Or if you prefer Italian cuisine, catch the Sunday brunch buffet at Livermore's **Campo di Bocce**, which serves an all-you-can-eat selection of breakfast classics (including American favorites), plus bottomless cocktails. Cap your meal with a round of bocce on one of the restaurant's eight world-class courts.

If you're feeling adventurous, head over to Dublin's **Blossom Bee**, a hole-in-the-wall Thai fusion creperie that puts a twist on the beloved breakfast food with bold, unique dishes like the Royal Chicken crepe with peanut sauce.

Enjoy the sweet air of Tri-Valley mornings at **Nonni's Bistro**, an open-air, European-style eatery in Pleasanton. Both breakfast and brunch are served on weekends, giving plentiful takes on the morning meal.

Branford Marsalis 1/21



Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy 2/27



Don Felder 3/14



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Since opening in July 2016, **Danville Harvest** has garnered a lot of buzz—and deservedly so. Embracing the farm-to-table concept, chef Timothy Humphrey gives a Southern twang to casual Bay Area cuisine.

For a culinary adventure south of the border, look no further than Livermore's family-owned **Posada**, which expanded in 2016 due to popularity. A contemporary take on Southwestern food, the eatery (or its food truck, Posada On Wheels) is the perfect lunchtime stop before a day of wine tasting.

Opened in 1997, **Blue Agave Club** was the first restaurant in Pleasanton to showcase Mexican cuisine. Twenty years later, the popular spot is well-known for its 100 percent blue agave tequila margaritas as well as its enchanting outdoor dining experience.

POWER LUNCH

For authentic Southeast Asian cuisine, Pleasanton's **Experience Burma** has you covered. Dining family style is recommended—and the best way to sample multiple dishes—so grab some friends and dig into the pumpkin pork stew or lemongrass tofu. In Livermore, **Uncle Yu's at the Vineyard**'s remarkable wine list is spotlighted by the multicourse tasting menu, which pairs Szechuan staples and vino.

A modest storefront houses mouthwatering Japanese hot pot at Dublin's **Little Dipper Shabu Shabu**. Ensure you can satisfy your cravings with the all-you-can-eat option.

COMFORT FOOD

If you want to kick back and relax, **Danville Brewing** is your spot. The restaurant boasts exceptional pub food paired with award-winning beers like 925 Blonde and Oatmeal Raisin Cookie (which lives up to its name).

Danville's **Locanda Ravello** embraces the Amalfi Coast with bright dishware, cheerful patterns, and hearty pizzas and pastas. Superior service makes it even easier to relax and savor the luxurious Italian cuisine.

LUNCH BREAK

THE TRI-VALLEY'S LARGE VARIETY OF LUNCHTIME SPOTS WILL HAVE YOU HUNGERING FOR THE SECOND DINING OPPORTUNITY OF THE DAY.

TAKE IT EASY

With its homey menu and refined decor, **Tri Valley Bistro** on Pleasanton's Main Street is the perfect spot to unwind. Indulge in a glass of wine as you sample the delicious New American cuisine.

For a taste of something different, visit **The Banana Garden** in Dublin. The flavorful Malaysian menu—rooted in mainstay ingredients such as coconut and shrimp paste—includes boldly spiced items like belachan string beans and tender chicken satay, while the saltwater aquarium and painted palm trees create a soothing tropical ambience.

Like to pair your food with wine—and enjoy it with good friends? **Pairings Cellars** in Pleasanton is a contemporary wine bar with Italian-American food and the appealing motto of “sip, savor, social.” The menu includes plenty of shareable plates as well as assorted cheese and charcuterie flights, making this a great choice for a delicious and convivial lunch.

THE BIG MEAL

THE REGION'S DINING SCENE INCLUDES EXCITING NEW RESTAURANTS AND POPULAR STANDARDS—OFFERING COSMOPOLITAN CUISINE TO PAIR WITH LIVERMORE VALLEY'S MANY FINE WINES.

THE CLASSICS

The Tri-Valley has its share of trusted favorites. Danville's **Blackhawk Grille** and **Bridges Restaurant & Bar** are perfect examples; these paragons provide elegant settings and spacious patios. But classic doesn't mean stuffy: Blackhawk offers artisanal cocktails and flavors its menu of American standards with locally sourced ingredients. Bridges, which was featured as a location in the 1993 comedy *Mrs. Doubtfire*, has maintained its buzz-worthy status by fine-tuning its fresh California cuisine with Asian influences.

Pleasanton's 1950s steakhouse **Hap's Original** allows for dining in style and comfort. While steak is most definitely the focus here, with the finest dry-aged cuts of beef, the house-made sauces and dressings help elevate already scrumptious dishes.

WORLDLY WONDERS

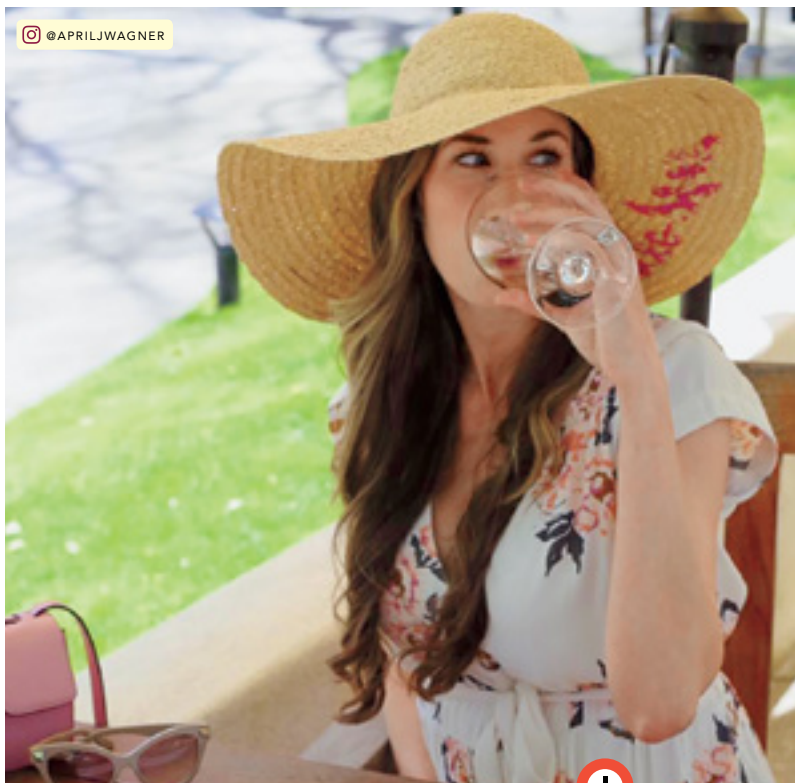
In Pleasanton, the flavors of Malaysia come to life at local star **Taste of Sing-Ma**. Drawing on culinary influences from Europe, China and India, the dishes are as diverse as they are dynamic. With so many options, it can be difficult to choose, but it's hard to go wrong with crab in chili garlic tomato sauce and pineapple fried rice.

Dishes from both northern and southern Thailand cohabit the inventive menu at **Thai House**, just a few blocks from Danville's Hartz Avenue. Flip to the chef's favorites section to find a mouthwatering (and sometimes spicy) group of standouts.

Get a taste of Jordan at Livermore's **Petra**. This family-owned eatery is excellent for both those dipping their toes into Middle Eastern cuisine for the first time and more experienced eaters. The mansaf gets a special recommendation, and complimentary cardamom tea and pita shouldn't be skimmed on either.

The family behind Pleasanton's **Korean Village** wants you to feel at home in their little village. With congenial service and lovingly cooked, authentic Korean meals like fish cake ramen and soft tofu soup, you'll likely find they've achieved their goal.


Ultrafresh sushi and high-end Japanese fare can be found at **Amakara** in Dublin, where chef Eddy Imano takes as much pride in his colorful presentations as he does in his delicious rolls.



@APRILJWAGNER



The granddaddy of fine dining is **The Restaurant at Wente Vineyards**. The famed restaurant, nestled in a spectacular wine country setting, features a half-acre organic production garden that provides fresh seasonal vegetables to complement hearty dishes influenced by Italian, French and California cuisine. An amazing wine selection adds to the sublime experience.



New to Livermore, **Range Life** occupies a restored 1800s carriage house and mixes urban and rustic in both food and atmosphere. The seasonally changing menu draws influences from diverse cuisines, and playful craft cocktails are an excellent way to round off an evening on the town.

LATE-NIGHT HOT SPOTS

A string of restaurants in the Tri-Valley offers exciting menus, expansive bars and late hours. Dublin's **Berevino Cucina & Wine Bar** specializes in old-world Italian cuisine and an extensive wine list; it's a great place to have a romantic dinner for two or to sip reds with a big group of friends.

In Danville, **Revel Kitchen & Bar** has been a smash with city sophisticates. The upscale tavern serves bar bites and small plates, as well as heartier entrees until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.

Chef Matt Greco elevates the affordable everyday meal at **Salt Craft** in Pleasanton. The restaurant's plentiful a la carte options include whole-grain pastas, and sandwiches with house-made bread and house-cured meats.

Sabio on Main, with its delicious small plates and large bar, has become a go-to spot in Pleasanton from midday to late night. The global tapas menu is packed with delights, best when shared. For special occasions, the chef's menu and wine pairing, served in the Castile Room, make for an unforgettable experience.

Take a drive to Pleasanton's iconic **Meadowlark Dairy**, California's first certified dairy. Founded in the early 1900s, the store is a nostalgic throwback to the days of local milk shops. Hit the drive-thru for a cone of the signature soft-serve ice cream (which can reach half a foot tall).



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SAMPLE IRRESISTIBLE TREATS ON THE TRI-VALLEY'S LATEST TRAIL.

- > Start your tour at Danville's **Smallcakes**. While the worldwide cupcake chain is generally known for its, well, cupcakes, stores also make 15 flavors of small-batch ice cream daily. The scoops are often inspired by Smallcakes' famous *gateau* recipes, which means pairing cake and ice cream is more than possible—it's encouraged.
- > Head to Dublin to enjoy a different sort of ice cream—organic soft serve. **O'Honey** elegantly swirls and layers its signature dessert with fun textured additions, such as Rice Krispies and honey. The deeply Instagrammable result is just as satisfying to look at as to eat. The matcha options have garnered rave reviews, and the Honey Lover more than earns its name.
- > Refreshing Italian ice is the star of the show at **Rita's** in Pleasanton. Made fresh daily, this snow cone-meets-real fruit pairing will change the way you view frozen desserts. If you really fall in love, go for the quart size.
- > If you're in the mood for something a bit different, **Amorino Gelato Al Naturale**—located at the San Francisco Premium Outlets in Livermore—scoops up more than a dozen flavors of addictive Italian gelato, such as lime basil, dulce de leche and salted caramel. Amorino also offers tantalizing gelato-inspired beverages, including frappes (milk mixed with gelato or sorbet), granitas (iced fruit drinks) and sorbet drinks (think liquid sorbet).



TREAT YOURSELF RIGHT

To satisfy a different kind of sweet tooth, make a detour to Pleasanton's **Bake-a-Wish** and pick up a seasonal scone or turnover. Savory fans can also fill up on its sourdough toast and avocado. For more decadent delicacies, look no further than **Old Towne Danville Bakery**, established in 1952. This long-standing spot does everything from cakes to cookies; around the holidays, keep an eye out for its special menus. Or head to premier Dublin bakery **Tous les Jours**, which serves up slices of cake so aesthetically pleasing that it's difficult to eat them. But not too difficult, because they taste even better than they look. Livermore's **Casse Croute** instantly transports diners to France with its authentic tarts and croissants.



Smallcakes

LIQUID ASSETS

Whether part of an extensive local history or at the beginning of a new movement, the region's winemakers, brewers and spirit creators are at the top of their game.



GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

Decades of craft mean that the Tri-Valley has a rich wine-making history. Continuing that tradition, Livermore Valley wineries are constantly finding new ways to create impressive varietals.



Darcie Kent Vineyards

COURTESY OF VISIT TRI-VALLEY

THE LIQUIDITY OF LIVERMORE

WINE MAKING HAS A ROBUST HISTORY IN LIVERMORE VALLEY.

Livermore Valley wine culture has aged well over the centuries since Spanish missionaries began growing wine grapes in the 1760s. Robert Livermore realized the area's potential value, planting the first commercial vines in the 1840s. The quality of the regional wines was confirmed at the 1889 International Paris Exposition, when judges awarded the Grand Prix to a white from Cresta Blanca Winery (the site of Wente today)—a first for an American wine.

The Livermore Valley's distinct terroir makes it a prime wine location. Surrounded by coastal range mountains and foothills, the area has a unique gravel-based soil, which increases flavor concentration in the grapes. Coastal fog and marine breezes come in from the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay every afternoon, cooling the warm air in the valley. This mix of sunny days and chilly nights creates ideal conditions for fully ripened and balanced fruit.

As a testament to this optimal setting, early wineries Wente Vineyards and Concannon Vineyard have thrived since they were both founded in 1883. The Livermore Valley AVA was formed in 1982, and in the ensuing years, more growers and winemakers have flocked to the area. In 1993, only 13 wineries were members of the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association; to date, there are nearly 60 wineries.



THE ART OF WINE

THE PALATE MEETS THE PALETTE AT DARCIÉ KENT VINEYARDS.

Darcie Kent, a fifth-generation vintner and accomplished fine artist, says her two passions are deeply intertwined. “Our wines reflect the unique terroir in Livermore Valley,” she says. “And my paintings reflect the unique attributes of our wines.”

Her interests in fine wine and evocative artwork are deeply rooted in her DNA; her great-grandfather—the son of the original winemaker in Kent's family history—hand-painted his own labels, and a tradition was born. Today, all the wines that bear the **Darcie Kent Vineyards** name also bear colorful labels based on Kent's original artwork. (See page 31 for an example.)

Visitors to the Darcie Kent Vineyards can experience firsthand how she has lovingly kept the legacy alive. An on-site art gallery displays Kent's paintings, and a tasting room features a selection of wines from the six vineyards in the Darcie Kent portfolio.

“We are so privileged to be here in Livermore Valley,” Kent says. “It offers the ideal weather, soil and climate to produce excellent wines. But even more importantly, there's a welcoming, family feel here. And for a family business like ours, that makes all the difference.”

VINTNER FOR A DAY

WENTE'S WINEMAKERS STUDIO GIVES CORK DORKS THE LATEST IN DIY WINE.

Call it the ultimate wine-geek experience. **Wente's Winemakers Studio** offers immersive tasting sessions, during which a "wine ambassador" leads patrons through four of the winery's latest releases. The Livermore studio sets itself apart from a typical tasting room by hosting regular 60- to 90-minute classes on topics such as wine and cheese pairings and wine aroma. With the Blending Experience, aspiring vintners can use samples from Wente's various estate vineyard blocks to blend their own custom bottles. *wentevineyards.com*



Bob Bossi and Dan Rosenberg

VINTAGE FRIENDS

A LONG HISTORY LEADS TO WINE-MAKING GOLD AT DANTE ROBERE.

When Dan Rosenberg and Bob Bossi decided to establish a vineyard in Livermore Valley, they knew they'd be ideal business partners. Friends for some 40 years—the two South Bay natives met in high school—Rosenberg and Bossi share a similar palate, which made their plans to become co-winemakers that much smoother.

They began in 2007 by planting a small vineyard in Rosenberg's backyard in Livermore. The friends then immersed themselves in the art of wine making: studying oenology, learning the business and volunteering with others to observe the process. Now a decade later, they produce up to 3,100 cases a year of Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Barbera and Petite Sirah, among others.

"Over the years, I have seen such positive changes and great advances among the winegrowers here," says Rosenberg. "I am just so glad that we are part of the great wine community here."

As for how they came up with the name **Dante Robere**, Bossi admits that it was a deliberate effort to "snob it up" a bit.

"We couldn't call it Dan and Bob's wines," says Bossi, with a laugh. "And Dante Robere just had the right ring."



1



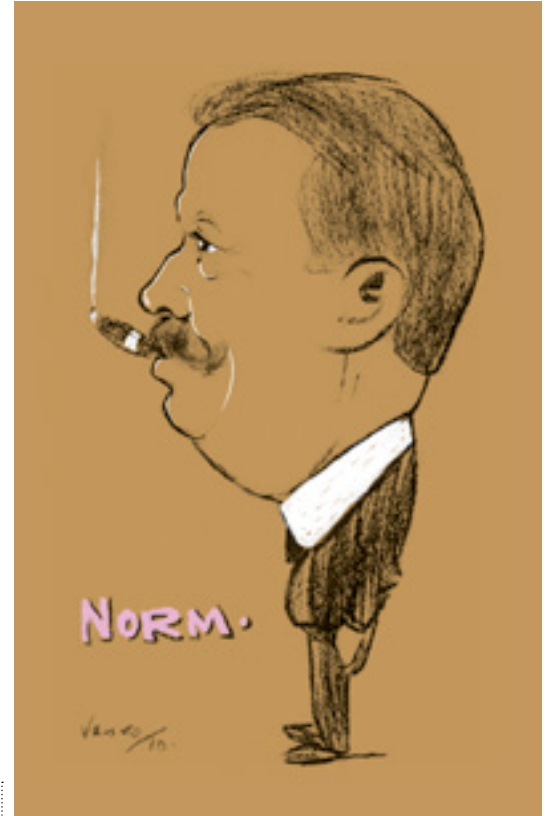
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5



4



3

LABELS TO LOVE

GO AHEAD AND JUDGE THESE BOTTLES BY THEIR COVERS. THE ART OF WINE DOESN'T STOP AT WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOTTLE. IN LIVERMORE VALLEY, THE CRAFT ALSO SHINES THROUGH ON THE LABELS.

1. BIG WHITE HOUSE/JOHN EVAN CELLARS

For a departure from manicured lawns and uptight fonts, the walls and labels of Big White House and John Evan Cellars proudly display the work of the winemaker's sister, Laura Marion. bigwhitehouse.com

2. RUBY HILL WINERY

Of all the cases of Peacock Patch Zinfandel produced at the Ruby Hill Winery every year, only 12 bottles feature a full-color image of a peacock. If you come across one, you will win a bus tour on Mello Cielo and experience the history, art and science behind the vineyard's award-winning wines. rubyhillwinery.net

3. VASCO URBANO WINE COMPANY

The labels on Nottingham Cellars' Rhone varietals take us back to 1910, when caricature artist Vasco Urbano Loureiro sketched local patrons. Now, the drawings are an homage to area history—each label introduces wine drinkers to the story of Henry, The Sheriff, Norm and more. nottinghamcellars.com/vu

4. DARCI KENT VINEYARDS

Renowned vintner and professional artist Darcie Kent captures the spirit and splendor of Livermore Valley in her vivid and evocative original labels. darciekentvineyards.com

5. WENTE VINEYARDS

Wente Vineyards selects one artist per vintage to grace the face of its Small Lot Artist Series (reserved for its club members). For the 2014 Serenity red blend, local artist Nick Brown's painting captures the tranquil skies above the Livermore Valley vineyards. wentevineyards.com

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BEYOND A HOBBYIST

LARRY DINO BRINGS THE OLD WORLD TO CALIFORNIA.

“I always say it’s a hobby gone wild,” says Larry Dino, founder and winemaker of Livermore’s **Cuda Ridge Winery**. “We didn’t really have a desire to start a winery; that wasn’t our plan. But it all just progressed.”

For Dino and his wife, Margie, what began in 1999 as making a casual barrel or two of wine transformed into building a barrel room in their garage and planting a vineyard. It wasn’t long before they founded Cuda Ridge.

“We’ve always been into wine and the whole lifestyle around it,” Dino says.

Cuda Ridge stands out among the many other venerable wineries in Livermore Valley due to its focus on Bordeaux-style wines. After taking multiple viticulture classes at local Las Positas College, Dino developed a deep appreciation for the European style of wine making and brought that back to Cuda Ridge. “We thought we could make a niche out of it,” he says.

Although the Dinos certainly take making their high-quality wines seriously, they keep a sense of humor about it all. For instance, the winery itself is named after Dino’s vintage Barracuda; the image on the wine labels is actually an homage to the car’s shape. “There’s a subliminal car theme throughout the entire winery,” Dino says.

A GUIDE TO HOPPINESS

From Danville to Livermore, the Tri-Valley's microbreweries, taprooms and gastropubs offer the latest and greatest in beer. But with so many bars and taps to sample, how do you choose? Not to worry—here's a handy guide to help you get your drink on.



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COURTESY OF VISIT TRI-VALLEY

WHAT'S BREWING

DISCOVER EXCITING NEW BEERS AT THESE MICROBREWERIES.

> **Altamont Beer Works**

Livermore's long-standing micro-brewery jump-started the city's beer scene. Try the Undersized IPA if you're new to craft beer, or go Hella Hoppy if you're a pro. altamontbeerworks.com

> **Danville Brewing Co.**

Danville Brewing Co. cooks up delicious pub eats to pair with five house beers and selections of bottled brews, craft cocktails and wines. danvillebrewing.com

> **Eight Bridges Brewing Co.**

The family-owned, family-friendly microbrewery offers a range of brews that all beer lovers can enjoy and board games for the kids. eightbridgesbrewing.com

> **INC 82 Brewing**

This Dublin gastropub pays homage to local history in both its decor and its moniker. (The city was incorporated in 1982.) INC 82 offers signature craft beers and a seasonal menu of pub grub. inc82.com

> **Main Street Brewery**

Grab a pint and bite at this local favorite that promises seven house beers along with a dozen rotating guest taps. mainstreetbrewery.com

> **Shadow Puppet Brewing Company**

This craft brewery combines traditional brewing techniques with uncommon ingredients, creating unique tasting experiences. shadowpuppetbrewing.com

> **Working Man Brewing Co.**

Award-winning brewers and co-owners Joel Pelote and Matt Stine obsess over every beer they produce until it's just right. workingmanbrewing.com



THE PUPPET MASTER

BRIAN BLACKBURN CASTS A LONG SHADOW WITH HIS BREWERY'S UNIQUE BLENDS.

Brian Blackburn, founder and CEO of **Shadow Puppet Brewing Company**, always wanted to run his own business. Working in corporate marketing, he helped tech companies like Microsoft and HP build their brands, all the while thinking about how to make his own mark.

He found entrepreneurial inspiration in an unlikely source: a home-brewing kit gifted to him by his wife. "I made my first batch, and it was really horrible," Blackburn says with a laugh. "So I thought: I have to figure this out."

Blackburn invested in better equipment and learned everything he could about craft brewing; soon, it paid off. "I entered some contests and won some awards," he says. "That planted the seed for Shadow Puppet."

Shadow Puppet opened in Livermore in 2016, and its unique beers and family-friendly taproom are already popular with locals. The brews are a collaborative effort, with Blackburn developing the concepts and Shadow Puppet brewmaster Craig Danielson determining the execution.

Blackburn is optimistic about Shadow Puppet's future thanks in part to support from the community. "Livermore recognizes the importance and value breweries bring [to the city]," he says.

CONTAIN YOUR BEER

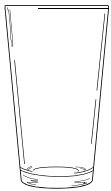
THE VESSEL FOR YOUR DRINK DOES MORE THAN JUST HOLD IT.



Tulip: This glass shares many of the pilsner's attributes but enables you to swirl the brew like wine. Use it for Belgian styles.



Goblet: The wide, medieval-esque design of this glass is another excellent choice for showcasing Belgian ales.



Pint: One of the most common glasses used for beer, the pint doesn't accentuate aroma, so it is normally used for beers that don't need assistance, such as IPAs, porters and stouts.



Pilsner: Made for light beers like its namesake, this glass' shape allows for the best retention of head on the beer, as well as enhancing the beer's fragrance.



Growler: The best way to transport draft beer from your favorite brewery back home is this jug. Even better, many Tri-Valley breweries sell reusable growlers for your convenience. (Some also offer crowlers, the growler's sturdier, can-shaped cousin.)



BEER PIONEER

HOW STEVE SARTORI BROUGHT CRAFT BEER BACK TO THE TRI-VALLEY.

Steve Sartori, brewer and founder of **Altamont Beer Works**, says that his journey to creating Altamont started when the economy tanked. Prior to the financial troubles that affected the U.S. in 2008, Sartori had been the manager of a wakeboard shop in Tahoe, but when the recession hit, he headed home to Livermore to work for the decades-old family trucking business.

"When I came back," Sartori explains, "I said, 'We have all these wineries; why don't we have a brewery?'"

Sartori certainly fixed that in 2012, bringing Livermore its first brewery since Prohibition and paving the way for a local craft beer renaissance. It wasn't easy—90 percent of Altamont was hand-built by the Altamont team, with no outside contracting. "It was really a labor of love," says Sartori.

With its laid-back vibe and clean, flavorful beers, Altamont made a strong first impression on Tri-Valley natives and visitors new to the beer scene. In fact, the impression was so strong that the brewery expanded into the space beside its original taproom in 2018. The hashtag accompanying the Instagram announcement post seems nearly prophetic: #ifyoubuildittheywillcome.



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Norm's Place

DINING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

HANKERING FOR A SAVORY BITE WITH YOUR BEER? THESE RESTAURANTS AND PUBS ARE SURE TO SATISFY.

- > **First Street Alehouse.** This Livermore alehouse is the locals' go-to spot for drinking and dining, with a tempting array of sandwiches and burgers and 28 rotating beers on tap. Admire the wall of almost 6,000 vintage beer cans, the country's largest public collection. firststreetalehouse.com

- > **The Growler.** Featuring 20 rotating taps of local craft brews, this Danville bar and restaurant specializes in mouthwatering burgers, with meat supplied by famed New York butcher Pat LaFrieda. For beer on the go, browse the impressive on-site bottle shop for great picks. growlerpubdanville.com

- > **Beer Baron Bar & Kitchen.** This bar's Pleasanton location offers delicious lunch and dinner (plus brunch on the weekends), while the Livermore spot has a cool speak-easy atmosphere that's perfect for date night. Enjoy its rotation of 30 craft beers along with craft cocktails, and pair with its astounding duck fat fries. beerbaronbar.com

- > **The Hop Yard American Alehouse & Grill.** With classic American grub, numerous flat-screen TVs and a huge variety of beers on tap, this bar and restaurant is the perfect place to catch the big game in Pleasanton. Drop in for Brewery Night every Tuesday, featuring local and national brewers showing off their craft. hopyard.com

- > **BottleTaps.** BottleTaps is more than just a craft-brew taproom and bottle shop; it's a beer education center. Run by Eric Wall, the only certified beer judge in Pleasanton, this upscale joint offers a variety of beers in its five retail coolers, from the well-known to the more obscure but still delicious, that will pair nicely with tasty tapas. bottletaps.com

- > **Norm's Place.** A family-owned grill and bar, Danville's Norm's Place offers "fun, food and friends" to go with the 25 beers on tap. Prove your eating prowess at the taco-eating contest held every Tuesday. normsgrill.com

- > **Sauced BBQ & Spirits.** Just as the name suggests, Livermore's Sauced serves up savory barbecue, which should be paired with one of the 19 craft beers on tap, including seven of its very own house beers. saucedbbqandspirits.com



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BEER

TAP QUEST

YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH THE TRI-VALLEY'S MIX OF HIP BARS AND TRENDY TAPROOMS.

MCKAY'S TAPHOUSE & BEER GARDEN

McKay's bar and kitchen in Pleasanton offers scrumptious pub fare and local beer and wine. Feeling really hungry? Go big with the Jammin' burger, an 8-ounce short rib and chuck patty, topped with bacon jam and aged white cheddar. *mckaysbeergarden.com*

CAPS & TAPS BOTTLE SHOP & TAPROOM

Quench your thirst at Caps & Taps, a family-owned taproom boasting 18 rotating drafts and a range of bottled craft beer, located in The Shops at Tralee Village in Dublin. *capsandtapsdublin.com*

HOP DEVINE

Both wine bar and taproom, Livermore's Hop DeVine showcases the best of the local beverage scene as well as not-so-local drinks. Snack from the small but yummy menu of panini and salads. *facebook.com/hopdevine*

TAP 25

Located in Blacksmith Square in Livermore, Tap 25 offers a rotation of 25 craft beers on tap, plus live music on Fridays and Saturdays and a lovely outdoor setting. *tap-25.com*

THREE SHEETS CRAFT BEER BAR

This Dublin bar has 38 rotating taps of craft beer and boasts a 200-inch projection screen and four flat screens to watch your favorite Bay Area team. Bring your own food into the bar from local restaurants or food trucks. *threesheetscraftbeer.com*



Casey Topalian
and Chris Guy

BREW BUDS

CHRIS GUY AND CASEY TOPALIAN BRING A LONG HISTORY TO PENNYWEIGHT CRAFT BREWING.

It's been a long journey for Chris Guy and Casey Topalian to **Pennyweight Craft Brewing**. After all, when they first met they weren't even legal to drink beer, let alone brew it.

The close friends, who met in middle school, have stayed in touch through moves, career shifts and more. Ever since they made their first batch of beer, they both dreamed of opening up a brewery. But it was only somewhat recently that Guy actually got the ball rolling.

"One day we were hanging out in my backyard and I said, 'I think the time's now,'" recalls Guy.

At Pennyweight, Guy and Topalian are putting a focus on community and locality. "From our grains to our hops to our yeast, everything's California-driven," says Guy. "We want to translate that to our food as well."

The key words for the actual brewery building itself are warm, cozy and inviting. "Basically, we're building a brewery that we'd want to step into as beer lovers," Guy concludes.

TIME

OUT

The Tri-Valley's wealth of recreational activities (with everything from golf to mountain biking), plus its variety of retail outlets and multitude of choices for culture (and car) lovers, makes staying inside not only silly, but a crime against nature.



DANIELLE POFF

Lake Del Valle

GET A MOVE ON

The Tri-Valley promises exceptional landscapes and recreational opportunities for every skill level. Whether you travel by bike, golf cart or your own two feet, head into the great outdoors to explore the region's natural wonders.



TRI-VALLEY: 3 WAYS

1. THE COUCH POTATO (EASY)

At Livermore's Lake Del Valle—the focal point of **Del Valle Regional Park** and an angler's delight—you can reel in rainbow trout and inland chinook salmon, or just contemplate the water, sky and hills. Rent a canoe or motorboat for fishing, or cast from shore—just make sure to get a fishing permit from the park. ebparks.org/parks/del_valle

2. THE WEEKEND WARRIOR (MODERATE)

The views from atop **Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park** are breathtaking—literally. The hike from the Foothill Staging Area, located just off Highway 680, up to the Thermalito Trail and the Ridgeline Trail is a bit of a climb but worth the sweat. The new Castleridge trailhead allows for exploration of the northern ridgeline of the park—after a steep climb, of course. ebparks.org/parks/Pleasanton

For those who prefer aquatic activities, you can skim over **Lake Del Valle** on a rented stand-up paddleboard (from \$20). outbackadventures.com

3. THE SUPERMAN (CHALLENGING)

Hike to the scenic summit of **Mount Diablo** for a pulse-quickenning workout. Start at Curry Point in Blackhawk and take the Curry Canyon Trail for a strenuous 5.4-mile hike that provides magnificent views of the Tri-Valley the whole way. parks.ca.gov/mountdiablo



COURTESY OF VISIT TRI-VALLEY

LIFE CYCLE

ENJOY THE AREA'S RUSTIC BEAUTY ON TWO WHEELS.

IRON HORSE REGIONAL TRAIL

The 20-foot-wide paved trail is a flat, easy ride that goes through Danville, Dublin and Pleasanton. Great for a leisurely trip, the route connects directly to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station.

DEL VALLE REGIONAL PARK

For spectacular lakeside vistas and tracks of varying difficulty, head to Del Valle Regional Park. Try the out-and-back ride along the east side of the lake for a route with challenging climbs and exhilarating dips.

MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

For off-road enthusiasts, Mount Diablo State Park offers a handful of mountain biking trails, featuring steep hills, thrilling descents and the Diablo sunflower—a rare indigenous plant. Make sure to visit Rock City and the wind caves!

Check out visitrivalley.com for self-guided bike routes and information on bike rentals.



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GREAT GREENS

GET YOUR GAME ON AT A DISTINCTIVE TRI-VALLEY GOLF COURSE.

If you are looking for a round with a view, it's hard to beat **The Course at Wentve Vineyards**. Grapevines and oak-dotted hills flank the only Greg Norman-designed course in Northern California, where golfers encounter plenty of challenges and thrills. Overlooking the tricky 18th hole, The Grill offers a casual menu and full bar. wentvevineyards.com/course

For more great risk/reward play, head to the back nine at Pleasanton's **Callippe Preserve Golf Course**. The greens are complex—for example, the fairway at hole 10 is bisected by a wide, dry ravine—so be sure to reward yourself with a visit to the Vista Restaurant, which offers sandwiches, burgers and a view of the surrounding nature preserve. playcallippe.com

Rees Jones designed the gorgeous **Poppy Ridge** on 3,000 acres in Livermore, with three nine-hole courses that demand the best from players. Afterward, take in the scenery over a meal at The Grill. poppyridgegolf.com

The nine-hole course at **Pleasanton Golf Center**, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, is suited to all abilities and budgets. Perfect your swing at the facility's driving range and recharge at the clubhouse, which serves salads, sandwiches and beer. pleasantongolfcenter.com

With nine- and 18-hole courses, **Las Positas Golf Course** in Livermore offers both challenge and fun. Its signature hole nine is a dogleg left par 4 measuring 427 yards. Raise a glass after the game at the course's lively Beeb's Sports Bar & Grill, where kids eat free after 5 p.m. laspositasgolfcourse.com

If you're lucky enough to know a member at the private **Crow Canyon Golf Course** in Danville, be sure to score an invite. Experience the signature 18th hole, involving a distinctive water hazard and an elevated green, then choose between the country club's Grill (casual) and Vintage (high-end) dining rooms. Another private club well worth a visit is **Castlewood Club** in Pleasanton, which boasts two 18-hole championship courses and plenty of amenities. clubcorp.com, castlewoodcc.org

With lots of par 3s, **Dublin Ranch Golf Course** is a short course that is long on interest, offering a few surprises as well as great wraparound views. At the course's new Hilltop Restaurant, try the Birdie, a grilled chicken sandwich with bacon, onions and Monterey Jack. dublinranchgolf.com

JUST THE TICKET

Les Ballets
Trockadero de
Monte Carlo
performs at the
Bankhead Theater.



The stage is set in the Tri-Valley, with a rich performing arts scene that includes theater, comedy, music, dance and more.

ONSTAGE AND ON VIEW

The **Bankhead Theater** brings some 100 music, theater and comedy acts to Livermore each year. The lineup includes international dance troupes, Grammy-winning singers, comedians and other stellar performers. The **Bothwell Arts Center** also showcases free, themed art exhibitions. [lvpac.org](#)

The **Village Theatre** in Danville presents classic plays with contemporary overtones (think Eugene O'Neill and George Orwell), as well as music (including jazz and bluegrass) and children's theater. [villagetheatreshows.com](#)

In Pleasanton, the intimate **Firehouse Arts Center** spotlights musicals and comedy, as well as jazz, folk and other music genres, from both big names and local stars. Along with its sister stage, the **Amador Theater**, the Firehouse hosts Museum on Main's popular speaker series. Visitors shouldn't miss the **Harrington Gallery**, which features seven group exhibitions per year from local and regional artists. [firehousearts.org](#)

AT THE WINERIES

The play's always the thing at the summertime **Livermore Shakespeare Festival**, and capping an evening of Shakespearean comedy with a glass of Chardonnay while strolling the lovely grounds of Wente Vineyards makes for a not-to-be-missed experience. Wente also produces a roster of concerts under the stars—combining music, wine and a refined dinner—plus the casual **Front Porch Music Festival**. Find out about more winery events at [visittrivalley.com](#). [livermoreshakes.org](#), [wentevineyards.com](#)

Its comedy program puts the "laff" in Retzlaff Vineyards. Fans can picnic beneath the trees as they watch the Livermore winery's **Comedy Uncorked** summer shows; musical buffs come for a concert calendar that extends through the fall. [retzlaffvineyards.com](#)

AT THE MOVIES

Dinner and a movie is usually a two-step process. But Livermore's **Vine Cinema & Alehouse** combines the outings, making it one of the best date-night spots in the Tri-Valley. The art house theater screens first-run, classic and indie films, while moviegoers pair local craft beer and wine with food from neighbor restaurant Zephyr Grill & Bar. [vinecinema.com](#)

AT THE WATER PARK

From spring through early fall, Dublin's new **Wave** water park features music twice weekly in its grassy amphitheater. Pick up dinner at one of the food trucks and let the sound waves wash over you. [dublinca.gov/1917/Tuesday-Night-Concert-Series](#), [thedublinwave.com](#)

LIVE AND LEARN

These museums and education centers will spark a sense of wonder about the past, present and future.

BLACKHAWK MUSEUM

The main event at this Danville establishment is a gleaming fleet of iconic cars, including jazz-era autos, a Ford Thunderbird built for the 1964 World's Fair, Alfa Romeo BAT cars and Chrysler's first fiberglass car. On another floor, Spirit of the Old West comes to life with miniature scenes, objects and photos; a third section displays contemporary African masks and other artwork, as well as the latest addition, Into China. blackhawkmuseum.org

MUSEUM ON MAIN

Delve into Pleasanton's history with artifacts and images of the Ohlone people, Spanish and Anglo settlers, World War II's expanding population, and today's dwellers. Traveling exhibitions add layers of historical depth, while a kids' corner provides hands-on activities. museumonmain.org

EUGENE O'NEILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Eugene O'Neill, the only American playwright to win the Nobel Prize, reached the peak of his powers at Danville's Tao House, which he built on 158 bucolic acres in 1937, and where he lived through 1944. Here, he wrote

Long Day's Journey into Night and *The Iceman Cometh*, among other masterworks. Combining elements of Asian and Spanish design, Tao House is now a museum where you can view O'Neill's desks, manuscripts and photos; in September, the O'Neill Festival presents plays in the barn. nps.gov/euon, eugeneoneill.org

MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

Visitors to this restored 1891 Danville train depot can explore the lives of early Native Americans, Gold Rush settlers and their successors. museumsrv.org

LAWRENCE LIVERMORE NATIONAL LABORATORY DISCOVERY CENTER

The Discovery Center introduces kids and adults to the thrill of STEM learning. Pedal an "energy bike" to see how much power it generates, and hold a plasma globe, a glass ball electrified with a Tesla coil. lnl.gov/community/discovery-center

DUBLIN CAMP PARKS MILITARY HISTORY CENTER

This museum-quality history center offers visitors the opportunity to learn about the Camp Parks military base—established during World War II—which helped transform Dublin from a rural community into the dynamic city it is today. dublinca.gov/1916

DUBLIN HERITAGE PARK AND MUSEUMS

Clustered on 10 acres, a Craftsman house, a simple white church, a schoolhouse and a cemetery tell the story of the Tri-Valley in the 1800s. In the school, interactive exhibits describe a time when the region was part of Mexico, and a pioneer playhouse allows for make-believe. A tour of the house provides details about its architecture and the family who lived there. dublin.ca.gov/269



Museum on Main



The Blackhawk Museum is home to the **Automotive Gallery** that features over 55 classic, rare and unique automobiles, the **Spirit of The Old West** gallery about the western expansion from the mid-1700s to early-1900s, and the newly opened **Into China** gallery showcasing handcrafted masterpieces that capture past and present cultures.



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CAR TALK

With loads of sunshine, beautiful country roads and quaint downtowns, the Tri-Valley makes the ideal backdrop for celebrating classic rides, with car shows, cruises and meets.

GOODGUYS ROD & CUSTOM ASSOCIATION

At Pleasanton's Alameda County Fairgrounds, the Goodguys Association presents three Get-Togethers and the West Coast Nationals during the year. More than 3,000 hot rods, custom cars and muscle trucks are on hand for Get-Togethers, along with lowrider displays, award contests and kids' model making. good-guys.com

CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

A parade of vintage cars in mint condition rolls into Danville every September for the Concours d'Elegance, a gathering designed to raise funds for Parkinson's disease research and patient care. Spectators can goggle at over-the-top styles dreamed up in decades past, as race cars, sports cars, antique and high-end modern vehicles, and even a handful of boats and motorcycles come together at this don't-miss event. danville-delegance.org

HOT SUMMER SUNDAYS CAR SHOW

On one weekend in both July and August, Danville welcomes Hot Summer Sundays Car Show. At this family-friendly event, more than 400 classic cars pull into town. Live music plus good food and drink complete the festivities. dhsncs.com

SUMMER NIGHTS IN THE LIVERY

August brings hot nights and car-themed events to Danville. For two nights, the Danville Livery shopping center is filled with live music, hot rod car shows, strolling entertainment and more. danvillelivery.com



Below: San Francisco Premium Outlets features 180 stores, including popular stops such as Bloomingdale's and Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th.



SHOP TALK

From high-end outlets to malls to charming boutiques, the area offers many opportunities for retail therapy.

With 180 stores, **San Francisco Premium Outlets**, located in Livermore, takes some time to navigate. But when exploring, savvy shoppers can find great deals on luxury lines. Options run from the trendy (Rag & Bone) to traditional (Brooks Brothers), upscale (Barneys New York) to basic (Gap Factory). And though the majority of shops lean high end, popular bargain spots—like Forever 21—rub elbows with the grander brands.

Gems like Kate Spade supply color and sophistication in women's accessories and jewelry: From playful purses to signature watches, the store provides a multitude of delightfully quirky options. Just a few steps away is Burberry, where beautifully tailored coats line the walls and an array of handbags shows off the brand's iconic tartan. At Gucci, the glam factor is evident in everything from ready-to-wear apparel to accessories; its chic printed dresses and jackets are delectable.

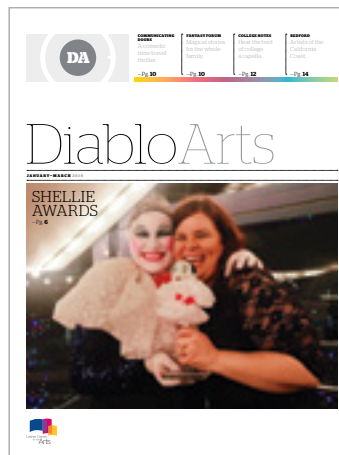
If your taste tends toward expensive footwear, walk this way. Purchase a sweet pair of Jimmy Choos and strut down the street like it's your personal runway. Or go for the eye-catching designs in bold colors at the Prada outlet. Treat yourself: This is luxe for less. premiumoutlets.com/outlet/san-francisco Check out visittrivalley.com for our shopping trail at the outlets!



5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT THE STONERIDGE SHOPPING CENTER IN PLEASANTON

- 1. You love cult beauty brands.** Sustainability-minded Canadian cosmetics maker Lush expanded its space in the mall.
- 2. Shopping makes you hungry.** The Counter—a gourmet burger joint—recently opened here.
- 3. The kids would rather be painting.** Young Art Lessons offers drop-in sessions.
- 4. You're all about international fashion.** Zara, one of the globe's largest fashion companies, recently opened its doors at Stoneridge.
- 5. You're into Nordstrom, Apple and Lego.** Check, check and check.

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EAT AND SHOP

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AT THE SAN FRANCISCO PREMIUM OUTLETS

The expansive outlets host 17 food-providing shops, from Subway and Chipotle to Chicken Now and Green Leaf's. But for a more exotic break, head across the street to the **Pacific Pearl** shopping center. This new area—which opened in summer 2018—already boasts 10 restaurants, many with an Asian-cuisine focus. Notable are Japanese chain Kura, which serves dozens of different sushi rolls on a revolving belt, and Fiery Shanghai, which promises to light up your taste buds with Szechuan and Shanghai cuisine.

AT STONERIDGE SHOPPING CENTER

Staples like The Cheesecake Factory, the Counter and PF Chang's are always good choices for a meal in between serious shopping, but check out the new Go Fish Poke Bar as well for elevated poke bowls and vegan and gluten-free options. If you happen to be shopping on a Friday, head out to the parking lot to find some of the Bay Area's best food trucks to choose from.



Whim House
in Danville

GETTING THE GOODS

STROLL THE STREETS FOR ONE-OF-A-KIND FINDS OR BIG-NAME BRANDS.

> **Hartz Avenue** cuts through historic downtown Danville with a wealth of charming shops. Even if you don't have much of a sweet tooth, Sweet Street is worth a visit for the eye candy alone. Snickerdoodles' adorable name suits its cute, gently used children's wear and gear. And after getting expert advice on running shoes at Forward Motion Sports, you'll be inspired to join the locally famous Wednesday Night Run.

> **Main Street in downtown Pleasanton** is a treasure trove of singular boutiques. Check out Prim and neighboring Prim Pop, which specialize in boho-chic clothing for women and children. Therapy stocks funky, stylish home goods and gifts, as well as ultracool accessories. Stop by the resident locally owned general bookstore, Towne Center Books, for literary needs.

> **Dublin's Hacienda Crossings** is anchored by a giant Regal Cinemas building with multiple screens, including an IMAX. Hit the larger stores like Old Navy and Barnes & Noble, then head to a restaurant (try Red Tractor Cafe or Kobe Pho & Grill) before capping off your outing at the movies.

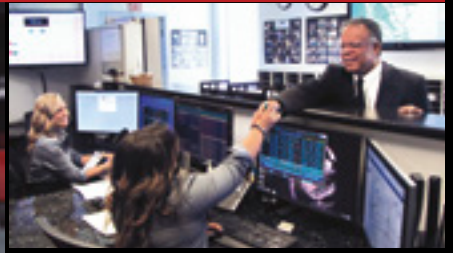
> **First Street in Livermore** is all about local boutiques, stocked with items locals love. Fortune Emporium supports small-batch artists, and Green Soap Bath Shoppe's storefront is a great place to pick up gourmet and organic soaps, lip balms, and candles. Pop into First Street Wine Company to taste and purchase vino from the Livermore Valley wine region.



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THE WEDDING PARTY

Turn the big day into a big weekend with this guide that will inspire more than bliss. Whether you want to hit the San Francisco Premium Outlets for day-before prep, let loose at Barone's during a bachelorette blowout or recap good times over brunch, you and your guests will enjoy a visit that goes beyond the vows.



A bride and groom celebrate their marriage at Pleasanton's Palm Event Center in the Vineyard.



Left: The Purple Orchid Wine Country Resort & Spa in Livermore.
Below: Coffee at Danville's Sideboard.



LADIES' DAY (AND NIGHT) OUT

MARK THE HAPPY OCCASION WITH A WEEKEND OF SHOPPING, SPA TREATMENTS AND A TASTE OF LIVERMORE VALLEY'S FINE WINES.

- > Skip Starbucks and head straight to **Sideboard** for a potent dose of artisanal coffee. Coffee not your speed? Don't worry: They've got mimosas and spicy bloody marys, too. Indulge in puffy beignets or a sour cream scone while planning your itinerary on the sunny patio or in the eclectic dining area—complete with a sideboard, of course. itsonthesideboard.com

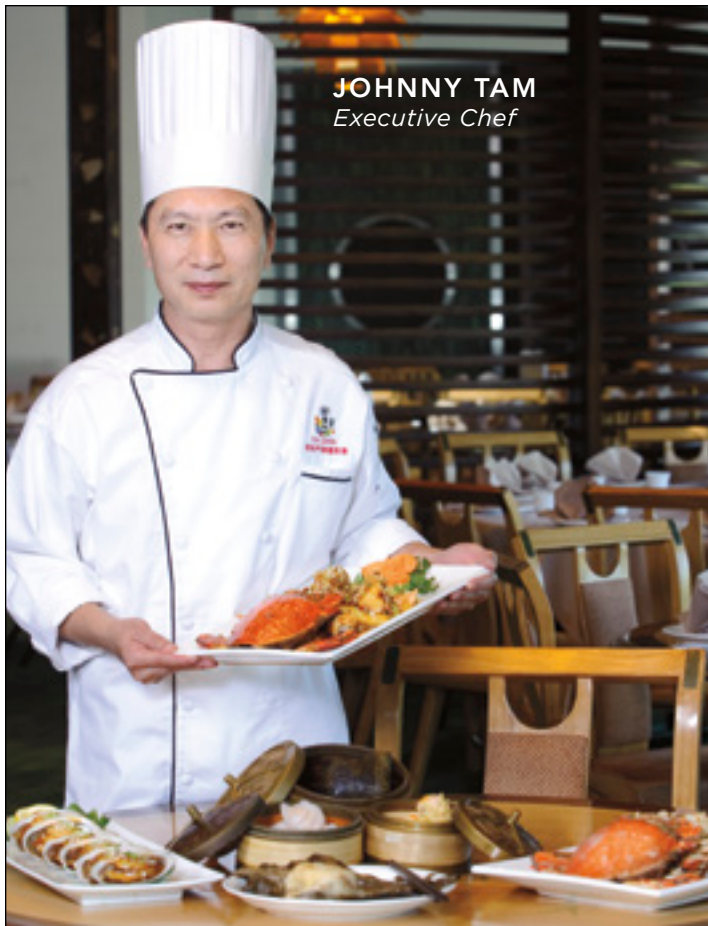
- > Dive into the world of retail at the **San Francisco Premium Outlets** located in Livermore—the largest outlet center in California. For boutique bounties, head to Main Street in Pleasanton or Prospect Avenue in Danville, where local fashionista faves such as **Prim**, **Drift Co.**, and **Flaunt** will help you keep on trend. premiumoutlets.com/outlet/san-francisco, iloveprim.com, catchthedrift.co, shopflaunt.com

- > Before the big day, say goodbye to stress and hello to the relaxing wonders of **The Purple Orchid Wine Country Resort & Spa**. Get revitalized with the spa's signature Hand Prints massage, an 80-minute experience that incorporates rosemary olive oil made at the property, along with warm towels, compression, light stretching, and acupressure on your back and feet. purpleorchid.com

- > Need to “wine” down? Take in the scenery at one of the numerous wineries in Livermore Valley wine country, where tasting flights await. For a tour of the region, hop aboard the **Livermore Wine Trolley**, and sip sans stress. livermorewinetrolley.com

- > Channel your inner Picasso at the Danville and Livermore outposts of **Pinot's Palette**, where wine and paint join forces to release even the most suppressed creative spirits. Enjoy stroke-by-stroke instruction, with a paintbrush in one hand and a glass of Sauv Blanc in the other. pinotspalette.com/danville, pinotspalette.com/livermore

- > Every Thursday evening during the summer, Sin City meets Pleasanton in the enormous outdoor backyard at **Barone's**. Stiff cocktails, live bands and questionable outfits are worth every penny of the \$15 cover. Tip: Reserve a cabana for a home base (and a place to hold court) after you let loose on the dance floor. baronespleasanton.com



JOHNNY TAM
Executive Chef

THE BEST DIM SUM IN THE BAY AREA

Named for a famous fishing village located in Hong Kong, Koi Palace's fishtail-shaped bar, live seafood in display tanks, and lotus leaf-adorned carpet create a vibrant backdrop for executive chef Johnny Tam's meticulously prepared dishes. Before he began crafting the Cantonese delicacies that appear on Koi Palace's daily lunchtime dim sum menu, Tam rose to prominence as a chef in Hong Kong and honed his technique during stints in Oakland and Las Vegas. Since 2008, Tam has been masterfully coaxing the freshest flavors out of Koi Palace's popular lunchtime offerings, including shrimp dumplings, sticky rice in lotus leaf, and shui mai with diced mushroom.



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BELLA ROSA AT GARRÉ WINERY

The state-of-the-art facility still manages an old-world charm, and the grounds are just as impressive as the chandelier-decked interior.

RIOS-LOVELL, RETZLAFF OR CROOKED VINE WINERIES

These family-owned wineries provide unique wedding spaces, including Rios-Lovell's White Wedding Gazebo, Retzlaff's tree-lined walk and Crooked Vine's Barrel Room.

MURRIETA'S WELL

This is one of the state's original wine estates. The stellar food and service will make your special day perfect.

REINSTEIN RANCH

Give your wedding a Western vibe. The antiquated barn adds intimacy to the ceremony, and the grassy fields are a romantic setting for pictures.



MEN OF ACTION

WHETHER YOU WANT AN AMPED-UP BACHELOR PARTY OR AN AFTERNOON ON THE LINKS, THE TRI-VALLEY IS READY TO PROVIDE.

- > Play a round at one of the Tri-Valley's 14 lovely golf courses. Wager a bet at **The Course at Wente Vineyards**—designed by Greg Norman—or flex your mastery on the notorious par-5 No. 18 at **Callippe Preserve Golf Course** in Pleasanton. wentevineyards.com/course, playcallippe.com
- > For legit barbecue, head to **Sauced BBQ & Spirits** in Livermore. Go for the nachos, a Runny Elvis burger or Burnt Ends before they're gone. The Hot Tin Roof sauce is a must for habanero heat lovers. Wash it all down with a \$5 whiskey of the day or a bloody mary from the Build Your Own Bloody Mary Bar on weekends. saucedbbqandspirits.com
- > Auto enthusiasts will find a collection of treasures at the **Blackhawk Museum**. You don't have to be car crazy to Instagram the "rolling sculptures" for instant social media approval. blackhawkmuseum.org
- > Gather up some buddies and hit the **Tri-Valley Beer Trail**. Check in at 10 of the 24 stops with your passport and earn free stuff. Keep the party going at **Altamont Beer Works** in Livermore, **Main Street Brewery** in Pleasanton, **Three Sheets** in Dublin or **The Growler** in Danville. altamontbeerworks.com, mainstreetbrewery.com, threesheetscraftbeer.com, growlerpubdanville.com
- > Work off any pre-wedding nerves by pedaling to the top of **Mount Diablo State Park** to soak in views of the Sierra Nevada, Lassen Peak and, on a clear day, Yosemite's Half Dome. parks.ca.gov
- > Attention, carnivores: Pull over when you see the neon sign for **Hap's Original** in Pleasanton, a New York-style steakhouse that features dry-aged beef, seafood and handcrafted cocktails. If beer and bites are more your vibe, pull up a stool at **World of Beer** in Dublin for a deeply satisfying lunch, dinner or "beerunch" (or, beer brunch). hapsoriginal.com, worldofbeer.com

THE PERFECT BLEND

Undertones of challenging golf paired with a first rate facility, finished off with top-notch attention to detail



WHERE NATURE AND GOLF COME TOGETHER



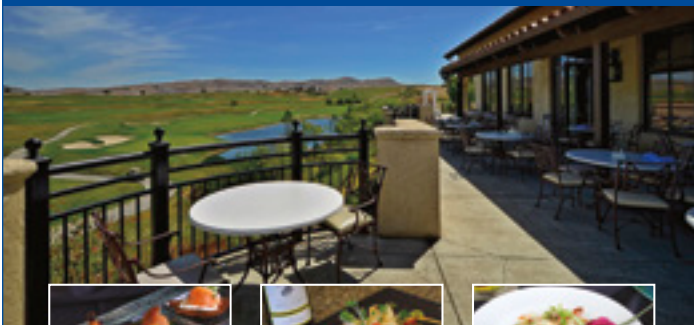
MERLOT



CHARDONNAY



ZINFANDEL



TAKE IN THE VIEW FROM OUR OUTDOOR PATIO

Three unique nine-hole courses are cleverly routed to close with a lakeside green at the foot of the clubhouse. Drink in a spectacular view of all **27 HOLES** and the rolling vineyards of the Livermore Valley Wine Country from **THE GRILL**, where local wine, and the latest in craft beer offerings, pair with an excellent seasonal menu.



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LIVERMORE, CALIFORNIA

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COLLISION OF RHYTHM

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Master Percussionists

WHITNEY:
"One Moment in Time"
February 16 & 17
Award-Winning
Tribute to the Legend



BANDA MAGNA

February 24 · 7 PM

Latin Rhythms
with Jazz Improv!



SIX APPEAL
March 2 · 8 PM

High Energy
A Cappella!



THE OSHIMA BROTHERS

April 19 · 8 PM

Keeping Folk/Pop
in the Family

4444 Railroad Avenue in Pleasanton
925.931.4848 • firehousearts.org





Left: K1 Speed.
Below: Meadowlark Dairy.



FAMILY TIME

FROM BOCCE BALL TO NATURE HIKES, A TRI-VALLEY WEDDING WEEKEND CAN BE AN ENTERTAINING TRIP FOR ALL AGES.

- > Grab a seat at the original **Denica's Real Food Kitchen** in Dublin, where breakfast and lunch are as unfussy as the atmosphere. Order at the counter to indulge the tykes (and yourself) with supersize samples of the cafe's legendary fresh-baked cookies. denicascafe.com

- > Double-knot the kids' shoes and slather on plenty of SPF before hiking around **Del Valle Regional Park**, where oak-covered hills frame a shimmering lake ideal for swimming, boating and paddleboarding. Pack a picnic for a full afternoon of adventure. ebparks.org

- > Step back in time at the **Meadowlark Dairy** in Pleasanton for a nostalgic drive-thru experience. The kids will get a kick out of ordering sky-high soft-serve ice cream cones. meadowlarkdairy.com

- > Energy overload? Bounce it off on the trampolines at **Rockin' Jump** or splash it away at **The Wave**, both in Dublin. Alternatively, fulfill your kid's racing dreams at Livermore's **Umigo Indoor Kart Racing & Event Center** or **K1 Speed**. For more go-kart action—along with mini golf, bumper boats, laser tag and a massive arcade—head to **Boomers**, also in Livermore. These family-friendly spots are sure to stem a sugar rush and prep appetites for the upcoming festivities. dublin.rockinjump.com, thedublinwave.com, umigoracing.com, k1speed.com, boomersparks.com/livermore

- > Reach beyond butter noodles at **Eddie Papa's American Hangout**. The iconic American dishes are made from scratch using local organic produce, all-natural proteins and sustainable seafood. And the mound of freshly spun cotton candy presented to every table at the meal's end wins kids over every time. eddiepapas.com

- > Practice teamwork to uncover clues at **Limitless Escape Games** in Livermore. With heist-, pirate- and Sherlock Holmes-themed options, you and the kids can meld minds to escape with your bounty, free yourselves from a curse or catch the leader of the notorious Baker Street Five. limitlessestapgames.com

- > After a full day of play, cocktail hour beckons parents at **Campo di Bocce**. Book a semiprivate room facing the vineyards, or nab a table outdoors to enjoy traditional Italian fare and eight world-class bocce courts. The kids can eat pizza and chicken tenders while grown-ups decompress with a glass of vino. campodibocce.com

WHERE TO EAT

DANVILLE

Basque**Boulangerie Café**

This cafe shines particularly bright at breakfast, when rich, baked-from-scratch French toast and bread pudding demand an extra shot of espresso in your latte or a second cup of coffee from the array of self-serve choices. A modest beer and wine list and kombucha on tap add intrigue at night. 411 Hartz Ave., Ste. A, 925.208.1631, basqueboulangerie.com. Breakfast and lunch Wed.–Mon., dinner Thurs.–Sat. 🍷🍷🍷

Blackhawk Grille

The Grille's seamless transition from fine to fun dining is complete, with a sexy new bar that draws you in. The huge exhibition kitchen dishes up trendy pizzas, classic salads, sandwiches—and filet mignon. Our short rib meatloaf captured the comfort food motif, while plump, sauteed mussels are one of many appetizers built to share. If you're looking for an intimate experience, choose the retro booths or by the duck pond, where a warm-weather brunch is particularly lovely. 3540 Blackhawk Plaza Cir., 925.736.4295, blackhawkgrille.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Blue Gingko Blue Gingko's waterside

lounge reels in passersby to a piscine paradise. The sushi is always pristine, but lunch is the best value, with generous slabs of nigiri (ask for halibut fin, when available) and seaweed salad. Winning small plates include crunchy soft-shell crabs and tempura prawn lettuce wraps. 3496 Blackhawk Plaza Cir., 925.648.7838, bluegingkosushi.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Blue Line Pizza The signature deep-dish at this modern parlor is phenomenal, packing just-wilted spinach into a cornmeal crust with feta and a garlicky tomato sauce that seals the deal. Spicy chicken wings don't get any better, and the salads are bold and beautiful. 550 Hartz Ave., 925.362.3295, bluelinepizza.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Bridges Restaurant & Bar

After 25 years, Bridges remains remarkably fresh. The refined, Asian- and French-accented menu shows both creativity (watermelon salad with manchego cheese and kimchee vinaigrette) and craftsmanship (New York steak served with edamame and bacon). Famous for its scene in *Mrs. Doubtfire*, Bridges' stunning atmosphere (including the garden patio) is timeless. 44 Church

St., 925.820.7200, bridgesdanville.com. Lunch Mon.–Fri., dinner daily, brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Crumbs This umbrella-festooned eatery offers hearty American breakfast and lunch standards every day. 428 Railroad Ave., Ste. B, 925.838.8824, crumbsdanville.com. Breakfast and lunch daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Danville Brewing Co. With its curved bar and wraparound patio, this on-site brewery is a looker. Try one of the 10 grass-fed burgers (the DBC with red onion jam is our fave) with one of the 20 on-tap brews (the Chux Double IPA is a house specialty). Or enjoy a craft cocktail and an upscale pub offering, such as honey-licked fried chicken. 200 Railroad Ave., 925.217.4172, danvillebrewing.com. Lunch and dinner daily, breakfast Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷

Danville Harvest This country-chic, farm-to-table restaurant showcases elevated comfort food with a Southern twang. A mustardy, South Carolina-style barbecue pork loin, scallion hush puppies and My Mama's Breakfast Plate (at brunch) are seductive samples. With a vibrant bar and lounge reserved for walk-ins, and a homey yet stylish dining room with a full-exhibition

kitchen, Danville Harvest welcomes all comers. 500 Hartz Ave., 925.362.3665, danvilleharvest.com. Dinner daily, lunch Mon.–Fri., brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷

Esin Restaurant & Bar

Esin is a classy neighborhood bistro, attracting friends and families with its affordable "small" plates and three-course dinner specials. House-made pastas, pot roast, and comforting cakes and pies, along with weighty flatware, crisp service and a serious wine list, add up to one of Contra Costa's most consistently excellent restaurants. Depending on your mood, choose seating on the casual patio or in the stately dining room. 750 Camino Ramon, 925.314.0974, esinrestaurant.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Fish on Fire Stay on close terms with the staff so they steer you to the best sushi, which, on our visit, included clear, fresh, supple bigeye tuna and rich, buttery salmon. Always good is the crisp wakame seaweed salad with its subtle sesame flavor. The tempura is as crunchy as you'll find. And the tender, juicy teriyaki chicken bears the satisfying flavor of the grill. 101-C Town and Country Dr., 925.837.1027. Lunch Mon.–Fri., dinner Mon.–Sat. 🍷🍷

Key to Symbols

🍷 Cheap (\$10 or less per dinner entree)

🍷🍷 Inexpensive (\$11–\$17)

🍷🍷🍷 Moderate (\$18–\$24)

🍷🍷🍷🍷 Expensive (more than \$25)

🍷 Wine and beer

🍷 Full bar

🌞 Outdoor dining

🍷 Private room parties of 50 or more

🕒 Late-night dining (service after 10)

🐾 Dog friendly

🐾 Dog friendly (when seasonal patio is open)

Restaurant listings are courtesy of Diablo magazine. Pick up a copy for a full East Bay list.

Forbes Mill

Steakhouse With its expansive lounge, Forbes feels like a Las Vegas-style steakhouse. Check out the white anchovy-dressed Caesar salad, the panko-crusted crab cakes and buttery Kobe steaks. The wine list boasts powerful Napa Valley reds that can stand up to the meat. 200 Sycamore Valley Rd. W., 925.552.0505, forbesmillsteakhouse.com. Lunch Mon.–Fri., dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

The Growler For just \$10, create a flight from 20 beers on tap or opt for wine on tap. The menu tops out at \$16—for "The Growler Classic" or the deliciously spicy

chipotle chicken sandwich. Our kale salad and pastrami sandwich were vibrant. Minimalist decor but warm service. 515 San Ramon Valley Blvd., 925.984.2706, growlerpubdanville.com. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Locanda Ravello

With its convivial courtyard and cottage-turned-bar, Locanda is built for hospitality. Epicurean pizza toppings (porcinis, burrata, prosciutto di Parma) and plates served with gusto (such as Mamma Carmela's meatballs) represent just two aspects of an extensive menu—with a wine list to match. 172 E. Prospect Ave., 925.984.2101,

ravello-danville.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

McGah's Pub & Pianos

The American pub fare strikes just the right note: spicy shrimp with smooth jalapeno sauce; crispy fried chicken sandwich; and great burgers galore. The dueling pianos—Friday and Saturday nights only—are a riot, and the sports theme is the real deal: E.V. McGah helped found the Oakland Raiders. 148 E. Prospect Ave., 925.743.8466, mcgahs.com. Breakfast Sat.–Sun., lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Norm's Place This casual automobile-themed eatery recently underwent a major remodel, doubling its seating and patio space. The updated menu changes regularly, but staples include traditional comfort food items such as wings, burgers and a spicy chicken wrap. Salads and sandwiches are fresh and reasonably priced. 356 Hartz Ave., 925.552.6676, normsgill.com. Brunch Sun., lunch Tues.–Sun., dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

The Peasant & the Pear

Chef Rodney Worth serves smart salads and sandwiches, such as the Tuscan: sliced chicken and sun-dried tomatoes on focaccia. If you go for dinner, don't miss the lamb shank and specialty martinis, such as the signature Spiced Pear-tini. The heirloom tomato salad (seasonal) and crostini with house-

made burrata also impressed. 267 Hartz Ave., 925.820.6611, rodneynorth.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Pete's Brass Rail and Car Wash

It's all mythology and microbrews at Pete's, where there's nobody named Pete and certainly no place to get your wheels washed. No, the headliners here are the burgers and the locals who fill the place with stunning regularity. In summer, there's no better place than Pete's patio—with a cold beer from the impressive rotating selection. 201 Hartz Ave., 925.820.8281, petesbrassrail.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

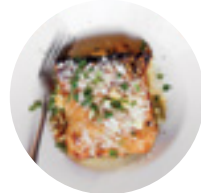
Piatti One of the best Californian-Italian restaurants in the Tri-Valley, with dishes such as Bellwether Farms ricotta gnocchi, Monterey Bay calamari and fried Prince Edward Island mussels. The filet mignon is thick and juicy, and the well-trained waitstaff will help you choose a wine to match. 100 Sycamore Valley Rd., 925.838.2082, piatti.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Pizza Antica With a wine wall at the entrance and a glittering bar, this small chain restaurant is refined. Yet the blistered pizzas (the heirloom potato and sausage pie with portobellos rocks) and rich rigatoni with duck ragu exhibit a rustic character. The Brussels sprouts salad

(famous at the Lafayette location), loaded with egg and bacon, is as decadent as our fall appetizer of roasted chanterelles with warm ricotta. 111 W. Prospect Ave., 925.718.8991, pizzaantica.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Revel Kitchen & Bar

Revel is the hipster complement to Esin and Curtis deCarion's staterier Danville restaurant, Esin. Entrees such as rabbit tagliatelle rocked on our visit, but the menu's thrust is bar snacks and small plates. We loved the garlicky hummus and shrimp and grits. Desserts, famously homey at Esin, get an upscale twist. 331 Hartz Ave., 925.208.1758, revelkitchenandbar.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷



Sideboard Neighborhood Kitchen and Coffee Bar

Order at the counter, select mismatched silverware, and wait for consistently delicious dishes to be delivered in a rustic and quirky dining area. The cooking style here may best be described as "grandma gourmet." Our favorites include an airy goat cheese pudding and a moist chicken salad with Point Reyes blue cheese, smoky bacon and creamy avocado. Great coffee and

desserts. 90 Railroad Ave., 925.984.2713, itsonthesideboard.com. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Thai House Restaurant

Bright and cozy Thai House is noted for its inventive, flavorful dishes, which include pumpkin curry and lobster. Green papaya salad is pleasantly spicy and tangy, with the crunchy and chewy textures of ground peanuts and dried shrimp. Duck curry is cooked in a rich hot sauce enlivened with pineapple and grapes. Desserts include sweet sticky rice with Thai custard. 254 Rose Ave., 925.820.0635. Lunch Mon.–Fri., dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Valley Medlyn

A hole-in-the-wall brunch spot popular with locals for its unpretentious, hearty dishes and delightfully decadent desserts. 330 Hartz Ave., 925.552.6449. Breakfast and lunch daily. 🍷🍷

Zalla Kabob House

In true Afghan style, Zalla's cuisine is brightly spiced and satisfying. The kebabs will fill you up, but it's worth starting with appetizers of lush eggplant (banjan) and butternut squash (kadu). We also loved the rich, complex lamb shanks at this darling order-at-the-counter cafe. (All meats are kosher.) 202 Sycamore Valley Rd. W., 925.208.1403, zallakabobhouse.com. Lunch and dinner Tues.–Sun. 🍷🍷

DUBLIN

Amakara Amakara doesn't look particularly Japanese, with its polished stone floor and big leather dining chairs, but the food is the genuine article. Starting with sweet-and-sticky rice and finishing with cleansing ginger, the sushi here is superior. We loved the red tuna and its upscale cousin, toro. Items from the kitchen were good, too, but a little less so (greasy tempura). 7222 Regional St., 925.803.8485, amakarasushi.com. Lunch Mon.–Fri., dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

The Banana Garden

This roomy and stylish Malaysian restaurant is a cross-cultural experience. Start with the roti prata, a crispy bread with toasted-curry coconut sauce. The charred chicken satay is uncommonly plump and moist. Clusters of slick noodles are just one of the intriguing textures in the fragrant seafood char koay kak. Finish appropriately with an irresistible fried-banana dessert. 4100 Grafton St., 925.248.2854, thebananagarden.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Coco Cabana As hip as it is friendly, Cabana's Latin-fusion menu includes tasty small plates: The excellent mussels are spiked with cumin. The shrimp al ajillo and ample, herbed sirloin albondigas (meatballs) were both winners, as was a wonderfully tart shrimp ceviche.

Entrees are more hit or miss, but cocktails are well-executed. Do not skip the awesome fried dough dessert. 4500-C Tassajara Rd., 925.556.9055, cococabanadublin.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Denica's Real Food Kitchen

Denica's is the place to go if you have multiple personalities. Part pastry cafe, part taco lounge, Denica's serves up just about anything—and does it well. The breakfast menu runs from huevos rancheros to killer cinnamon rolls. (Ask to have yours warmed.) At lunch, we liked the chicken pesto sandwich, fresh spring greens with walnuts and the chicken tacos. Order a snickerdoodle to go. 6058 Dougherty Rd., 925.829.6200, denicascafe.com. Breakfast and lunch daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Gum Kuo This Oakland follow-up has a welcoming burnt-umber decor and dishes ranging from comforting to daring. Comforting is the delicate tofu and snappy pumpkin hot pot. A whole crispy-skinned pompano requires dexterity but is remarkably moist. Gum's chow fun—slick with egg and slippery shrimp—is a sweet companion to bony yet beautifully bronzed duck. 3720 Fallon Rd., 925.999.8627, gumkuorestaurant.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷

Hot Crab It's no ordinary shrimp boil at this Louisiana Cajun seafood restaurant;

your customized catch comes bathed in a garlicky, chili-infused oil with varying heats. Easy-to-slurp clams and meaty head-on shrimp are rewarding, but serious crackers can opt for a heap of crawfish or pricey king crab. *4288 Dublin Blvd., 925.999.9580, hotcrabus.com. Lunch and dinner daily. \$\$\$*



Koi Palace With its lush green carpeting, fresh orchids and lily pad motif, this dim sum house is easily one of the most elegant in the Tri-Valley. We loved the spinach dumplings bursting with steamed greens. Also wonderful: tender pork buns, chewy pot stickers, crackly phyllo with wild mushrooms and Chinese broccoli with oyster sauce. And that's just for starters. *4288 Dublin Blvd., Ste. 213, 925.833.9090, koipalace.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat. and Sun. Y P \$ \$*

Lee's Sandwiches This San Jose food truck turned chain focuses mainly on Asian and European sandwiches. The Vietnamese banh mi is the star, with zippy pickled vegetables and house-made baguettes, available in a dozen varieties, from grilled chicken to sardine to lemongrass tofu. Or get it in a bowl, with noodles, greens and dressing. Don't

miss the surf and turf spring rolls and ricotta- and choco-late-stuffed cannoli. *4101-B Dublin Blvd., 925.828.8888, leesandwichesdublin.com. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. \$*

Mayflower Restaurant Whether it's stunning dim sum or dazzling shellfish pulled from the live seafood tank, Mayflower presents authentic Cantonese cuisine with style. The pork buns, seafood dumplings and juicy pot stickers are best bets. Try at least one traditional Cantonese dish and, for familiar fare, go for the silky chow fun with slivers of barbecue pork and the ultrafresh lettuce cups. *4086 Grafton St., 925.551.8088, mayflowerdublin.com. Lunch and dinner daily. Y P \$ \$ \$*

McNamara's Steak & Chop House The mahogany bar, low lighting and luxurious decor at McNamara's say classic steakhouse. We loved the plump chilled prawns, charred filet mignon and rosemary-seasoned rack of lamb. At dessert, go for the fudge-smooth warm brownie, but skip the chewy chocolate crepes. *7400 San Ramon Rd., 925.833.0995, mcnamarasteak.com. Lunch Mon.-Fri., dinner daily. Y P \$ \$ \$ \$*

Pamir Restaurant Where to start? We say bulanees, squares of fried flatbread filled with potatoes or leeks. Right behind is buranee badenjan

(sauteed eggplant) topped with tomato and yogurt. Then on to the classics: mantu (beef dumplings smothered in meat sauce) and aush (noodle soup with tasty beans). Finish with vanilla ice cream topped with pistachios and cardamom. *4288 Dublin Blvd., Ste. 111, 925.999.8820, pamirdublin.com. Lunch and dinner Thurs.-Tues. \$ \$*

World of Beer This offshoot of the national franchise offers a low-key, industrial atmosphere to enjoy dozens of beers on tap and classic pub food. *4920 Dublin Blvd., Ste. 260, 925.962.5646, worldofbeer.com. Lunch and dinner daily. Brunch Sat.-Sun. Y \$ \$ \$*

Yanagi Sushi & Grill This spacious, contemporary dining room is divided into three sections—a sushi bar, a teppan area and regular booths. We were taken with zippy chicken yakitori skewers and the delicate tempura shrimp and veggies. The adventurous should try the Heart Attack roll appetizer, with fried jalapenos, cream cheese and spicy tuna. *6599 Dublin Blvd., Ste. K, 925.556.9575, yanagisushigrill.com. Lunch and dinner daily. P \$ \$*

LIVERMORE

Backyard Bayou at the Vineyard This cavernous Cajun-style spot offers a good time. Tear into a platter of shellfish sauced and spiced to your specs.

Or play the field with soul-satisfying gum-bols, luxurious lobster rolls and spice-crusted skewers of grilled alligator. The full oyster bar here is front and center, adding a definitive New Orleans spirit. *2491 First St., 925.523.0611, thebackyardbayou.com. Lunch Fri.-Sun., dinner Tues.-Sun. Y P \$ \$ \$*

Bar Tatami This attractive Asian restaurant inside Casino 580 is surprisingly good. We indulged in dazzling Thai mussels, Asian pear short ribs, Korean tacos and a very decadent all-American burger stuffed with rich goodies. If you gamble, the food can be tastefully brought to your betting table—where a diverse \$5 casino menu is also available. Check out the bountiful 580 breakfast. *962 N. Canyons Pkwy., 925.800.0076, parkwestcasino580.com. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Y \$ \$ \$*

Bua Thai Kitchen Soft brown leather booths and hardwood decor make this Thai eatery feel warm and inviting. The food is equally homey, with the mango yellow curry being a standout, as the sweetness of the mango contrasts nicely with the heartier curry. *1106 E. Stanley Blvd., 925.292.8587, buathailivermore.com. Lunch and dinner Tues.-Sun. P \$ \$*

Campo di Bocce On the outskirts of town, Campo di Bocce can evoke a Tuscan

retreat, where daily seafood specials like osso bucco and grilled halibut grace romantic fireside nooks. But the cavernous indoor/outdoor space is family friendly: Reserve a bocce court (where bowling meets croquet) and order a plate of lamb lollipops or a pepperoni pizza. There's a big bar with a great local wine list. *175 E. Vineyard Ave., 925.249.9800, campodibocce.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sun. Y P \$ \$ \$ \$*

Cinco TacoBar Instagrammers love this hip taqueria, with its vibrant calavera murals and neon sign pleading, "Feed me tacos and tell me I'm pretty." You'll want to order at least two tacos, which are served in thick corn tortillas cooked to order and stuffed with fillings such as soft carne asada, sweet al pastor and grilled squash. Try the "Oaxaca mule" with mezcals served in a terra-cotta cup. *4526 Las Positas Rd., 925.583.5300, cincotacobar.com. Lunch and dinner daily. Y \$ \$ \$*

Demetris Taverna Meals in this warm remodeled space start with heated pita bread and a garlicky spread called skordalia. The tender dolmades come with a tangy avgolemono sauce, and the village salad uses kalamatas and briny feta for a salty counterpoint to the fresh veggies. A Mediterranean burger brings the flavors of Greece—oregano, feta,

tomato and grilled red onion—into each juicy bite. *2235 First St., 925.373.0306, demetristaverna.livermore.com. Lunch and dinner daily. Y P \$ \$ \$*

El Charro The full bar and festive-yet-relaxed ambience have turned a family operation into a modern Livermore standout. The restaurant, triple the size of the First Street original, features smoked pork chops for carnivores, chili rellenos for vegetarians and killer enchiladas for anyone. Still skeptical? The El Charro margarita, made with agave nectar, could very well be the best drink in town. *186 Maple St., 925.371.8297, elcharrolivermore.com. Lunch and dinner Tues.-Sun. Y P \$ \$ \$*

First Street Alehouse Share a giant basket of onion rings—and a local pint or two—on the sunny patio. Or stay cool in the expansive brewpub, where you're bound to find a burger, salad or grilled chicken sandwich with your name on it. The food's not fancy, but you can't match the Alehouse's indulgent, unpretentious vibe. Meals end with a Tootsie Pop. *2106 First St., 925.371.6588, firststreetalehouse.com. Breakfast Sat. and Sun., lunch and dinner daily. Y P \$ \$ \$ \$*

Hops and Sessions This pour-your-own beer pub is a wide-open communal space with picnic-size blonde-wood tables,

a wall of 28 rotating taps, and a “starting line” where you scan your driver’s license and credit card in exchange for a wristband. The beer selection is well-rounded with many local brews. The pub food is above average, with sausages, a crispy chicken sandwich and a killer wedge salad on offer. 2339 First St., 925.495.4118, [hopsandsessions.com](#). Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Monica’s

Livermore Housed in a soulful brick building with a fantastic shaded patio, Monica’s specializes in big, homey plates of traditional breakfast and lunch fare and simple, from-scratch pastries. While our Reuben sandwich and shrimp omelet were so-so, a hearty huevos rancheros and two grilled chicken salads were standouts. Pickles, jam and most everything else are made in-house. 2074 Second St., 925.292.5568, [monicaslivermore.com](#). Breakfast and lunch daily, dinner Fri.–Sat. 🍷🍷🍷

Petra This family-run restaurant offers Jordanian dishes as authentic as you’ll find anywhere in the Bay Area. Solicitous service and plenty of freebies—including cardamom tea and creamy lentil soup—make it a homey gold mine. The classics—falafel, hummus, baba ghanoush and tabbouleh—are all extraordinary. 4524 Las Positas Rd., 925.371.0412, [petra-livermore.com](#).

Lunch and dinner Tues.–Sun. \$\$

Posada The offerings at Posada are particularly wonderful at brunch, when diners can nosh on sublime huevos rancheros, meaty enchiladas with fried eggs and grilled oysters Posada. Happily, the Southwestern restaurant’s spicy mahi-mahi tacos, crispy lamb flautas and lush short ribs with blackberry mole are as good as ever. 988 Murrieta Blvd., 925.606.1004, [posadarestaurant.com](#). Lunch and dinner Wed.–Sun., brunch Sun. 🍷🍷🍷

The Press, an Artisan Cafe With a walk-up counter that flows into minimalist yet spacious decor, The Press serves fresh, creative and affordable toastinis and paninis, attracting crowds of all ages. The Avocado Triple Cheese panini is as lush as a sandwich can be, while the BLET with egg (and Hobbs’ Applewood Smoked Meats bacon) and side salad was a steal at \$10. The original is in Pleasanton. 2470 First St., Ste. 110, 925.292.1916, [thepressartisancafe.com](#). Breakfast and lunch Mon.–Sat. 🍷🍷

Range Life This new neighborhood favorite serves high-quality, seasonal fare in a restored 1800s brick building. 2160 Railroad Ave., 925.583.5370, [rangelifelivermore.com](#). Dinner Wed.–Mon., breakfast and lunch Sat.–Sun. 🍷 \$\$\$

The Restaurant at Wente Vineyards

A commitment to a seasonal menu that emphasizes local ingredients keeps things happening at this restaurant in wine country. Stand-out dishes include heirloom tomato soup with charred balsamic and grilled local calamari with fingerling potatoes, tomato confit and black olive tapenade. The lemony-garlicky Caesar salad features hearts of romaine served with a judicious sprinkle of smoked paprika. Meanwhile, Wente’s famous smoked pork chop never fails to satisfy. An ever-evolving list of more than 500 wines includes some excellent Livermore selections. 5050 Arroyo Rd., 925.456.2450, [wentevineyards.com](#). Dinner Tue.–Sun. 🍷🍷🍷

Revolución at the Last Word

Trade your Coke for a cocktail, and get truffle instead of butter on your popcorn, at this hip saloon behind Livermore Cinemas. Pair your Blood and Sand (a smoky Manhattan), or a Death in the Evening (licorice sparkling wine) with upscale sliders, spicy chicken and waffles, or a sophisticated arugula salad. 2470 First St., 925.493.7293, [lastwordbar.com](#). Dinner Tues.–Sun. 🍷🍷🍷

Roya Afghan

Cuisine Roya offers something for everyone and offers everyone a great value. The veal “kebab” arrives as an enormous

T-bone; the challaw badenjan brings a lush eggplant stew. Six juicy hunks of meat come skewered in the lamb kebab; wedges of sweet pumpkin are smothered in yogurt in the challaw kadu. Owner Friedoon Yawary ensures a smooth ride in a cozy dining room. 2020 First St., 925.447.0576, [royaafghancuisine.com](#). Lunch Tues.–Sat., dinner Tues.–Sun. 🍷🍷

Sauced BBQ & Spirits

Stacks of wood, banks of TVs, rows of butcher-papered tables and the alluring smell of smoke create a warm feeling at this family-owned barbecue joint. The ribs, smoked half chicken and burgers are all tasty. From the lengthy choice of sides, we liked the baked beans and cornbread best. Start with a green salad so you can finish with fried Oreos. 2300 First St., Ste. 120, 925.961.1300, [saucedbbqandspirits.com](#). Lunch and dinner daily, breakfast Sun. 🍷🍷🍷

Simply Fondue

There’s nothing simple about Simply Fondue. The average table time is two hours, and the experience is as much spectacle as meal. The four-course dinner starts with a light salad prechilled and straight from the fridge, followed by generous samplings of cheese and meat fondue. Wrap it up with a personalized (get Grand Marnier) chocolate fondue. 2300 First St., Ste.

110, 925.443.6638, [simplyfondue.livermore.com](#). Dinner daily, brunch Sun. 🍷🍷🍷

Star Anise The modern Thai–Southeast Asian food here lives up to its sleek atmosphere. Island finger lumpia are served with a mild and balanced carrot-plum sauce. The panang beef is amazingly tender and delicious. Pumpkin-salmon curry showcases squash and seafood in a red peanut curry. Roasted duck comes off the grill flavorful and meaty. 2470 First St., Ste. 108, 925.202.0590, [staranisetthai.eat24hour.com](#). Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷

Terra Mia A soaring brick fireplace, gleaming open kitchen and warm, professional service impart an intimate feel to the cavernous dining room. The Calabrian owners have built on this soulful aesthetic with made-from-scratch bread, pastas and thin-crust pizzas. They get all the basics right: The fish is fresh, and the meats are seasoned well and served with simple sides. 4040 East Ave., 925.456.3333, [terramialivermore.com](#). Lunch Mon.–Fri., dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Uncle Yu’s at the Vineyard

With a classy decor and wine list, Uncle Yu’s has an enticing vibe. So enjoy a lovely Alsatian white with spinach dumplings—soft noodlelike wrappers exploding with fresh spinach, shrimp and chicken. Or try the crisp-roasted

free-range chicken with red chili–flecked sweet sauce. Desserts, like the wines, are above average. 39 S. Livermore Ave., Ste. 125, 925.449.7000, [uncleyusvineyard.com](#). Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Zephyr Grill & Bar

Zephyr’s all-day menu lists some 26 main courses—40 when you include salads and sandwiches. Some hidden deals include thick slabs of seared tuna and a lemon cheesecake that, while huge, says finesse not factory. Tall, window-side booths are sleek, but dine at the bar to sense the scene. A fantastic selection of Livermore Valley wines. 1736 First St., 925.961.1000, [zephyrgrill.com](#). Lunch Mon.–Fri., brunch Sat.–Sun., dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

PLEASANTON

Barone’s

Restaurant Around the corner from the hustle of Main Street, its burbling fountain marking time, Barone’s makes one long for an old-fashioned shrimp cocktail or veal parmigiana. Barone’s menu pays homage to souped-up American and Italian fare. Start with scoozie (Gorgonzola-stuffed flatbread), smoked salmon or the prosciutto salad, followed up with house-made ravioli, swordfish or pepper steak. 475 St. John St., 925.426.0987, [baronespleasanton.com](#). Dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷



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Beer Baron Bar & Kitchen To pair with the bar's international brews (including 25 taps), the kitchen offers Asian-spiced lamb riblets, citrusy halibut ceviche, rustic duck sausage and a good old-fashioned burger—on brioche, of course. The tavernlike space, defined by a wall of whiskeys and a ceiling of interlocking reclaimed barrel staves, is as welcoming as the food is enticing. 336 St. Mary St., 925.223.8577, beerbaronbar.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Blossom Vegan Restaurant An immediate hit, this vegan paradise has a distinctive Vietnamese edge. Everything is so fresh. We love the green papaya salad and curried eggplant. Do not miss the mushu—mushu, wrapped in Indian pancakes. A tropical mural sets a nurturing tone in the relaxed yet bustling dining room. 4000 Pimlico Dr., Ste. 112, 925.399.5232, blossomvegans.com. Lunch and dinner Wed.–Mon. P \$

Blue Agave Club This “club” provides genuine Mexican delicacies such as earthy cuitlacoche “truffles” on plump, succulent shrimp and chicken enjococado in sour cream sauce. A gorgeously grilled skirt steak stars in a platter that includes chicken mole, chili relleno, grilled green onion and guacamole. The outdoor patio is heaven, and there are more tequilas than you can

count. 625 Main St., 925.417.1224, blueagaveclub.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

BottleTaps This 30-tap-strong Cali-focused ale-house with open-hearted service and a ferment-friendly food menu takes beer seriously—with no pretension. BottleTaps' greaseless Cubano sandwich, garlicky house pickles, and smorgasbord of meats and cheeses prove that hearty needn't be heavy. The spacious, brick-accented dining room warmly belies its strip-mall locale. 3020 Bernal Ave., Ste. 160, 925.399.8322, bottletaps.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

China Lounge Allen Shi's \$1.2 million baby is a must visit. A theatrical open kitchen, pulsing bar and impressively refined dining room complement moist ribbons of bang bang chicken, sublime crispy pork belly soup and bold kung pao chicken made with tongue-numbing peppercorns, bright lemongrass and a thin but darkly caramelized sauce. 4220 Rosewood Dr., 925.227.1312, chinaloungeus.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷



Clubhouse Restaurant This new restaurant at Pleasanton Hotel

comes from the owner of Eddie Papa's American Hangout. Expect bar standards with a gourmet twist. 855 Main St., 925.750.8855, pleasantonhotel.net. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Eddie Papa's American Hangout This affordable American hangout has a family-friendly menu as long as a cross-country road trip, but—spiked with historical tidbits and a full page of classic cocktails—it's worth the ride. Enjoy jambalaya, a Reuben or boneless Southern fried chicken (complete with potato mashed potatoes) in a spacious, skylit dining room. 4889 Hopyard Rd., 925.469.6266, eddiepapas.com. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily; brunch Sat.–Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Experience Burma Restaurant & Bar Burmese cuisine echoes the affordable, flavorful and shareable qualities of Indian and Thai food yet is wholly distinctive. The tea leaf salad—tossed at the table—bursts with crunchy nuts, seeds and jalapeno. Wok-fried lemongrass pork is tender and aromatic, while glistening mango shrimp balances sweet sauce with chilies. Warm wood and contemporary lighting are offset by colorful marionette dolls. 600 Main St., 925.398.8219, theexperienceburma.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷

Frontier Spice This attractive spot is known for its tandoori dishes. Alongside meaty kebabs, you'll find lime-scented salmon and pimento sea bass, both flash-roasted in the tandoor. Get the tandoori mix grill: chicken tikka seasoned three ways and served sizzling. The curries are good, but trust the tandoor—and double up on the garlic naan. 411 Main St., 925.846.3077, frontierspice.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Gay Nineties Pizza Co. Always hopping with birthday parties and post-soccer-game festivities, this pizzeria and pasta house is the quintessential family restaurant. The secret of the signature pizzas is the crust: The house-made sourdough is aged and cold stored for five to seven days before cooking. The oldest pizza parlor in the Tri-Valley, the mainstay's atmosphere remains cozy. 288 Main St., 925.846.2520, gayninetiespizza.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Hap's Original Hap's has been around since the 1950s and has evolved into an upscale steakhouse. Complimentary crudites and Hap's namesake salad topped with walnuts, Gorgonzola and honey-chili vinaigrette made for refreshing starters. The filet mignon with brandy peppercorn sauce (one of five sauce choices for all steaks)

was even better with a seasonal side dish of grilled artichokes. 122 W. Neal St., 925.600.9200, hapsoriginal.com. Dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Jim's Country Style Restaurant Sure, we try to look out for our arteries, but sometimes Kashi cereal with fruit just won't cut it. Jim's has the stuff: ranch-style omelets with biscuits and gravy, hearty pancakes, and sugar-sprinkled French toast—all served until 4 p.m. At lunch, try the mouth-defying triple-decker barnyard club. When all is lost, order the heaping platter of chicken-fried steak. 5400 Sunol Blvd., Ste. 1, 925.426.7019. Breakfast and lunch daily. \$ \$

Lokanta Mediterranean Grill & Bar A Turkish word meaning “neighborhood bistro,” Lokanta is at once exotic and familiar. A clean, open kitchen dishes up bean and barley salads, along with vodka-spiked salmon and skewered hanger steak. The skylit back dining room makes for some of the best summer dining in the East Bay. Grab a pillow and enjoy heavenly lamb shish kebab and a glass of (Turkish) wine. 443 Main St., 925.223.8074, eatlokanta.com. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

McKay's Taphouse & Beer Garden You'll feel right at home in McKay's buzzing beer garden.

Try the jammin' burger slathered with bacon jam or a Cubano sandwich, properly pressed with the mandatory pickles. Soft fresh-baked pretzels and crunchy house-made chips had the right salty goodness for pairing with an array of all-local craft beers. 252 Main St., 925.425.0217, mckaysbeergarden.com. Lunch Wed.–Sun., dinner Tues.–Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Nonni's Bistro Born in Iceland, owner Jon Magnusson borrows freely from Italian, French and American traditions, specializing in comfort foods with just a touch of California froufrou. Check out warm goat cheese crepes, capery bistro steak salad and, of course, anything with Magnusson's magnificent smoky lox, made with sustainable Loch Duart salmon from Scotland. 425 Main St., 925.600.0411, nonnibistro.net. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Sabio on Main This is a sophisticated restaurant that just wants to have fun. Dishes range from tangy Peruvian ceviche to sweet Moroccan meatballs to intense Asian lettuce wraps. But Spain is the biggest player, evidenced by the house-made charcuterie and hot-and-creamy salt cod croquettes. 501 Main St., 925.800.3090, sabiopleasanton.com. Dinner daily, lunch Tues.–Fri., brunch Sat. and Sun. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

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WHERE TO SLEEP

Salt Craft The remarkably innovative chef Matt Greco has created a full-service neighborhood spot with all outdoor seating. Situated in a converted house, the interior is now one big kitchen and bakery. Polenta and poached eggs in the morning, whole-grain pastas at lunch, and slow-roasted pork loin at night are just a few reasons to drop by anytime. 377 St. Mary's St., 925.425.9716, saltcraftpleasanton.com. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily; brunch Sat.–Sun. 🍷🍷🍷 P \$\$\$

Shanghai Dumpling House Enjoy affordable, classic Chinese dishes at this new local haunt. There is no fuss over presentation or ambience—just plain good food. 201 Main St., Ste. E, 925.201.3009, shanghaidumplinghouse.business.site. Lunch and dinner Wed.–Mon. 🍷🍷 \$

SideTrack Bar + Grill This casual spot serves an inspired array of juicy burgers and tasty sandwiches in a friendly, open dining room. 30 W. Angela St., 925.399.6789, sidetrackeats.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷 \$\$\$

Sozo Sushi Sozo means “creative” in Japanese, and this neighborhood sushi bar in Pleasanton lives up to the name. Sure, you could order the classics here: unagi (barbecued eel) or spicy tuna hand rolls. But why, when the menu boasts 30 “creative maki” rolls? Options

range from the Marilyn Monroll—with shrimp tempura, crab and avocado—to the Monterey—a mix of shrimp and jalapeños. 2835 Hopyard Rd., 925.484.5588, sozosushi.com. Lunch and dinner daily. 🍷🍷🍷 P \$\$\$

Taste of Sing-Ma Sing-Ma stands for “Singapore-Malaysia”—evocative of Thai, Chinese and Indian cuisines. While the atmosphere is plain, presentations are delightful. Fried rice arrives in a half pineapple; stir-fry is in scooped-out mangoes; and chilled juice is in a whole young coconut. Crepe-like roti is buttery, with a rich curry sauce to boot. Don't miss the basil eggplant. 824 Main St., 925.249.9448, tasteofsingma.com. Lunch and dinner Wed.–Mon. 🍷🍷🍷 P \$

Tri Valley Bistro With its warm earth tones and unobtrusive service, Tri Valley Bistro offers a measure of old-fashioned romance. Start with wine and a lush arrangement of prosciutto, dried figs and delicately crusted warm goat cheese. Follow with succulent scallops nestled in black rice rich with sherry cream. The focus here is less farm-to-table than luxury. 519 Main St., 925.523.3815, trivalleybistro.com. Lunch Tues.–Fri., dinner Tues.–Sun., brunch Sat.–Sun. 🍷🍷 P \$\$

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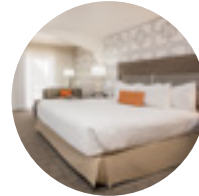
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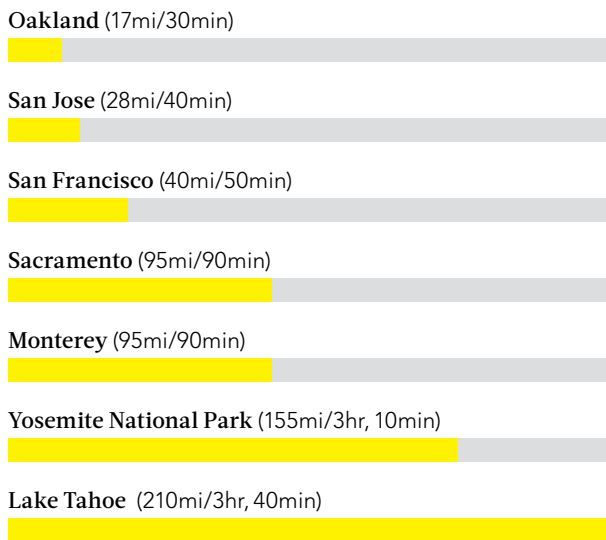
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- > **Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART).** Includes stops at West Dublin/Pleasanton and Dublin/Pleasanton. 510.464.7134, bart.gov
- > **County Connection.** Bus service throughout Contra Costa County, including Danville. 925.676.7500, cccta.org
- > **Wheels bus.** Operated by the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority, Wheels offers connections to Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and County Connection. 925.455.7555, wheelsbus.com

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 - > **Oakland International Airport (OAK),** 17 miles from the Tri-Valley, 510.563.3300, oaklandairport.com
 - > **San Francisco International Airport (SFO),** 40 miles from the Tri-Valley, 650.821.8211, flysfo.com
 - > **San Jose International Airport (SJC),** 28 miles from the Tri-Valley, 408.392.3600, flysanjose.com



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