

# Very Best Things to Eat

THE 2007 FOOD ISSUE: The 35 most unforgettable dishes. The year's most exciting chefs. PLUS: Is SF killing its restaurants?

# San Francisco



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A barcode is located below the text.

...those who shine the brightest are from western Sonoma and Mendocino. Cork's minimalist room has a marble-and-granite counter, benches with throw pillows, and rust-hued walls. Even the food reflects an ethos of restraint. A fine layer of mascarpone and cucumber fills a delicate sandwich. A hint of truffle oil graces a prosciutto, parmesan, and arugula panino. Raw, shredded Brussels sprouts mingle with cubes of sharp pecorino in an inspired salad. Marinates pride themselves on embracing life's little pleasures. Cork is right in. (S.H.) 317 OHNSON ST. (AT BRIDGEWAY), 415-332-2975. **DW** ★★½ (11/05)

## Dry Creek Kitchen

HEALDSBURG

## Best wine bar

**1. OTTIMISTA ENOTECA-CAFÉ** The preferred hangout for polished Marina girls who come to sip northern Italian varietals and split plates of cheese-stuffed arancini. Nearby sports bar attendees, take note. 1838 UNION ST., S.F., 415-674-8400.

(J.S.) 317 HEALDSBURG AVE. (AT MATHESON ST.), 97-431-0330. **\$\$\$** ★★½ (1/05)

this north Indian standard in the Lower Haight. 293 FILLMORE ST. S.F., 415-626-1628.

**3. NAAN-N-CURRY** The go-to pusher of quick-service curries and vindaloes at dirt-cheap prices. Locations all over the city make it almost too easy for you to get a spicy-greasy fix. 642 IRVING ST. S.F., 415-664-7225; 533 JACKSON ST. S.F., 415-693-0499; 336 O'FARRELL ST. S.F., 415-346-1443; 690 VAN NESS AVE., S.F., 415-775-1349; 2366 TELEGRAPH AVE., BERKELEY, 510-841-6266.

## Best Mexican restaurant

**1. TRES AGAVES** Sure, there's soulful food from Mexico's Jalisco region, but we have a feeling it might be the 110-plus blue-agave tequilas behind the bar that swayed your vote. 130 TOWNSEND ST. S.F., 415-227-0500.

**2. MAMACITA** Owners Vintage 415 make it hard not to like Mamacita. Everything is easy on the eyes, from Sam Josi's artfully presented, sustainable Mexican to the alluring throngs downing margaritas at the bar. 2317 CHESTNUT ST. S.F., 415-346-8494.

**3. MAYA** Maya is a newcomer to the list, but it's been a local fixture since Richard Sandoval opened this offshoot of his NYC smash here in 1999. Think mole poblano and langosta y camarones. 303 SECOND ST. S.F., 415-543-2928.

## Best wine bar

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**2. HIDDEN VINE** When you want some privacy, you tuck into this cozy subterranean alcove near Union Square for regional tasting flights and plates of artisanal California cheese. 620 POST ST. S.F., 415-674-3567.

**3. CAV WINE BAR & KITCHEN** Pamela Busch turned the wine bar concept on its head with a Cal-Med menu that complements her far-reaching wine list—not the other way around.

1666 MARKET ST. S.F., 415-437-1770. ■

with creamy polenta and long-cooked squash, and Petrale sole with swiss chard, potatoes, and salsa verde. Here you feel the spirit of an easygoing restaurant, with a waitstaff whose laid-back approach never slips into lassitude. From start to finish, Harvest Moon strikes a subtle chord. Though familiar, it's not the empty echo of canned pop music but the soft, endearing rhythms of a lullaby. (J.S.) 487 FIRST ST. W. (AT NAFA ST.), 707-933-8160. **\$\$\$ DRW** ★★★ (10/06)

## Sol Food

SAN RAFAEL

☉ Sol Hernandez's likable Puerto Rican restaurant serves plantains in more ways than you probably knew existed, each dish tastier than you could possibly imagine. Twice-fried, mashed with olive oil, or coated with Monterey jack cheese, they alone would be worth a trip. But in addition to those plantains and her superb steak and oregano-marinated chicken, the humble legume gets the royal treatment at Hernandez's hands. Cooked with vegetable oil instead of the traditional lard—this is San Rafael, after all—Hernandez's red and black beans are wholly inauthentic and absolutely irresistible. The mood is relaxed and lively, and the corner restaurant—a spin-off of her 14-seat bodega a block away—is splashed with sunny island hues, including the exterior's now-notorious lime green. One

## Terra

ST. HELENA

☉ Hiro Sone has set the wine country's standards and one of the region's worst commutes. His bus-and-forth between San Francisco and wine country has done no apparent disservice to Terra. Its menu bounces between expectations with such as plump parmesan-crusted oysters perched on pork belly in blue-vinegar sauce. Serene casual and nonchalant and desserts like ricotta pie with buttermilk cream hold your interest through the end of a satisfyingly enjoyable Terra has long been a local favorite. For San Franciscans, it's a must-visit that no one should have to make more than once a week. (J.S.) RAILROAD AVE. (AT A ST.), 707-963-8931. **\$ DRW** ★★★ (6/06)