



# NapaLife

**For those who live in Napa Valley –  
and those who wish they did...**

An Insider's Look at Napa Valley

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## Michael Chiarello's new Bottega (maybe) restaurant and NapaStyle store

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Dinner Specials at Napa Valley Restaurants

Michael Chiarello's new restaurant at V Marketplace in Yountville will be called Bottega if he can clear the naming issues. It will occupy the northwest ground floor that used to contain Café Kenyon, two conference rooms and part of the Cravings space .

The entrance will be from the patio in back, and it will have 150 seats altogether, with extensive outdoor restaurant and lounge seating in the existing patios with awnings and heaters as needed.

It will be opened up a lot, with an inviting lounge and bar in today's present large western conference room, plus a garden room on the north, all open with French doors when the weather is nice.

Inside, Michael is expanding the small Café Kinyon dining area and taking the wall way back through the open kitchen. It's expected to open in September.

His new NapaStyle retail store and deli will be across the patio in the bottom floor of the back building that held Cucina a la Carte and V Wine Cellar. This store and deli should open in June.

The café/deli will be large, with a wine bar, open kitchen, a wide selection of Italian items including bulk olive oil, cheeses, house-made salume.

Michael knows how important it is to patrons to see the chef, and he's going to have an office on site to make it easy for him to be there at both lunch and dinner. He also says they food will be a bit more Italian than Californian as it was in the past. "As I get older, I get more traditional," he admits.

V Wine Cellar is moving to the front of the main building and is expected to open in time for A Taste of Yountville March 22.

Ironically, Michael's old company, Real Restaurants, has withdrawn completely from the Vintage Estates property that includes V Marketplace. It was running the catering and food service for the property, intended to open a pizzeria in the Cucina space, and signed up to replace Compadres with an upscale restaurant. It no longer is involved in them, though it continues to run Tra Vigne in St. Helena, where Michael Chiarello and his food became famous.

Michael's presence at should give V Marketplace a big boost as it remakes itself.

Before Real Restaurant's signed on, Thomas Keller was planning to offer the catering at Vintage Properties, which also includes Vintage Inn and the Villagio, but that agreement also evaporated.

The former Compadres space is now being used for banquets, and the loss of the conference rooms to Bottega will reinforce that use. Fortunately, the NapaStyle café and deli will be reasonable, so locals will once again find an affordable place to eat in Yountville.

### **Elements coming to old Azzurro site**

Rich Poliak plans to open Elements Restaurant and Enoteca in the former Pizza Azzurro site in mid May.

It will feature small plates at tables and a wine/food bar. The food will be "like Zuzu," says Poliak, but more varied with some Mediterranean, some Asian and some Baja style. It will be open for lunch, which should help revitalize that section of town as the new office building and Avia Hotel open.

It will feature wines by the glass and sell wine at retail. The wines will include local wines and those from around the world, many from small producers. Michael Holcomb of Coldwell Banker Commercial Brokers of the Valley handled the deal.

By the way, if you've noticed an explosion of enotecas, it's just the Italian word for wine cellar.

### **The person to see about restaurant space**

Cathy D'Angelo Holmes of the same office of Coldwell Banker Commercial Brokers of the Valley was the broker for Pizza Azzurro, Ubuntu and Bleaux Magnolia. She's become the person to see for downtown restaurant space, though she handles other commercial space, too.

She's involved in most of the new restaurant sites, and reminds us that the proposed restaurant space in the Zeller Building has outdoor seating in front and between it and Anette's Chocolate. You can call Cathy at 257-5680.

### **La Toque sets tentative date**

Ken Frank has formally announced the move of his La Toque restaurant to the Westin Verasa on the Napa River next to Copia and the Oxbow Market.

Acclaimed chef Frank will also supervise the other food service at the hotel, including the information space used for breakfasts and other meals.

The move had been reported here long ago.

The restaurant is expected to open in early fall, and La Toque remains open in Rutherford at the Caymus Inn until then. There's no replacement yet.

### **Locals' specials**

A new feature of *NapaLife* will be a regular list of specials for locals, most during the week.

It's highlighted in the table at the end of the *NapaLife* text this week, but will be included in the calendar listing in the future.

Thanks for the idea go to Donna Leverenz of Sherwin Family Vineyards, who many of you know from Meadowood and other venues as a wine expert.

And all restaurants are invited to submit their specials to [paul@napalife.com](mailto:paul@napalife.com).

### **Popular '70s deli returning**

Jerry and Judy Nunn intend to re-establish their Nunn's Cheese Barn, a popular deli in downtown Napa in the 1970s and '80s.

It was in the 1400 block of Main Street the, but this reincarnation will be part of a 10-room inn that they intend to develop at the southeast corner of Seminary and Clay streets downtown.

The corner house, which dates from 1906, will have five guest rooms and the garage on Clay will be torn down. A barn-themed deli will replace it and will have five guest rooms upstairs.

### **Ubuntu scores with *New York Times***

The *New York Times* has picked Ubuntu as one of the ten best new restaurants in America (outside New York City, at least). It's profiling the ten, two per week, on Wednesday, so the review is a few weeks off, but it's the last one, which implies that it's number one!

If you haven't been by recently, I suggest you try it again. I found significant change for the better in the first few months it was open, and its food is certainly innovative, fresh and delicious.

### **Munching at the Oxbow**

I've now eaten at every venue at the Oxbow Public Market, and I can say every experience has been great.

This past week, I hit Taylor's, a delightful place to lunch on a warm day outside – or inside if it's cold or wet. The long lines are just like those in St. Helena, so come early.

The food is well known: traditional drive-in food plus a famous ahi burger, a classic Cobb salad and more.

I had a normal hamburger, which was excellent, though I'd skip the sauce for ketchup, and stole some friends' French fries, also very good. I had to skip wine that day, but noticed some incredible deals for Napa: A glass of Bandit Chardonnay for \$4, a half bottle of Merryvale Chardonnay or Frog's Leap Sauvignon Blanc (my favorite) for only \$12, and a

whole bottle of Bandit Chardonnay for \$12, Chappellet Chenin Blanc for \$15.

I can't figure out why they don't have any cheap reds, but you can get Wingnut Zin for \$15 or a glass for \$5.

On the other hand, Taylor's also offers 2003 Shafer Hillside Cabernet for \$295 or Phelps Insignia for \$225!

And corkage is a steep \$1.

If you're at the Oxbow Market late in the day — it's a great place to meet some new friends at Oxbow Wine Merchants — and Model Bakery sells the day's leftover bread for half price.

### **Rôtisario's luscious pork—and chicken**

Last week, I grabbed a porchetta (rotisserie-roasted pork) sandwich from Rôtisario.

Fortunately, I ran into an old friend, for it was excellent but huge. I can't imagine how anyone could eat it but a high school football player. It's \$8 and they'll add French fries with aioli or roasted potatoes for \$3 more.

If the portions were smaller, and the price a little less, it would be perfect.

Rôtisario also offers chicken, pork, steak and meatloaf plates, and chicken salad sandwiches as well as salads.

A foodie reader writes, "This is the best rotisserie chicken I have ever had. The birds are big — free range from Fulton Valley Farm — and we get four plus meals out of each bird. I plan to serve this chicken to company."

It was not quite warm enough to sit outside for me, but many people were enjoying the new picnic tables overlooking the river.

They also offer whole and half chickens to go, plus chicken or pork dinners to take home for dinner.

Pica Pica seems to have found its fans, too; the line at noon stretched across the room but moved quickly.

### **The evolution of First Squeeze**

First Squeeze downtown launched a new menu last week; it's no longer just a juice bar, but an eclectic eatery. It now serves favorite dishes from around the world in a casual, affordable ambience.

That includes breakfast selections like huevos rancheros, omelets, and Benedicts that includes free coffee from two North-Bay micro roasters.

For lunch, it offers a French dip, Chinese chicken salad and an assortment of sandwiches and wraps. In total it has over 75 items on the menu.

And it claims to still be the only place in town to offer fresh squeezed juice combinations such as carrot, beet and ginger. Yum...

Fresh Squeeze is on First Street next to the sad plaza that should be the jewel of Napa.

### **Lady of America returns with smoothies**

After Lady of America's local franchise closed in River Park on Imola, Megan Pierce bought the local franchise and plans to reopen at 1850 Soscol Ave. near Lincoln.

It will also have a smoothie bar. But can men patronize it? An interesting question as state law would seem to prohibit discrimination based on sex...

### **More cooking classes in Napa Valley**

Here's another place for cooking classes in Napa Valley:

Kent and DJ Nielsen, the resident chefs of Cooks and Books and Corks, can be found conducting cooking classes and private events at several estate and winery locations.

They also give their own classes at their home, including creating a three-course meal.

Classes start at \$250 per person all inclusive, but their most popular class is a two-day basic skills classic designed for both the beginner and the experienced cook, to make cooking fun and easy.

The class will introduce you to the foundation needed to begin exploring and creating exciting meals.

This hands-on class concludes with a graduation dinner prepared by the class.

The fee is \$495 per person and a guest may join you for the final dinner at 4 p.m. on day two.

Contact them through [www.cooksbookscorks.com](http://www.cooksbookscorks.com) or call 965-9409.

### **Spring special at Silverado Resort**

Stay in a resort guestroom at Silverado Resort for \$99 through April 10 excluding Saturday nights, though the rate does not include resort fee of \$20 per night, so I guess it's really \$119 per night...

Occupancy tax is additional.

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