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OF THE CITY

Highbrow CHOCOLATE, handmade POTTERY, and FITFLUENCER studios: It's Silicon Valley, unplugged.

EAT

NEW RESTAURANT

Protégé
250 California Ave., Palo Alto, 650-494-4181
When two French Laundry alumni launched their first restaurant in the heart of Silicon Valley, it was going to be a big deal. So it was with much hype that, after more than a year of delays, executive chef Anthony Secviar and master sommelier Dennis Kelly opened their doors. Serving artful New American fare with Spanish, French, Eastern European, and Japanese influences, Protégé more than lived up to its promise. Enjoy a swank à la carte lounge, a tasting-menu-only dining room, and a cheese cart curated by acclaimed cheesemaker Soyoung Scanlan of Andante Dairy. The short rib pithivier, the world's chicest meat pie, is not to be missed. **Runner-up:** Salt Wood Kitchen & Oysterette, Marina

HANDMADE PASTA

Pasta Armellino
14560 Big Basin Way, Saratoga, 408-216-8838
Michelin-starred chef Peter Armellino has gone low—well, lower—brow for his latest venture. Armellino, who has long made his own pasta at the Plumed Horse, seems liberated to be rolling dough instead of turning tweezers here. But his artistry is still on display in the dough room, where passersby can peer in on trays of hand-wrapped gnocchetti



and orechiette. Upscale frills like uni and truffle oil do make appearances here despite the back-to-basics vibe; Armellino can't help himself. **Runner-up:** Vina Enoteca, Palo Alto

CHOCOLATE SHOP

Plumed Horse Chocolaterie by Angelica
14572 Big Basin Way, Saratoga, 408-867-4711
As you'd expect from a bonbon called the Habañero Hottie, the morsels coming out of Angelica Duarte's shop are not only exquisite looking—they're also bona fide flavor bombs. Duarte, a former Plumed Horse server turned artisan chocolate maker, opened the shop next door late last year. How highly regarded are her creations? The Plumed Horse recently ditched its cheese cart in favor of her handiwork. **Runner-up:** Alexander's Patisserie, Mountain View and Cupertino

POWER BREAKFAST

Mayfield Bakery & Café
855 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, 650-853-9200
Ever since Steve Jobs first showed up here for breakfast with just his iPad for company, Mayfield has welcomed a stream of copycatting venture capitalists. They flock here for housemade croissants; avocado toast gussied up with grapefruit, cilantro, and chili; corned beef hash with potatoes from the restaurant's farm; and a whiff of that old Jobsian magic. Also, for custom drip coffee made from a choice of beans from sister establishment RoastCo in Oakland. **Runner-up:** Madera, Menlo Park

LOUNGE

[esc]
Four Seasons Silicon Valley, 2050 University Ave., East Palo Alto, 650-566-1200
Hotel lounges are often unremarkable way stations where you wait in purgatory for a room to be cleaned. Not in this Valley, however, and certainly not at this hotel. Named appropriately for the escape key on a computer, this

lounge is a place where guests happily hang out on plush couches and at high-top tables, eating from the french fry bar and sipping the hotel's signature red, Blend 122, made by Byington Vineyards of Santa Cruz. **Runner-up:** Jack Rose Libation House, Los Gatos

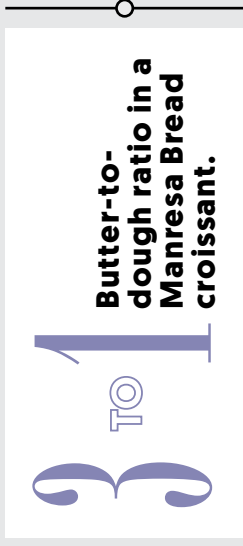
ARTISAN BREAD

Manresa Bread
271 State St., Los Altos, 650-946-2293

Flour, water, and yeast: three simple ingredients that turn majestic in the hands of Manresa Bread head baker Avery Ruzicka. As expected from the offshoot of a three-Michelin-star restaurant, this bakery sweats the details, from importing its own wheat berries and ancient grains (which are stone-milled in-house daily) to hand-shaping every long-fermented loaf and perfectly coiled croissant. And better yet, it continues to expand. Look for a new downtown Campbell location later this year. **Runner-up:** The Midwife and the Baker, Mountain View

BEER GARDEN

Wursthall
310 Baldwin Ave., San Mateo, 650-931-4282
When does a biergarten spark national buzz even before its doors have opened? When it's opened in partnership with culinary savant J. Kenji López-Alt, whose online column The Food Lab is obsessed over by cooking nerds. Never mind the six sous-vide circulators and the transglutaminase meat glue; the German-inflected food here soars with currywurst fried potatoes and a chicken schnitzel sandwich as big as your head. Of the 28 beers on tap, standouts include Braserie Dupont's Saison



TOP: JIM SULLIVAN; BELOW: COURTESY OF PLUMED HORSE CHOCOLATERIE

COURTESY OF PRUNEYARD CINEMAS

Dupont and the Andechs Helles, a lager produced in a Benedictine monastery outside Munich. **Runner-up:** Steins, Mountain View and Cupertino

SPLURGE MEAL

Adega
1614 Alum Rock Ave., San Jose, 408-926-9075
Chefs Jessica Carreira and David Costa had a modest dream: to elevate the cuisine of their Portuguese heritage and to do it in the Little Portugal neighborhood where Carreira grew up. With Adega, which offers three-, five-, and seven-course tasting menus—as well as one of the largest selections of Portuguese wines in the country—they've more than realized that dream, garnering San Jose's first Michelin star. **Runner-up:** Manresa, Los Gatos

PIZZA

Howie's Artisan Pizza
855 El Camino Real, Ste. 60, Palo Alto, 650-327-4992
It's all about the crust—in this case, one fashioned from bread-flour dough that takes two days to rise before being baked. The results are puffy, perfectly charred edges and a chewy interior, no matter if it's the classic margherita pizza or a baked potato pie. Owner Howard Bulka has a fine-dining pedigree, with stints at Marché in Menlo Park and La Toque in Napa Valley. Leave it to him to come up with a corrugated-cardboard-lined tray to keep the pizza crisp at the table. **Runner-up:** Oak & Rye, Los Gatos

BUTCHER SHOP

Belcampo
855 El Camino Real, Ste. 161, Palo Alto, 650-561-3492
It's the rare butcher shop that not only is certified organic but also controls its entire supply chain. Belcampo does its own slaughtering and retails everything it raises on 25,000 acres near Mount Shasta, from grass-fed prime rib to more esoteric cuts like whole lamb neck or goat shoulder. If you work up an appetite perusing the meat case, order a barbacoa burrito or Philly cheesesteak to go. **Runner-up:** Dittmer's, Los Altos

SHOP

LOCAL GIFTS

Makers Market
378 Santana Row, St. 1120, San Jose, 408-320-1868
This purveyor of American handmade gifts hosts outdoor fairs throughout the year, making it possible to meet the jewelry designers, glassblowers, woodworkers, and leather artisans behind its wares. Browse Mountainside Jewelry's one-of-a-kind hammered-brass earrings, BoundByHand leather journals, and Coco Chispa's California-inspired pottery. You'll also find maker demos on Saturdays at the new and more spacious Santana Row location. **Runner-up:** Ladera Garden and Gifts, multiple locations

INTERACTIVE

SHOE STORE

A Runner's Mind
1111 Howard Ave., Burlingame, 650-437-2217
Enough with chat bots and shipping charges. Here you'll find knowledgeable humans to geek out over your gait and send you off with shoes that fit. While the 1,700-square-foot store is worth perusing for its collection of On, Hoka, and Nux runners, it's also a vibrant workout hub, with 2,000 square feet of outdoor gym space. Novices and pros can also join group walks and runs throughout the week. **Runner-up:** Road Runner Sports, San Carlos

TOY STORE

Talbot's Toyland
445 S. B St., San Mateo, 650-931-8100
Don't cry for Toys "R" Us. We still have this 65-year-old toy store in San Mateo, which packs its 30,000 square feet with an impressive array of toys, crafts, books, and collectibles. Budding hobbyists will



marvel at the model cars and trains, some of which whistle and chug along on tracks overhead. Looking for a bike? Neighboring Talbot's Cyclery has a vast selection of two- and three-wheelers. **Runner-up:** Five Little Monkeys, Burlingame

INDEPENDENT

BOOKSTORE

Linden Tree Books
265 State St., Los Altos, 650-949-3390
Come for the cozy vibe and the mix of bestsellers, indies, and YA titles. Stay for community initiatives like the Teen Board, which helps plan events; the Page Turners discussion group for elementary school kids; and local-author events. The shop is also known for its picture-book biographies and a menagerie of hand puppets. **Runner-up:** Books Inc., various locations

PLAY

MOVIE THEATER

Pruneyard Cinemas
1875 S. Bascom Ave., Campbell, 408-717-4712
When you're sick of Netflix and chilling, opt for this newly renovated independent theater inside the Pruneyard Shopping Center. A push of a button from your ultra-comfy recliner summons a server delivering elevated movie snacks (including bacon-cheese-and-umami popcorn), entrées, desserts, craft cocktails, wine, and beer. **Runner-up:** The Stanford Theatre, Palo Alto

KIDS MUSEUM

Curiodyssey

1651 Coyote Point Dr., San Mateo, 650-342-7755
At this often-overlooked science playground and wildlife refuge nestled inside Coyote Point Recreation Area, kids can get up close for daily otter and bobcat feedings, spot a falcon in the walk-through aviary, or tinker with hands-on science exhibits. First Friday Family Nights afford grown-ups a creative way to multitask: Meet up with friends for wine and beer at the makeshift bar while letting the little ones burn off their post-nap buzz. **Runner-up:** The Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose



DIY ART

Scribble Me Happy

411 S. B St., San Mateo, 650-343-4119
This charming art studio—meets—crafty gift boutique hosts regular adult workshops that give even the most addicted screen junkie reason to disconnect. With expert instruction from co-owners Stacie Yun and Brenda Dos Santos Szeto, you'll learn how to carve a stamp, etch glass, or write calligraphy—red wine included. Daytime mommy-and-me classes, open-studio sessions, and summer camps offer kids a multitude of ways to get messy as well. A good venue for baby showers or children's birthday parties, the intimate space also sells stationery, prints, books, and toys by local artists. **Runner-up:** Create It Ceramics and Glass Studio, Palo Alto

TECH TEMPLE

Apple Park Visitor Center

10600 N. Tantau Ave., Cupertino, 408-961-1560
With its gleaming glass facade across the street from the company's "spaceship" headquarters, this Apple Store on steroids offers all the iGadgets you want, plus Cupertino-only exclusives like Apple baby onesies. Using an augmented reality iPad app, visitors can even take a virtual tour of the 12,000-employee campus. For an IRL glimpse, head up to the rooftop terrace and unleash your selfie stick. **Runner-up:** Intel Museum, Santa Clara

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South of the City

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BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Hotel Nia

200 Independence Dr., Menlo Park, 650-900-3434

This buzzy 250-room modernist hotel, a stone’s throw from Facebook HQ, is tricked out with all the latest tech amenities: ticketless mobile valet service, endless charging stations, and HDTVs galore. While the sleek Verve café works for an a.m. power meeting, the (curiously named) Porta Blu restaurant and its fire-pit-lined courtyard are where you want to unplug at night—or, you know, pitch your app. Look out for the “delight bike” delivering sunscreen, ice cream, and other treats poolside. *Runner-up:* **Rosewood Hotel, Menlo Park**

HELP

SHOE REPAIR

The Cobblery

410 S. California Ave., Palo Alto, 650-323-0409

Whether you’re looking to resole a pair of loafers or restore some prized vintage heels, this 80-year-old family-owned shoe and leather repair shop is a footwear Genius Bar. Ask for fourth-generation shoe doctor Jessica Roth. No time for pickup? She’ll ship your shoes via UPS for a nominal fee. *Runner-up:* **Model Shoes, Mountain View**

DAY SPA

The Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay

1 Miramontes Point Rd., Half Moon Bay, 650-712-7000

As if its stunning Pacific vistas weren’t enough, the Ritz offers a 16,000-square-foot spa loaded with 15 treatment rooms, a coed whirlpool, steam rooms, saunas, and a renovated fitness center. Ask about the seasonal secret spa menu, which for summer includes the 80-minute Rodeo facial. *Runner-up:* **The Spa at Four Seasons Silicon Valley, East Palo Alto**

BOUTIQUE GYM

Lift Exercise

3050 S. Delaware St., Ste. 120, San Mateo, 650-477-2638

Menlo Park “fitfluencer” Erin Wetzel recently opened the second San Mateo location of her popular studio, offering a trifecta of trending workouts: spin, ballet barre, and heated high-intensity interval training. Studio snobs will appreciate the spa-like perks, including cold aromatherapy eucalyptus towels, gratis beauty products, and non-frumpy activewear. The clincher: Members get complimentary childcare while they sweat. *Runner-up:* **Orangetheory Fitness, multiple locations**

MANI-PEDI

AvantGard Spa

1151 Greenwood Ave., San Carlos, 650-591-1498

This nail salon takes hygiene to the extreme, insisting that every set of nail tools be sterilized in a medical autoclave and that basins be cleaned with medical-grade disinfectants. But it’s not just about sanitation here: It’s also about restoring sanity. The hydrating paraffin wax AvantGard Manicure (\$40) and the therapeutic Himalayan Warm Salt Stone Pedicure (\$60) start with a heated neck pillow and an herbal foot bath, followed by a warm-stone leg and foot massage and a meticulous polish. *Runner-up:* **Lunula Nail Spa, Burlingame**

PARENTS’ RESOURCE

Parents Place

200 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, 650-688-3040

Trying to sleep train your baby? Tamp down tantrums? Or just learn some new counterinsurgency tactics? Parents Place—a service of the nonprofit Jewish Family and Children’s Services—has a course, consultant, or support group for every need. Breastfeeding moms should look no further than family nurse practitioner Cherie Tannenbaum, a 30-year veteran lactation consultant. *Runner-up:* **Healthy Horizons, multiple locations**