

THE EAST BAY MONTHLY

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LARGEST CIRCULATION IN THE EAST BAY

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❖❖❖ Judging by the long line on a recent Friday night it seems that North Berkeley's petite **Gregoire** is a qualified success. The reason? Well, there's takeout and then there's *takeout*. Gregoire is definitely of the latter variety. The concept is simple: Grab a paper menu, check off the items you want, and hand it to the friendly cashier. While you wait for your food, you can either watch chef-owner Gregoire Jacquet maneuver his way through the kitchen and pretend it's your own private cooking show, or have a seat at one of the outside tables.

In any given month Gregoire's menu includes seafood, beef, chicken, and vegetarian dishes that best reflect the seasonal bounty. Some mainstays are the excellent potato dishes and a very good chocolate mousse. Meals are served in corrugated, recycled cardboard boxes that keep food hot up to 20 minutes.

Before arriving in America, Jacquet apprenticed at various prestigious restaurants in his native France. In the States, Jacquet practiced his craft at the sumptuous Ritz-Carlton (in San Francisco and Boston) and San Francisco's renowned Amelio's.

The idea to open up his own restaurant came about when Jacquet realized that people were tired of the same old boring takeout and wanted something different. "After 9/11 people don't necessarily want to go out. I provide a service for sick people and well people; everyone who wants to eat well," says Jacquet, "It feels good to make people happy. And the restaurant is so small that I'm able to keep the overhead low."

Gregoire, 2109 Cedar Street, Berkeley, (510) 883-1893; www.gregoirerestaurant.com.

—M.T.