



The Examiner.

So many choices!

Hungry? Overwhelmed by the countless eating options in S.F. and around the Bay? Check out this sampler of sure-to-please places that won't leave you asking "Why did we ever go THERE?"

BY TRACIE BLOOM
Special to The Examiner

XYZ
181 Third St., S.F.
(415) 817-7836

I went to XYZ with a friend, as we were craving the rarified, globetrotter-sustaining air of the W Hotel as well as Chef Malachi Harland's buzzworthy cuisine. What we got was an embarrassment of riches. The people-watching? A little boring. The Brazilians next to us, dressed in taupes, all ordered the same thing. However, XYZ's incredible wine buyer, Michael Garcia, poured opulent wines like Peter Michael's 2000 "Moulin Rouge" and led a tour of expert dishes.

Standouts included the ravioli of spring greens with mint and almonds, the braised-yet-crispy pork shoulder with mushrooms, and the roasted duck with the tastiest brussels sprouts ever to touch a bacon jus. The much-discussed hominy cakes were just OK, but the sexy café mocha pot de crème took up the slack. XYZ is expensive, but money's probably no object if you're ordering a \$24 (albeit luscious) glass of Inskillin icewine.

Gregoire
2109 Cedar St., Berkeley
(510) 883-1893

After a morning of tooling around in the East Bay, my friend and I found ourselves

noshing on cheap, fabulous French delights at the take-out window of Gregoire, a chi-chi little hotspot of sunny, daytime street picnicking just around the corner from Chez Panisse. As if chef Gregoire Jacquet's achingly fresh Dungeness crab, tomato and avocado salad on crostini wasn't enough, we splurged on a flank steak sandwich with creamy blue St. Augur cheese and walnuts. Throw in frites with sundried tomato aioli (secretly I wished for ketchup!) and a too-bitter mixed green salad with goat cheese dressing and dried cranberries, and you've got a couple of stuffed city girls wishing they didn't have to face bridge traffic. A couple of bottles of French lemonade and a promise to return for chocolate bread pudding, and we were off, wishing we'd had room to stay for the dinner being prepped by the small, friendly staff in the tiny, beautifully tiled kitchen. Viva Gregoire!



It's worth it: XYZ (located in the swanky Hotel W) is pricey but delivers the fine-dining experience you would hope to find.

Todai Japanese Seafood Buffet
1901 Junipero Serra Blvd.
Suite A, Daly City
(650) 997-0882

When I started going to mov-

ies at the new-ish Century 20 Theaters by the Daly City BART station, I became way too curious about Todai. Families always seemed to be lined up outside; it was a mystery! Then I