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SAN MATEO downtown

Vibrant Dining, European-Style Boutiques, and More

The mid-point between San Francisco and Palo Alto, San Mateo has gone through a variety of phases throughout the years, reaching a glamorous heyday back in the 70's when department store I. Magnin catered to the beautifully dressed women of the surrounding area and the Benjamin Franklin Hotel was the hub of social activity. Subsequent decades were tough on San Mateo's downtown, but there is a palpable sense of renewal. New shops and restaurants seem to be opening weekly, and Third and Fourth Avenues are bustling.

We highly recommend starting a San Mateo excursion with lunch atop **Draeger's** gourmet food emporium. Lunch at a grocery store you might ask? Well, this is no ordinary grocery store. When it was opened a decade ago, it was considered the second largest gourmet food shop in the world—the first being Harrod's in London. Draeger's restaurant Viognier was designed and run by Gary Danko. Over the years, a succession of bright and talented chefs have maintained Danko's standards and kept the restaurant at the top of its game. Currently, Chef Preston Dishman is blending classic French techniques with California's freshest ingredients. The wine list at Viognier is pretty terrific, too, earning top awards from *Wine Spectator* year after year. You'll want to browse through Draeger's fabulous offerings after lunch and then venture out to downtown San Mateo. *222 East 4th Avenue.*

Antique lovers will swoon over the selection at **Collective Antiques**. From Art Deco jewelry to European furnishings to Asian artwork, this elegant antiques shop is a must. The antiques buyers here are a discerning bunch. They comb the globe for some of the finest pieces available. *55 East 3rd Avenue.* Further down 3rd Avenue you'll find **Nouvelle Vogue**, an exquisite little boutique that would be at home on Paris's Rue de Grenelle. The shop specializes in exquisite wedding dresses, bridesmaid dresses, and evening gowns. The personalized attention that the owners offer ensures that every bride looks her best on the big day. *132 East 3rd Avenue.*

Brides, grooms, and just about anyone who loves fine jewelry



should make the effort to stop into **Christensen & Rafferty Fine Jewelry**. This gem shop creates beautiful custom work and also carries fabulous pieces by designers like Oscar Heyman, Stephen Webster, and Tournaire. *181 Second Avenue, Suite 242.*

If you're ready for a little respite, we've discovered one of the most unusual places to stop for a coffee, frozen yogurt, or pastry—**Clear Optometry**. Yes, you did read that correctly. This innovative, full-service eyeglass shop is patterned after some of Beverly Hills' top shops that cater to the stars. While you're browsing for designer shades, you can indulge in a latté and scone. If you're not in the

market for glasses, don't worry. All are welcome to stop in for a treat. *138 East 3rd Avenue.*

For dinner in San Mateo, there are many terrific options, especially in and around "B" Street and the city's downtown movie theater. A few of our favorites include **King Fish** (*201 South "B" Street*) with its addictive Raw Bar and delicious steaks, and the newly opened **Osteria Coppa** (*139 South "B" Street*).

Osteria Coppa is helmed by Executive Chef Chana Kamen who worked his way through Italy at a number of Michelin-starred restaurants. His resume also includes San Francisco's award-winning Quince and Jardiniere. At Osteria Coppa, Kamen is committed to bringing farm-to-table contemporary Italian cuisine, and he's earning accolades and much deserved attention from the press. We're dreaming about the Tajarin with Black Truffles and the Slow Cooked Pork Shoulder with Creamy Polenta and Broccoli Raab. After a visit to Osteria Coppa you will be, too!

Another newcomer on the San Mateo dining scene is **All Spice**, a charming spot serving Indian fusion. Co-owned by Sachin Chopra and Shoshana Wolff, All Spice features a seasonal menu that incorporates California's fresh food sensibilities with the traditions of Indian cuisine. *1602 South El Camino Real.*

To finish off your day in San Mateo, indulge in a glass of wine at **750ml**, a delightful little wine bar and store that carries an eclectic variety of hand-crafted wines. *227 South San Mateo Drive.* ■