

Of Note: Holly Jolly Bites, Sips And Trips

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The Vault Garden's patio, which is festively decorated and illuminated, makes for a magical dining environment. Opposite: Kokak Chocolate's seasonal offerings include towers of boxed sweets.

This time last year, many of us were canceling plans and nixing (or remixing) wintertime rituals. Thankfully, the 2021 holiday season is shaping up to bring great joy again throughout the Bay Area, including the return of longstanding celebrations and traditions. Here's to merry meals and end-of-year getaways!

Artful Lodgers:

Sonoma's MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa recently teamed up with Uprise Art to launch an artist-in-residence series, leading to some impressive contemporary art on display at the upscale property. Be sure to step outside and view the rotating cast of five outdoor sculptures curated by the local AERENA Galleries & Gardens.

Get Cooking:

Don't just give your family another cookbook — give them the gift of a Bay Area-centric cookbook! There's the excellent *East Bay Cooks* from *Nob Hill Gazette* contributor **Carolyn Jung**. And Napa writer **Jess Lander's** *The Essential Napa Valley Cookbook* was published this year, with part of the proceeds going to Napa Valley restaurant workers impacted by the pandemic.

Latkes and Lavish Feasts:

It's an exciting month ahead at Yountville's elegant Bardessono Hotel and Spa and its Lucy Restaurant & Bar. First up is the annual Latke Throw Down, a latke-making competition that takes place December 2. And the special menus on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will include tempting dishes like slow-roasted suckling pig with black truffle polenta.

Mountain View's New "Urban Resort":

The South Bay added another notable boutique property to its repertoire a few months ago with the Shashi Hotel. It's located right in the shadow of the Googleplex and features 200 stylish rooms, along with a craft cocktail bar.

A Festive Pairing:

Healdsburg's Harmon Guest House and Marine Layer Wines are teaming up for a fun December experience with a stay at the boutique hotel and a sampling at the town's newest must-visit tasting room. The weekday-only special also includes preview bites from SingleThread's forthcoming community-minded concept, Little Saint.



A Waterfront Retreat:

Sausalito's The Inn Above Tide is surprisingly still an under-the-radar luxury staycation option. As a holiday treat to yourself, book an exciting Yoshi Tome's Sausalito package that includes insider advice from the Sushi Ran chef-owner and dinner for two at his acclaimed restaurant.

Drinks and a Show:

San Francisco Ballet's *Nutcracker* returns December 10. Consider popping into Linden & Laguna, the excellent new wine bar in Hayes Valley, before or after a performance. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, one of the City's top chefs, **Kim Alter**, offers a stellar seasonal tasting menu at Nightbird. If you're planning to catch *A Christmas Carol* at the Golden Gate Theatre, enjoy a nearby holiday tea at the San Francisco Proper Hotel (the lounge features a *Nutcracker*-themed tea) or The Ritz-Carlton (whose charming Teddy Bear Tea is always popular).

Walking (and Eating) in a Winter Wonderland:

Downtown SF's holiday magic isn't limited to the Embarcadero lights and ice-skating rink. A few blocks away, The Vault Garden has become an alfresco dining winter wonderland with nightly tree lightings, festive decor and events like a holiday-themed edition of its Drag Brunch.

Sweet Treats:

Move over fruitcakes and cookie tins — let's talk about indulgent seasonal offerings from San Francisco confectioners. Kokak Chocolates has two impressive "chocolate towers" composed of truffles and bars that make for perfect party centerpieces. And Christopher Elbow Chocolates has brought back its eight-piece holiday pie collection, featuring flavors such as pecan pie and spiced cranberry pie.

Alameda's Destination Restaurant Turns One:

As it celebrates its first anniversary this month, Alameda's already beloved neighborhood bistro, alley & vine, switches gears with a luxury-leaning six-course tasting menu, with options such as an A5 Wagyu beef preparation paired with Dom Pérignon.

Cheers to that!

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