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MYTOWNE SILICON VALLEY

WEEKEND GETAWAYS

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FIRST TAKES

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Inside!

weekend getaway

A European Getaway in the East Bay by ROBERT QUIHUIS

LOOKING TO ESCAPE THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE SILICON VALLEY? Why not a weekend getaway to Lafayette, California? Sure, it's off the beaten path, and it's probably never crossed your radar as a weekend destination, but at just under an hour's drive from the South Bay and a mere hour from the Peninsula, Lafayette is central to San Francisco and Napa – and even closer to the East Bay – making it an excellent home base for exploring all three popular destinations.



GRACIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

Just off of Mount Diablo Road, enter the shady manicured property of what looks to be an elegant French chateau. This is the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, the perfect destination for anyone who's longing for a sweet stay at a charming European inn but doesn't want to hassle the airport and a long flight.

Once inside, you'll notice the impeccable attention to detail, from the elegant chandelier that looks more like a modern art installation than a light fixture, to the handcrafted hardwood floral mosaic gracing the elevator floor.

Check-in is simple thanks to an exceptionally accommodating – and just flat-out nice – staff. The suites are spacious and comfortable and feature amenities including high-definition televisions in both the bedroom and sitting room, a Keurig stocked with coffee and teas, and, in the well-appointed bath, a large vanity, roomy tub, and high-pressure shower head (always a bonus in our book).

CREATIVE FARM-TO-TABLE CUISINE AT PARK BISTRO AND BAR

Just downstairs, dinner is served in the Park Bistro and Bar. The menu is seasonal and much of the farm-to-table ingredients are sourced locally.

First and foremost, cocktails: The Chimneysweeper, winner of the 2016 Lamorinda Art of Mixology Competition and named the "best cocktail in the East Bay" by Diablo Magazine, gets its striking ebony color from activated charcoal and its flavors from citrus, Fernet-Branca, and bitters – unique and worthy of its accolade; and the Beekeeper: light and smooth, flavored with honey and lemon from honeycomb-washed vodka and charred lemon gum syrup, topped with an airy foam whipped up from aquafaba.

For dinner, the Heirloom Tomato Salad made with tomatoes marinated in sherry vinegar and dressed with olive oil, fresh herbs, goat cheese, and croutons to start. The perfect combination of sweet, savory, and tart, enhanced by creamy cheese and crisp croutons – each bite a harmonious mouthful of flavors and textures. Then, the Ahi Tuna Crudo, fresh ahi tuna, avocado, radishes and tomatoes on

horseradish cream and drizzled with vinaigrette – the fresh, high-quality ingredients dazzle in this dish.

Entrees were especially created by Chef Frank Macias. The first entrée was a Moroccan Chicken & Corn Gnocchi; succulent chicken with a crisp savory skin, served over lentils, greens, and vegetables. For the vegetarian at the table, the chef came up with a custom dish on the spot – a lovely Corn Gnocchi: roasted corn in a cream sauce, flavored with fresh fennel and parsley. Both entrees were creative and perfectly highlighted the fresh ingredients. For dessert: a chocolate plaisir, warm chocolate molten lava cake, banana brûlée and French vanilla ice cream – a decadent ending to an excellent meal.

REST & RELAXATION

For the ultimate in self-indulgence, book a massage at The Spa at The Park, the hotel's signature spa.

The experienced massage therapist (Heather), will expertly work on specific problem areas smoothing away knots and tight muscles. The peppermint essential oils and hot towels elevate the experience to heavenly heights. The perfect bedtime send-off!

EXPLORE

After a good night's rest, start the day by exploring downtown which is conveniently located just down the street from the

hotel. Downtown Lafayette is a quaint town worth an exploratory stroll with galleries, cafes, restaurants, and shops to peruse.

There are plenty of popular hiking trails and parks to explore. The Lafayette reservoir is a good place to start. It has abundant parking, a beautiful and relatively easy trail and even boats for rent.

Lafayette is just a 20-minute drive to Oakland and another 20 minutes further to San Francisco, making it a convenient home base to San Francisco and the East Bay. Lafayette is also just an hour's drive to Napa. If you have a few days, you can stay in Lafayette and visit them all! ●

Read more about this weekend getaway at mdigitalbayarea.com/category/travel/

ABOUT ROBERT QUIHUIS

Robert is an instructional aide at a school for autism in San Jose. When he's not teaching, he enjoys drawing, watching movies, going to museums, and spending time with his wife. He will jump on any opportunity to travel, especially if it involves writing!