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A 30-Year-Old Italian Staple Will Close This Weekend

Plus, a former Zuni chef heads to Oakland, a new tasting room comes to Napa, and more intel

by Janelle Bitker | @JanelleBitker | Oct 26, 2018, 9:32am PDT

Three more days to say goodbye

Longtime Italian restaurant Il Fornaio will permanently close its San Francisco location on Sunday, October 28. For 30 years, it served pastas, pizzas, and rotisserie dishes in a white tablecloth-setting at Levi's Plaza, but a rent increase compounded by slow business in recent years and an old building meant it was finally time to leave. Il Fornaio's other Bay Area locations, including restaurants in Burlingame, Palo Alto, and San Jose, will continue to operate.

Flora gets a new chef

Former Zuni head chef Rebecca Boice has taken over as executive chef at Flora Restaurant & Bar in Uptown, Oakland. She fills a vacancy left by chef Rico Rivera, who went on to buy Penrose, a former Charlie Hallowell establishment. Boice is bringing an Italian-influenced menu to Flora, with new dishes such as focaccia, meatballs, and calia e simenza (a Sicilian snack of crispy chickpeas and pumpkin seeds).

A new Napa wine destination

Alpha Omega Collective is opening its first tasting room for all three of its wineries, Alpha Omega, Tolosa, and Perinet, in downtown Napa. The spacious tasting room at 1245 First Street, currently occupied by Capp Heritage, includes a lounge and outdoor seating. It should open this winter.

Il Fornaio/Facebook

About that Blue Bottle...

Details are emerging about the newest Blue Bottle Coffee, set to open Saturday, November 3 at 4001 Piedmont Avenue in Oakland. The red brick building, most recently A.G. Ferrari Foods, was built in 1916, and design team Lincoln Lighthill Architect is emphasizing its original brick walls, porthole windows, and terra cotta wreaths — contrasted by modern lighting, concrete tiles, and bleached ash furnishings. Blue Bottle's usual assortment of coffee drinks will be paired with pastries from the Midwife & the Baker.