

By Laura Stec

Local Flavor

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The Food Party! has been keeping it local lately.

Rendezvous Café and Catering

Hidden away east of 101 is a relatively new café called Rendezvous, part of Redwood City's Sobrato Center for Nonprofits, a group of youth development, housing, health and human service providers. Rendezvous is a program of CALSO, a California nonprofit whose parent organization Groupe SOS is headquartered in Paris.



Classified as a "social enterprise," Rendezvous offers work opportunities to the underserved of Silicon

Valley – people who dropped out of school, people with a history of incarceration, homeless youth, teen parents, etc. – and empower them to become self-sufficient through a food-oriented training program.

Employees of Rendezvous come through San Mateo County's 12-week Job Train program, and enter year-long work at Rendezvous. The goal is to take 85 people per year through the program to better employment and a better life.

Chef Charles Crossley offers a classic lunch menu including grass –fed burgers and gluten free options. I had the Minnestone soup (\$5.95), with a deep umami flavor-flave, even though the soup was vegetarian. I also enjoyed the Grownup PB & J, a grilled yum of almond butter, fig jam, melted goat cheese and caramelized red onion (\$5.95). The café keeps prices all under \$10.



It's a bright breezy café open to the public from 8 AM – 3 PM, with lots of room to set up your computer and get some good work done over the free wifi. Important to note is any 501c3 nonprofit can reserve a free conference room in the Sobrato Center for meetings or gatherings. Get details on their website.

And if you'll need food while there, or at any lunchtime gathering around town, remember Rendezvous for catering.



Tava Kitchen

Next a visit to Palo Alto's Tava Kitchen to test out its new "no boundaries" menu, a fusion of Indian and South Asian cuisine. Tava has a full-flavored focus with a modern, handmade touch, from the roti, to their spice mix and chutney's. Every item has an extra zing, and vegetables are given the respect they deserve. Match your Chicken Tikka with Crunchy Kale & Quinoa, and the Chilled Brussels Sprouts & Grapes. Or combine Braised Beef and Pineapple Gastric Glazed Sweet Potatoes with South Asian Mac & Cheese (sharp cheddar and jack cheese with a South Asian crumb topping). The Candied Pistachios make a super side much, and Slow Braised Chicken was my favorite. *Tava, any chance you'd share that recipe with Food Party! readers?*



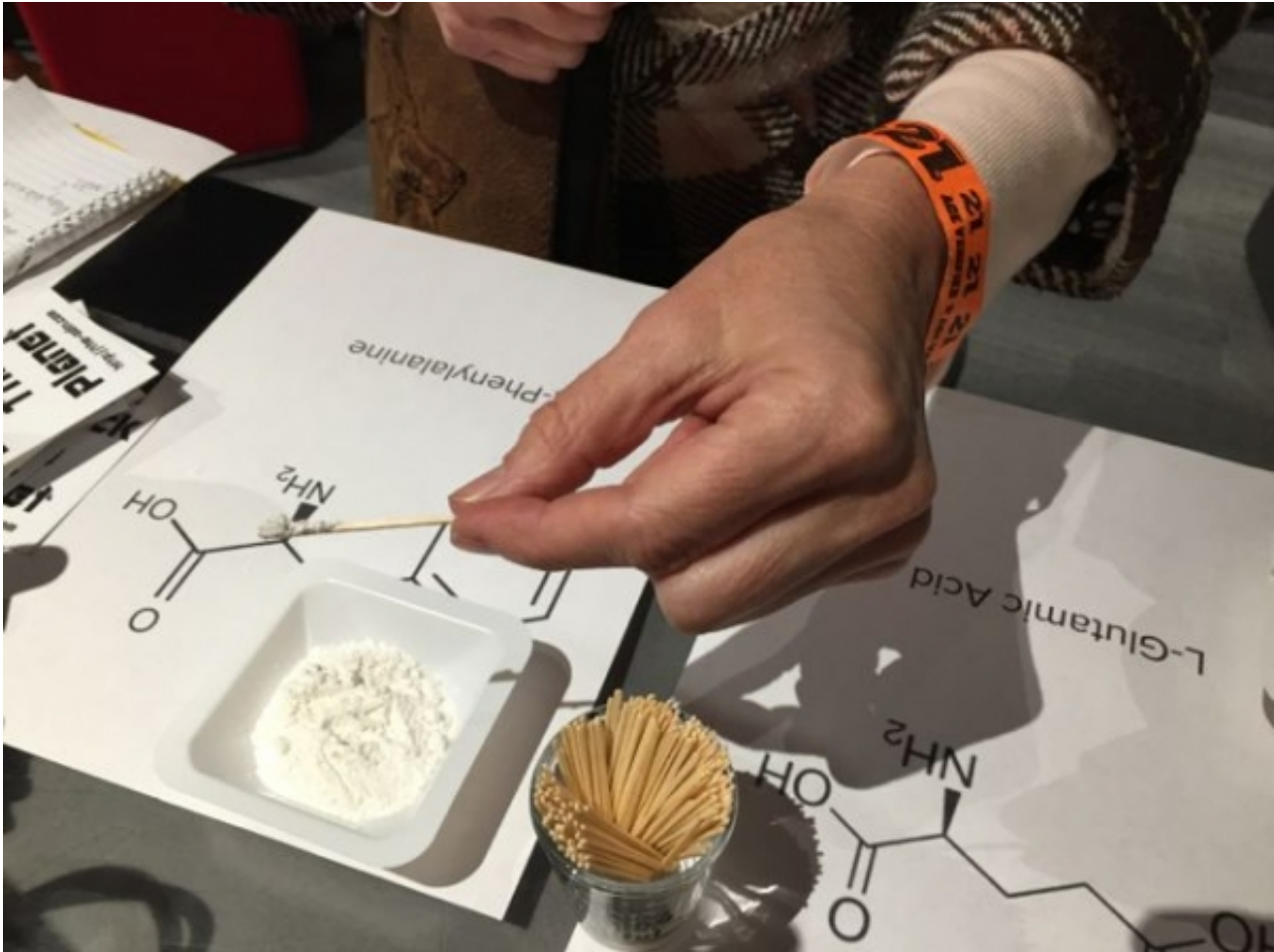
Co-founder Hasnain Zaidi opened Tava with his Duke friends Vijay Brihmadessam and Jason Pate) He's a cute, young entrepreneur, so full of positive energy, you know it transfers into his restaurant and food. I love meeting this new generation of sincerely pumped up business owners trying to change the food world. Go Tava!

The Tech Museum of Innovation

Then a stop at The Tech in San Jose this past Tuesday for Bio + Hacking. It was a one-night event, but you can still check out their ongoing Bio Design studio. Two stations caught my eye during the event. The first we built bricks out of mushrooms and agriculture waste. A mushroom "root" system grows throughout the brick to form a solid mass, super light-weight and biodegradable. They are being grown as a foam replacement for packaging and building materials, and Mycoworks CEO Sophia Wang said future uses are a possible replacement for leather.



The second station was by The Odin, an online business that sells bio hacking supplies to the public. Owner Josiah Zayner hosted an amino acid taste test. He, Ph. D, is all into "Crisper." We sample 8 of the 20 amino acids in pure form. The difference in flavor was dramatic. Glycine tasted like sugar with honey. Proline was a very complex mix of bitter and sweet. Cystein like rotten eggs, Glutamic Acid was big in umami flavor. I was fascinated thinking how one might use this in commercial food products. Who knew you could taste individual amino acids?



The Milk Pail

Lastly, a quick shout out to The Milk Pail for its staying power, 42 years and counting. I was surprised during a recent drive-by, at the intensive development surrounding this charming European produce and specialty market, off San Antonio in Mountain View, and even more surprised to see that the market survived it! Their parking lot has moved and now open, so stop by next time you are in the hood and support this classic community establishment. A great place for produce, cheeses and a lot of international foods you can find nowhere else.



Rendezvous Café and Catering

350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Redwood City

Tava Kitchen

855 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (Town and Country, behind Trader Joes)
Also San Francisco and coming soon to Santa Clara and Alameda

The Tech Museum of Innovation

201 S. Market Street, San Jose

The Milk Pail

2585 California St., Mountain View