

# M azine

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## SPRING TRAVEL

Taking trips down memory  
lane in Nepal and Ireland

**MICHAEL BAUER:**  
RESTAURANTS AND  
INNS WHERE YOU  
CAN DINE, RECLINE



## SIX OF A KIND: RESTAURANTS AT INNS

# Dine and recline

By Michael Bauer

Few activities are more pleasurable than being able to have a beautiful meal and wine and not worry about a late-night drive home. Fortunately, some exceptional meals can be found at inns and resorts in the Bay Area, creating the best of both worlds.

Sure you can dine in the city at Michael Mina and then ride upstairs to a room at the Westin St. Francis, but what we have in mind are the places that take you out of the mainstream, with food that has a sophisticated big-city demeanor.



**At Solage Resort in Calistoga, guests can dive into a large pool, above, and try exceptional dishes like Solbar's crab salad, below.**

### Solbar, Calistoga

The Solage resort at the winding end of the Silverado Trail in Calistoga features cabinlike rooms set around a beautiful pool and a Howard Backen-designed dining room. Indoors, it's warm and toasty; outside in spring and summer, the patio beckons. Chef Brandon Sharp divides his menu into comforting and light dishes; that can mean anything from a rich chicken soup and spicy pork tacos to wild pig with accompaniments such as lettuce cups and crepes.

755 Silverado Trail (at Brannan), Calistoga; (707) 226-0850 or [www.solagecalistoga.com](http://www.solagecalistoga.com). Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Main courses \$17-\$34 at dinner.



### **Erna's Elderberry house, Oakhurst**

Clearing stands of elderberry bushes to create her restaurant and Cha-teau du Sureau, Erna Kubin Clanin has created a rarefied experience in an out-of-the-way area not far from Yosemite National Park. Chef Karsten Hart creates a five-course menu that might include pan-seared cobia with pea risotto, clam-celery broth and brown butter emulsion. In addition, the inn offers cooking classes so you can eat, cook, take a turn in the spa and eat again. 48688 Victoria Lane (Highway 41), Oakhurst (Madera County); (559) 683-6800 or [elderberryhouse.com](http://elderberryhouse.com). Dinner nightly. Three courses, \$59.50; five courses, \$98. A la carte menu also available.

### **Restaurant at Meadowood, St. Helena**

Looking out over the lush grounds of Meadowood, diners in the restaurant can see impressive stands of trees, a well-manicured croquet court and the Mayacamas Mountains in the background. It's bucolic and almost surreal, especially when you're eating Christopher Kostow's beautiful food. The fixed-price menu might include such things as goat poached in whey and served with barley, dollops of goat cheese and fresh snips of wild vineyard grasses. 900 Meadowood Lane (at Silverado Trail), St. Helena; (707) 967-1200 or [www.meadowood.com](http://www.meadowood.com). Dinner Monday-Saturday. Three courses \$75; eight-course tasting menu \$155.

### **Manzanita, Lake Tahoe**

The new Ritz-Carlton Highlands, at Northstar-at-Tahoe, breaks the traditional, stuffy mold of the venerable hotel chain. The lobby has a stone fireplace in the center shaped like a silo with openings on each side, creating loads of warming places for recovering from the winter weather outside. Traci Des Jardins has created a sophisticated hotel restaurant for all seasons, with a menu based on some of her favorite dishes from San Francisco's Jardiniere, including scallops on mashed potato mouseline and black truffle nage, and bread salad with artichokes. 13031 Ritz-Carlton Highlands Court, Truckee; (530) 562-3050 or [www.manzanitalaketahoe.com](http://www.manzanitalaketahoe.com). Lunch and dinner daily. Main courses \$29-\$34 at dinner.

### **Madrona Manor, Healdsburg**

Eight wooded acres, which also contain gardens for the restaurant, create a majestic setting for this grand 22-room Victorian inn. The downstairs parlors are set aside for the restaurant, where Jesse Mallgren uses the latest techniques on his fixed-price menus. His scallop sashimi is sprinkled with soy salt; he cooks lobster sous vide and serves it with uni sauce cut with fennel and blood orange; and he makes ice cream tableside using liquid nitrogen. 1001 Westside Road (at West Dry Creek Road), Healdsburg; (707) 433-4231 or [www.madronamanor.com](http://www.madronamanor.com). Dinner Wednesday-Sunday. Fixed-price menu ranges from \$64 for three courses to \$82 for five courses.

### **Sante, Sonoma**

The thermal mineral baths that are part of the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, which opened in 1927, are one of the main attractions of this 220-room resort, which also includes a golf course, hiking trails and other activities. Andrew Cain creates a spectacular menu that far outstrips the dining room, with its rattan chairs and views of the outdoor pool. Diners can choose an a la carte or a seven-course tasting menu that might include butter-poached lobster with a mushroom tart and a degustation of Kobe-style beef with a foie gras sauce. 100 Boyes Blvd. (at Highway 12), Sonoma; (707) 938-9000 or [www.fairmont.com/sonoma](http://www.fairmont.com/sonoma). Dinner nightly. A la carte, \$28-\$48; seven-course tasting menu \$95; Monday-Thursday three-course menu \$49.

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