

# Real Estate & Culinary News from Ito Ripsteen

Fall 2015



Dear friends and colleagues,

I was recently looking back on 2015 and was trying to pinpoint why this year has been so much fun. Maybe because I am truly enjoying what I am doing. The year has been busy with private lending, property development and all sorts of interesting real estate deals. All that activity certainly has added to my happiness, but it dawned on me that a lot of my well-being is tied to... food. I mean good food, culinary

delights. Living in the Bay Area, we are so fortunate to have so many high quality choices and it seems every week we hear about a hot new chef or new "it" restaurant opening up to much fanfare and acclaim. So beyond my elation at being a Bay area denizen with access to all these eats, I am thankful for the bricks and mortar restaurants that I've had the good fortune to work with this year. Here are some highlights, that I urge you to check out and keep an eye on:

**Mission Heirloom Garden Cafe- 2085 Vine Street Berkeley.** I was honored to be included in their one-year anniversary celebration, and wow- it is clear that Bobby and Yrmis have quite a faithful following. The joint was packed, and the common thread of conversation was not just about the benefits of a paleo diet, but also about how access to good clean food is so important, how truly life changing it can be. The passed hors d'oeuvres were so flavorful that I was probably pretty rude in taking more than I should have...

<http://www.missionheirloom.com/>



**Little Gem Belgian Waffles - 2468-A Telegraph Avenue Berkeley.** When I first met Janelle and Chong, they lugged an eighty-pound waffle iron up the stairs to my office to make me a batch of their waffles. First taste: awesome. And better yet, my office smelled sweet and sugary for about five hours thereafter. They explained to me that they had traveled the world visiting Belgian Waffles shops, and had trained under a master baker in Belgium. After over one hundred-forty different recipe experiments, they have nailed their secret formula. I was so very glad to welcome them to the building, and they have done an excellent job remodeled the premises to make it their own. Sweet and savory waffles available! As of this missive, yelp has them averaging five stars. <http://www.yelp.com/biz/little-gem-belgian-waffles-berkeley>



**Atcha Thai Bistro -10558 San Pablo Avenue El Cerrito.** I am very excited about welcoming Atcha and Eric to Moeser Square Shopping Center in El Cerrito. They bring a hip, upbeat style and energy to the center with their fresh and amazing food. It is refreshing to see so much passion behind what they are doing. Atcha also runs a daycare in El Cerrito, so she is dialed into the community. Restaurants as a gathering place to "break bread" and tell our stories to one another, are truly a key component to community building. Thank you, Atcha, for being so immersed in the El Cerrito community. Friends: call me up and let's go eat there together!

<http://www.atchathaibistro.com/>



**Wood Tavern (name of restaurant T.B.D.) - 3853 Piedmont Avenue Oakland.** When I had the opportunity to purchase the former Baywolf location, I knew right away who would make the perfect next restaurateur to inhabit the space. I made a phone call to Rich Wood, and after some discussion and a few glasses of wine, we were off and running towards a

lease agreement. No doubt most of you are familiar with Rich and Rebekah's Wood Tavern and sister restaurant Southie, so you can imagine that their Piedmont Avenue spot will be nothing less than special. Over the next several months we will be working together to renovate the property, adding square footage to the existing kitchen, and re-configuring the interior to adapt to their new concept. Check in with me for updates, but we anticipate an opening by end of Summer 2016.

<http://insidescoopsf.sfgate.com/blog/2015/10/27/wood-tavern-owners-taking-over-bay-wolf-space-in-oakland/>

So please come check out Mission Heirloom, Little Gem Belgian Waffles, and Atcha Thai Bistro, (and stay tuned for the Wood Tavern folks). As I mentioned, beyond just the food, restaurants bring us together and allow us to visit with one another. Call me up and if I am free, lunch is on me!

Warm regards,

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