



- [Email](#) your restaurant news tips or comments
- Read John's [daily food news blog](#)
- Read John's column every Tuesday in the [Daily Sound](#)

Tuesday, December 30, 2008

2008 Year in Review: My foodie duties for the year wouldn't be complete without summarizing eatery activity on the South Coast:

- In 2008 there were 44 openings and 42 closures of food-related businesses (with walk-in storefronts). When compared to the activity in 2007 there has been a 10% increase in the number of openings and a 24% increase in the number of closures.
- Openings included: American (13), Dessert (6), Deli (3), Mexican (3), Bakery (3), Burgers (2), Japanese (2), Spanish (2), Thai (2), Cheese Shop (1), Chinese (1), Coffee (1), French (1), Fusion (1), German (1), Mediterranean (1) and Vietnamese (1)
- Closures included: American (11), Dessert (5), Coffee (4), Burgers (3), Japanese (3), Deli (2), Fusion (2), Italian (2), Spanish (2), Bakery (1), BBQ (1), Chinese (1), Mediterranean (1), Mexican (1), Pizza (1), Thai (1) and Vietnamese (1)
- Biggest Goodbyes: Chad's Restaurant and Mel's Lounge. Chad's went out at the top of its game. After 16 years in business Chad's closed its door while as popular as ever and after winning many awards in local restaurant polls for 2008. Ever-popular Mel's Lounge accumulated generations of fans before having its last call in 2008, after 45 years in business.
- In 2008, the top five most talked about eateries in the SantaBarbara.com Restaurant Guide were: Boathouse (71 reviews), Brummis – The German Taste (54 reviews), Marmalade Café (53 reviews), Crushcakes (51 reviews) and Renaud's Patisserie & Bistro (49 reviews).
- Most Anticipated Arrivals for 2009: Based upon word I hear around town, it appears that Pinkberry and Whole Foods Market will do big business when they open next year.
- Foodie Topic of the Year: The South Coast cupcake invasion. There are now six local cupcakeries including Bella Dolce, Crushcakes, Sugar Bliss Sweets, Sweet Buttercup, Sweetie Cakes, and Whodidily (formerly Sprinkled Pink).

Grapevine Opens: Co-owners Claudette Pentz & Victor Kerschbaumer (chef) have opened **Grapevine**, a fine food market at 126 E. Canon Perdido Street (former home of **Jimmy's Oriental Gardens**). Kerschbaumer has a background in fine dining restaurants and his goal with Grapevine was to create an environment where people can come in and get really high-quality food to go.

Grapevine offers a lot of imported goods included high-quality Russian, Polish, Czech, Irish, Scottish, German and Austrian products. They chose a few items that they feel is the best from each country and will adjust their offerings based upon response from the community.

They offer two soups each day, one vegetarian and the other is a chef's special. There is also a salad bar with a lot of organic fresh vegetables. In the future they plan to offer catering and after hours wine & cheese dinners with a chef's table, exotic dishes and wine pairings. They will also be offering local and imported boutique wines. Grapevine is open Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. For more information call 899-8800.

Pinkberry Update: I called corporate headquarters yesterday and was told that frozen yogurt phenomenon **Pinkberry** hopes to open at 742 State Street in mid-January.

Three Pickles Update: I stopped by the **Three Pickles** deli downtown and was told that they are aiming for a March opening of the new Three Pickles deli on Fairview Ave in Goleta.

Winter Warm-up: Hollister Brewing Co. in Camino Real Marketplace offers a new specialty cocktail to keep you cozy: The Winter Warm-up. It includes Amaretto, Bailey's Irish cream, and Pete's coffee, with Grand Marnier drizzled over whipped cream. Hollister has also just introduced a new beer called "Barleywhine" that has the highest alcohol content (9.7%) of any beer on their menu.

Book Signing: Pamela Sheldon-Johns, who owned a gourmet cooking school in Santa Barbara in the 1990s, is going to be at Tecolote bookstore (1470 E. Valley Rd in Montecito) tonight at 5 p.m. for a public signing of her 15th

cookbook. Former students and teachers from the cooking school will be catering the event, including Two Peas in a Pod Catering, Emilio's, the Greek House and others.

2009 Restaurant Survey Ends Tomorrow: December 31st is the last day of my annual "Best Of" poll to determine the best dining destinations on the South Coast. The results will be published next week. You can vote for your favorite restaurants online at SantaBarbara.com/survey

Kids And Bikes: On Christmas Eve I met a gentleman by the name of Louis Ventura who told me about a wonderful organization he started called the [Kids and Bikes Foundation](http://KidsAndBikes.org) that makes a lot of children happy. Kids And Bikes Foundation is a non-profit organization that started in December 2004 for the purpose of providing new bicycles to the children of families who had fallen on hard times. The idea was to get the members of Goleta Valley and Santa Barbara to donate money for bicycles. Bikes would be purchased at cost and assembled by volunteers to provide a gift to those children who would otherwise go without. Everybody remembers their first bike and Kids And Bikes Foundation wanted to be part of that memory.

This last Christmas 253 volunteers built 585 bikes and delivered them to children across the South Coast through a variety of organizations including Unity Shoppe, Isla Vista Youth Projects, Cottage Hospital, and many others. To learn more about the Kids and Bikes Foundation visit kidsnbikes.org or call (805) 685-1649.



Volunteers assemble so many bikes that they fill an entire tennis court.

[Archives:](#) Read all Restaurant Guy food news from the last 30 days