

Edible East Bay

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Over the Moon at Catahoula Coffee

By: Amanda Polick

Wide-open doors and the alluring smell of coffee invite passers-by into one of Berkeley's newest and friendliest shops. Catahoula's Kaffeegarten opened in September on the corner of Fourth Street and Addison in Berkeley. The location is just a bit off the beaten path of Fourth Street's bustling shops and restaurants, but owner Tim ("Timber") Manhart hopes the setting, which combines large communal tables with small cozy ones, will attract people in groups of all sizes to come sip espresso and stay a while.

Catahoula Coffee opened in Richmond in 2008, followed by its Berkeley Kaffeegarten earlier this year. Photos by Amanda Polick.

It's Manhart's second store, and "friendly" seems to be part of his business plan. In the seven years since he opened his [Catahoula Coffee Company](#) (named after his favorite dog breed), the store has become a Richmond neighborhood destination. Manhart hosts local events, pours free coffee for community meetings, and has helped Richmond High's Advanced Placement students raise money to pay for AP tests.

Manhart says that the true test of good coffee is an eight-ounce latte. Catahoula has proven just how good its fair-trade coffee tastes, being named Best of the Bay coffee shop by the San Francisco Chronicle four times. Along with his memorable blends, Manhart promotes delicious baked treats prepared by employees and other local bakers. Sometimes he even offers up his back kitchen so bakers working on a small scale can cook in a commercial space that doesn't cost a tiny fortune. Don't pass up the Millionaire Bar, a chocolate-lovers dream, or the gluten-free- and vegan-friendly SuperSquare Bar, made with shredded coconut, carob chips, sliced almonds, and pumpkin seeds.

However, no visit to Catahoula would be complete without a cup of their Mexican Mocha. With hints of cinnamon, the rich chocolate lingers at the bottom of the cup and long after every sip. And Catahoula's baristas create art that goes far beyond the popular latte leaf: My cup featured a floating universe of planets and stars. The art almost convinced me to sip the coffee so very slowly that the stars and planets would linger in my cup. Almost.