

## Six Of A Kind - Michael Bauer

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SIX OF A KIND: By the Fire  
Seeking Warmth

## Six spots for escaping winter's wrath

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Newcomers to the Bay Area complain we don't have seasons, but those of us who have been through a few seasonal rotations can attest to the differences. As fall progresses, temperatures may be similar to what we have in spring, but there's a bone-chilling dampness that signals winter. Fireplaces have an uplifting effect and help to make the coming winter rains something to look forward to.

## IMAGES



Liz Hafalia / The Chronicle

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Many restaurants in the Bay Area have fireplaces, of course, but the following offer something special.

## Foreign Cinema

With its hard edges and high ceilings, this Mission District restaurant could come across as cold, but the fire warms things up. The opening of the fireplace hits at about eye level, allowing wood to be stashed underneath, as one would at a ski lodge. The windows overlooking the patio, where foreign films are shown on an outside wall, add to the charm.

The food, a rustic Mediterranean cuisine cooked by owners John Clark and Gayle Pirie, is warming, too: artichoke and green bean salad with olives, Parmesan and lemon vinaigrette; beef carpaccio with horseradish cream and fried capers; and curry fried chicken with Gypsy peppers, a must-order item.

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2534 Mission St. (near 21st Street), San Francisco; (415) 648-7600 or foreigncinema.com. Dinner nightly; brunch weekends.

## Kokkari

The fireplace in the front dining room is so large that you could walk into it; it not only warms the patrons, but is also big enough to roast haunches of pig, lamb or goat served as nightly specials. Aside from the roasted meats, the modern Greek-inspired menu by Erik Cosselmon includes crispy smelt with fresh lemon, mesquite-grilled octopus, traditional salads and a molten moussaka. The lamb chops are some of the best in the city, but so is the grilled chicken.

With the goatskin-shaded lights, the high wood-beamed ceilings and upholstered chairs that look as if they should be pulled up to the fire, Kokkari creates a fantasy winter retreat.

200 Jackson St. (at Front Street), San Francisco; (415) 981-0983 or kokkari.com. Lunch weekdays; dinner Mon.Sat.

## Murray Circle

The winds that whip through the Marin Headlands are quickly negated by warming fires at Cavallo Point Lodge's restaurant. First, chase the chills in front of one of the two fireplaces in the Farley Bar. Then, proceed to the dining room, which in its former life as Fort Baker was a barrack, where each of the four dining areas is outfitted with old-fashioned fireplaces.

I'd indulge in Joseph Humphrey's eight-course tasting menu, exceptionally priced at \$85. It might include a "fish and fowl" trio - poached pheasant egg with Parmesan foam and caviar, hard-boiled partridge egg on chive-flecked creme fraiche with coral salmon roe, and a fried quail egg draped over sea urchin roe on leeks and bacon.

602 Murray Circle (at East Road), Sausalito; (415) 339-4750 or murraycircle.com. Breakfast and lunch weekdays; dinner nightly; brunch weekends.

## Farm at Carneros Inn

The imposing fireplace at this Napa resort is flanked by windows that look out over a manicured lawn and patio. The room has lots to recommend it, with a barn-like open trussed ceiling and three wine walls, one of which slowly changes color. If the weather's not too inclement, there's also a large fire pit on the patio.

Chef Christophe Gerard creates a farm-to-table menu. The market salad at this time of year includes Belgian endive, watercress, pears, walnuts and Roquefort cheese in a mustard vinaigrette. Main courses include roast chicken with Brussels sprouts, braised chestnuts and Black Jonathan apples. It's a great place to feel like one of the privileged set, if only for a couple of hours.

4048 Sonoma Highway (near Highway 121), Napa; (707) 299-4900 or thecarnerosinn.com. Lunch and dinner daily.

## Camino

The fireplace isn't really in the dining room at this Oakland restaurant owned by Russell Moore, who was at Chez Panisse for more than 20 years. It's the centerpiece of the open kitchen, and it's where most of the food is cooked. Not only can diners see the slowly turning leg of lamb over the open flame, but they can also smell the searing meat and smoldering wood. Or it may be goat, pork or chicken being kissed by the fire.

Moore's menu changes each night and features three or four appetizers, three main courses - one meat, one fish and one vegetable - and a couple of desserts.

3917 Grand Ave. (near Sunnyslope), Oakland; (510) 547-5035 or caminorestaurant.com. Dinner Wed.-Mon.

## MacArthur Park

Huge brick fireplaces surrounded by richly paneled walls bookend the dining room at this Palo Alto restaurant. In a historic 1918 Julia Morgan building that was built as a welcoming center for World War I servicemen and their families, the restaurant's interior has recently been freshened up.

MacArthur Park was just bought by Faz Poursohi, who was chef when the restaurant opened in 1981. He's kept the famous barbecued ribs, chicken and fried onion strings, but added his own items, which include an appetizer platter with grilled artichokes, crisp calamari and fried skin-on potatoes.

27 University Ave. (at El Camino Real), Palo Alto; (650) 321-9990. Lunch Mon.-Fri. dinner nightly, brunch Sun.

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