

THE MONTHLY

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Shop Talk

By Rachel Sarah

Understudy

For anyone who has wandered into the lingerie dreamland **A La Folie**, it will come as no surprise to learn that owner, Nafissa Tayebi, wore a corset—by itself—for her wedding.

Prior to getting hitched, Tayebi, who came to the East Bay from Algeria via France and Luxembourg, regularly spent her paychecks on these beautiful underthings. Now, she helps local women indulge in what is her own favorite joy.

A la folie is French for "to the point of madness" and a quote from the French version of "He loves me, He loves me not." This charming shop carries panties, slips, camisoles, upscale lounge wear, and bras from size 32A to 38DD. Styles run from the lacy intimates of Italy's Cotton Club to the gorgeous, soft creations of New York's Leigh Bantivoglio. This writer also couldn't get enough of the fragrance collection from L'Artisan Parfumeur.

Recently relocated from its old location on Alcatraz—where Parfait Amour Chocolaterie just opened—the gorgeous Tayebi threw a grand re-opening party in June (during which her hubby, Gary McCoy, was the champagne pourer). McCoy was, by the way, "the first male person" to buy Tayebi lingerie.

Upon request, Tayebi will set up a lingerie party for your friends, and until the end of August, A La Folie will display boudoir photos by San Francisco-based photographer Lone M. Schneider, whom clients can hire.

A La Folie, 6395 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, (510) 547-6543; www.visitlafolie.com.



Sip in the City

A winery in Oakland? "People look very confused," admits Michael Dashe, co-owner of **Dashe Cellars**, when he tells locals that he and his wife, Anne, run a winery near Jack London Square. "We're by far the largest winery in Oakland that's ever existed!" adds Dashe, half-teasingly.

Over 400 wine tasters descended here for the open house in June to celebrate what Dashe calls "urban wine making." It was a joint party with their co-tenants JC Cellars (www.jccellars.com), with whom they share wine-making equipment. Zinfandel, Syrah, Cab, Merlot, and Petite Syrah were "flowing like mad."

Dashe Cellars marries techniques from California and France, Dashe explains. The results are complex, sensuous red wines that capture the charm and personality of Sonoma vineyards in the Dry Creek and Alexander valleys. Anne and Michael both hold degrees in enology (Anne, from the University of Bordeaux, and Michael from the University of California at Davis), and during blending, the couple works side by side, sharing their insights.

A family-run artisan winery, Dashe Cellars has all the equipment one would find in a traditional Napa wine-making business. Well, unless you imagine that those high-rises could magically turn into vineyards. "It's only an hour to truck grapes from the vineyard to here," Dashe says. "It's not that long, really." As yet, they've produced about 9,000 cases of wine, available at Berkeley Bowl as well as Vino on College Avenue, Vintage Berkeley on Vine Street, and Solano Cellars.

Dashe wines can be tasted in the cooperative Family Wineries of Dry Creek Valley tasting room (visit www.familywines.com for information). By the end of the year they hope to open their own tasting room in Oakland.

"When I watch someone taste one of my wines and I see that look of total satisfaction," says Dashe, "what I've made has transcended being a wine, and become an experience."

Dashe Cellars, 55 Fourth Street, Oakland, (510) 452-1800; www.dashecellars.com. Open by appointment only.

Hot Chocolates

Whenever my Dad drops by my house, he's never empty-handed. The past few visits he's shown up with box of truffles, which he told me he found in some new store off Telegraph Avenue.

Mother-daughter team Welmoed Muller and Kim Ahmad opened **Parfait Amour Chocolaterie** ("perfect love") in April "by accident." Muller, the owner of Gypsy Honeymoon, an antique store in San Francisco, says some friends told them about the empty storefront on Alcatraz Avenue and Muller went to peek out of curiosity. When she saw it, her first thought was, "That would look like such a nice candy store!"

Holland native Muller, who comes from a family of candy and dessert-makers, prides herself on the fact that she taught her children how to cook and bake. Ahmad went a step further, studying to become a pastry chef in Holland.

All of Parfait Amour's chocolates are handmade with French cocoa in a commercial kitchen in Redwood City—from deep chocolate truffles to white-chocolate ginger and walnut-caramel. (My favorite is the layered chocolate with caramel inside.) Whether you're looking for party favors, platters of cookies, or cakes, the store also caters desserts for parties.

Parfait Amour Chocolaterie, 507 Alcatraz Avenue, Oakland, (510) 594-1403.

At Your Fingertips

Want a cocktail with that manicure and pedicure? Drop by **Cure, A Nail Spa**, any Thursday or Friday night between 5 and 7 and you'll get a pink Cosmo on the house as your hands and feet are beautified.

Owner Lisa Hoffman says she opened Cure last December to bring more peace and less stress to locals. So, stretch out in one of her resort-style chairs and rest those fingers in a bamboo bowl filled with warm rocks. (Combo mani-pedis start at \$40.)

This is not your typical acrylic nail shop (Hoffman doesn't even use acrylic polish): "Our polishes don't have formaldehyde or toluene in them. Our polish remover is preferred by pregnant women."

Moms with newborns who are not yet walking get a 10 percent discount on Wednesdays between noon and 5 p.m. (bring a stroller or use the spa's playpen). Or, bring a friend on "Two for Tuesdays" for a two-for-one manicure/pedicure. The "Coffee Cure" (\$55) gives your fingers and toes a rejuvenating lift from a soy milk and coffee bean bath. Waxing, massages, airbrush tans, and tints for lashes or brows are also available.

Cure, A Nail Spa, 1240 Powell Street, Suite 1B, Emeryville, (510) 654-2873, www.cureanailspa.com.

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