

# Petaluma: Antiques, tastings, music and more

By Carole Terwilliger Meyers  
Oakland Tribune Correspondent  
Posted: 11/05/2011 12:00:00 PM PDT



McNeers Mystic Theatre ( Carole Terwilliger Meyers )

## Bay Area and Beyond

Petaluma may offer an old-fashioned small-town atmosphere, but it still knows a thing or two about being on the big stage.

Modern classic movies "American Graffiti" and "Peggy Sue Got Married" filmed here. The town was once famous as the "World's Egg Basket," and although the area still produces plenty of eggs, it is better known now as a dairy center.

## Fortify for shopping

With that in mind, start a visit here with breakfast downtown. Diners order at the cheery counter in the Tea Room Cafe. This takes time, because the chalkboard menu has small printing and a vast selection, but you can't go wrong with fluffy sour cream pancakes or eggs in a hole spiced with harissa. A perfect latte is served in a big French-style bowl, and orange juice is freshly squeezed.

Just steps away, you will discover the Find, a spacious consignment shop that purveys everything from a series of chicken-head paintings to an antique chicken-egg incubator.

This is just the tip of a rewarding shopping experience. A few blocks away, antique stores rule on Petaluma Boulevard, the town's main shopping street. Don't miss Vintage Bank Antiques, inside a former Wells Fargo Bank, or Sienna and its collection of big pieces and kitchen items spread through three floors. Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds -- known as "The Seed Bank" -- operates inside another former bank and offers the largest selection of heirloom seeds in California.

If you want to start your day on this street, another great breakfast stop is Della Fattoria. Menu items include a house-made bagel with homemade cream cheese and smoked salmon and a crusty house-made rosemary-Meyer lemon bread toasted and topped with pureed flageolet beans, Laura Chenel chevre, roasted garlic and olive oil. Order up a loaf of the artisan bread and a bag of granola (heavy on nuts mixed with oats) to take home.

Kentucky Street, another shopping road, runs parallel behind Petaluma Boulevard. Here you might be tempted to while away the morning browsing Copperfield's Books. Across the street, Summer Cottage is awash in soft pastels and seashells, and its antiques collection is reminiscent of a day at the beach.

## Time for tastings

Time it right, and you can take an afternoon tour at the Lagunitas Brewing Co. Located on the outskirts of town in a business park area, this brewery has developed a cult following, even as it repeatedly has moved locations. The TapRoom and Beer Sanctuary features a large beer garden with long communal tables and fire pits, but cozy indoor seating is also available. Live music entertains from 3 to 6 p.m. weekends. Bar food is on the menu, and peanuts in the shell and pretzels are complimentary and go well with the malt-based Fusion VII and the bourbon barrel-aged Cappucino Stout. The tour is always free and includes a "free at three" tasting (at other times there is a small charge).

Free tastings, this time of six wines, also is available at Sonoma Valley Portworks, on the outskirts of town in the new Riverfront Warehouse District. Tasting usually includes the chocolaty Decor port and Duet hazelnut sherry, as well as rich, sweet Sonomic "almost" vinegar. Across the street, two can eat well at relatively new Luma by sharing a dinner of beet and arugula salad and a pizza, perhaps the Satan's Kiss topped with house-made Italian sausage, leeks and ricotta cheese. Delicious fried Brussels sprouts and key lime pie are also worthy house specialties.

Back downtown, dinner at casual, publike McNear's Saloon & Dining House gives you a choice of great bar food (think spicy Buffalo wings) as well as house-made soups, salads, sandwiches, hamburgers, fish and chips, pastas and steaks. With good fortune and advance planning, you might secure tickets to a live performance in adjacent McNear's Mystic Theatre.

Should you decide to stay into the evening, you also can spend the night at the Metro Hotel, six blocks from downtown in the Riverfront Warehouse District. Described by some locals as "curious," it is a bit unconventional with a Parisian flair. Most rooms are in a converted 1870 mansion, and all but two have claw-foot tubs. An Airstream trailer is also available for overnight guests.

An overnight stay also means you'll have another day to explore more of the hidden pleasures in this pleasant town.

## If You Go

WHERE TO EAT/TASTE: Tea Room Cafe -- 316 Western Ave., 707-765-0199, [www.tearoomcafe.com](http://www.tearoomcafe.com). Della Fattoria -- 141 Petaluma Blvd. N, 707-763-0161, [www.dellafattoria.com](http://www.dellafattoria.com). Lagunitas TapRoom and Beer Sanctuary -- 1280 N. McDowell Blvd., 707-769-4495, [www.lagunitas.com](http://www.lagunitas.com). Lagunitas Brewing Co. -- Tours 3 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, 3 and 5 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays and 1, 3 and 5 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays. Sonoma Valley Portworks -- 613 Second St., 707-769-5203,

[www.portworks.com/petaluma.php](http://www.portworks.com/petaluma.php). Luma -- 500 First St., 707-658-1940, [www.lumapetaluma.com](http://www.lumapetaluma.com).

McNear's Saloon & Dining House -- 23 Petaluma Blvd. N., 707-765-2121, [www.mcnears.com](http://www.mcnears.com).

WHERE TO SHOP/VISIT: The Find -- 322 Western Ave., 707-763-2276, [www.thefind-petaluma.com](http://www.thefind-petaluma.com).

Vintage Bank Antiques -- 101 Petaluma Blvd. N., 707-769-3097. Sienna -- 119 Petaluma Blvd. N, 707-763-6088. Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds -- 199 Petaluma Blvd. N., 707-509-5171,

[www.rareseeds.com/petaluma-seed-bank](http://www.rareseeds.com/petaluma-seed-bank). Copperfield's Books -- 140 Kentucky St., 707-782-0228,

[www.copperfieldsbooks.com](http://www.copperfieldsbooks.com). Summer Cottage Antiques -- 153 Kentucky St., 707-776-2873,

[www.summercottageantiques.com](http://www.summercottageantiques.com). McNear's Mystic Theatre -- 21 Petaluma Blvd. N.,

[www.mystictheatre.com](http://www.mystictheatre.com).

WHERE TO STAY: Metro Hotel -- 508 Petaluma Blvd. S., 707-773-4900, [www.metrolodging.com](http://www.metrolodging.com); rates from \$99 a night.

MORE INFO: 707-769-0429, [www.visitpetaluma.com](http://www.visitpetaluma.com).