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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

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## WHY WE ARE HOPELESSLY UNPREPARED FOR THE NEXT BIG QUAKE

BY JAMES DALESSANDRO



## The Bay Area's 9 Top Takeout Spots

Forget about limp pizza and cold chow mein. You could be bringing home Moroccan lamb shanks and shaking beef. We searched high and low to find to-go feasts worth staying home for.

BY JOSH SENS

THEY PREP IT, YOU COOK IT.  
Boulette's Larder wraps up everything you need to make a springtime risotto at home.

## Roberts of Woodside

3015 WOODSIDE RD. (AT CANADA RD.), WOODSIDE, (650) 851-1511

**The Skinny** A superchic supermarket—think Andronico's on designer drugs—it's been in business since the late 1800s, when anyone using the term “organic salmon” would have been hanged on the highest hill. Roberts uses it now, along with the other reassuring labels (“free range,” “hormone free,” and so on) that lard contemporary culinary lingo. Despite the upscale trappings, takeout dinners at Roberts are down-to-earth, with options shifting daily from such homespun standards as pot roast (\$8.99/lb.) and beef stew (\$8.99/lb.) to dishes like grilled salmon (\$16.99/lb.). It's the kind of food you'd make at home, if you had the time, skill, and inspiration. And that's the point. In a long glass case, you'll find dozens of sides, from potato salad (\$4.89/lb.) to sautéed string beans (\$6.99/lb.), and there's an excellent selection of wines on hand. Ask for a recommendation—the employees are so friendly you'd think you'd just given them your Oracle stock.

**Upside** Why so many smiles? Have you stumbled into Stepford? Actually, the people who work here are just that nice. And the food has the straightforward freshness of good week-end cooking. Translation: a dependable dinner to go.

**Downside** Pretty pasta salads (\$5.99/lb.) that still taste like, well, pasta salads when you take them home. Not to mention the sobering thought that if this is your local takeout joint,



you're paying way too much in property taxes. **Convenience Score 8** It's on Woodside's main drag and five minutes off 280 for commuters, with plenty of parking. Food comes in tightly sealed plastic containers for easy transport.

**Best Bets** Rosemary chicken breasts with Dijon mustard sauce (\$4/piece); mashed potatoes (\$4.99/lb.); sautéed yellow squash, cauliflower, and broccoli (\$6.99/lb.); blueberry pie (\$13.99).

## Gregoire

2109 CEDAR ST. (BET. SHATTUCK AVE. AND OXFORD ST.), BERKELEY, (510) 883-1893

**The Skinny** This is takeout tailored to the Gourmet Ghetto, which means seasonal ingredients assembled with French-accented *savoir faire*. The menu changes monthly, but a recent sampling ranged from grilled rib eye with tarragon demi-glace (\$17) to prune-stuffed pork chops (\$14.75). Usually diners can find velvety rillettes (\$6.75) and pâté (\$6.75). Salads and potatoes appear in several permutations, including the perfect crisp potato puffs (\$4.25), which are like lovable curmudgeons: salty on the outside, sweet within. Desserts such as pear mousse with chocolate pearls (\$3.75) set your taste buds strolling down the Champs Élysées.

**Upside** The setting, the service, the style of cooking—a visit is like a brief Parisian vacation, after which you head right home.

**Downside** And head straight home you'd better. Many of the dishes aren't built for reheating.



**Convenience Score 7** Great packaging, in elegant eight-sided boxes, and efficient service (fax or call in your order and grab it on the go). Parking, though, can be tricky.

**Best Bets** Grilled bavette steak with balsamic vinegar-poached shallots (\$15), potato puffs, mâche salad with Point Reyes blue cheese and toasted walnuts (\$5.50), carrot bread pudding (\$3.75).

**Gregoire Jacquet (center) and his cooks give you Paris on a weeknight.**

## Lola's

1585 SOLANO AVE. (BET. ORDWAY ST. AND PERALTA AVE.), BERKELEY, (510) 558-8600

**The Skinny** Low fuss, low frills. That sums up Lola's, a spare-looking place that deals largely in pizza (\$15–\$18) by day but turns out oven-roasted chicken (\$13) at night. You can get focaccia (\$4), too, stromboli (\$5.95), and calzones (\$5.95), variations on a theme all based on beautiful, lightly blistered dough. The roasted birds come out of the oven crisp on the outside, moist on the inside. They're seasoned with lemon, rosemary, and garlic. The two sides never change: roasted potatoes (\$5) and sautéed chard (\$7). But you can add some extra spice with an order of housemade mango chutney (\$12/pt.). Lola's also offers a changing menu of “take-home-and-bake” dinners, packaged and ready for reheating. On a recent Friday night, it included chicken potpie (\$6.95), macaroni and cheese (\$6.50), and yellow-split pea soup (\$9/qt.). Wonderful baked goods, both sweet and savory, also emerge daily from Lola's ovens. They range from Swiss chard and butternut squash pie (\$6.95) to polenta and Fontina torta (\$6.50) and Bosc pear galette (\$18)



and bittersweet chocolate cake studded with almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, and orange zest (\$22 whole, \$3.50 slice).

**Upside** Elegantly executed California cooking.

**Downside** Even with the ovens cranking, service at Lola's can be chilly. →