

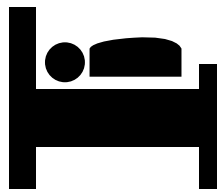


# OAKLAND CALIFORNIA

The Bay Area's once-second-tier city is movin' on up.  
by Tina Barseghian

San Francisco's notoriously homely stepsister, Oakland, is giving the precious City by the Bay a run for its money. While khaki-clad prepsters invade San Francisco's every last recess, Oakland's street culture has been steadily drawing artists, architects, and other non-dot-com creative types to the sunnier side of the bay. Take a twilight stroll around Lake Merritt and you'll see proof of how Oakland's diversity isn't just lip service; people old, young, and representing every color of the rainbow are out pushing strollers, running, biking, and enjoying the views. Take it from us: There are enough worthy diversions to compel you to skip foggy SFO and land directly in the O.

Psst: The first weekend of each month is prime time for hitting gallery openings and the flea market. Plan accordingly.



## MOST READYMADE HOTEL

**The Washington Inn**  
(495 10th St.; 510-452-1776; [www.thewashingtoninn.com](http://www.thewashingtoninn.com))

Housed in an elegant, historic building, the Washington's quiet, tasteful rooms belie the activity outside. Walk a few blocks to Oakland's buzzing Chinatown, where you can snack on the best sticky buns this side of the Pacific.



## BEST BARS

### Radio

(435 13th St.; 510-451-2889)

It's dark as night inside Radio, a sometimes-smoky bar nestled under the Tribune Tower downtown. The crowd ranges from after-work happy-hour types early in the evening to tatted and pierced beauties as the night wears on.

### The Alley

(3325 Grand Ave.; 510-444-8505)

At the storied Alley, legendary piano man Rod Dibble holds court Tuesdays through Saturdays, playing sing-along cabaret standards to a crowd of hard-living regulars and irony-inclined youngsters.

## BIGGEST SWAP MEET

### The Alameda Point Antiques and Collectibles Faire

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

Technically outside of Oakland's city limits, the island of Alameda is worth visiting on the first Sunday of each month, when it hosts a sprawling outdoor bazaar. Hundreds of vendors take over a former Navy base to hawk vintage postcards, clothing, and furniture.

# HIPPEST GALLERIES



## Oakland Art Murmur

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

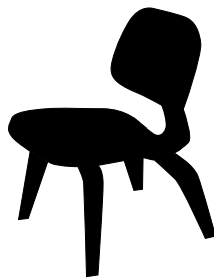
When studio space in San Francisco was nearly obliterated by luxury lofts and dot-coms during the boom, many artists headed east. As a way of showcasing local work, a coalition of galleries called Oakland Art Murmur hosts monthly First Friday openings. The proximity to the California College of the Arts means that you're liable to catch some talent (and score some deals). Crowds swell in the area around Telegraph Avenue and 23rd Street (near **Mama Buzz Café and Gallery**) from 8 to 10 p.m. Galleries farther afield worth checking out include **Auto3321** (3321 Telegraph Ave.; [www.freewebs.com/autoartgallery](http://www.freewebs.com/autoartgallery)), **ABCo Artspace** (3135 Filbert St.; [www.abcoartspace.com](http://www.abcoartspace.com)), and **21Grand** (416 25th St.; 510-444-7263; [www.21grand.org](http://www.21grand.org)).

## TASTIEST BRUNCH

### Mama's Royal Cafe

(4012 Broadway; 510-547-7600; [www.mamasroyalcafeOakland.com](http://www.mamasroyalcafeOakland.com))

Score a booth at homey Mama's for a multitude of gluttonous breakfast treats. Order either the lox, onions, and scrambled eggs dish or the decadent Eggs Brady, and you'll be fueled all day. Don't miss the grits.



## FUNKIEST DESIGN SHOPS

### Swallowtail

(5332 College Ave.; 510-595-1240)

In the Rockridge neighborhood, Swallowtail serves up off-the-wall home accessories.

Looking for vintage science lab equipment? It's here, right next to high-end bedding.

### Form Vintage Modern

(5330 College Ave.; 510-420-1950; [www.formvintagemodern.com](http://www.formvintagemodern.com))

Midcentury-modern mavens will feel right at home in this small showroom of pristine vintage and contemporary pieces, including Eames chairs and Nelson clocks.

## LOCAL VENDOR OF THE HANDMADE

### Rock Paper Scissors Collective

(2278 Telegraph Ave.; 510-238-9171; [rpscollective.com](http://rpscollective.com))

In addition to offering crafts workshops and classes, this gallery of the homespun hosts exhibits and sells work by indie artists. Pay a visit for your fill of zines, feather earrings, and screenprinted ties.



# ★ TALENT SHOW



**Fifteen years ago**, concrete was the cracked surface you parked your car on. It was the foundation underneath your house, the dank basement floor you covered with carpet remnants. Mark Rogero changed all that.

Along with a couple of like-minded folks in the Bay Area, Rogero spit-shined and polished the workhorse material and brought it inside the home. Now, concrete is the architect's default material for high design, found everywhere from kitchen counters to bathroom floors.

The look that launched a successful business was a by-product of Rogero's parsimonious life as a young architect. While living in an Oakland studio that he describes as "completely raw" and working on building projects that left him cash-strapped, Rogero decided to build a countertop for his empty kitchen space with the cheapest material he could find. Though his first attempt wouldn't have landed him the cover of *Dwell*, it did pique interest. "I started experimenting, and the architects encouraged me to stick to it," he says. "So I kept going."

Today, as the founder of Concreteworks ([www.concreteworks.com](http://www.concreteworks.com)), Rogero installs his one-of-a-kind pieces all over the country. His clients are almost as excited about being part of the process as he is. "It speaks to some kind of innate characteristic we have as humans to make things," he says. "We do it when we're kids, but much less frequently as adults. When my customers see the opportunity to be in an environment where people make things by hand, they get giddy about it."

**Insider Pick:** When he's in historic Old Oakland, Rogero eats at **B** (499 Ninth St.; 510-251-8770; [www.boxedfoodscompany.com](http://www.boxedfoodscompany.com)), a new progressive American restaurant committed to using ingredients from local farms.

## 🍴 HOTTEST RESTAURANTS

### Pizzaiolo

(5008 Telegraph Ave.; 510-642-4888; [www.pizzaiolo.us](http://www.pizzaiolo.us))

This newbie to the up-and-coming Temescal district won raves the day it opened, and though the queue is always long, the polished food is worth the wait. Chef (and Chez Panisse alum) Charlie Hallowell serves nouveau Italian fare with an emphasis on seasonal, organic ingredients.

### Lanesplitter Pub & Pizza

(4799 Telegraph Ave.; 510-653-5350; [www.lanesplitterpizza.com](http://www.lanesplitterpizza.com))

A more plebeian but equally satisfying thin-crust pie can be had at Lanesplitter. The crowd consists of bike messengers and rockabilly parents drinking California microbrews while their tots roam free.

### Le Cheval

(1007 Clay St.; 510-763-8957)

Tables turn fast at this cavernous Vietnamese restaurant. Order family-style, and if you don't mind getting your hands dirty, dig into the ginger crab.