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Berkeley

Janelle Bitker

Aug. 16, 2019



A beet and warm lentil salad with egg, yogurt, herbs and cucumber at Fava in Berkeley.

Photo: Janelle Bitker / The Chronicle

On one wall of Fava, there's a short menu dominated by salads. Attached to the other wall is a crate full of tomatoes, operating as functional decor. The whole scene screams California, Berkeley and Chez Panisse.

Jeremy Scheiblauber and Sylvia Osborne-Calierno, who met while cooking at Chez Panisse 12 years ago, opened Fava last week in a tiny space around the corner from their North

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being picked is our priority,” said Osborne-Calierno. “We believe in taking the perfect tomato and helping it be its best self.”

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Osborne-Calierno went on to open Toto, an Italian-influenced restaurant in Barcelona with her husband, while Scheiblauber helped open Heyday, a lunch spot in downtown San Francisco. They both ultimately returned to Chez Panisse, though, before opening Fava.

Fava currently offers three salads, two sandwiches, one soup and a few drinks five days a week for lunch. Scheiblauber and Osborne-Calierno don’t plan to significantly expand the menu or hours in the future — they always envisioned opening a small, low-key place where they could have fun and achieve a better work-life balance than most restaurant owners.

“The restaurant business is clearly changing and morphing into something different,” said Osborne-Calierno. “I don’t know what it’s morphing into but I know it’s not white linens and waiters anymore. We’re trying to make the career sustainable.”

“We don’t want to overextend ourselves because we want to make sure the food is good,” added Scheiblauber.

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Fava, a lunch spot opened by former Chez Panisse chefs, is located at 2114 Vine St. in Berkeley.

Photo: Janelle Bitker / The Chronicle

The braised lamb wrap (\$14), with cabbage and yogurt on housemade, whole-wheat flatbread, has emerged as an early favorite. Fava makes only 50 flatbread wraps a day — there's also a vegetarian version — and so they sell out early.

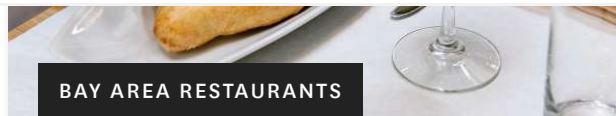
Salads are substantial and lively, such as eggplant with hummus, tomatoes and chile (\$13), and beets with warm lentils, herbed yogurt and an egg (\$13). Fresh herbs abound. The chefs consider health a key theme of the restaurant, but not in a wellness-trend sort of way.

“Every single thing on the menu isn’t a huge statement,” Osborne-Calierno said. “It’s just what we think is tasty and delicious and good for you today.”

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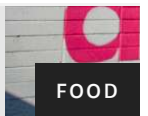
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Drink options include carrot ginger juice (\$4), hibiscus lemonade (\$4) and a mango lassi (\$5) — in a sense, they echo the space's previous incarnation as the Juice Bar Collective, which closed in February after 42 years. A Berkeley native, Osborne-Calierno grew up eating at the Juice Bar.

This particular slice of North Berkeley — sometimes called the Gourmet Ghetto — is rich with culinary history, with long-running establishments like Chez Panisse, the Cheese Board Collective and Saul's Delicatessen & Restaurant all sharing breathing room.

Fava is part of a wave of younger businesses moving into the neighborhood, with Lila Owens' Cupcakin' Bake Shop taking over the former Virginia Bakery space and Nick Cho's Wrecking Ball Coffee due to open in the old Philz Coffee soon.

"The Gourmet Ghetto, in order to keep it vibrant, you have to let the young bucks step up," Osborne-Calierno said. "We're not another trendy place that's going to close in a few years. We're here for the long haul."

Fava. 11 a.m. - 3p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. 2114 Vine St., Berkeley.

www.instagram.com/fava_onvine

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Chez Panisse alumni to open Fava in the former Juice Bar Collective space

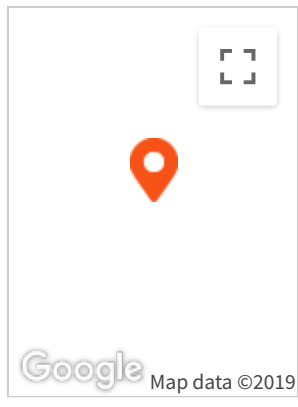
By Sarah Han, July 3, 2019, 7 a.m.



Jeremy Scheiblauber and Sylvia Osborne-Calierno, best friends and business partners, will open Fava at 2114 Vine St. in Berkeley. Photo: Sarah Han

Fava

2114 Vine St.
(between Walnut and Shattuck), Berkeley



Sylvia Osborne-Calierno spent a lot of time at the Juice Bar Collective as a kid. She grew up in North Berkeley and her family was friends with Clea MacIver, a longtime core member of the collectively run, mostly vegetarian take-out restaurant in the Gourmet Ghetto. Osborne-Calierno recalls visiting the tiny counter-service lunch spot, often after soccer

practice, where she'd refuel on smoothies and sandwiches. More than just a deli, the Juice Bar Collective was a place to get food "made by people

who care," she said, where "the community feeling was real."

When the [42-year-old collective closed in February](#), Osborne-Calierno and many others were wistful that another "so Berkeley" institution was gone. So, as she and her best friend Jeremy Scheiblauber prepare to open their new to-go restaurant Fava in the same space this summer, they strive to pay homage to the former collective's spirit and ethos, bringing fresh, healthy and homemade food to the area.

Osborne-Calierno and Scheiblauber met around 12 years ago, while cooking at Chez Panisse. Neither chef had gone to culinary school, but both have backgrounds in the arts (Osborne-Calierno earned a masters of fine art in painting from Mills College; Scheiblauber, who's originally from Santa Cruz but currently lives in Moraga, is still an active artist and musician). Different paths led them to Chez Panisse as young chefs and different paths led them to leave for new projects a few years later — in 2012, Osborne-Calierno moved to Barcelona, Spain, where she and her husband [opened Toto](#); around the same time, Scheiblauber helped open a fast-casual lunch spot called [Heyday](#) in San Francisco, where he was the executive chef.

But as many who work at "Chez" come to realize, Alice Waters' iconic restaurant is a place like no other. Both eventually returned to the "mother ship," cooking downstairs in the restaurant up until about three weeks ago, when they officially quit their jobs. The ties still bind, however: the duo are currently collaborating with Waters on an

upcoming cookbook focusing on nutritious, affordable and sustainable school lunches.



Fava owners put up a plaque paying homage to the Juice Bar Collective and long-time collective member Clea MacIver, who died in 2015. Photo: Sarah Han

Their Chez Panisse pedigree and connections will no doubt flavor the offerings at Fava. Osborne-Calierno and Scheiblauber plan to offer a curated, mainly vegetable-focused menu of rustic salads, soups, wraps and refreshments. There'll be a heavy nod towards Middle Eastern cuisine but they will also dabble with flavors from other regions. Everything on the menu will be made from scratch and will showcase the freshness of locally sourced, organic produce.

“We’ll be like the teenage version [of Chez Panisse]— bolder, spicier, ballsier and in your face.” — Sylvia Osborne-Calierno

But don't expect a fast-casual carbon copy of Chez Panisse. The food will be equally fresh, but less refined and the flavors will be amped up a few notches with loads of citrus, herbs and spices. (“We’ll be like the teenage version — bolder, spicier, ballsier and in your face,” Osborne-Calierno joked.) Staple dishes will include the likes of a beet salad with lentils, homemade yogurt and fresh herbs; farro salad; and drinks including mango lassi and seasonal fruit juices. There will

be a few meat-inclusive dishes, but even those will highlight the accompanying vegetables and herbs. And menu items they can't make themselves on site, they'll bring from favorite local makers. Fava's flatbreads, for example, will come from Reem's California, Reem Assil's Arab bakery in Fruitvale, delivered daily. Prices will likely hover between \$10-12 for most items, with specials featuring fish or meat priced slightly higher.

Osborne-Calierno said one of the first ideas she had for Fava was to put up hooks on the wall, where they'd hang up crates of fresh fruits and vegetables straight from the farms. This wouldn't just be for show; the chefs would use the bounty straight from the crates to make the day's offerings. Still, both chefs, who have a deep respect for the old-school, insist their take-out spot will not be precious, pretentious or fancy. They slapped on a fresh coat of paint (with the help of Osborne-Calierno's father) and they've updated some of the old kitchen appliances and equipment, but overall, Fava will not look too different than when it was the Juice Bar Collective. Like the old spot, there will be limited seating (just a couple of tables outside) for those who want to enjoy their lunch just out the door.

The chefs say they will likely hire one or two staffers to help them prep, cook and serve customers, but both plan to work daily — in aprons, not chef coats, and Chuck Taylors.



Jeremy Scheiblauber talks to curious passersby about the restaurant to come in the space formerly occupied by what many locals considered a Berkeley institution. Photo: Sarah Han

“It will be real people making real food,” said Osborne-Calierno.

The partners aim to open Fava on July 22, but they know the date may slide back. But it’s not the delays and all the worries of opening a new business that keep them up at night.

“We’ve got big shoes to fill,” Osborne-Calierno said. “There’s a feeling that the community has for the space and we have to live up to it.”

Fava will open as a lunch-time only spot, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday; hours will expand to include breakfast and possibly evening hours, if there is a demand for it.

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Berkeley-North

Some chefs dream of white tablecloth, three-Michelin-star glory. But Sylvie Osborne-Calierno and Jeremy Scheiblauber, a duo of chefs and best friends who met cooking at Chez Panisse, had other plans in mind. “We always knew we wanted a tiny little spot,” Osborne-Calierno said. The shoebox-sized, lunch-only North Berkeley restaurant churns out delightfully fresh, homemade dishes made using top quality produce and ingredients. The star dish is the lamb flatbread, made using housemade flatbread that’s baked fresh daily and grilled to order. Rustic lamb shoulder stewed with tomato tops the flatbread, along with harissa, yogurt, shredded red cabbage, and a generous handful of herbs. The rest of the menu focuses on veggies: for example, an escarole salad with melon, spiced almonds, bulgur wheat, and purple basil, or a hummus bowl with roasted eggplant, French feta, red cabbage, golden cherry tomatoes, and purslane. For dessert, don’t miss the sesame chocolate cookies, made with chocolate wafers rather than chips for luscious pools of fruity dark chocolate.

— Katherine Hamilton


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OCTOBER 22, 2019

Fava Is All About Balance

The tiny North Berkeley lunch spot serves fresh, rustic meals full of herbs and veggies, but don't forget the chocolate chip cookie for dessert.

By Katherine Hamilton

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PHOTO BY LANCE YAMAMOTO

The lamb flatbread at Fava is a best seller.

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Some chefs dream of white tablecloth, three-Michelin-star glory. But Sylvie Osborne-Calierno and Jeremy Scheiblauber, a duo of chefs and best friends, had other plans in mind.

"We always knew we wanted a tiny little spot," Osborne-Calierno said. So when they heard that the 42-year-old Juice Bar Collective on Vine Street was closing, they jumped at the chance to carve out their own tiny slice of North Berkeley.

It's not that Osborne-Calierno and Scheiblauber lacked the pedigrees to open a larger restaurant. The friends met cooking at Chez Panisse 12 years ago, and both went on to open other restaurants — Osborne-Calierno with Toto, a brunch restaurant in Barcelona, Spain, and Scheiblauber with Heyday, a lunch spot in San Francisco's Financial district. Both ultimately returned to Chez Panisse, where they were working until Fava's opening.

Alice Waters' guiding principles are evident in the food that comes out of Fava's kitchen: the insistence upon fresh, top-quality ingredients, simply prepared without relying on fancy equipment. But Fava drops the French cooking techniques, the four-course format, and the triple-digit price tag in favor of a shoebox-sized, counter-service only restaurant, equipped with compostable plates and a few outdoor folding tables and chairs.



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With such a small space, the duo had to pare down Fava's menu to just the essentials: a few salads, sandwiches, and a daily soup, plus fresh juices and sesame-chocolate chip cookies.

"It really gives you constraints that sometimes maybe feel a little tight," Osborne-Calierno said. "But at the same time, it really forces you to really hone down and get to the real soul of what you're trying to do."

Fava's style isn't easy to distill into a few words or labels, but the menu, which happens to be entirely housemade and organic, is clearly Mediterranean and Middle Eastern influenced. Latin American influences also make their way onto the menu, albeit more subtly. "We don't really feel pegged to any one culture," Osborne-Calierno said. "We just make things that taste good."

The lamb flatbread is one of the restaurant's best sellers, and for good reason. The bread itself, which lies somewhere between naan and pita, is made in-house every day with whole wheat flour. The last bit of cooking gets done on a plancha, giving it the same effect as freshly made bread. The bread was delightfully airy, chewy, and elastic, with a touch of crispness around the edges and a nutty, toasty flavor. On top of the flatbread was a smear of harissa, which lent bright color and a punch of cumin. Layered on top of that were tender, juicy slices of lamb shoulder braised in a tomatoey broth — "grandma-style," Osborne-Calierno calls it, as opposed to French cooking techniques that incorporate mirepoix and wine. Dollops of creamy, rich yogurt topped the lamb, followed by crunchy red cabbage tossed with a touch of vinegar. The crowning glory was a copious handful of mint, dill, and cilantro.

At first, I was taken aback by how many herbs were on top of the flatbread, and since you're eating it open-faced, you're likely to end up with an entire sprig of mint sticking out of your mouth at some point. But the whole thing was surprisingly well-balanced, and it struck me how the herbs and vegetables shone just as brightly as the lamb. The herbs also kept the sandwich light and refreshing, which was a minor miracle considering that lamb is such a fatty, richly flavored protein. "We don't believe in there being too [many] herbs," Osborne-Calierno laughed. "We like to treat herbs like they're a lettuce, like they're a vegetable."

Fava's menu is primarily vegetable-focused — every other item on the menu when I visited was vegetarian. I particularly enjoyed the escarole salad. The slight bitterness of the crisp, lightly dressed leaves was perfectly balanced by slices of juicy melon, while housemade chile almonds added a little earthiness and spiciness. Bulgur wheat served double duty, not only by making the salad more filling, but also by brightening it up with plenty of lemon juice. The most striking part was the leaves of purple basil on top, which added an unexpected pop of color and flavor.

"I like the purple basil ... it kinda looks crazy," said Osborne-Calierno. "[We] kinda try to be a little crazy, spice up North Berkeley a little bit."

Also on offer was a hummus bowl with roasted eggplant, topped with cherry tomatoes, French feta, red cabbage, and purslane. The hummus was exceptionally smooth with plenty of tahini flavor, while the golden tomatoes were firm and perfectly ripe. I appreciated the use of French feta here, which provided a punch of salt with a creamier, milder flavor

than its Greek and Bulgarian counterparts. Like all the other dishes I tried, it was also a beautiful dish to look at, with the green purslane and purple cabbage dominating the dish with little golden tomatoes shining like gems amid a background of hummus.

For maximum Instagrammability, try one of the brightly colored yet not-too-sweet housemade juices to enhance the look of your meal. I particularly loved the mango lassi, which was creamy and tangy with plenty of real mango flavor. The hibiscus lemonade and green juice, on the other hand, were refreshing and tart.

A rotating selection of soups and sides rounds out the menu. I wasn't a big fan of the side of roasted sweet potatoes. Though they were perfectly roasted and caramelized, they needed a little salt for balance.

The soups, though, are worth ordering. On one of my visits, it was a warm tomato soup with firm chickpeas and a dollop of zesty, creamy lime yogurt; on another, it was a red lentil soup topped with a drizzle of lemon oil for an unexpected citrusy kick.

Don't leave Fava without one (or more) of the sesame chocolate chip cookies. The sesame provided a nutty flavor and subtle richness to the cookie, while giving it a chewier-than-usual texture. Best of all, the cookies used dark chocolate wafers rather than chocolate chips, which provided luscious pools of fruity, bitter dark chocolate.

No, it's not health food. But like everything else at Fava, it's all about balance. Asked whether Fava will open for dinner one day, the duo said they'd like to stick to lunch hours — and possibly breakfast one day — so they can balance cooking with having an actual life outside of the kitchen, which is a rarity in the restaurant industry.

Osborne-Calierno is the mother of 5-year-old twins. When Scheiblauber isn't cooking in the kitchen, he's busy playing synths in his post-punk, new wave band called Vandal Moon. Sure, the duo is ushering a youthful, casual vibe with plenty of fresh flavors into North Berkeley — but unlike generations before them, they won't sacrifice having a balanced lifestyle.

"I don't think moms should have to choose between 'I'm either a mom or I'm a chef,'" Osborne-Calierno said. "We are all these things at once, and that's really important."

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Chez Panisse Alums Open Veggie-Driven Lunch Counter in Historic Berkeley Space

Now serving salads, soups, and flatbread sandwiches

by **Becky Duffett** | Aug 19, 2019, 12:24pm PDT



Fava

A new lunch counter from a couple of **Chez Panisse** alums has opened up in Berkeley's prime "gourmet ghetto" dining territory. **Fava** is a tiny spot at only 340 square feet, but it seems to be punching above its weight, offering a sweet and simple menu of salads, soups, and flatbread sandwiches starring lots of seasonal produce from local farms.

Fava's daily menu is posted on a board, and may be tweaked from week to week. But it's always to include a few salads, a couple of flatbread wraps, one soup, and two sides. At the moment, that looks like a warm lentil salad with beets and yogurt, red lettuces with feta and bulgur, and roasted eggplant with tomatoes and chiles. The best seller so far — the business opened August 6 — has been a braised lamb sandwich with harissa, cabbage, and herbs. It's served on freshly baked flatbread, and only 50 are available per day.

D R A N K		S A L A D S	
KESAR MANGO LASSI	5	-BEET W WARM LENTILS / CUCUMBER / YOGURT & AN EGG	13
HIBISCUS LEMONADE	4	-RED LETTUCE W FETA / MELON / BASIL BULGAR & ALMONDS	12
GREENS CUCUMBER LIME	4	-EGGPLANT W HUMMUS / EARLY GIRL TOMATOES /CILANTRO AND CHILE	13
CARROT GINGER JUICE	4	FLAT BREAD SANDWICHES	
SESAME CHOCOLATE COOKIE	4	-BRAISED LAMB / CABBAGE & YOGURT	14
		-SWEET POTATO / FETA / CABBAGE	14
		TOMATO SOUP W CHICKPEAS & MINT	6

Daily menu at Fava in Berkeley | Fava

Fava chefs and owners Sylvia Osborne-Calierno and Jeremy Scheiblauber met more than a dozen years ago as cooks at Chez Panisse. Osborn-Calierno, an artist, and Scheiblauber, a musician, opened restaurants in Spain and New Zealand, respectively, before circling back home to the Bay. Osborne-Calierno actually grew up in Berkeley, and attended the Edible School Yard, Alice Water's urban farming and public education project. They always wanted to open a small restaurant together, the duo says, allowing them to balance cooking with family life and artistic pursuits.

When the **Juice Bar Collective** relocated, Osborne-Calierno and Scheiblauber jumped at the chance to take over its space. That former Berkeley institution, opened by a group of hippies in the '70s, served juice and social justice to the community for 42 years. It occupied prime Berkeley real estate, two spaces down from the original Peet's Coffee, and around the corner from Chez Panisse and Cheese Board.



Outside Fava in Berkeley | Fava

Fava may have deep roots in the community and connections to local farms, but don't expect fine dining. "Despite our backgrounds with Chez Panisse, our philosophy and style is different now," Osborne-Calierno explains. "We're not interested in finely slicing or dicing anything. Our food is more homey, with handfuls of herbs, big squeezes of lemons, and lots of chiles."

Fava is now open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at 2114 Vine Street, Berkeley. The tiny space is limited to counter-service only, but there are a few tables out front.