

The boutique also sells fabulous clothes, shoes, and jewelry, but let's just get hung up on the bags for a moment. Classic to kitschy, there are myriad species of clutches, purses, handbags, and hold-alls that congregate on shelves here and huddle in corners there. You will likely find a well-behaved brown leather doctor bag sitting sensibly next to a flirty fuchsia and tangerine purse that looks like it should be swinging in the '60s. There are hand-painted handbags by New York's Nancy Lucia and funkily colored and black-and-white striped leather bags designed by the boutique's owner, Belinda McNeely.

But the jewel in Belinda M's crown is this: the price. By designing her own bags and importing others directly, McNeely is able to keep costs down. There are no outrageous price tags here, just fabulous, original, well-made bags.

Belinda M Designs, 1372 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, (925) 934-0938,
<http://www.belindamdesigns.com>

Editor's Pick

Quickie Beauty Treatment

What do you order at a **Brow Bar**? A new look, of course.

Professionals at these drop-in counters, in local Macy's department stores, wax, tweeze, and shape your brows into a perfect face-flattering frame. A no-appointment policy makes the service ideal for gals on the go, but expect to wait a few minutes for your turn on busy weekends. The treatments are no more than 15 minutes, and the aesthetician will pass you to a make-up artist to touch up your makeup afterward.

The bars, operated by Benefit, a San Francisco cosmetic company, are open 10:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m. seven days a week. An eyebrow wax costs \$18.

Brow Bars are located at Macy's in Walnut Creek's Broadway Plaza, (925) 279-3333, Ext. 2323; Concord's Sunvalley Shopping Center, (925) 689-3333, Ext. 2323; and Pleasanton's Stoneridge Shopping Center, (925) 463-3333, Ext. 2323. —Martha Ross

Readers' Pick

Manicure/Pedicure

Perched atop our vibrating spa-chair thrones, we really, really wanted to try **Pinkies'** princess pedicure, which comes with a fabulous tiara. But it's reserved for kiddies 12 and under. Drat. Among the offerings for big girls are natural and not-so-natural nail services (you get to keep the file), a callus treatment, eyelash and eyebrow tint, and plenty of hair removal options (Brazilian, anyone?).

Expect to leave feeling light and twinkly toed, toting a shopping bag full of private-label products. One item you won't want to forget is the acclaimed Cellular Detoxifying Salt Scrub, which you can use on your whole body, including hands and feet, and which will keep you buffed to a satiny finish between appointments.

The French mani and pedi come highly recommended by perfectionists. Upon seeing our flawless piggies, we squealed, "Oui! Oui! Oui!" all the way home.

Pinkies Nail Salons, 3333 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, (925) 299-1229,
<http://www.pinkiesnailsalons.com>

Readers' Pick

Yoga Teacher

There's something unusual about this year's best yoga teacher: He's not just a yoga teacher. Bikram East Bay's director, **Billy Wee**, who pocketed most of your votes, works as a self-employed financial planner, is father to four children, and likes to powder ski in his spare time.

The 49-year-old Bikram boss is a walking, talking, downward-dog example of how yoga can become a part of real life. And this, he says, is one of the things that makes him a better yoga teacher. "You have to find a way to integrate yoga into your life," says Wee. "One of my life missions is to bring Bikram to the suburbs so that busy people with full lives and families can integrate it into their regular schedule and receive the benefits, because that is exactly what I've done."

Bikram, Wee's yoga of choice since he was 17, is a 90-minute class of 26 challenging poses done in temperatures of around 105 degrees. Nine years ago, Wee opened his first yoga studio in Orinda, then one of only five Bikram studios in the world.

Now, he's got two additional studios, in Walnut Creek and San Ramon.

Wee teaches at least one class a week (usually Monday at 5:30 p.m. in Walnut Creek) and takes a class as a student every day. Why? So that he can empathize with and be on the same road as his own students. "Instead of just commanding my students to do it," he says, "I'm trying to motivate them from the inside, so that they want to do it."

Bikram East Bay, 1 Orinda Way, Ste. 2, Orinda Village, Orinda; 3120-C Crow Canyon Rd., San Ramon; 2021 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Walnut Creek; (925) 988-9642 (all locations), <http://www.bikrameastbay.com>

Readers' Pick

Women's Hair Salon

Tribez in Danville isn't just a hip full-service salon. It's like a beauty parlor version of a teaching hospital—on a mission to train future professionals and pioneer new techniques. And it has a maverick overseeing its academy: Troy Foustino, whose official title is artistic director. He's a San Ramon-reared hair guru who splits his time among Tribez, his society clientele in Beverly Hills, and styling assignments for TV and magazines.

Foustino has a singular vision about styling aesthetics, which he preaches to the beauty college graduates admitted to Tribez's six-month training program. He says that a good cut requires technical precision and an understanding of the "geometrics of hair."

Like the best physicians, Foustino is a superb diagnostician. Trainees watch as he spends time with first-time clients, assessing face shape, coloring, body type, and personality to recommend the best cut. Even with more conservative clients, he can suggest styles that are cutting-edge but