





high. Of course, channeling my inner brat, I protested, but dad came in as the peacemaker and found rave reviews for Tex Wasabi's. He said this place would marry my pickiness with Mom's desire to break out of the ordinary because it was a blend of good ol' American barbecue and "rock-n-roll sushi." As we got ready to order, my dad, embarrassingly, explained our predicament to our waiter, who recommended we try some of the "gringo sushi." We decided on the Jackass Roll. It looks like your average sushi roll, but it's filled with pulled pork and avocado, wrapped with sticky sushi rice and dolloped with chile aioli. Tex Wasabi's is the place where hesitant foodies can cautiously widen their food horizons, and for the adventurous who want to see where unlikely cuisine fusion can take them. 515 Fourth St., Santa Rosa. 707.544.8399.—S.S.

**BEST PLACE TO GET A JAMÓN IBÉRICO AND L'ÉTIVAZ ON POILÂNE RYE**

That's "ham and Swiss on rye" in plain talk, for all you would-be gourmands who have not yet ventured into the epicure's candy shop that is **Atelier Fine Foods**. Opened by **Boisset Collection** in 2016, Atelier eschews the downmarket descriptor "deli"—they prefer the epithet "épicerie"—though you can, in fact, find here all the fixings for the most exquisitely curated ham and Swiss in this valley or the next. Start with that jamón Ibérico, from a heritage breed of pigs that gorge themselves on Andalusian acorns to produce a prosciutto-like cured meat that is nutty and more intensely flavored, for \$211 per pound. "It's an affordable luxury if you buy it by the slice," says catering manager Betsy Musick. Six slices costs above 11 bucks, according to Musick, who suggests that splurging for a taste can be a salve for all the cravings that food and travel shows create for hungry viewers. "It allows you to experience this thing that you've heard so much about in the culinary world." L'Étivaz cheese is made by Swiss villagers who lead their cows to the highest alpine pastures in spring to munch on the first delicate flowers that follow the melting snow, and it's available by the pound for \$38, along with over a hundred other cheeses from the North Bay and Europe. Slap it all between two slices of Poilâne rye bread at \$17 per round, which is flown in weekly from the

renowned bakery in Paris—maybe with a few pumps of the house mustard, sold in bulk and imported directly from the last real mustard maker anywhere near Dijon, France. On a budget? Just pick up a Jambon de Paris—French ham and Comté cheese on a baguette, pre-made in the morning and available for \$12 until they run out. And amid the half dozen brands of caviar, the terrines, foie gras and charcuterie, a surprise hit has been the huge selection of *conservas*, canned fish from Spain and Portugal. All selections, like the home-grown biodynamic salads, rotate according to season, because, as Musick says, "Sometimes the 'best of today' is not the best two months ago—no pun intended." 6505 Washington St., Yountville. 707.934.8237. [jbcollection.com](http://jbcollection.com).—J.K.

**BEST OLD-SCHOOL ICE CREAM SHOP WITH NEW-SCHOOL FLAVORS**

**Lala's Creamery** in Petaluma offers a classic diner vibe, with a dessert bar, a checkered floor and vintage décor. But the ice cream and baked goods are far from old-fashioned. Look for flavors like Earl Grey, honey and horchata, as well as classic strawberry, chocolate and vanilla. Food allergies and dietary preferences are no issue here. Lala's is constantly creating delicious dairy and gluten-free desserts, in addition to low-sugar flavors. No corn syrup, artificial food colorings or hard-to-pronounce additives are used in any of the sweets. The red in the house-made maraschino cherries? Plant-based. 134 Petaluma Blvd. N., Petaluma. 707.763.5252. [lalacreamery.com](http://lalacreamery.com).—S.S.

**BEST CLOSED RESTAURANT THAT WE TOTALLY HOPE REOPENS BEFORE FIRE SEASON**

And so there I was, hunkered down in the *Bohemian's* smoky office on the afternoon of Oct. 9, shocked at the damage and struggling to crank out some copy about the fires. The phones didn't work and the internet was down, and you could practically feel the panic

**BEST SERENADED BOOZE**

**Spirit Works Distillery** is among the hundreds of small-batch, artisan