

Fresh Fusion

Bocanova blends Pan-American cuisine with authentically Californian ingredients.

In many restaurants, the staff shares a meal before each shift. This simple repast inspired Rick Hackett to explore a new world of cuisine — at least, new to a chef trained in classical European techniques.

“I once had a Peruvian sous-chef from Lima and he opened my eyes,” says Hackett. “I’d never thought much about South American food, but it’s simple, delicious, and very diverse. It gives you an opportunity to try a lot of different things.”

So Hackett opened Bocanova, a Pan-American restaurant in Oakland’s Jack London Square. To develop the menu, he worked closely with his staff. “I had people from all over South and Central America working in my kitchen,” says Hackett. “They called their moms to get recipes and then we’d refine them.”

The menu draws inspiration from regions

ranging from Mexico to Argentina, but the ingredients are locally sourced. “We rely on area farmers,” says executive chef John Jackson. “I can even request that they grow specific herbs and peppers. We also make everything

from scratch here, including our own tortillas.”

You can taste the fresh, Latin-inspired flavors in dishes such as scallops with Brazilian curry sauce, Peruvian seafood stew with bacon and serrano-pepper pesto, and pork loin with tamarind glaze, chayote, and jicama slaw.

Diners can choose a seat in Bocanova’s warm, inviting dining room, which features a rotating display of paintings and photographs by local contemporary artists, or on the outdoor patio overlooking the marina on the Oakland Estuary. Indoors or out, the relaxed atmosphere and inventive menu make Bocanova a feast for all the senses.

BY IVY LAMB

Clockwise from top: quinoa salad, Bocanova’s dining room, owner Rick Hackett and executive chef John Jackson, and pork tamale



Bocanova

55 Webster Street
Oakland, CA
510.444.1233
bocanova.com



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