

INSIDE BAY AREA

MEET / *Mill Valley*

Spoke on the water

In the Bay Area, there are seemingly infinite bike trails, paths, and lanes to cruise—but last year, **Judah Schiller** realized there was one type of terrain that cyclists hadn't tapped: the water. So this summer, he premiered the Schiller Bike, an aquatic bicycle that can be pedaled across the San Francisco Bay at the land equivalent of about 9 miles per hour. (The X1 model retails for \$6,495.) We took a test spin with Schiller to hear about his plans for launching bicycling's next big thing. —Jenna Scatena

What gave you this idea?

I live in Marin County, with some of the best biking and surfing in the country in my backyard. Water biking just seemed like the next evolution. I made the first ride across the bay last year using a Bianchi road bike propped on an old Italian floatation system, but I thought I could come up with a better way.

How exactly does it work?

It's essentially a multispeed bike that floats on pontoons. The pedals rotate two propellers, and you steer as you would a normal bike.

How difficult is it?

Not that difficult. You're getting on a bike that doesn't fall over; if you know how to ride a bike, there's very little learning curve. In using your quads—instead of

Judah Schiller puts the X1 Schiller Bike through its watery paces.

your arms, as with most water sports—you can generate more energy faster. It's pretty easy to get above 8 knots. And you don't need a wetsuit or swimsuit.

Is it safe?

It's safer than biking on the road: There aren't any potholes or cars turning into your lane. You can see obstacles miles away. And it's definitely lower risk than motorized water sports. Of course, you should wear a floatation device and be aware of your surroundings. And I probably wouldn't recommend surfing on it.

What kind of reaction do you get out there?

Once most people get over their initial disbelief, they seem fascinated. This one guy almost crashed his yacht trying to videotape me.

Why not just stick to kayaking?

You can see more marine life because you're higher up, looking down into the water instead of across it. I biked with a pod of about 50 dolphins at Stinson Beach. Who's ever done that?

Where are your favorite places to ride?

The calm waters around Mill Valley, where I live, or the rougher waters along Crissy Field are fun. I love watching the sunset from underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, or riding it to a beach camping spot on Tomales Bay.

Is it easy to transport?

The frame fits on a standard rear bike rack and the rest into a duffel bag. It's only about 45 pounds and takes about 10 minutes for one person to reassemble. schillerbikes.com.



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Clockwise from above: The Estate House at Hamel Family Wines; Molina; ribs, chicken, and sides at Perdition; SoMa West Skate Park.

SEE & DO / Sonoma

Sniff, sip, play

Hamel Family Wines is kind of like a summer camp masquerading as a winery. In lieu of a stuffy tasting room and the usual in-and-out hustle, Sonoma's newest grape escape kicks things off with a packed calendar through the end of the year: a campfire concert series, dinner and movies in the wine cave, and come the holiday season, a lighting of the vines. Of course, if you'd prefer to kick back and sip Sauvignon Blanc on the sprawling patio overlooking the vineyards, that can be arranged too. Just be sure to make an appointment. *Tasting from \$40; hamelfamilywines.com.*

EAT / Mill Valley

What's the DJ mixing?

At **Molina**, a sweet and intimate North Bay newbie, chef-owner Todd Shoberg doubles as a DJ, spinning vinyl in his open kitchen while turning out

winning ingredient-driven dishes with nothing but a fryer and a wood-fired hearth. The evening's playlist is printed on the menu, whose flip side spotlights the season's finest: pink-centered rib-eye, seared in a cast-iron skillet and plated with morels and roasted potatoes; bountiful cioppino, with shellfish, corn, and salmon in a shallow bath of fennel-scented broth. Although the restaurant's farm-fresh themes ring largely familiar, much like the records that Shoberg plays, the crispness of the cooking and the personalized setting make Molina a novel riff on California cuisine. \$\$\$; 17 Madrona St.; *molinarestaurant.com.*

EAT / Berkeley

Brew and 'cue

Beer and barbecue, that ageless pairing, takes a youthful turn at **Perdition**, a lively smokehouse featuring an epic list of local craft beers and crowds of 20-somethings in Confederate



soldier beards. The chalkboard menu pays tribute to tradition, with slow-cooked classics such as dry-rubbed brisket and tangy pork ribs, served by the pound or in combo platters, along with coleslaw, baked beans with burnt ends, and other sides that would make a purist proud. Yet for all the throwback touches, this is not your grandpa's old-school barbecue shack, not when you can groove to an indie-rock soundtrack while washing down pork shoulder with a summery saison. \$\$; 2050 University Ave.; *perditionbbq.com.*

SEE & DO / San Francisco

Concrete jungle

The former no-man's-land beneath the Central Freeway between Valencia and Otis Streets got an unexpected makeover—and, no, it's not another parking space parklet. After five years and \$3.3 million (including a \$10,000 donation from skate legend Tony Hawk), the **SoMa West Skate Park and Dog Play Area** has become the hood's newest place to let loose. (Not always to the delight of the park's actual neighbors, whose concerns about noise have led

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Love your neighbor: About half the seating at Penrose is at bar-height communal tables.

EAT / Oakland

Chef on fire

Wood-fueled oven. Farm-to-table menu. The hallmarks of a Charlie Hallowell restaurant, evident at Pizzaiolo and Boot and Shoe Service, are present at **Penrose** too. But the chef now has his hearth set on a broader repertoire. Instead of thin-crust pizzas, he's slinging Middle Eastern flatbread, along with assorted wood-fired items that show the kitchen's willingness to roam around the map. A seared hanger steak with farro, grapes, and chimichurri shares space on the menu with a robust Moroccan chickpea soup and a roasted half-chicken, with apple-fennel slaw, that springs

straight from the rustic Cal-Med playbook. A buzzing bar, an upbeat soundtrack, and eclectic artwork, including a Jetsons-like glass awning above the kitchen, lend the place the feel of a trippy farmhouse operating at an urban pace. \$\$; 3311 Grand Ave.; penroseoakland.com.

SEE & DO / Mill Valley

One last camping trip

Want to take advantage of California's most underrated camping season (hello, Indian summer), but slacked on snagging a campsite in time? Then head to Mt. Tamalpais State Park, where the 15 sites at **Bootjack Campground** are on a first-

come, first-served basis, after being a day-use-only picnic spot for the last four decades. The site, on Mt. Tam's south side, comes with plenty of perks, like proximity to the Matt Davis Trail, which winds down to Stinson Beach, and the namesake Bootjack Trail, which drops to Muir Woods. It's also far from urban light pollution, making it an ideal stargazing perch. \$25/night; parks.ca.gov.

EAT / Oakland

Found in translation

Daniel Patterson still calls his Uptown restaurant Plum, only now he says the word in

Japanese: **Ume**. With the change in name comes a shift in focus toward a sharp but casual menu that plucks ingredients from California while drawing inspiration from overseas. On a recent evening, roasted eggplant, dusted with mint, fermented chiles, and bonito flakes, made way for a fragrant bowl of fried chicken ramen followed by a scramble of maitake mushrooms with eggs and silken tofu skin. Although the dark wood interior was left untouched, the rejuvenated cooking, combined with brisker service, gives the restaurant a fresh energy that suits its surroundings: a once-dormant neighborhood on the rise. \$\$; 2214 Broadway; umeoakland.com. 🍣