

FOOD

East Bay's biggest and most ambitious food hall opens with its first 3 vendors



Janelle Bitker

| July 23, 2020

| Updated: July 23, 2020 11a.m.



Castro Valley Natural Grocery is the anchor tenant at Castro Valley Marketplace, the East Bay's new 39,000-square-foot food hall.

Photo: Castro Valley Marketplace

Organic produce, handmade sausages and flaky pastries are all on offer at Castro Valley Marketplace, a massive food hall now open in the East Bay.

While there are a few other food halls in the East Bay, Castro Valley Marketplace is set to be the biggest and most ambitious. At 39,000-square-foot, it's even larger than Assembly, the planned food hall for Oakland's Jack London Square that's drawn a star-studded lineup of chefs.

In the works for nearly three years, the Castro Valley complex promises several restaurants and food-oriented shops, plus multiple classrooms and event spaces intended to make it a true community hub — at least, when the coronavirus allows such gatherings. It's unclear whether the new marketplace is considered a mall and may at some point be restricted to visitors due to county public health orders, as was the case Wednesday at San Francisco's Ferry Building.

For now, Castro Valley Marketplace only has three businesses open, including a new grocery store. Castro Valley Natural Grocery is a spin-off of the much-loved Alameda Natural Grocery in Alameda and similarly focuses on organic produce and locally produced artisan goods. The new store ups the stakes with a professional cheese monger and its own restaurant called Tomato.

Baron's Quality Meats & Seafood, which has locations in Alameda and San Francisco, also opened a new shop in the food hall. The butcher specializes in meat, poultry and seafood free of hormones and antibiotics, and its handmade sausages and marinated meats have built a following.

Also open is Seven Hills Baking Co., a new solo venture of baker Julien Wagner, who most recently spent a decade at Alameda's Feel Good Bakery. Seven Hills serves a variety of laminated pastries, organic whole grain breads and classic baguettes.

In August, olive oil purveyor Amphora Nueva and spice specialist Oaktown Spice Shop are scheduled to open new locations. Both shops already operate multiple popular outlets elsewhere in the Bay Area. September is slated to bring a second location of Berkeley sushi restaurant Akemi.

Other coming attractions include Cannery Kitchen & Tap, a restaurant from the chefs behind Hayward's now-closed Cannery Cafe; Cordial Cellar + Lounge, a bar from the owners of San Leandro's Cordial Bottle Shop; and Night Owl, a cocktail lounge from the team behind Oakland's Blind Tiger and Gogi Time.

Castro Valley Marketplace. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily; seniors and at-risk customers can visit the grocery store starting at 8 a.m. 3295 Castro Valley Blvd., Castro Valley. <https://castrovalleymarketplace.com>

Janelle Bitker is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: janelle.bitker@sfgchronicle.com Twitter: [@janellebitker](https://twitter.com/janellebitker)