

REASON TO DRIVE TO NATOMAS FOR LUNCH

Trek to a Natomas strip mall for lunch? Yes, we're serious, so long as your destination is **Mati's Indian Express**. If you like fresh-baked garlic naan, tangy chicken tikka masala and flaky, just-fried samosas (which are even better with the tingly cilantro chutney), then hop in the car and go. This brightly painted, friendly eatery dishes up cheap and tasty combo plates, well worth a short drive to spice up your weekday. 3800 Truxel Rd., Sacramento. 285-0532. matisindianexpress.com

GREEN LOCAL ROCK BAND

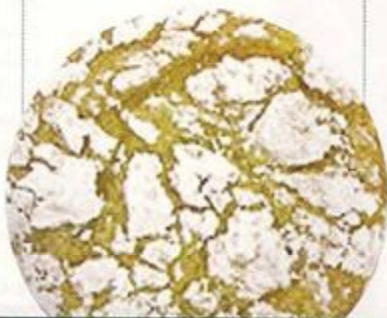
While fans have been patiently waiting for the band's next album (due out next year), it turns out that **Cake** has been busy saving the planet. Not only did the quartet play last year's EarthFest concert, but they also recently converted their Sacramento studio to run on 100 percent solar power. They even posted a video about the installation of the panels at cakemusic.com. In addition to going solar, the band has a carpooling forum on its site, gives away saplings to lucky fans and sells a \$5 Cake-branded reusable shopping bag to help "eliminate shopping bag landfill." No wonder they made the list of Top 5 Greenest Bands in *Billboard* magazine in April.

TASTE OF VIETNAM FOR A NOMINAL PRICE

You have just \$3 in your pocket and you're starving. No problem: grab a banh mi (Vietnamese-style sub) on a big, cushy baguette-like roll from **Huong Lan Sandwiches**. The most expensive sammy on the menu is but a mere \$2.75 (cash only!), and each one comes packed with cilantro, sweet-tart pickled carrots, sliced jalapeños, crunchy fried shallots and meat like succulent grilled pork, peppery meatballs or (for brave souls) head cheese. Got another \$3? Splurge on a sweet shake with tapioca pearls—you big spender, you. 6950 65th St., Sacramento. 429-9999

DIET-BUSTING OVER-SIZED COOKIES

If the pervasive shrinkage of your favorite childhood cookies (Oreos, Teddy Grahams, Chips Ahoy) for those 100-calorie packs is driving you as crazy as it is us, **Cookie Connection** is where you need to go. Here, you can score a fresh-baked jumbo cookie that's four inches in diameter, or roughly the size of a hubcap. We're fans of the tarty Lemon Drop and sweetly rich Crackie (that's chocolate brownie), but our fave is the S'More, with its graham cracker bottom and mini-marshmallows. Locations in Sacramento and Roseville. cookieconnection.com



PRESIDENTIAL DOG

Nope, we're not talking about Bo. We're referring to the downward dog poses that teachers from Sacramento-based **Zuda Yoga** taught during the Obamas' first Easter Egg Roll. Being that this was also the first time yoga was included in the annual event (the biggest to take place every year on the White House grounds), it wouldn't be too much of a stretch to say that our local yogis breathed new life into this 131-year tradition. Locations in Sacramento and Folsom. zudayoga.com

SHOP WHERE VODKA BOTTLES GO TO DIE

If your idea of eco-friendly home design is lumpy brown hemp draperies, think again. At the environmental building and design store **Green Sacramento** in midtown, owner Josh Daniels is making sure that being green is easy on the eyes and the conscience. That's why he stocks materials like stylish wood flooring certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, over 900 colors of paint that help protect the ozone layer (and even make you less irritable, ask for the AFM Pitta colors) and Vetrazzo countertops made from 85 percent recycled glass, including beer bottles (check out the Alehouse Amber color) and vodka bottles (the Cobalt Sky color comes from blue Sky vodka bottles). Just another example of why green is the new black. 1937 H St., Sacramento. 448-8109. greensacramento.com

HOT RUMOR THAT MAY ACTUALLY COME TRUE

While plans for the Firestone building were being revealed last year, we were also hearing whispers that across the street at 16th and K, Roseville's popular wine-themed **Crush 29** will be opening a downtown Sacramento location. But then the whispers died down, along with our hopes for another exciting dining destination. Well, time to break out the Bordeaux. Scheduled to open next spring, the Sacramento location will feature a two-story glass façade, high ceilings and an indoor-outdoor bar area. But the Napa-inspired menu will remain the same as in Roseville. Now if only the free valet parking situation will, too.

