

# San Francisco Chronicle

WEEKEND PREVIEW

## Dinner, dignity at Crossroads

**W**hen you come to a fork in the road — take it," begins a flyer that describes the origins and philosophy behind **Crossroads Cafe** at 699 Delancey St.

Crossroads Cafe is a project of the Delancey Street Foundation, a 26-year-old self-help residential, educational and job-training organization for people who are rebuilding their lives after drug abuse, trouble with the law or other personal strifes.

According to the foundation's flyer, Delancey Street brings together "people . . . committed to change, to hard work and 'can-do' confidence, to discipline and dignity, to self-respect and service to others."

The bright-eyed Crossroads staff is eager to take and fulfill your order. Their skill and professionalism could serve as a model for other restaurants. The staffers earn salaries, but they don't accept gratuities. All tips are considered donations that go into Delancey support services.

The menu includes comforting nourishments, both traditional and inventive. For breakfast, rev up with the homemade granola that has almonds, sunflower seeds and currants (\$3.50; add banana for 50 cents, or yogurt for \$1); or the "made-from-scratch" waffles (buttermilk or lemon-poppy seed) with butter and maple syrup (\$5.95).

All Crossroads juices are freshly squeezed. Choose from orange, carrot, apple or the racy homemade raspberry limeade (small: \$1.45, large: \$2.65).

### LUNCH WITH THE LORD

*Lord Martine*

Their salads get a green light with these unusual tosses: The seared rare ahi tuna over greens with mango papaya salsa (\$7.50) and the zippy Caribbean Chicken Salad, with chunks of juicy orange and ripe avocado (\$7.50).

Proceed without caution toward the sandwich board, where you'll find a chilled, spicy meat loaf with house-made onion marmalade (\$6.25), and warm Brie and sweet pear on focaccia (\$4.25). (This dish is as good as a hot date, but without the jitters.)

Pastries and desserts are made fresh every day. Just like Mom used to make. (Well, not *my* mom, but somebody's mom.) Apple tea cakes (\$1.85), three-layer lemon bars (\$1.50), All-American chocolate cake (\$2.95), three-ginger gingerbread (\$3.50), chocolate fudge pie with Snickers and cheesecake topping (\$3.50) and peanut butter cookies (\$1.25) are just a sample of the sweet fuels available.

Crossroads is a meeting point for folks of all walks. They have an Olde Fashioned Soda Fountain that serves sundaes (\$3.15-\$4.95), milkshakes and malts (\$3.45). In addition, they offer Full High Tea (\$12.50-\$14.50 per person) and Simple Afternoon Tea (\$3.95 to \$7.50). Both are served with an assortment of tea sandwiches and pastries.

Tank up your brain with a pick

from the in-house bookstore, newsstand or magazine rack with publications such as "O" magazine — with guess who on the cover — available to browse or buy.

The custard-yellow walls boast stunning paintings by **Brad Stewart**, a 48-year-old Bay Area artist.

Not only is the food made from scratch, but so is the structure at Crossroads. The wavy food counter was hand-carved, the bookcases were hand-built, and the concrete flooring was poured and stained by the Delancey work force.

Comestibles and reading materials in hand, stop at your choice of hip living room-style couches, tables, chairs and stools — all donated by Pottery Barn.

Or head out to the lush, tree-shaded lanai, where travelers soak up sunshine and cool bay breezes.

Unpaved, a road less traveled is rough in terrain but rich in discovery.

### At the Crossroads

Crossroads Cafe is at 699 Delancey St., between Brannan and the Embarcadero, across the walkway from Townsend Bakery. Hours: 7:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. (415) 836-5624.