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Let's Celebrate

47 Holiday Recipes

Ice cream makes everything better

Issue 170

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Sodium Diacetate

Sodium Glutamate

Sodium Propionate

Sodium Stearoyl-2-Lactylate

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INDULGE

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For additional pairing suggestions and more on the Five Senses of Chocolate Tasting process, visit Lindt.com

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Lindt

CHOCOLATE
BEYOND COMPARE

December

A cargo ship rests in the harbor in Reykjavík, Iceland.
p. 84

THIS MONTH
ON THE WEB

Find more than 100 **festive holiday drinks,** from boozy hazelnut white hot chocolate to tea-infused champagne punch, all perfect for your next party, at **SAVEUR.COM/HOLIDAYDRINKS;** celebrate 25 days of baking with our **Cookie Advent Calendar** at **SAVEUR.COM/COOKIES;** make an **unforgettable holiday meal** with recipes for centerpiece roasts, hearty vegetable sides, and delectable desserts at **SAVEUR.COM/HOLIDAY.**

ON THE COVER *Apple Pandowdy (see "Boston Uncommon," page 70)* **Photograph by Romulo Yanes**

ARIANA LINDQUIST

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December

Bartender Paul Gustings of Broussard's in New Orleans with his Roffignac cocktail.
p. 43

Chef Hugh Acheson presides over a home-cooked holiday meal.
p. 58

Cool and intense, coffee gelatin is one of our favorite Boston finds.
p. 70

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY; CHRIS GRANGER; INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY; ARIANA LINDQUIST

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This lively langoustine soup is spiked with paprika and curry powder.
p. 93

Recipes

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

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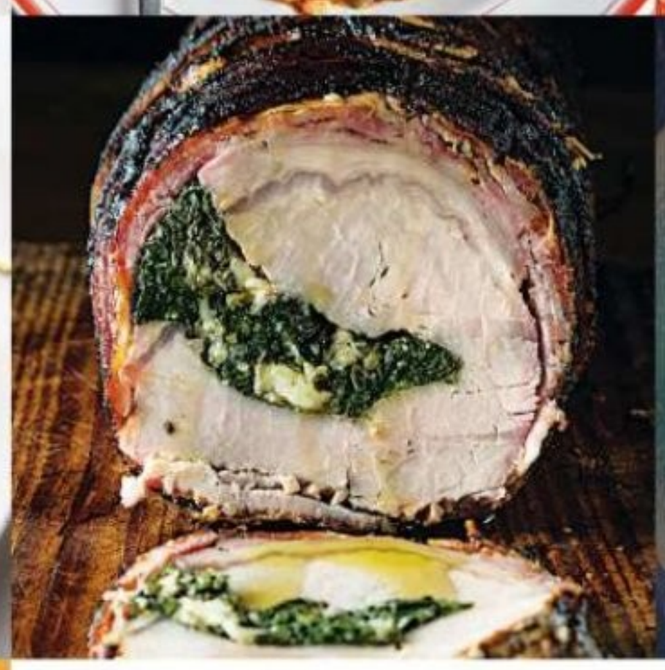

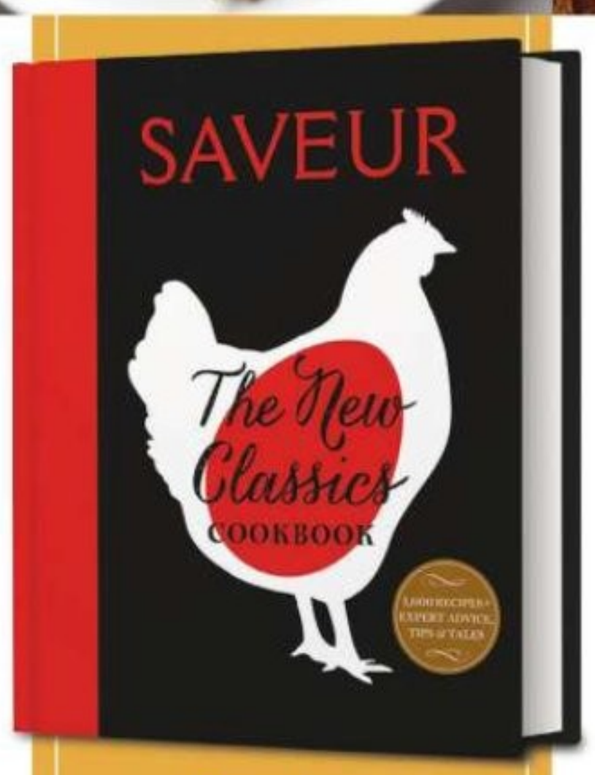

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10 CHEFS 10 WINERIES

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We asked 10 of Americas top chefs to develop recipes paired specifically to 10 of Portugals best wines. The result: a delectable and diverse group of dishes from a variety of cuisines including French, Italian, Vietnamese, contemporary Portuguese, Asian fusion and seafood paired perfectly to a unique collection of wines.

On the 1st of every month throughout this year, we're releasing one of the recipes with the wine pairing through the Wines of Portugal Facebook page, Twitter handle (hashtag #10chefs) and on the website. Videos of each chef preparing their respective recipes and talking about the unique wine pairing are also available online.

The culmination of this culinary journey will be a recipe book featuring the 10 chefs, wines, wineries and recipes. Look for this limited edition book at upcoming Wines of Portugal events. Follow us on Facebook for a chance to win your own copy.

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Holiday Gift Guide

FARE

Goodies and Gear from the World of Food

From the moment it debuted at Grant Achatz's Chicago bar The Aviary, we've coveted **The Porthole,** a cold-infusion vessel newly available for retail. Use it for cocktails, flavored vinegars, and even cold broths ($99; theportholeinfuser.com).

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY. HANDWRITING: VALERO DOVAL

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2 This **JAPANESE BRASS TRIVET** ($90; poketo.com) evokes the shape of the moon. **3** Le Creuset's new 5.5-qt. **MATTE FINISH FRENCH OVEN** ($280; lecreuset.com) looks as good as it works. **4** A **BASQUE PORRÓN** ($20; spanishtable.com) streams wine into your mouth. **5** Make bone-in, cured Virginia **"SURRYANO" HAM** ($219; edwardsvaham.com) a holiday centerpiece. **6** Stir in style with **FALCON ENAMELWARE PREP SETS** ($70–89; falconenamelware.com). **7** Give biweekly deliveries of single-origin coffee with **BLUE BOTTLE AT HOME** ($13–34 per shipment; bluebottle.com). **8** The pretty **ENGLISH STEEL COUNTERWEIGHT SCALE** is more sensitive than digital devices ($279; kaufmann-mercantile.com). **9** Toast the new year with **DOM PÉRIGNON P2 1998** ($350 for a 750-ml bottle; crushwineco.com). **10** A **BRACELET FLASK** ($225; cynthiarowley.com) holds three ounces of holiday spirit. **11** Just-harvested **RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER OYSTERS** make elegant presents ($50 for 50; rroysters.com). **12** Open them with the **SHUCKER PADDY** ($20; surlatable.com). **13** Savory-sweet flavors of peat and honey make **HIGHLAND PARK 18** single-malt ($120 for 750 ml; crossroads wines.com) a favorite fireside sip. **14** The buttery leather **BOWERY CAMERA BAG** ($239; onabags.com) will delight food photographers.

Illustrations by Valero Doval

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15 Stuff stockings with the chocolate **JEWEL BAR,** spangled with nuts, candied rose petals, and candied oranges ($7.50; gearhartschocolates.com), and **16 DUCK FAT CARAMELS** ($18 for 24; oliveandsinclair.com). **17** A Polish 15-liter **FERMENTING CROCK POT** ($190; sausagemaker.com) is a great gift for the budding pickler. **18** Tangy **DRINKING SHRUBS** ($22; shrubandco.com) are delicious in a stiff drink. **19** Buying something nice for yourself? Put a bow on the new **BLUE STAR PLATINUM 48" RANGE** ($10,478; bluestarcooking.com), featuring 25,000 BTU burners, a stovetop grill, and an infrared broiler that hits 1,850 degrees. **20** The **GRAY KUNZ CHEF'S SPOON** ($40; jbprince.com) is an object of obsession. Spring for the gold-plated 20th-anniversary edition. **21** Gorgeous **BIG CHILL REFRIGERATORS** ($2,995; bigchill.com) require no wrapping. **22** Colorful **GIR SPATULAS** ($16; product ofgir.com) are heat resistant up to 550 degrees. **23** The **DURAND CORKSCREW** ($125; thedurand.com) removes older corks without damage. **24** The **VITAMIX S30** ($409; vitamix.com) has a mini blender that doubles as a travel mug. **25** An even heat conductor, the **FALK CLASSICAL LINE OVAL COPPER FRYING PAN** shines in many ways ($295; falkusa.com). **26** Handsome **DRY GOODS VESSELS** have walnut tops ($84 each; fortstandard.com).

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Customers gather for drinks at Yudale, a cocktail bar in Jerusalem.

EILON PAZ

Holy City of Sips

The pope's bar and other cocktail joints in Jerusalem

You wouldn't know it from the news or guidebooks, but Jerusalem is a great bar city, with a cocktail culture that incorporates local flavors and traditions. A universe apart from the normal trek undertaken by tourists—the esplanade of the mosques, the Western Wall, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—the bar scene remains nearly unknown to most visitors. But after a tour of the historic highlights, nothing beats an evening in an (almost) equally storied bar.

A classic place to start is The Cellar Bar at The American Colony Hotel, where journalists and clutches of diplomats come to unwind. Fadi Nsra, one of the head barmen, presides over this warren of interlocking rooms under the hotel's restaurant. My favorite drink there is a gin and tonic that is chockful of crushed black peppercorns and slices of green chile pepper.

The next stop on the pilgrimage is about a mile away, at the most magical of venues: Rooftop Cheese and Wine Restaurant, a cloistered bar located atop the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Pontifical Institute, the pope's official residence in the Holy City. This is the place to sip a glass of champagne from the bar's extensive collection, or a

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside."

—MARK TWAIN (1835–1910)

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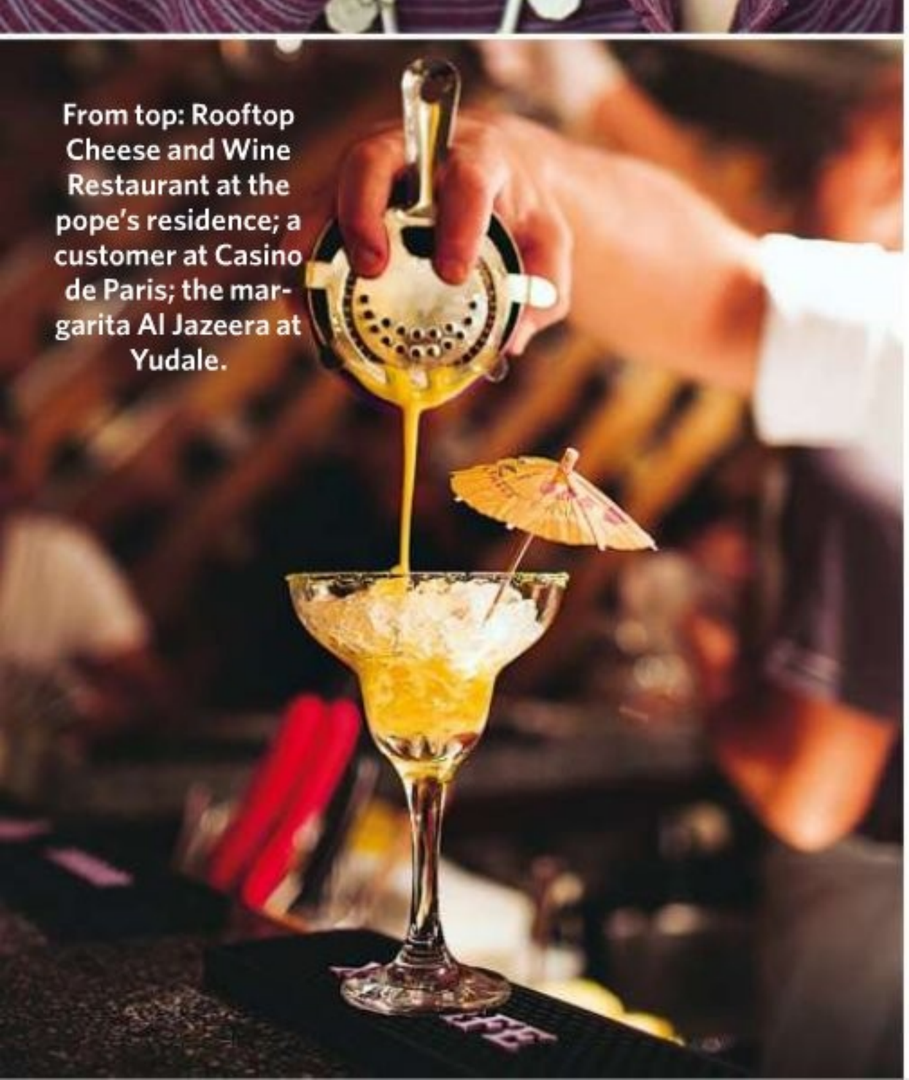

From top: Rooftop Cheese and Wine Restaurant at the pope's residence; a customer at Casino de Paris; the margarita Al Jazeera at Yudale.

tumbler of top-notch tequila, on hand for the Mexican Legionaries of Christ, who operate the center—while the Old City glitters below.

A ten-minute walk along Jaffa Road takes you to Barood, where for more than 20 years owner Daniela Lerer has acted as a walking encyclopedia of boutique nativist drinks. For a uniquely local experience, order a shot of *krupnik,* a powerful yet smooth honey distillate made in the Galilee. Bar food here is based on traditional Sephardic recipes like *pastelikos,* small meat-stuffed pockets; *boyikos,* a cheesy pastry; and *prasa,* leek fritters.

Farther down Jaffa Road, tucked into a courtyard in Jerusalem's central market, Machane Yehuda, is Casino de Paris. Located in a former brothel, it offers irreverently named sui generis cocktails like the Arab Spring, composed of grenadine, cardamom, fresh mint, pomegranate juice, and *boukha,* a Tunisian fig distillate.

Nearby, within the same sprawling market, is Machneyuda, one of Israel's most talked-about restaurants. The current wait for a dinner reservation is a few weeks, so cross the narrow street instead to its sister property, Yudale, where the food is vibrant—mussels steamed in the anise-flavored spirit arak and local wild herbs; a butcher's selection of Golan beef served au jus over smoked green wheat berries—and the drinks elicit smiles. One tequila-based creation is an homage to the many journalists who tramp through town: the margarita Al Jazeera, infused with rose petals and cumin. —*Noga Tarnopolsky*

Barood
31 Jaffa Road, Feingold Courtyard
97/22/625-9081

Casino de Paris
3 Mahane Yehuda Street
97/22/650-4235

The Cellar Bar
1 Louis Vincent Street
97/22/627-9777; americancolony.com

Rooftop Cheese and Wine Restaurant
3 Paratroopers Road
97/22/627-9177; notredamecenter.org

Yudale
11 Bait Ya'akov Street
97/22/533-3442; machneyuda.co.il/en

PRIDE OF PROVENCE

In Aix-en-Provence, in the south of France, the holidays aren't complete without calissons, confections of ground almonds and candied fruit. They're eaten on Christmas Eve as one of 13 desserts symbolizing Christ and his apostles, and offered instead of communion wafers at mass the next day at the local cathedral. While the icing-topped treats can be found at bakeries throughout the city, the best are also available online from Confiserie Léonard Parli, whose calissons have a rich, dense texture and a pure, sweet almond taste. ($42 for a 1.1-lb. box; leonard-parli.com)

—Brianna Wilson

FROM LEFT: EILON PAZ (3); INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

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DELTA

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Competitive set is U.S. carriers: Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, JetBlue Airways, US Airways, United Airlines and Southwest Airlines.

At Jessamyn Rodriguez's Hot Bread Kitchen, a nonprofit teaching bakery in Manhattan, bakers produce bialys with high puffy rims and deep wells of amber-colored onions ($2 each or 6 for $10; hotbreadkitchen.org).

Overseen by chef Mark Strausman, Freds at Barneys in Los Angeles and New York sells oniony bialys with a jaw-exercising texture ($18.50 per dozen; New York: 212/833-2200; Los Angeles: 310/777-5877).

To make the glistening, toasty brown specimens from Farm & Sparrow bakery in Asheville, North Carolina, owner David Bauer mixes onions and poppy seeds with olive oil, giving the bialys a handsome sheen while keeping the onion filling soft, blond, and supple ($2 each; large orders only for shipping; farmandsparrow.com).

THE RETURN OF THE BIALY

Mimi Sheraton *charts the renaissance of the onion roll*

How far would a sane person travel to find an onion roll? I'm afraid that I know the answer. While researching my book *The Bialy Eaters* (Broadway Books, 2000), the search for the roll known as a bialy took me to Poland, Israel, Argentina, Australia, England, France, and various cities in the United States. For those not yet privileged to know it, the bialy is a squat, squashy bagel alternative characterized by a slightly crackling yet softly puffy rim encircling a crisp center well, all mantled with pungent golden brown flecks of caramelized onions and crunches of poppy seeds.

Since then, it has become ever more difficult to find convincing examples. For decades, New York bakers turned out excellent bialys, but with changing times and tamer palates ("What? Me eat burned onions for breakfast?"), the old standards declined. Today, the bialy is returning to fashion, but mostly in bizarre guises with toppings such as squid ink and roasted red peppers, or a slice of cheese that melts in baking. All might cause traditionalists (including me) to lose their appetites altogether.

Fortunately for devotees of the classic bialy, the flame is being kept alive by a few new-generation bakers. In my former searches, I never would have thought to look for great bialys in Manhattan's Spanish Harlem, or at ultrachic Barneys in New York and Los Angeles, or, least of all, in Asheville, North Carolina. But bakers in these places are proving that sometimes the best things don't need updating.

Bialys

MAKES 16

The recipe for this classic Jewish staple was adapted from Mimi Sheraton's *The Bialy Eaters* (Broadway Books, 2002).

- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 1 small Vidalia onion, minced
- 2 tbsp. coarse bread crumbs, lightly toasted
- 3 cups ice-cold water
- ½ oz. fresh yeast (see page 100)
- 5¾ cups bread flour, plus more for dusting
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. poppy seeds

1 Heat oil and onion in a 12" skillet over medium; cook until onion is golden, 12–14 minutes. Stir in bread crumbs; let cool.

2 Stir ½ cup water and the yeast in a bowl until smooth; add remaining water. Combine flour and salt in a stand mixer fitted with a hook. With the motor running, slowly add yeast mixture until a sticky dough forms. At medium-high speed, knead dough until smooth but still sticky, 3–4 minutes. Cover bowl with a dish towel; let sit in a warm place until dough has doubled in size, 1–1½ hours.

3 Uncover and return dough to stand mixer with hook; knead 10 minutes. Return dough to bowl and cover; let sit until doubled in size once more, about 1 hour. On a floured surface and with floured hands, divide dough into 16 balls. Place 2" apart on parchment paper–lined baking sheets and cover with dish towels; let sit until slightly puffed, 40–45 minutes.

4 Place a pizza stone on a rack in lower third of the oven; heat to 450°. Wet the bottom of a small glass (about 3" in diameter) with water and dip in flour; press glass into center of each dough ball and twist glass back and forth to produce a thin, flat well surrounded by a thick ring of dough on the outer edge. Brush a little water over top of dough rings and sprinkle with poppy seeds; spread 1–2 tsp. onion mixture in well and top edges of dough. Working in batches, place baking sheet on pizza stone; bake until bialys are golden, about 10 minutes. Transfer baking sheet to the middle rack; bake until bialys are browned and onions are slightly caramelized, 6–8 minutes. Let bialys cool before serving.

ANDRE BARANOWSKI

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ONE GOOD FIND

PASTA PERFECT

Whenever I visit Bologna, Italy, I stop at Antica Aguzzeria del Cavallo, a tiny shop where I load up on antique brass pasta cutters as presents for my kitchen staff. But the best purchase I ever made there, I kept for myself. It's a *torchietto,* a hand-cranked extruder for shaping *passatelli,* thick noodles made from bread crumbs, eggs, parmesan, lemon, and nutmeg. I poach them in chicken broth for the ultimate comfort food.

—MICHAEL TUSK, CHEF-OWNER OF QUINCE AND COTOGNA IN SAN FRANCISCO

Torchietto in Ottone, $150; Antica Aguzzeria del Cavallo, Via Drapperie 12, Bologna; 39/051/263-411; aguzzeria delcavallo.it

Prune's *"Garbage" chapter gives tips for cooking with sardine bones and chard stems.*

10 BOOKS FOR COOKS

The volumes to give this season

THE BAR BOOK Jeffrey Morgenthaler (Chronicle Books, $19) The bar manager at the renowned Clyde Common in Portland, Oregon, shares the recipes and techniques that make up his award-winning cocktail program, from freshly made mixers to artisanal garnishes. The book is geared toward professionals but is engaging for enthusiasts who wish to elevate their home game.

BAR TARTINE Nicolaus Balla and Cortney Burns (Chronicle Books, $27) This volume from the team behind San Francisco's Bar Tartine highlights the dishes at the heart of their success, with stunning recipes like pork-knuckle-and-sausage-stuffed vegetables and hazelnut butter–strawberry jam cookies.

BROOKS HEADLEY'S FANCY DESSERTS Brooks Headley (W. W. Norton & Company, $30) The desserts from the pastry chef of Manhattan's Del Posto have a quiet genius that sneaks up on you—kabocha cake with sage gelato; candied squash-and-saffron wedding cookies—all proffered in a playful tone.

THE CUBAN TABLE Ana Sofía Peláez (St. Martin's Press, $24) Peláez digs into Cuba's home kitchens, surfacing recipes that showcase the confluence of flavors on the island: African chicken and okra stew; Spanish *pastelitos,* turnovers of sweet cheese and guava paste. Packed with gorgeous photos, the book is a vivid portrait of Cuba today.

HOW TO EATALY Oscar Farinetti (Rizzoli, $35) This handsome compendium from the founder of Eataly offers techniques for using foods the Italian way and 100 recipes—pasta alla Norma, branzino with tomatoes and olives, tiramisù—that embody the simple, ingredient-focused cooking of classic Italian cuisine.

A KITCHEN IN FRANCE Mimi Thorisson (Clarkson Potter, $25) Thorisson brings her blog Manger (mimithorisson.com), written from a French farmhouse kitchen in Médoc's countryside, to print. It's filled with beautiful photography by Thorisson's husband, Oddur, and seasonally driven dishes like roast chicken with crème fraîche and herbs.

NEW FEAST Greg and Lucy Malouf (Hardie Grant Books, $31) Chef Greg and writer Lucy Malouf have penned a cookbook full of rich Middle Eastern vegetarian recipes that span the region, from Egyptian breakfast beans with feta, lemon oil, and green chile relish to a Persian herb salad with fresh figs and labneh. Framed by lush photographs, the recipes celebrate the diversity of the Levant.

PRUNE Gabrielle Hamilton (Random House, $31) You know when you read a book that's so good, you have to put it down every few pages to destimulate? That's *Prune.* Chicken braised in hard cider, shad roe with bacon and paprika butter—oh, what recipes! It's a trip through the mind of a chef who has a deep understanding of the pleasures of rusticity.

RELAE Christian Puglisi (Ten Speed Press, November 2014, $32) Puglisi delves into the philosophy that defines his Copenhagen restaurant, Relae. Dishes like potato "noodles" with pickled seaweed in a warm pecorino sauce are presented as object lessons, exploring the techniques that shape each plate. It's an enlivening work, with lots of takeaway—and inspiration—for home cooks.

THAILAND Jean-Pierre Gabriel (Phaidon Press, $34) Gabriel's tome on Thai cooking contains 500 recipes, ranging from old favorites like spicy stir-fried pork with basil to dishes that go beyond the familiar, like sea bass with cardamom shoots. It amply demonstrates Thai cuisine's dazzling breadth.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

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BY JANE AND MICHAEL STERN

England's Sticky Toffee Pudding Trail

In a bucolic corner of the country, sweetness awaits at every turn

One spoonful of sticky toffee pudding at a café in northwestern England, and we were euphoric. Surely, this was the last word in extravagance. The pudding before us was warm and spicy, an impossibly moist gingerbread cake larded with chopped dates and sopped with buttery caramel syrup. But when we oohed and aahed, the waitress deflated our culinary egos by admitting that the kitchen secured its pudding from McClure, a big-box restaurant provisions vendor across the road. A clerk at McClure frankly told us, "Our sticky toffee is fine, but if you want the best, you must go to Cartmel. There is none richer."

We set off, heading toward that 12th-century hamlet to hunt for exemplary renditions of the signature dessert of Cumbria

Sticky toffee pudding (see page 35 for recipe).

TODD COLEMAN

A hairpin turn
that makes your hair
stand up straight.

An 18-wheeler
begging
to be passed.

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the window with a smile
bigger than Alaska.

A long straight road
nicknamed "Woo-hoo."

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Go Further

From left: sticky toffee pudding at Cartmel Village Shop; sheep in a field near Cartmel.

County. The landscape there, rolling pastures where fat sheep graze, begs to be traversed on horseback behind a pack of yodeling hounds, but our transportation—a borrowed indigo and silver twin-turbocharged Rolls-Royce V12 Ghost—was quite alright, too.

As we glided into Cartmel, we espied in the window of the Cartmel Village Shop a sign that read THE HOME OF STICKY TOFFEE. One in a long line of cakelike "puddings" that dates to the arrival of French cooks after the Norman Conquest, the dessert was not actually invented here. Its parentage is claimed by two Scottish hotels, the Udny Arms and the Saplinbrae House, while a competing theory traces its roots to southern England.

The dessert took particular hold, however, in the northwest. Indeed, Cartmel is to sticky toffee pudding devotees what Memphis is to Elvis fans. Cartmel Village Shop serves neat little rounds that are rich, dense, and vividly spiced. As in most locations, the date-stippled batter is steamed in a mold until set and then turned out onto a plate and smothered in caramel sauce.

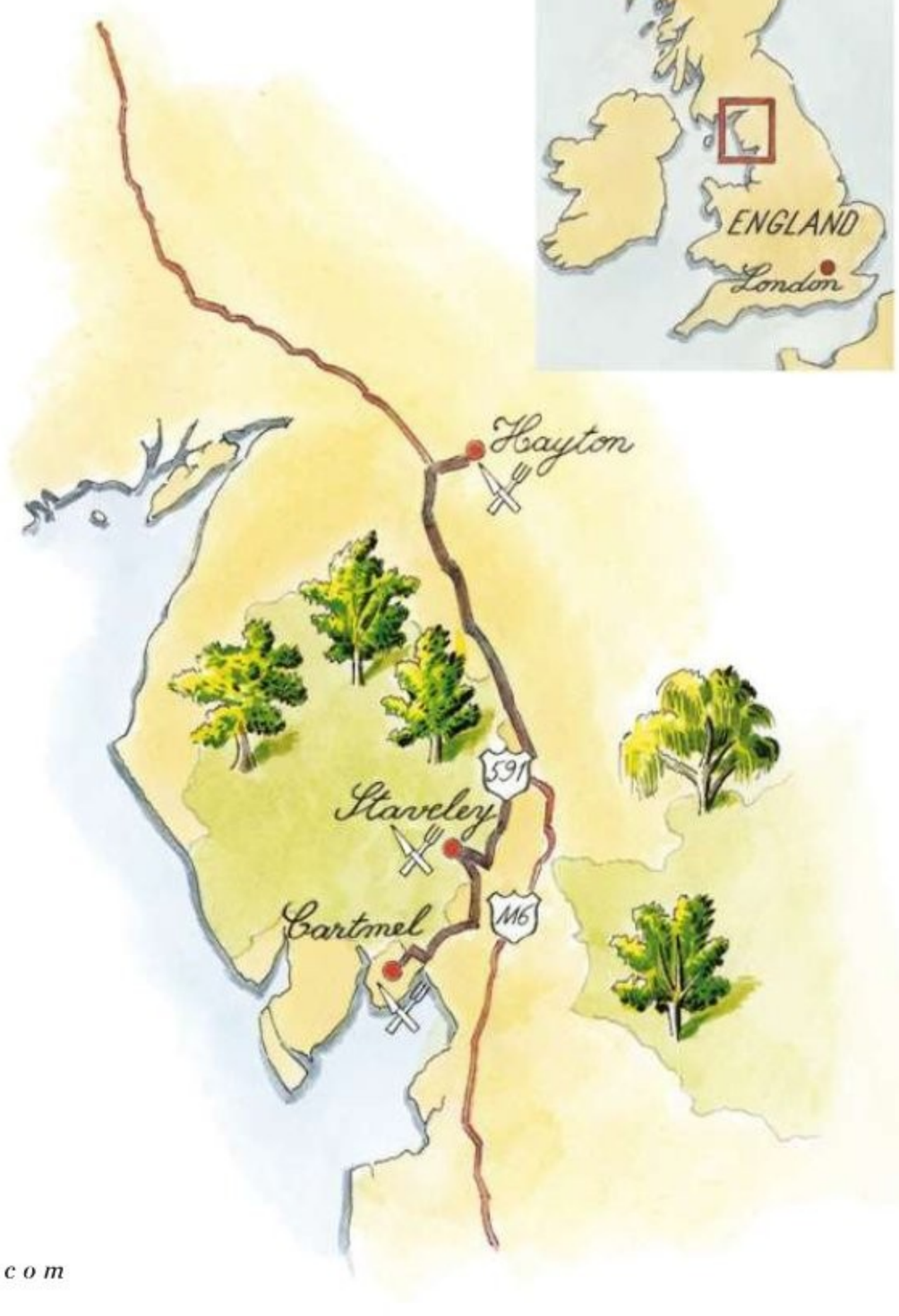
We puzzled over Cartmel Village Shop's seeming variations: sticky banana, chocolate, and ginger puddings. Yet as we motored through the Lake District, we noticed that "sticky" is a favorite adjective for any caramel-soaked dessert. A couple of places were out of sticky toffee pudding, so we comforted ourselves with sticky cake (which we'd have a hard time differentiating from the pudding), sticky tarts, sticky ice cream, and sticky toffee scones.

Taking the M6 highway north, we approached the town of Carlisle. Farmland here is occupied by dairy cattle, which helps to explain the goodness of the local toppings: whipped cream, custard, and, especially, ice cream. Against the warm pudding, a frozen scoop turns to cool rivulets that swirl into the amber sauce. We had the best ice cream of the trip at Cumbrian Cottage Farm Shop and Tea Room, just east of Carlisle in Hayton. Banana-flavored, it was a righteous match for a pudding that was intensely spicy, floating in a toffee sauce so dark it was nearly black.

Back south, in Staveley, we found the fireplace-cozy pub Eagle & Child Inn. It was here, after an echt Cumbrian dinner of steak and kidney suet-crust pie and sausage with creamy mashed potatoes, that we discovered the alpha and omega of our quest: a golden-sauced fluffy cake that yielded to the lightest pressure of a spoon.

"Texture is so important," chef Lorna James told us. "My mother's recipe calls for cream, and by that she meant top cream." Top cream, also known as double cream, is the especially luscious, high-butterfat stuff that floats to the top of the cream pot.

How good is James' sticky toffee pudding? As we ensconced ourselves in the car after supper at Eagle & Child Inn, an old gent strolled over. He looked from the Flying Lady hood ornament to the pub's glowing window and informed us that we had just eaten "the Rolls-Royce of stickies."



MIKKO TAKKUNEN (2). ILLUSTRATION: RODICA PRATO

The Guide

Cumbrian Cottage Farm Shop and Tea Room
Brampton Road, Hayton, Cumbria (44/1228/670-518; cumbriancottage.org.uk)
Eagle & Child Inn
Kendal Road, Staveley, Cumbria (44/1539/821-320; eaglechildinn.co.uk)
Cartmel Village Shop
Parkgate House, The Square, Cartmel, Cumbria (44/1539/536-280; cartmelvillageshop.co.uk)

Contributing editors JANE *and* MICHAEL STERN *are the authors of roadfood.com. Their most recent article for* SAVEUR *was "Forgotten Coast" (November 2014).*

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Sticky Toffee Pudding

SERVES 8–10

In this version of the classic English dessert (pictured on page 30), adapted from one in Rose Levy Beranbaum's *Rose's Heavenly Cakes* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), dates are soaked in stout beer and then puréed, resulting in a super-moist crumb.

For the pudding:

- 1 cup stout beer, preferably Guinness Extra Stout
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 10 large pitted dates
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened, plus more
- 1½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 3 eggs

For the toffee sauce:

- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, preferably Plugrá
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped and reserved
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt

1 Make the pudding: Heat oven to 350°. Boil beer in a 1-qt. saucepan. Stir in baking soda and dates; let cool. Transfer to a food processor; purée until smooth. Whisk flour, cinnamon, baking powder, nutmeg, and salt in a bowl. Using a stand mixer fitted with a whisk, beat sugar, butter, and vanilla until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients, alternating with reserved date mixture, until a smooth batter forms; pour into a greased 9" x 13" baking dish. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the pudding comes out clean, about 30 minutes.

2 Make the sauce: Simmer sugar, butter, and vanilla bean and seeds in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium until sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in cream, lemon juice, and salt. Strain sauce; let cool. Cut pudding into squares; drizzle with sauce.

BY KELLIE EVANS

Photograph by Michael Kraus

Buried Treasure

A bounty of black and white truffles grows in the forests of the Pacific Northwest

One morning last December, I found myself crouching over emerald green moss digging for truffles, those famously aromatic fungi that grow among the roots of oaks and evergreens, most notably in Italy and France. I wasn't in Europe, though. I was in Eugene, Oregon, with Chloe and Ilsa, dogs trained to smell for ripe truffles. They barked as they lit upon a promising patch.

Forager Connie Green, who has been truffle hunting since the 1970s, knelt beside me, pushing aside loose soil at the foot of a Douglas fir. As we worked, she explained the symbiosis between truffle and tree: The firs provide food (carbohydrates, basically) to the fungi, and the fungi break down organic matter that fertilizes the tree.

Finally, I caught a glimpse of ivory in the dirt, and soon I was holding six pale truffles ranging in size from marble to golf ball. These small white varieties, *Tuber gibbosum* and *Tuber oregonense,* taste like their Italian cousins, with notes of garlic, hazelnut, and nutmeg. Oregon's larger, black *Leucangium carthusianum,* found deeper in the soil, is muskier, with hints of chocolate and green apple.

West Coast chefs are having a field day with both: Sarah Schafer of Irving Street Kitchen slips black truffles into chocolate-hazelnut mousse cake, while Portland chef Dustin Clark purées the white ones with sunchokes for a silky velouté.

But I favor simplicity. Toting my pungent quarry back to New York, I used shavings to elevate everything from whipped cream to tagliatelle (see page 98 for recipe). And I stored them with my butter, rice, and eggs to infuse those staples with umami-rich flavor (see "In Truffles We Trust," page 97). This year, I'm ordering them online, keeping in mind that although they are far less costly than their European counterparts, their season is shorter. Maturing in December, they peak in January. Supplies don't last, so contact Umami Truffle Dogs early to order ($40 per ounce; umamitruffledogs.com).

TRENDING ››

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CALIFORNIA Walnuts

BY SANDI TAN

Photograph by Andre Baranowski

Indonesian-style chicken wings (see page 40 for recipe).

Winging It

A young Chinese girl discovers the zesty, life-changing flavors of Indonesia

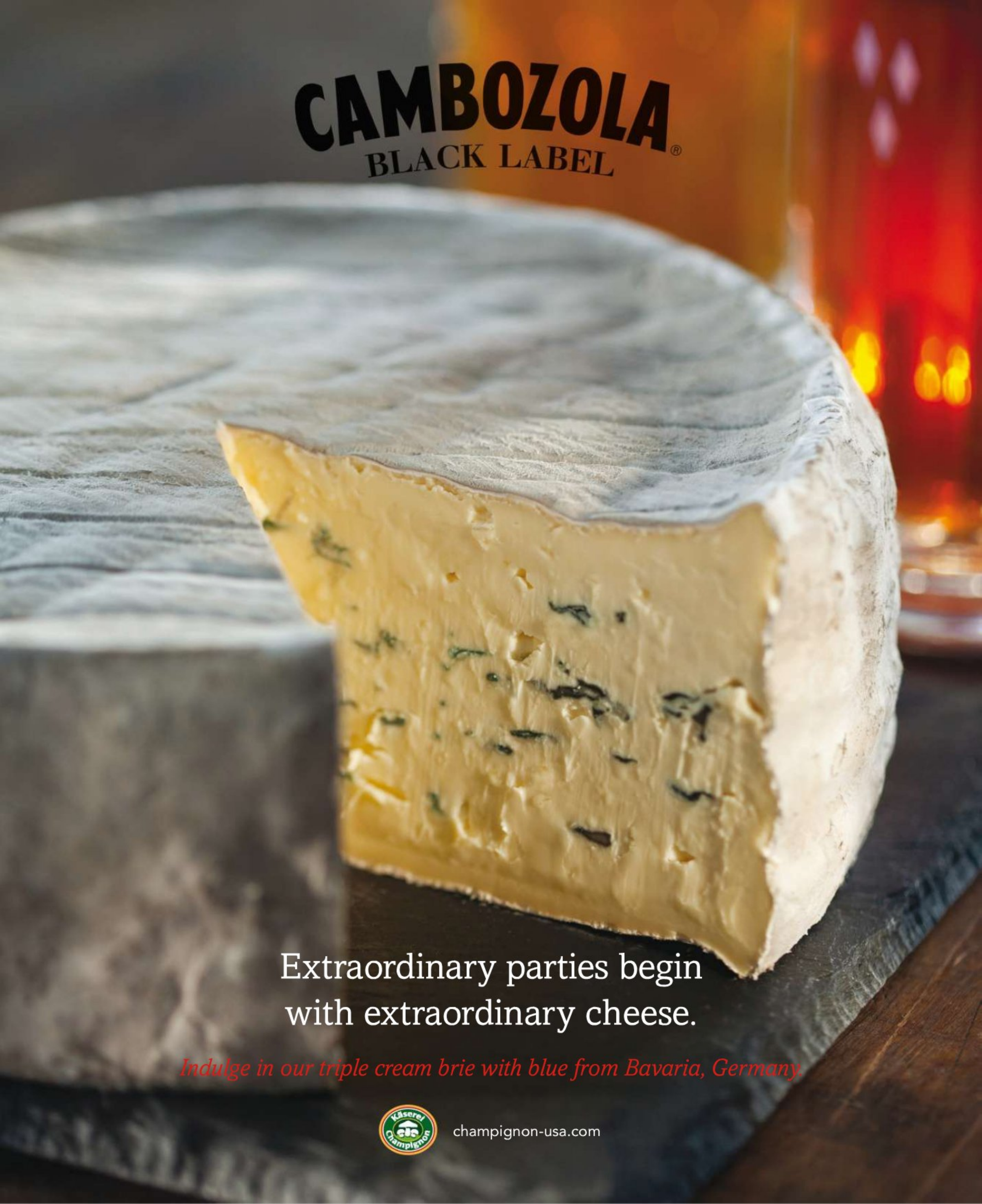
Food mysteries, I have found, are best unraveled in layers. Friends who know of my aversion to dim sum often ask: How is it that a girl of Chinese stock would have no taste for Chinese food? Why, they wonder, do my culinary preferences lean farther south, to Indonesia? My answer to both questions is simple: Ah Eng.

Ah Eng, you see, was our family cook. At 30, this Chinese-Malaysian generalissimo was the most senior person my family employed at our home in Singapore, so the dubious honor of being chef fell to her. Why? Tradition, said my grandmother. What tradition? Oh, will you be quiet! Though she needed a helping hand or two, the diminutive Ah Eng refused to surrender even a spatula. *Those Indonesian girls* can't be trusted in the kitchen, she said, referring to our other domestic workers. *Those Indonesian girls* have never cooked before. Soggy rice, she warned. Food poisoning, she threatened. Gas explosion, she hissed.

And so we were subjected to Ah Eng's greatest hits, night after night: pork belly stewed with dark soy sauce in a Crock-Pot (idiotproof) and "lazy chicken" (slather whole chicken with Campbell's condensed French onion soup, pop in oven, and *voilà*). We all knew her food was rotten, but we cleaned our plates anyway. Colonial British reticence and that age-old Confucian unwillingness to rock the boat had done irreparable damage to our collective self-confidence.

So, if I were to be honest about my distaste for Chinese food, I'd have to conclude it was due as much to what Ah Eng couldn't do (cook) as to what my family *didn't* do (intervene). The explanation

SANDI TAN *is a novelist and screenwriter living in Pasadena, California. Her debut novel was* The Black Isle *(Grand Central Publishing, 2012). This is her first article for* SAVEUR.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Indonesian-Style Chicken Wings

The author (center, in pigtails) at a 1979 birthday party.

for my love of Indonesian food would, however, be incomplete if, like Ah Eng, we were blithely to overlook *those Indonesian girls*.

Tati and Risti were high-spirited women who had been hired to watch my baby cousins. They made quite a team: Tati lank and klutzy, Risti buxom and sturdy, the two always chattering, always laughing. Hanging around them, I picked up gossip and a sense of the world's surprising possibilities (Risti would eventually run off with Kusman, the Indian security guard at our condo complex).

It was pure chance that Ah Eng was called away on an emergency the day before my tenth birthday party. A void had opened up, but because whoever filled it would have to contend with a birthday party of ten hungry girls, none of my relatives volunteered to help. I was getting *the* chocolate birthday cake from Lana Cakes in the ritzy Bukit Timah area. But my friends would scoff if that was all we served. This was Singapore. One couldn't have a proper party without chicken wings.

> As I devoured ten wings straight, I thought about the simple pleasures my family had denied itself

My grandmother rounded up Risti and Tati. "Can you cook?" she asked. Risti and Tati exchanged sheepish looks. Tati shrugged and pointed at Risti. Risti confessed: "Sedikit [A little]." Emboldened by Ah Eng's absence, Grandmother ventured a follow-up. Could they be trusted not to start a fire? The Indonesian girls laughed.

The next morning, I woke to sounds of chopping and blender-buzzing from the kitchen, punctuated by nervous titters. "Hati-hati!" Risti cautioned Tati. "It'll stain everything!"

Uh-oh, I thought, and went downstairs for a peek.

Risti and Tati were on their haunches, the sleeves of their batik housecoats rolled up and tucked atop the shoulders. Their hands were coated in neon yellow goop, and bright flecks of the same tinted their hair. They were massaging about a hundred raw chicken wings inside plastic buckets of what looked like pulpy nuclear waste. Still, I'd never smelled anything so pungently good: turmeric, coriander, lemongrass, galangal, garlic, shallot, and a tart hint of tamarind. I tiptoed away, confused, intrigued.

Later that day, as my party guests arrived, a new aroma had taken flight. It was the exotic mélange of what I had smelled before plus the sweet, fatty fullness of chicken skin romancing sizzling peanut oil. The wings were being deep-fried, suffusing my world with a distinctly unfamiliar aura: a happy smell.

Tati carried the wings out on two heaving platters, nearly tripping twice—"Careful! Very hot, ah!"—and put them on the table. They sat before us, little V's of golden brown perfection, crisp-skinned and fragrant, the luminosity of the turmeric hanging back but still teasingly there.

I tore into my first piece of chicken, pulling the flesh from the bone in perfect white segments, releasing puffs of steam and flickers of bright yellow oil. I unsheathed the skin, saving it for last, and bit into the tender flesh between the wing's bony tines.

I expected it to taste like the fried wings I'd known: the batter-metastasized monsters of Singapore food courts, the lukewarm, taupe-colored phalanges at every birthday party. But this was no cousin, not even a flamboyant sister-in-law. Risti and Tati's Indonesian chicken was exuberance, camaraderie, boldness, color, and a vigorous crunch.

As I devoured ten wings straight, I thought about the simple pleasures my family had denied itself. Even at ten, I knew the solution was obvious: Shouldn't Risti and Tati be cooking *all* our meals?

But it wasn't to be. Ah Eng came home that night to a well-scrubbed kitchen (we told her we had ordered McDonald's), and Risti and Tati bowed their heads and returned to their prescribed child-care roles. While Ah Eng's food was terrible, we didn't have the heart to tell her that she had been outdone by *those Indonesian girls*.

Indonesian-Style Chicken Wings

(Ayam Goreng Kuning)

SERVES 6

Marinated in tamarind and aromatic spices, these chicken wings (pictured on page 38) are cooked in coconut water before frying. For hard-to-find ingredients, see page 100.

- 1 cup tamarind paste
- 1 tbsp. ground coriander
- 1 tbsp. ground turmeric
- ½ tsp. cayenne
- 10 candlenuts or unsalted macadamia nuts
- 6 small shallots, peeled
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 stalks lemongrass, white parts only, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 1 2″ piece galangal or ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 3 lb. chicken wings, separated at the joint
- 2 cups unsweetened coconut water
- 2 bay leaves
- Peanut oil, for frying

1 Purée tamarind paste, coriander, turmeric, cayenne, candlenuts, shallots, garlic, lemongrass, galangal, and salt in a food processor until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and add wings; toss to coat. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight.

2 Transfer wings and marinade to a 6-qt. saucepan. Add coconut water and bay leaves; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until chicken is cooked through, 40–45 minutes. Drain wings; pat dry using paper towels.

3 Wipe pan clean; heat 2″ oil until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Working in batches, fry wings until browned and crisp, 1–2 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

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HOLIDAY Drinks

Winter Warmers

Toast the holidays with five of the planet's steamiest cocktails

By Felicia Campbell

1. Kuhano Vino

In central Europe, winter parties are fueled by this mulled wine. Heat 10 whole cloves, 10 black peppercorns, and 4 star anise in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high until toasted, 1–2 minutes. Add 4 cups red wine, ¼ cup honey, ½ tsp. grated nutmeg, peel of 2 oranges, and 2 cups water; boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer 10 minutes. Serve in mugs; garnish with orange slices and star anise. Serves 2–4.

A fruity red wine works best for this richly spiced punch, so try a bright-cherry merlot or a jammy syrah.

①

For hard-to-find holiday drink ingredients, see PANTRY, *page 100.*

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

"Grog, hot and strong, with two or three lumps of sugar in it, and a squeeze of lemon." Such was the remedy, a bygone sailors' winter ration, that London magazine *Punch* prescribed to readers to beat the bitter December weather of 1879. We merrily concur, with a caveat: Often the trick to a great warm drink is not just balanced sweetness and acid, but a dose of spice.

③

④

In 1475 in the Scottish Highlands, the Earl of Atholl captured a rebel leader by spiking his well water with honey, whisky, and oatmeal. Lucky rebel.

②

⑤

Wassail gets its name from the Old Norse *ves heill* and Old English *was hál*, meaning "be fortunate," which is how we feel when we drink it.

2. Wassail

This British punch comes from a pagan rite in which revelers toasted to apple trees to ensure the harvest. Heat oven to 350°. Place 6 cored apples in baking dish; place 2½ tbsp. light brown sugar in center of each apple. Pour 1 c. water in dish; bake 1 hr. Toast 15 allspice berries, 15 cloves, and 6 cinnamon sticks in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high, 2 min. Add 1 c. madeira, 1 c. unsweetened cider, 2 tsp. ground nutmeg, 1 tbsp. ground ginger, three 16-oz. cans ale, one 750-ml bottle dry hard cider, and peel of 2 oranges; boil. Reduce to medium; simmer 1 hr. Add apples and any liquid; cook 10 min. Serves 12.

3. Rakomelo

On Greece's Cyclades islands, this sweet, anise-flavored drink is said to boost libido. Heat 4 cloves and 2 halved cinnamon sticks in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-high until toasted, 1–2 min. Add 2 c. raki and ½ c. thyme honey. Boil; cook 5 min. Serves 2.

4. Atholl Brose

Stir 2⅓ c. scotch and ½ c. steel-cut oatmeal in a bowl; cover with cheesecloth. Let sit in a cool, dark place for 2 days. Strain into a 1-qt. saucepan. Add ⅔ c. heavy cream and ¼ c. honey; bring to a simmer. Serve in heatproof glasses. Serves 2–4.

5. Canelazo

At Christmas, Ecuadorians sip tea spiked with a sugarcane spirit. Boil ½ c. sugar, 8 cinnamon sticks, juice of 1 lemon, and 4 c. water. Reduce to medium-low; cook 15 min. Stir in 1 c. passion fruit pulp; cook 5 min. Pour in mugs; top with 1 oz. aguardiente. Serves 4–6.

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HOLIDAY *Drinks*

Happy Brew Year

Spicy, rich, and filled with lots of character, holiday beers are worth celebrating

Port Brewing Santa's Little Helper
($16; 375 ml; wine commune.com) Chocolaty and big at 10 percent alcohol, this beer is great now but will also age well for Christmases future.

Deschutes Jubelale
($2; 12 oz.; deschutes brewery.com) There's something for everyone in this satisfying ale: subtle fruitiness, a hint of smoke from roasted barley, and a floral hop complexity.

Typically strong, malty, and full-bodied, holiday beers have a history as deep as their flavors. As far back as the Viking days, Scandinavians drank beer at the winter solstice, and medieval monks brewed a potent beer to celebrate the birth of Christ. The English made mulled beers in winter, as we would cider. The 17th-century diarist Samuel Pepys drank his beer hot and infused with sugar and ginger, the spice actually a remnant of an older tradition that harkened back to the days before hops were commonly used to flavor and preserve beer. Though we drink them chilled, today's holiday season brews tend to be spiced as well.

With notes of cinnamon, pine, and chocolate, plus a lingering boozy kiss, they go great with game, cheeses, and desserts.

—Linda Monastra and Richard Bolster

Great Lakes Christmas Ale
($26; twelve 12-oz. bottles; rozis.com) The bitter finish of this well-hopped ale is balanced by notes of cinnamon and ginger, plus a sweet dose of honey.

Eggenberg Samichlaus Classic
($7; 11.2 oz.; halftime beverage.com) Brewed on December 6, Saint Nicholas Day, this *doppelbock* is an intense partner for strong-tasting foods like lamb.

D'Achouffe N'Ice Chouffe
($10; 750 ml; luekens liquors.com) Complexity abounds in this classic from Belgium; a candy-sweet aroma gives way to flavors of orange, cloves, and allspice.

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How Sweet It Is

There's nothing wrong with a little sugar in your holiday wine

In 1983, on my first trip to Bordeaux, France, my host paired chilled white asparagus with one of the region's dulcet sauternes. An improbable but dynamic combination, it had me falling for sweet wine. In ancient Rome and elsewhere, sweet wines were the most valued. It wasn't until the 18th century that glass bottles and corks, which keep oxygen at bay, allowed dry wines to gain quality and eclipse sweet ones. Today, with the interest in unique, local winemaking, sweet wines are making a comeback. The best seduce with aromas of honey and wildflowers and flavors of dried apricot, caramel, and candied lemon peel. They roll over your tongue like silk, but zingy acidity keeps them from seeming syrupy. Each has its own personality. France's sauternes and barsacs (from a town within Sauternes) are made mainly with sauvignon blanc and sémillon grapes, which are left on the vine to develop *Botrytis cinerea,* a fungus that concentrates their sugar, yielding an elegant, full-bodied wine that pairs well with savory foods. Made similarly, Hungary's tokaji aszú wines go back nearly 450 years. The sweetest, labeled "5 Puttonyos" and "6 Puttonyos"—120 and 150 grams of residual sugar per liter, respectively—are delicious with chocolate and, like sauternes, with blue cheeses. The Mediterranean's sweet-savory vin santo is made from grapes air-dried on straw mats or hung from rafters, the wine then aged in casks. I often use these wines to bookend the holiday meal. Sauternes is ideal for sipping with foie gras at the start of dinner; tokaji and vin santo shine later with nuts, cheeses, plum pudding, or an Italian panettone. But I don't just reserve them for Christmas. I've come to rely on this trifecta of luscious nectars when friends drop by on any cold night. —*Elin McCoy*

Ancient kings sipped sweet wines made with pricey sugar; common folk drank dry ones, which soured quickly.

Tasting Notes

Fattoria di Fèlsina Vin Santo Chianti Classico 2004 *($50; 375 ml; sherry-lehmann.com)* This Italian wine delivers a heady mix of burnt sugar, herbs, and orange peel.

Disznoko Tokaji Aszú 5 Puttonyos 2007 *($33; 500 ml; saratogawine.com)* Bright fruit aromas and rich pear and almond flavors mark this wine from a superb vintage.

Château Coutet 2011 *($35; 375 ml; millesima-usa.com)* Full-bodied and tangy, with a core of lemony fruit, this sauternes is one of the stars of the village of Barsac in France.

Estate Argyros Vinsanto 2006 *($33; 500 ml; wespeakwine.com)* Made with mainly assyrtiko grapes, this Santorini vin santo tastes of salty caramel and smoky orange peel.

Château Raymond-Lafon 2011 *($28; 375 ml; aabalat.com)* Deep-bodied and complex, this wine blazes with intense hints of apricot and spicy pineapple.

Royal Tokaji Aszú 6 Puttonyos Mézes Mály 2007 *($195; 500 ml; astorwines.com)* Floral and round, with apricot notes, this is Tokaj's Château Lafite Rothschild.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY (7); ILLUSTRATION: JOHN HUTTON

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Hillrock Single Malt Whiskey

($88; 750 ml; astorwines.com) Using barley from distillery fields, this is the first farmstead whiskey from New York's Hudson Valley since Prohibition.

BenRiach Solstice Second Edition

($86; 750 ml; hitimewine.net) In Gaelic, the name of the distillery that makes this fruity scotch means "hill of the red deer."

Old Forester Birthday Bourbon 2014

($100; 750 ml; castlewine.com) All the bourbon blended in this bottle comes from a single day of production in 2002.

Hibiki 21

($300; 750 ml; winfieldflynn.com) The mizunara oak used to age a portion of this Japanese spirit imparts notes of sandalwood.

Smooth Ambler Old Scout Straight Rye

($41; 750 ml; moraswines.com) Balanced and accommodating, this suave rye shines in a perfect Manhattan.

Redbreast 21

($240; 750 ml; international wineshop.com) As with other spirits, the age of this bottle—the oldest expression for Redbreast—is pegged to the youngest whiskey in the mix.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Whiskey Aces

Six exceptional bottles worth seeking out this winter

By Mari Uyehara

Like so much else in this mad world, things were once simpler when it came to whiskey. Single malts came from Scotland. You could name every rye producer in one breath. And there wasn't, for Chrissakes, sweet tea–flavored bourbon. Well, times have changed: Distilling has exploded across the globe, and many of the results are excellent. In the roaring category of Japanese whiskeys, Suntory's Hibiki 21 blends product from Chita, Hakushu, and Yamazaki, an all-star cast of distilleries. Aged in American and Spanish oak, as well as Japanese mizunara oak, it offers lush tones of caramel, wood, and fruit, with a touch of smoke.

It's rare nowadays to find single pot still whiskey, distilled from both malted and

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unmalted barley in a copper pot still. But Redbreast produces Irish whiskey the traditional way, which lends elegance to Redbreast 21. Aged in bourbon and oloroso sherry casks, the smooth spirit bursts with tropical fruit, spice, and toasted nuts.

In Speyside, where peat is uncommon but port casks are not, BenRiach Solstice 17 Year Old Second Edition marries Scotland's twin traditions of smokier and sweeter scotches. Starting with heavily peated malted barley and finishing in tawny port casks, the spirit has a smoky kick that tangles with toffee and a hint of bright red fruit.

Whiskey distilling has exploded across the globe

American producers are new to single malts, but New York's Hillrock Single Malt Whiskey stands toe-to-toe with the best. Made from organic estate-grown barley, smoked with Scottish peat, and aged in sherry casks, it sports spicy clove and cherry notes, resolving in a sleek finish. Another young outfit, West Virginia's Smooth Ambler, makes a lovely rye. Balancing spiciness with honey and mint notes, Old Scout Straight Rye Whiskey 7 Year is more perky than rough. A non-chill-filtration whiskey, it retains the fatty acids that contribute to flavor and a silky mouthfeel.

And the classic producers still wow. The highly anticipated annual release of Old Forester Birthday Bourbon 2014 offers rich vanilla, cinnamon, and dried fruit notes—as with other years, this limited edition bottle will sell out quickly. But with more whiskey produced than ever, even if you can't track it down, there's something on the shelf worth taking home.

New Orleans' Other Poison

. . . and the irresistible raspberry-vinegar syrup that puts it over the top

Roffignac
Shake 2¾ oz. raspberry shrub (see recipes on page 98), 1¾ oz. cognac, and ¾ oz. simple syrup in an ice-filled shaker. Strain into ice-filled glass; top with soda water. Makes 1 cocktail.

The Sazerac and the Ramos gin fizz may be better known, but the Roffignac, named for New Orleans' last French mayor, is the city's finest liquid secret. Count Louis Philippe Joseph de Roffignac served from 1820 to 1828, bringing cobblestones and gas lighting to the French Quarter. The concoction that celebrates him, served throughout the city in the 19th century, was a signature drink at Maylie's restaurant until 1986. When Maylie's shuttered, the Roffignac faded away. But recipes survive in books like Stanley Clisby Arthur's 1937 *Famous New Orleans Drinks and How to Mix 'Em*, which calls for whiskey, sugar, soda, and the curious "red Hembarig." This, says local bartender Paul Gustings (pictured above), is raspberry shrub, a berry-infused syrup made with vinegar that adds a balancing zing to the drink. In his own version, Gustings swaps the whiskey for cognac, a nod to Roffignac's Gallic heritage. *—Elizabeth Pearce*

NEGRONI TIMELINE

by Camper English

A Brief History of the World's Trendiest Cocktail

1860
Negroni's key ingredient, Campari, is invented. The bitter liqueur, created by the owner of a café in Novara, Italy, is an infusion of a secret blend of herbs and fruit in alcohol.

1919
Café Casoni in Florence creates a drink for Count Camillo Negroni. To make it, stir 1 oz. each Campari, gin, and sweet vermouth in an ice-filled tumbler; garnish with an orange slice. Makes 1 cocktail.

1968
Negroni variations emerge. The Negroni Sbagliato ("bungled") is invented at Bar Basso in Milan when the bartender accidentally puts sparkling wine into the drink instead of gin.

2014
Peak Negroni! The drink is dehydrated, gelatinized, and set on fire, and ingredients are swapped for everything from mezcal to sherry. For recipes, see SAVEUR.COM/HOLIDAYDRINKS.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY (WHISKEY, NEGRONI); CHRIS GRANGER

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HOLIDAY Drinks

In Praise of the White Russian

Coffee, cream, and vodka drinks we're not ashamed to love

Like "The Dude," Jeff Bridges' dissolute bowler in the 1998 film *The Big Lebowski,* I have always felt a personal connection to the White Russian. It was the go-to tipple for my grandmother—the same woman who daintily claimed she got tipsy "just smelling a drink" during a Prohibition-era first date with my grandfather. And it's a point of pride that, in my 20s, I knocked back an unspecified number of White Russians with her at a bar mitzvah, resulting in a family kick line. Oh, the power of that trashy mix of vodka, coffee liqueur, and cream. While it doesn't have speakeasy roots or a fashionably bitter edge, bartenders have taken a shine to the drink lately, updating it with artisan coffee liqueurs (see tasting notes at SAVEUR.COM/HOLIDAYDRINKS) and infused syrups. But even with these high-minded tweaks, it remains an easy-drinking libation. The "Russian" refers to vodka, and the Black Russian was created in 1949, with just vodka and coffee liqueur. It's unclear when dairy entered the picture. Cocktail historian David Wondrich cites 1961's *The Diners' Club Drink Book,* which mentions two vodka-and-Kahlua drinks, one with cream. But most experts point to the mid-1960s for the White Russian's official debut. That's surely when its popularity hit its stride, spilling over into the sweet-tooth '70s. Today, the White Russian abides, albeit in delicious new incarnations. *—Kara Newman*

The Dude

The Wallflower in Manhattan pours this drink named for the hero in *The Big Lebowski*. Shake 1½ oz. cognac, ¾ oz. chilled coffee, ½ oz. each Demerara sugar, heavy cream, and ruby port, 4 dashes Angostura bitters, and 1 egg in a shaker. Add ice; shake. Strain into glass. Makes 1 cocktail.

Espresso Martini

Vanilla liqueur perfumes this drink from New York's Dear Irving bar. Combine 1½ oz. vodka, 1 oz. cold-brew coffee, and ¾ oz. each coffee and vanilla liqueurs in an ice-filled shaker. Shake; strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Top with ¼ c. heavy cream and dust with cocoa powder. Makes 1 cocktail.

White Nun

San Francisco's Tosca Cafe serves this warm drink. Bring ¾ oz. heavy cream, ¾ oz. whole milk, and 1 tsp. coffee syrup to a simmer in a 1-qt. saucepan; remove from heat. Add 1 oz. coffee liqueur and ¾ oz. brandy; pour into a mug. Add ¼ oz. cream to pan; whisk over medium until frothy. Pour over drink. Makes 1 cocktail.

Ozark Speedball

This citrusy coffee cocktail comes from Portland, Oregon's House Spirits. Stir 1 oz. each chilled coffee, coffee liqueur, and white whiskey in an ice-filled shaker. Strain into a chilled old-fashioned glass. Top with ½ c. heavy cream and a dash of Angostura bitters; garnish with 4 drops orange oil. Makes 1 cocktail.

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HOLIDAY Drinks

Pisco Sour

This 1920s Lima classic is topped with a frothy egg white. To make it, vigorously shake 3 oz. pisco, 1 oz. each lime juice and simple syrup, and 1 egg white in a shaker. Add ice; shake again. Strain into a coupe glass; garnish with a dash of Angostura bitters. Makes 1 cocktail.

Orchard and Vine

This elegant pisco cocktail comes from Meaghan Dorman of New York's Raines Law Room. To make it, stir 1½ oz. pisco, 1 oz. Lillet Blanc, and ½ oz. apricot liqueur (preferably Rothman & Winter Orchard) in an ice-filled rocks glass. Garnish with a wide lemon peel. Makes 1 cocktail.

Peruvian Pour

Pisco's finest hour has finally arrived

In pisco country on Peru's southern coast, my bus rattled past windswept dunes. Improbably, grapes grow here. In the 1550s, the colonizing Spaniards planted grapevines, which they irrigated with water from the rivers flowing from the Andes. The wine was soon levied; by distilling fruit rather than making wine, producers could avoid paying taxes. Thus was born pisco, a white spirit made from fermented grape juice. It hit the States during the gold rush. At San Francisco's Bank Exchange bar, pisco punch hooked devotees with the inclusion of (then legal) cocaine. Prohibition and Peru's political turbulence soon dampened pisco's fortunes. Though the spirit found renewed domestic interest in the early 2000s, producers struggled to entice overseas admirers. Legal controls helped. Today, production is strictly regulated. Rather than a tall, modern column still, which removes many interesting flavors, producers must use a gourd-shaped copper alembic or potlike *falca* to distill the juice of eight different grapes. Dilution and barrel aging are prohibited, and the spirit must rest, mellowing for three months before bottling. The results are exuberant in any style: single-varietal *puro*; *acholado*, a blend; or *mosto verde*, a sweet pisco made by distilling before the grape fermentation finishes. At Pisco Portón, based at the Americas' oldest continuously operating winery, with vines growing in the stark landscape as backdrop, I sipped a *mosto verde* made from the aromatic torontel grape. Born from a desert that blooms in spring, it was floral and earthy—heady with roses, violets, and pear. With such exciting piscos on the market, mixologists are discovering the spirit's potential. Home bartenders, too, will find it intriguing in a classic pisco sour, substituted for vodka in a Tom Collins, swapped for tequila in a flowery margarita, or mixed into something completely new. (For more recipes, go to SAVEUR.COM/HOLIDAY DRINKS.) —*Lauren Mowery*

Tasting Notes

Pisco Portón *($35; 750 ml; arlingtonwine.net)* A *mosto verde*, this pisco delivers weight and a velvety mouthfeel along with hints of flowers, tropical fruit, and baking spices.

Viñas de Oro Mosto Verde Italia *($46; 750 ml; finewineandgoodspirits.com)* Notes of jasmine, geranium and rose, along with ripe fruit, characterize this *mosto verde* pisco made with italia grapes.

Campo de Encanto Grand & Noble *($42; 750 ml; dandm.com)* An *acholado* (blend) of four grapes, this pisco serves up lemon, peach, nuts, and honeysuckle flavors with a tangy, pine needle finish.

Macchu Pisco *($30; 750 ml; garnetwine.com)* Textured like butter, this *puro* made from the grape quebranta offers almond, citrus, and wine grape aromatics with a subtle herbal and grassy finish.

BarSol Supremo Mosto Verde Italia *($36; 750 ml; moraswines.com)* Rich and round, this bottle has distinct fragrant pear notes, along with hints of citrus and flowers.

Santa Rosa

Hibiscus, a Christmastime flower, adds holiday spirit to this fruity drink. Muddle 2 Luxardo cherries in a shaker. Add 1 oz. each Cocchi Americano Rosa, pisco, and Sorel hibiscus liqueur, ½ oz. lime juice, and ice. Shake; strain into a collins glass filled with crushed ice. Top with a dash of absinthe; garnish with a Luxardo cherry and mint sprig. Makes 1 cocktail.

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PURE EXPRESSION

Hugh Acheson is the chef-owner of five restaurants in Georgia, including Five & Ten in Athens and Empire State South in Atlanta. This is his first article for SAVEUR.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARIANA LINDQUIST

The Acheson Christmas spread includes, from left, field pea gratin, roasted turnips with buttered greens, maple-and-mustard-glazed ham, and carrots Vichy. Recipes begin on page 64.

DOWN HOME *in* GEORGIA

The Canadian-born chef and *Top Chef* judge Hugh Acheson cooks a Christmas dinner that's inspired by Southern ingredients

IT'S DOUBTFUL WE'LL EVER HAVE A WHITE Christmas in Athens, Georgia. When I was growing up in Canada, there was always snow in December, but in the 18 years I've lived in the South, snow has been more of an apocalyptic rarity than a seasonal event. We don't deal with it well; our towns aren't equipped with a fleet of plows, and our old water oaks can't bear its downy weight. The tree limbs snap, knocking out power, the streets become littered with abandoned cars, and the grocery stores empty out like in a scene from

The Walking Dead. This year brought no such end-of-days anomaly. It was a suitably beige holiday, festive in its own way.

On Christmas morning, I woke up happy but in need of coffee. Nursing a bourbon at 2:00 A.M. while wrapping presents like some part-time Santa made a 7:00 A.M. rise a bit more difficult than normal. At what point would my kids no longer want to challenge darkness with a predawn scramble for gifts, I wondered.

The night before, we had eaten, as we do every Christmas Eve, slow-roasted lamb leg studded with garlic and fragrant with rosemary and mint. It's an unshakable Acheson family tradition. In some nightmare plague, the locusts could come and devour everything including the plastic Santa outside and the lights hanging on the porch, but we would somehow still be eating succulent lamb. We ate slices carved from the bone, along with roasted endive, smoked sunchokes, roasted potatoes punctuated with my home-pickled ramps, and a simple mâche salad dressed in olive oil, lemon, and champagne vinegar. Then my wife, Mary, and I read *A Child's Christmas in Wales* to our daughters, 12-year-old Beatrice and 10-year-old Clementine, tucking them into bed in time to execute the strategic plan of stuffing stockings and forging notes from Santa and his reindeer. Things were properly staged for the morning, right down to fake footprints

Acheson and daughter Clementine select some radishes at Woodland Gardens in Winterville, Georgia.

Choice Cut

Ask your butcher for the shank end of the ham leg. Neither cured nor smoked, this fresh ham produces a robust, juicy roast with a pure flavor that takes well to a tangy maple-and-mustard glaze (see page 68 for recipe).

Carrots Vichy (see page 64 for recipe).

from the chimney to make our little Southern home look like a *CSI* Christmas special.

With all this production, I suppose Mary and I might have been a tad disappointed if the kids weren't revving to go at daybreak. Our own reward would be Christmas dinner. When I was young and still believed in that fat guy with the red suit, Christmas supper at my grandparents' house in Toronto meant a standing rib roast and Yorkshire pudding, turnips and glazed carrots, mashed potatoes and gravy. It's hard for a Canadian to shake the British influence. My wonderful grandfather, for whom I'm named, would preside over a massive antique table with seating for 24. Plumb full of dishes, it was all the more congested by the bran pie, which was not a pie at all, but a trough of small gifts submerged beneath a mound of dry bran. Each one was tethered to a place setting, so that when you pulled your ribbon, a little present would emerge—as if the morning's haul hadn't been sufficient. Here in Athens, we don't do the bran pie, but we do hunt high and low for quality Christmas crackers, the festive popping devices that are filled with cheap toys, a bad joke, a lottery number, and an ill-fitting paper crown. These little odes to my history are still pretty foreign around here, but my kids now cherish them.

For Christmas Day, the regional larder in Georgia guides my menu. This year, the meal was based around a fresh ham roast, a beautiful cut of meat from my friend Adam Musick, a singer-guitarist from the band Southern Bitch who put his instruments aside to raise what I think is the most stunning pork in America. I roasted the ham slowly and finished it with a mustardy glaze light on sugar, so the pork's purity shined.

When our guests filtered in, we handed them drinks. Our longtime neighbors John and Heather and their two boys, Owen and Lucas, plus Heather's mom, Pam, arrived first. Our friend Windy and her kids, Colin, Everett, and Jane, filled the house soon after. There was eggnog—not that processed stuff from the grocery store, but the real thing, a mix of milk, cream, and frothy egg whites spiked with bourbon and rum and dusted with nutmeg. We also made a cognac-and-pomegranate punch because someone once told me that all Christmas parties need a punch, and I couldn't find fault with that. Oysters graced the table for at least 15 minutes, until oyster-crazed Beatrice bogarted them. They were sizable specimens from Rappahannock River Oysters, with a Chesapeake Bay salinity that sang, especially when topped with a dash of citrusy mignonette and hot sauce.

Fine china, which we never use otherwise, filled every nook and cranny of the table. Wine glasses somehow found a spot. Some of the dishes surrounding the roasted ham had a personal meaning for us. My field pea gratin, a French dish made with Southern ingredients, was an ode both to France and to Birmingham, Alabama–based chef Frank Stitt, for his skillful melding of French and

From top: Young guests line up for dinner; sautéed Brussels sprout leaves (see page 68 for recipe).

Southern cuisines. Frank has been a strong influence on many of us in the region. This year's peas, a small white varietal known as zipper cream, were shelled in August by our friends Tim and Alice Mills, whose farm sits on the outskirts of Athens. We froze them in the summer to last through the colder months; they defrosted beautifully. I baked them into a toasty casserole, lush with cream and smoky with country ham. Also of special importance to me was James Beard's version of carrots Vichy, one of the recipes I read as a kid from cookbooks in my dad's kitchen. A butter-boiled dish, it's so simple, yet perfect. We use local Nantes carrots—lovely orange cylinders with such an abundance of natural sugar that they taste like candy. My kids love carrots, but I expected them to take a few bites and hide the rest in their bunched up napkins in anticipation of the real sweets that awaited them in their stockings.

We filled the remainder of the table with more platters of vegetables. Over the years I've developed a close relationship with Woodland Gardens, an organic farm in nearby Decatur. The farmers, Celia Barss and John Cooper, focus on heirloom varietals, and as they've become one of the most important purveyors for my restaurants, they've also stocked our home fridge. This year, Clementine and I visited their winter hoop houses and had the luxury of selecting the perfect produce for our holiday meal. Among our finds were petite Hakurei turnips, their skin so tender that I didn't even peel them. I roasted them and served them alongside their sautéed greens, with little more than butter and salt as seasoning. Fresh arugula lightly dressed with vinaigrette was a respite from the rich pork and pea gratin. I charred Brussels sprout leaves, sautéing them in very hot olive oil to crisp each one individually. And, lastly, there was leek bread pudding, browned and crunchy on top, creamy in the middle, and aromatic from all those tender sliced alliums.

For Christmas Day, the regional larder in Georgia guides my menu

Acheson and Clementine return from nearby Woodland Gardens with a box full of handpicked heirloom vegetables.

Keep it Simple

Using just one pot, Acheson sautés the leeks first for his **leek bread pudding** *(pictured above) and then builds the dish in the same vessel for baking. Fresh oysters need little adornment. Acheson finds the best local specimens and adds just a touch of* **orange, candied onion, and mint mignonette** *and homemade hot sauce. Recipes begin on page 64.*

Acheson and his wife, Mary, sit at the heads of the table, hosting their friends.

We ate family style, with the kids at the card table dragged from under a bed and dressed up for the occasion. Our flea-market chairs squeaked every time we laughed. Our cheeks turned rosy from the wine and warmth; it was chilly enough outside to make the inside feel cozy and snug. The kids got just enough savory sustenance to recharge their sweet tooths, and after trading the Christmas cracker surprises, they retired to the living room to enjoy their loot. Too full to move to less noisy seating, the grown-ups relaxed, relieved that the night would bring our usual bedtimes and sleep that would stretch past sunrise.

Finally, the guests started to say their good-nights. After such a long day, Beatrice and Clementine were tuckered out. Their paper crowns sat rumpled on their heads. I sipped a 1994 Graham's port that Windy had brought, a cellared beauty bequeathed by her recently passed husband, our friend Garrie. What could have been a solemn moment was, instead, one of quiet celebration. It had been a good Christmas and a darned fine meal.

The Recipes

Carrots Vichy

SERVES 4–6

In Acheson's update on the French classic (pictured on page 61), he replaces sugar with maple syrup, subs in fresh herbs for dried ones, and adds chile for some heat. He also likes to stir the chopped carrot tops in at the end of cooking for added flavor.

- 2 lb. carrots, cut into ½" rounds
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 tbsp. heavy cream
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1½ tbsp. marjoram leaves
- 1 small Holland or Fresno chile, sliced ¼" thick

Bring carrots, butter, salt, and ¼ cup water to a simmer in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium; cook, covered, until carrots are tender, 5–7 minutes. Stir in cream, syrup, and 1 tbsp. marjoram; cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in chile. Transfer to a serving dish; garnish with remaining marjoram.

Field Pea Gratin

SERVES 8

Southern cooks freeze field peas in the summer to use in the colder months. But butter beans or Sea Island red peas, an heirloom variety from South Carolina, make great substitutes in this casserole (pictured on page 68).

- 6 slices bacon, cut into ¼" pieces
- 2 tsp. olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 1 small yellow onion, minced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 smoked ham hock (see page 100), skin and bone discarded, ham roughly chopped
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 6 cups fresh or frozen field peas, butter beans, or red peas
- 2 cups heavy cream
- ¼ cup roughly chopped parsley, plus more for garnish
- ½ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 eggs
- Kosher salt, to taste

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Elegant Eggnog

*Acheson dresses up his homemade **eggnog** with nutmeg (see this page for recipe). But other ingredients, such as cinnamon, grated nuts, and dried fruits, also make festive garnishes.*

Heat oven to 375°. Cook bacon in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high until slightly crisp, 8–10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain. Add oil to pan; cook onion until golden, 5–7 minutes. Add garlic and ham hock; cook 3 minutes. Add stock and peas; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until peas are tender and stock is thickened, 35–40 minutes. Stir in reserved bacon, the cream, parsley, chile flakes, eggs, and salt. Transfer to a greased 9" x 13" baking dish; bake until set, 45–50 minutes. Turn oven to broil; broil until top is browned, 1–2 minutes. Garnish with parsley.

Hugh Acheson's Eggnog

SERVES 6–8

In this Southern spin on the boozy Yuletide favorite (pictured on this page), a mix of bourbon and rum takes the place of brandy. It can be made up to 4 hours before serving.

- 4 cups whole milk
- 1½ cups sugar
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 vanilla beans, split lengthwise and seeds scraped
- 8 egg yolks plus 4 whites
- ¾ cup bourbon
- ¼ cup rum
- 2 cups heavy cream
- ¼ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

Boil milk, sugar, salt, and vanilla beans and seeds in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium until sugar is dissolved, 6–8 minutes. Place yolks in a bowl; slowly whisk in 2 ladlefuls of milk mixture; return to pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture coats the back of a spoon, 10–12 minutes. Strain though a fine-mesh sieve into a punch bowl or pitcher; let cool. Stir in bourbon and rum. In separate bowls, and using an electric hand mixer, beat egg whites and cream until stiff peaks form; fold both into eggnog. Garnish with nutmeg.

Leek Bread Pudding

SERVES 6–8

The chewy sourdough bread cubes in this savory side dish (pictured on page 63) soak up custard for a creamy interior and toast to a golden brown for a crunchy topping.

- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tsp. minced thyme
- 1 1-lb. sourdough boule, cut into ½" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 large leeks, white and light green parts only, halved lengthwise and sliced crosswise ½" thick
- 1⅓ cups heavy cream
- 1⅓ cups whole milk
- 2 eggs plus 5 yolks
- ¾ cup grated parmesan

Heat oven to 400°. Toss 4 tbsp. butter, 1 tsp. thyme, the bread, salt, and pepper on a baking sheet. Bake until slightly crisp, about 20 minutes; let cool. Reduce oven to 325°. Heat remaining butter in an ovenproof 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high. Cook leeks until golden, 7–8 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and stir in remaining thyme and 2 tbsp. water; cook, covered, until leeks are tender, 5–7 minutes; let cool. Whisk

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Field pea gratin (see page 64 for recipe).

cream, milk, eggs and yolks, half the parmesan, salt, and pepper in a large bowl until smooth. Fold in reserved bread and leeks; return to saucepan and sprinkle with remaining parmesan; bake until golden brown and set, about 45 minutes.

Maple-and-Mustard-Glazed Ham

SERVES 10–12

Brining the fresh ham prior to roasting keeps the meat moist and succulent in this roast (pictured on page 60). The glaze can be made up to a week in advance.

For the ham:

- 1 cup kosher salt
- 1 tbsp. yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- ½ tsp. coriander seeds
- ½ tsp. whole cloves
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 1 10–12-lb. bone-in, skin-on fresh ham (see "Choice Cut," page 60)

For the glaze:

- 1 cup Dijon mustard
- 1 cup maple syrup
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- 5 tbsp. mustard seeds
- 2 tbsp. ground coriander
- 2 tbsp. minced rosemary
- 2 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf

1 Brine the ham: Boil ingredients, except ham, plus 16 cups water in a large stockpot; cook for 5 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool. Add ham to pot and cover; chill 24 hours.

2 Make the glaze: Bring ingredients to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium; cook until thickened, about 15 minutes, and set aside.

3 Bake the ham: Heat oven to 300°. Remove ham from brine and pat dry using paper towels. Using a sharp knife, score the skin of the ham in a 1" crosshatch pattern; place ham in a roasting pan fitted with a rack. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the ham reaches 130°, 3½–4 hours. Brush liberally with reserved glaze and increase oven to 450°. Bake until ham is browned, about 1 hour. Let rest for 20 minutes before carving.

Orange, Candied Onion, and Mint Mignonette

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

This fragrant sauce (pictured on page 63) is a bright accent to briny oysters, but it's also delicious with clams, steamed crab legs, and shrimp.

- ⅓ cup cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 small red onion, minced
- 1 cup dry sparkling wine
- 2 tbsp. minced mint
- ½ tsp. fleur de sel or kosher salt
- 2 1" strips orange zest, thinly sliced crosswise
- Oysters on the half shell, for serving

Bring vinegar, sugar, onion, and ¼ cup water to a simmer in a 10" skillet over medium. Cook until liquid is evaporated and the onion is caramelized, 20–25 minutes; transfer to a bowl and let cool. Stir in wine, mint, fleur de sel, and orange zest. Serve with oysters.

Roasted Turnips with Buttered Greens

SERVES 4–6

Any root vegetable with greens, such as beets or radishes, can be used in this buttery, caraway-spiced dish (pictured on page 59). Acheson favors delicate Hakurei turnips.

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 lb. small white turnips with green tops, such as Hakurei (see page 100), turnips halved, greens roughly chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ½ tsp. caraway seeds

1 Heat oven to 400°. Melt 2 tbsp. butter in a 12" ovenproof skillet over medium-high. Working in batches, cook turnips, cut side down, until browned, 4–6 minutes. Return all turnips to pan and season with salt. Transfer to oven; bake until tender, 12–15 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter; keep warm.

2 Wipe skillet clean and toast caraway seeds over medium-high until they pop, 1–2 minutes; transfer to a bowl. Add remaining butter to skillet; melt. Cook turnip greens until wilted, 3–4 minutes. Stir in reserved caraway seeds and salt; cook 1 minute. Transfer to platter with roasted turnips.

Sautéed Brussels Sprout Leaves

SERVES 4

A touch of sherry vinegar adds brightness and tempers the bitterness of Brussels sprouts (pictured on page 62).

- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, trimmed
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp. sherry vinegar

Using a paring knife, and working with 1 sprout at a time, insert the tip of the knife just outside the stem end of the sprout and twist the sprout around the knife to release the core. Using your fingers, separate individual leaves; discard cores. Bring a 4-qt. saucepan of salted water to a boil. Cook leaves 1 minute; drain and transfer to an ice bath until cold. Drain and dry leaves completely using paper towels. Heat oil and butter in a 12" skillet over high. Cook leaves, stirring occasionally, until golden and slightly crisp, 6–8 minutes. Stir in vinegar and salt.

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BOSTON UNCOMMON

In this historic New England town, centuries-old restaurants offer up classics, and a new generation of talented chefs digs into the city's storied cuisine

By Keith Pandolfi
Photographs by Landon Nordeman

New England's traditional boiled dinner is reborn at Puritan & Company, where its ingredients are artfully deconstructed into a salad of fresh greens, pickled veggies, and cured meats.

Puritan & Company's chef-owner, Will Gilson, sources much of his produce from his family's farm.

Snow is falling. Communal tables are being set. A Pixies song plays as a rush of seafood purveyors carry in the day's delivery of bluefish, swordfish, and clams. Dinner at Will Gilson's two-year-old restaurant, Puritan & Company, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, won't start for a few more hours, but already the barnlike dining room, strung with Mason-jar chandeliers, feels busy and inviting.

At 32 years old, Gilson is a youthful, the-world-is-my-oyster kind of guy who is always smiling, and with good reason. He's running one of the Boston area's hottest restaurants. He's getting a lot of love from the local press. And if that weren't enough, he's being credited with reviving, if not saving, some of New England's most beloved dishes.

Boston can lay claim to a particular cuisine: salt-pork clam chowders, hearty molasses-laced beans, and that perplexing cut of fish called scrod. Gilson, a 13th-generation descendent of a *Mayflower* passenger, is making sure regional specialties like these stay relevant in the brave new world of farm-to-table everything. Take, for example, his "boiled dinner." Rather than letting a mess of corned beef and root vegetables simmer for hours into typical Yankee-Doodle dreariness, Gilson gives it a fresh treatment. Using produce from New England farms, including his parents'—and tweezer-wielding precision—he composes a visually alluring salad of Brussels sprout leaves, hay-roasted carrots, pickled cauliflower, and thinly sliced house-corned Wagyu beef. The crisp, savory, artfully assembled dish would make a convert of even the most pious of Puritans.

"When you talk about the regional foods of New England, it's all about nostalgia and comfort," Gilson says. "But that doesn't mean these dishes can't be elevated. What we set out to do is find the things that are visceral to people from this region, and take them to the next level."

That level is well-represented by a smoked bluefish pâté seasoned with fresh parsley and tarragon and served with New England hardtack crackers. Hardtacks, a bland staple of 19th-century fishing vessels, were notorious as much for their bricklike texture as for their ability to endure long voyages without spoilage. In Gilson's hands, however, they are crisp, buttery, and highly addictive. Equally compelling is his finnan haddie chowder, made with cold-smoked, salted haddock and potatoes.

Puritan & Company is part of a resurgence in Boston dining, one that's been amply celebrated in the past decade. But Boston isn't just a culinary boomtown. What sets it apart is that so many of its old-guard restaurants—the kinds of places that inspired chefs like Gilson—are still around. It's why I love this town. At a time when everything old is new again, Boston is home to some of the most bona fide dining rooms, taverns, and seafood shacks in the country.

In Boston, you can dine in the SAME PLACES that your parents—heck, even your great-grandparents—once did

It's not just New England food they're serving, either. Centuries of immigration—from Italy, Ireland, Germany, and beyond—have left an indelible and delicious mark. On a cold Tuesday evening, I find myself in Jacob Wirth restaurant, sitting in a swarming barroom drinking pints of Guinness among ball-capped college students and happy-hour businessmen loosening their ties while a Bruins game plays on the flat-screens. Jacob Wirth was established in 1868 by its namesake, who grew up in the same German village as the Anheuser family and became the first New England distributor of their St. Louis–based Anheuser-Busch beers.

Back then, the restaurant was in a German Catholic neighborhood, a gathering place for Teutonic immigrants who landed here in the 19th century. Today, that same area is Chinatown. The building alone is a sight to behold—two adjoined tatty Greek-Revival row houses with dilapidated dormers and a massive old clock that looks like it was rescued from a Hollywood prop yard. Inside, tin ceilings, schoolhouse lights, and a battered piano make Jacob Wirth seem almost artificial—like a modern-day replica of itself. While the menu is filled with such crowd-pleasers as hamburgers and chipotle turkey sandwiches, I decide on the jaeger schnitzel, a breaded veal cutlet served with meaty wild mushrooms, sweet pea spätzle, and a thick sauce enriched with the spicy digestif Jägermeister, delectable proof that Jacob Wirth retains its Old World chops.

My mother, who was born in Massachusetts, was a teenager back in the 1960s when she ate at Durgin-Park restaurant, in the Faneuil Hall Marketplace. She was treating her older brother, George, to lunch here, celebrating his graduation from law school. That's one of the great things about Boston: You can revisit the same places your parents—heck, even your great-grandparents—once did, and eat pretty much the same food.

I'm guessing that successive generations have been served by the same staff at Durgin-Park, too. Standing in one of the restaurant's second-floor rooms, I read the framed obituary of Nancy Greenfield, a retired employee of the Post Office who went on to become one of the restaurant's "surly, celebrated waitresses" from 1976 until 1991. According to the article, Mrs. Greenfield held court at station 12, a table for 25 where single male customers were seated communally. Glancing toward that station, I notice an older man with a shock of gray hair enjoying a bowl of clam chowder. I figure he might've known Nancy. I'd bet he misses her.

Clockwise from top left: Will Gilson; seared swordfish with herb butter and sautéed vegetables (see page 80 for recipe) from The Marliave; happy hour at Jacob Wirth.

The sautéed seafood platter from Boston's No Name Restaurant, which opened in 1917.

WHERE TO **EAT**

Durgin-Park
340 Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston (617/227-2038; arkrestaurants.com. Boston classics like baked beans, Indian pudding , and chowder are served at this centuries-old joint.

Jacob Wirth
31–37 Stuart Street, Boston (617/338-8586; jacobwirth.com). German schnitzel and sausages are available at this beer hall opened in 1868.

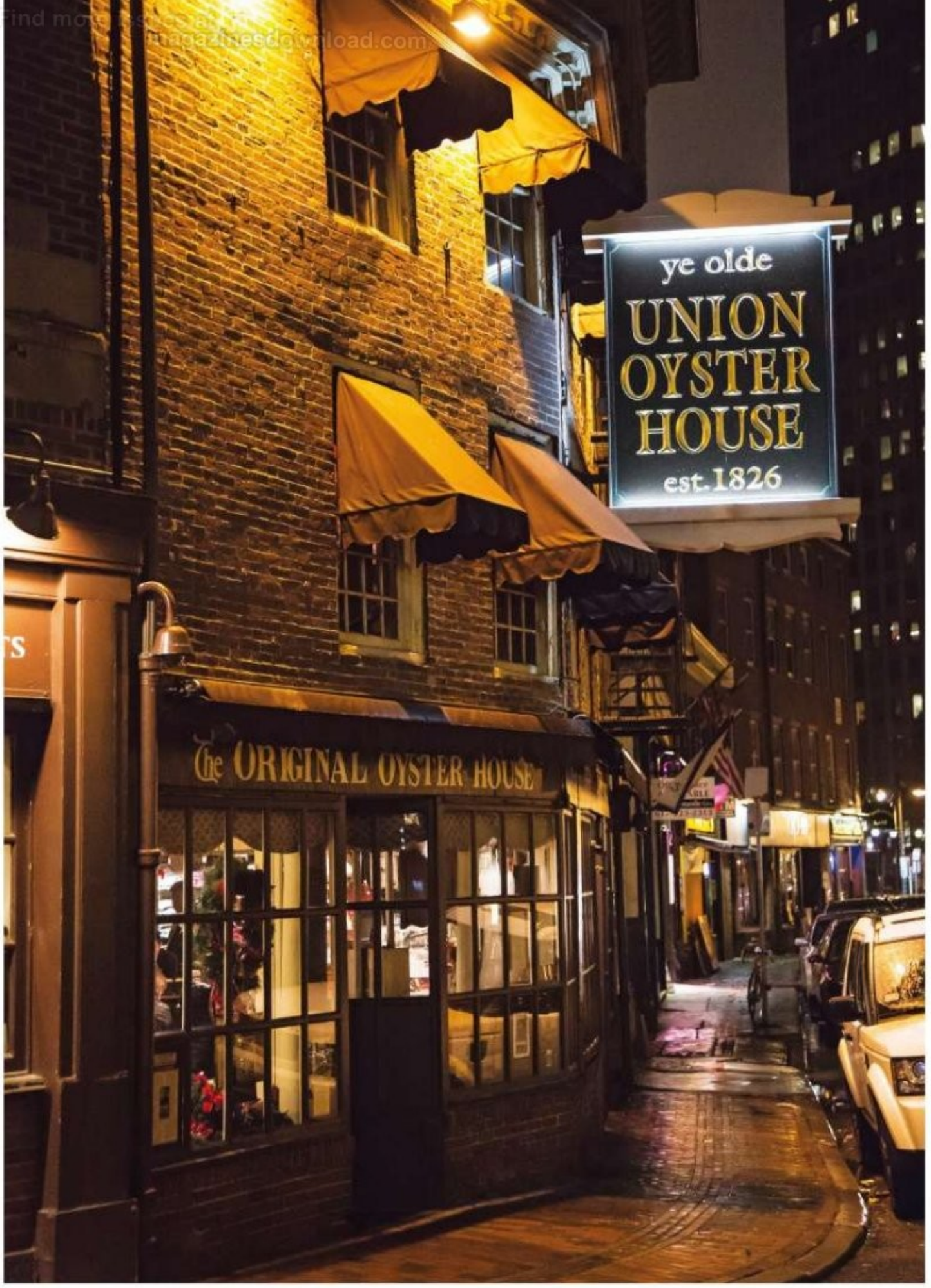
The Marliave
10 Bosworth Street, Boston (617/422-0004; marliave.com). Chef Scott Herritt serves updated versions of Italian, French, and New England mainstays.

No Name Restaurant
15½ Fish Pier, Boston (617/338-7539; nonamerestaurant.com). Located on Boston's oldest operating fish pier, this 1917 seafood shack offers shrimp, crabs, and lobster right off the boat.

Parker's Restaurant
60 School Street, Boston (617/725-1600; omnihotels.com). This Omni Parker House hotel dining room is an ideal place to enjoy New England favorites like Boston cream pie.

Puritan & Company
1166 Cambridge Street, Cambridge (617/615-6195; puritancambridge.com). The cuisine here is a nod to the region's past as well as its future.

Union Oyster House
41 Union Street, Boston (617/227-2750; unionoysterhouse.com). The city's oldest restaurant, this is where JFK came for his lobster stew fix.



Long before it became a restaurant, Union Oyster House was a dry goods store. In 1796, an upstairs apartment was home to Frenchman Louis Philippe, the future king of France.

Durgin-Park was born as a nameless dining hall that catered to Faneuil Hall vendors and fishermen, who would dock their boats in what was once—before numerous engineering projects—the nearby harbor. In 1827, a regular customer named John Durgin teamed up with merchants Eldridge Park and John Chandler to buy the place. Since both Durgin and Park died soon afterward, Chandler named the restaurant in their memory. Over the years, it became known as *the* spot to get your New England fix, with such dishes as Boston baked beans, cornmeal-based Indian pudding, caramelly apple pandowdy, and an intimidating 32-ounce prime rib that makes my mouth water as a waitress named Regina delivers it to another table.

When my equally formidable portion of Yankee pot roast arrives, I shred the tender, flaky meat into the accompanying mashed potatoes. It's the kind of dish I remember eating countless times as a kid, usually halfheartedly. But there's something about having it here, in this history-laden dining room, that makes it almost transcendent. I finish off the meal with the most curious item on the menu, coffee gelatin, which arrives in a ceramic mug topped with whipped cream. The caffeinated dessert, made with the leftovers from yesterday's pot, has been served here for ages, and as I swallow my last quivering bite, I can't help thinking of the incongruity of a bunch of salty sailors spooning up these cute little cubes before heading out to sea.

"Let's get us some oy-stas," one of a group of five men says, affecting a Boston accent, as I make my way into the Union Oyster House. These are young guys, suited, draped in overcoats, and wrapped in expensive scarves. My guess is that they're in town for a convention. My guess is that they're a little drunk. One of them, a dead ringer for a *Citizen Kane*–era Orson Welles, looks up to the restaurant's wood sign and scoffs, "This whole city feels like Disney World."

His words get to me, but I understand where he's coming from. There are parts of Boston that do feel like historic re-creation. You can't walk a few footsteps without happening upon a plaque signifying some legendary event or celebrated birthplace. One morning I casually strolled by the Old State House, where, in 1770, the Boston Massacre gave way to the American Revolution. Walking down the street from my hotel to buy dental floss, I passed the tombstones of Paul Revere, Samuel Adams, and Benjamin Franklin's parents.

But despite young Orson's skepticism, Union Oyster House really did open in 1826, making it among the country's oldest restaurants. While it has expanded threefold into neighboring buildings over the years, its main room looks almost exactly as it did in the 19th century, when a blowhard senator named Daniel Webster riled his fellow patrons after too much brandy. Upstairs is the wooden booth where, back in the 1950s, another Massachusetts senator—John F. Kennedy—spent his Sundays reading the newspapers and mulling his political future over bowls of lobster stew.

While I long to sit in that booth, it is already taken up by a group of Harvard undergrads, so I settle for the one directly

Clockwise from top left: Yankee pot roast at Durgin-Park; diners at Union Oyster House; Durgin-Park's coffee gelatin; bluefish pâté with hardtack crackers from Puritan & Company. Recipes begin on page 78.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY (POT ROAST AND COFFEE GELATIN)

across from them instead. I order a cup of clam chowder and take in the restaurant's wood-beamed ceilings, nautical light fixtures, and a Victorian Christmas tree that looks as if it had been decorated by Dickens himself.

The chowder arrives smelling of briny shellfish and smoky salt pork. I tear open a bag of oyster crackers, mixing them in with the tender meat and potatoes. Taking my waitress's recommendation, I follow it up with a classic seafood Newburg with succulent scallops, lobster tail, and shrimp, all of them sautéed in butter and doused in a spicy Worcestershire-and-sherry-spiked cream sauce with a flaky vol-au-vent. By the time I'm finished, the Harvard students have gone back to Cambridge, so I sneak into Kennedy's booth and order a Jameson on the rocks.

After settling my tab, I make my way up the block to the Omni Parker House hotel, where I'm staying. But before heading to my room, I make a split-second decision to duck into Parker's Restaurant, just off the main lobby. While some may call it stodgy and outdated, this circa 1920s dining room is one of my favorite places on earth. With its opulent chandeliers, handsome hardwood paneling, and heavily draped floor-to-ceiling windows, it harkens back to a time when black-tied men and white-gloved women maintained an almost absurd amount of decorum, at least until the third martini kicked in.

Following in the footsteps of illustrious Parker's chefs Jasper White and Emeril Lagasse, the current executive chef, Gerry Tice, serves New England mainstays: chowder, lobster, the fluffy namesake Parker House rolls, and, of course, scrod, which he sautés in white wine and coats in bread crumbs. It's a quintessentially New England food whose name, my tuxedo-clad waiter tells me, was an acronym for the phrase "Special Catch Requested of the Day."

While this seems an apocryphal tale for a term that, according to most dictionaries, is derived from the British term "scrawed," which refers to a split and salted young fish, I order it anyway. As I slide my fork into the moist white fillet, I'm reminded

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The dinner crowd gathers at Parker's Restaurant in the Omni Parker House hotel.

that it's far better tasting than it sounds. I settle into my plush leather chair and surrender myself to the Parker's experience. A World War II–period soundtrack plays in the background. I gaze toward a corner table where, more than half a century ago, it is said that a young man named John proposed to a beauty named Jacqueline. The hushed, largely empty dining room springs to life, at least in my imagination.

In 1875, inside a small brick building on Bosworth Street, a dream came true. Here, a young French immigrant to Boston named Henry Marliave opened what would become one of the city's most revered restaurants—The Marliave. For more than a century, it would be celebrated for its menu of French, Italian, and New England dishes. But starting in the 1990s, the food began to suffer; the crowds began to thin. In 2003, Henry Marliave's dream ended when the restaurant was shuttered, many believed for good. Its unlikely resurrection came less than two years later, thanks to chef Scott Herritt, who grew up not in New England, but in Oklahoma. Much like Gilson's approach at Puritan & Company, part of Herritt's plan for The Marliave was to make it a showcase for refined New England classics. And if the tender pan-roasted local swordfish served with Swiss chard, red bell peppers, and potatoes is any indication, The Marliave might still be here a hundred years from now.

After finishing my meal, I take a seat at the restaurant's reassuringly crowded bar, the old mosaic tile floors and pressed tin ceilings still intact, and watch as good-humored patrons imbibe Prohibition era cocktails. I order a boozy Boston Tea Party made with tequila, ginger, lemon, and Earl Grey. A couple sitting next to me asks if the Bruins won tonight. I say I'm from New York, and they tell me that's okay. "Blue Christmas" starts playing in the background. And while this timeless Boston restaurant is nearly a century and a half old, right now, it feels to me like opening night.

THE RECIPES

Apple Pandowdy

SERVES 6–8

At Boston's Durgin-Park, squares of buttery crust are pressed into a simmering apple filling partway through cooking to soak up the spiced sauce in this old-school dessert (pictured on the cover and page 82).

- 1 cup flour, plus more for dusting
- 15 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed and chilled
- ¾ cup plus 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. ice-cold water
- ¼ cup unsweetened apple cider
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1½ tbsp. molasses
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

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- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- 12 semisweet apples, such as Fuji, cored, peeled, and sliced into ½" wedges
- 2 tbsp. heavy cream
- Vanilla ice cream, for serving (optional)

1 Pulse flour, 12 tbsp. butter, 1 tbsp. sugar, the baking powder, and ½ tsp. salt in a food processor into pea-size crumbles. With the motor running, add water; pulse until dough forms. Form dough into a disk and wrap in plastic wrap; chill 30 minutes.

2 Heat oven to 375°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough ⅛" thick; trim edges to make a 9" square. Cut dough into 3" squares; chill until ready to use. Stir remaining butter, sugar, and salt, the cider, cornstarch, molasses, lemon juice, cinnamon, cloves, and apples in a 12" cast-iron skillet; simmer over medium-high for 10 minutes. Arrange dough squares over apples and brush with cream; bake 20 minutes. Using a spoon, press the crust into the filling; bake until top is golden, 18–20 minutes. Serve with ice cream, if you like.

Coffee Gelatin with Whipped Cream

SERVES 6

Served in glistening mahogany cubes, this caffeinated dessert (pictured on page 76) caps off the meal at Boston's Durgin-Park.

- 4 cups strong brewed coffee
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 ¼-oz. packages unflavored gelatin
- Whipped cream (see "Make Whipped Cream in a Jar," page 99), for garnish

Boil coffee in a 2-qt. saucepan. Whisk in sugar and gelatin until dissolved, 4–5 minutes. Pour into an 8" square baking dish; chill until set, 2½–3 hours. Cut into 1½" cubes; serve in mugs with whipped cream.

Finnan Haddie Chowder

SERVES 6–8

Chef Will Gilson serves this Scottish-style chowder (pictured on this page), made with clams and cold-smoked haddock, at Puritan & Company.

- 1 lb. finnan haddie (cold-smoked haddock; see page 100), cut into 1" pieces
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 small yellow onion, minced
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 2½ cups bottled clam juice
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 lb. waxy potatoes, peeled and cut into ¼" pieces
- 3 cups heavy cream
- 10 littleneck clams
- 3 tbsp. dry sherry
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Chervil leaves, for garnish (optional)

Soak haddock in a bowl of cold water 30 minutes; drain. Melt butter in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high. Cook onion until soft, 3–4 minutes. Sprinkle in flour; cook 2 minutes. Whisk in clam juice, bay leaf, and thyme; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until thickened, 18–20 minutes. Add potatoes and cream; simmer until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in reserved haddock and the clams; cook until shells open, 8–10 minutes. Stir in sherry and salt; discard bay leaf and thyme. Garnish with chervil.

Seafood Newburg

(Lobster, Scallops, and Shrimp in Sherry Cream Sauce)

SERVES 4

This French-inspired mixed seafood dish (pictured on page 82), from Boston's Union Oyster House, is served in a vol-au-vent, a puff pastry shell.

- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 1½-2-lb. live lobsters
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 lb. medium sea scallops
- 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined, tails removed
- 2 tbsp. flour
- ¼ cup dry sherry
- ¼ cup half & half
- 2 tsp. hot sauce
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ tsp. ground white pepper
- 1 egg yolk
- 4 vol-au-vent (see "Golden Oldie," on page 99)

1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook lobsters 5 minutes; drain and transfer to an ice bath until cold. Drain lobsters; separate claws and tails, reserving legs. Halve tails lengthwise and remove meat; crack claws and remove meat. Roughly chop lobster meat; chill until ready to use. Roughly chop legs and shells.

2 Add 3 tbsp. butter to pot; melt over medium-high. Cook carrots, celery, and onion until soft, 6–8 minutes. Stir in chopped legs and shells and 8 cups water; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook 1½ hours. Strain stock and return to pot; simmer until reduced by three-quarters, 1 hour.

3 Melt remaining butter in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high. Cook scallops and shrimp until just cooked, 4–5 minutes; transfer to a bowl. Sprinkle flour into pan; cook 2 minutes. Whisk in reserved stock; boil. Reduce heat to medium; stir in sherry, half & half, hot and Worcestershire sauces, white pepper, and salt and cook until thickened, 6–8 minutes. Whisk 1 cup sauce with yolk in a bowl and return to pan; add reserved seafood; cook 2 minutes. Divide vol-au-vent bottoms between plates and ladle seafood mixture over top; top with vol-au-vent lids.

Seared Swordfish with Herb Butter

SERVES 4

A simple herb butter sauce complements this seared fish dish (pictured on page 73) at Boston's The Marliave.

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THE CLASSICS

At Union Oyster House, the seafood Newburg (left) is chockful of lobster, scallops, and shrimp. Apple pandowdy (right), an easy skillet pie, has been served at Durgin-Park restaurant for more than a century. Recipes begin on page 78.

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 4 8-oz. boneless, skinless swordfish steaks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. minced herbs, such as oregano, rosemary, and thyme
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- Mashed potatoes and sautéed vegetables, for serving (optional)

Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high. Season steaks with salt and pepper; cook until browned, 2–3 minutes. Flip steaks; add herbs, butter, and lemon juice. Cook, basting steaks with herb butter, until cooked through, 2–3 minutes. Serve with mashed potatoes and vegetables, if you like.

Smoked Bluefish Pâté with Hardtack Crackers

SERVES 6–8

This umami-rich spread (pictured on page 76) from Puritan & Company is served with buttery hardtack crackers, an update of a New England staple.

For the crackers:

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- ½ cup light rye flour (see page 100)
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed and chilled
- 1½ tbsp. kosher salt
- ¾ cup ice-cold water

For the pâté:

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup crème fraîche
- 1 cup plain full-fat Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup minced chives
- 2 tbsp. minced parsley
- 2 tbsp. minced tarragon
- 2 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 2 tsp. Sriracha hot sauce
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Zest and juice of 2 lemons
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless smoked bluefish (see page 100), flaked
- Aleppo pepper, pickled mustard seeds, purslane, and sea beans, for garnish (optional; see page 100)

1 Make the crackers: Pulse flours, sugar, butter, and salt in a food processor into pea-size crumbles. With the motor running, slowly add water until dough forms. Form dough into a disk and wrap in plastic wrap; chill 30 minutes.

2 Heat oven to 325°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough ⅛" thick; trim edges to make a 21" square. Using a pastry cutter or knife, cut dough into 3" squares; transfer to parchment paper–lined baking sheets. Bake until crisp, about 40 minutes.

3 Make the pâté: Stir cream cheese, crème fraîche, yogurt, chives, parsley, tarragon, chile flakes, hot sauce, salt, and lemon zest and juice in a bowl. Fold in bluefish and transfer pâté to four 8-oz. ramekins; invert onto serving platters. Garnish with Aleppo pepper, mustard seeds, purslane, and sea beans, if you like; serve with reserved crackers.

Yankee Pot Roast

SERVES 8

Classic A.1. steak sauce adds zip to the gravy for this tender braised brisket (pictured on page 76) from Boston's Durgin-Park.

- 1 5-lb. beef brisket, trimmed
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 tbsp. ground white pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 cup flour
- 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 3 cups beef stock
- ½ cup A.1. steak sauce
- 2 tbsp. celery salt
- 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
- 6 bay leaves
- 6 carrots, chopped
- 2 small yellow onions, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 15-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, drained and crushed by hand
- Mashed potatoes and green beans, for serving (optional)

Heat oven to 325°. Pat brisket dry using paper towels; season with salt and 2 tbsp. white pepper and dredge in ½ cup flour. Heat oil in an 8-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high; cook brisket, turning as needed, until browned, 18–20 minutes. Add stock, steak sauce, celery salt, poultry seasoning, bay leaves, carrots, onions, celery, and tomatoes; boil. Cover and transfer to oven; cook until brisket is tender, about 4 hours. Transfer brisket to a cutting board; let rest 10 minutes before carving. Strain pan juices through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl. Whisk remaining flour and 1 cup water in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high; cook 2 minutes. Whisk in reserved pan juices; simmer until gravy is thickened, 6–8 minutes. Pour gravy over brisket; serve with mashed potatoes and green beans, if you like.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY (2)

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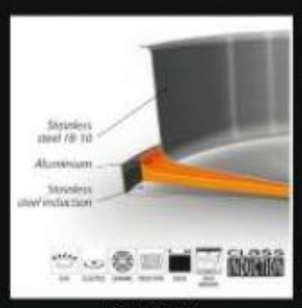

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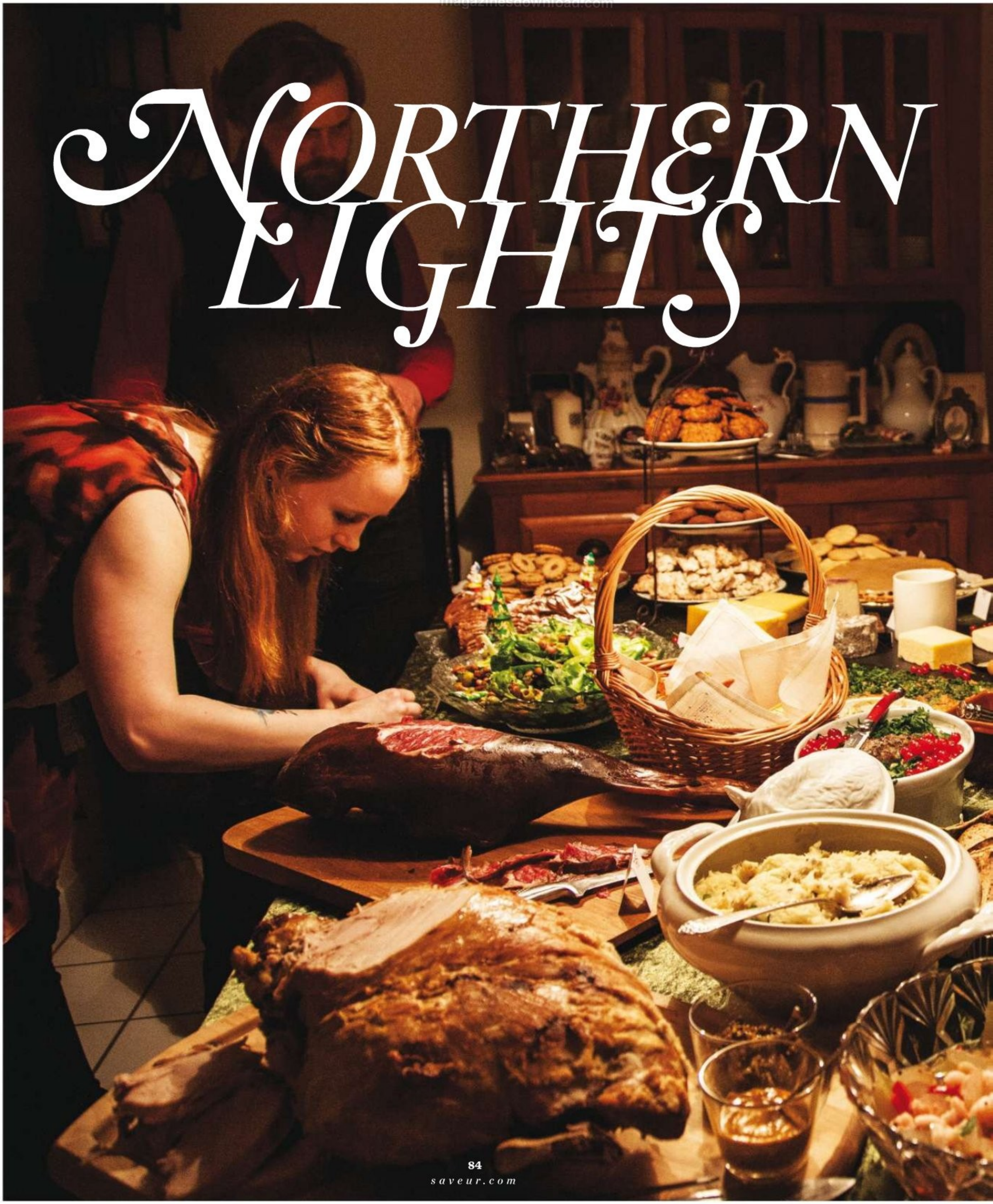

Icelandic cookbook author Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir (right) sets the buffet table for her *Þorláksmessa*, Saint Thorlak's feast, on December 23, with a little help from her son Hjalti Nönnuson and granddaughter Hekla McKenzie.

Christmas in Iceland *offers delicious food, wintry landscapes, and some much-needed cheer*

BY JUDY HAUBERT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARIANA LINDQUIST

It's three days

before Christmas, and Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir is baking at a furious clip. A motherly woman with hazel eyes and a no-nonsense manner, she dollops out the glossy batter for *marens-kornflexkökur,* chewy meringues studded with dark chocolate and cornflakes, the pale peaks on the cookie sheet mirroring the snowcapped mountains outside. Then she starts in on *kókosmjölskökur,* small chocolate thumbprints laced with shredded coconut; oatmeal cookies with chocolate and pecans; and, finally, *vínarterta,* a cake of cardamom-scented shortbread layered with homemade prune filling. It's an Icelandic adaptation of an old Viennese classic; she'll ice it with a coffee glaze.

All the while, I'm trying to make myself very small so as to fit between Nanna's baking and her lifetime of cutlery and cooking vessels in this cozy galley kitchen in Reykjavík, Iceland. Two tawny legs of *hangikjöt,* smoked lamb, hang in a corner, partially displacing the willy-nilly array of cast-iron skillets. Out on the balcony in the chill air, a fresh ham floats with juniper berries, cloves, and bay leaves in a bin full of sienna-colored brine. The apartment is suffused with the aroma of sugary things slowly caramelizing in the oven. It's a smell that makes me happy, and right now I'm especially thankful for it.

I'm here on this northern island in part because of Nanna's cookbook *Icelandic Food & Cookery* (Hippocrene Books, 2002). The volume, which I'd discovered months before on a shelf in New York, is loaded with Icelandic culinary history and classic recipes, many from Nanna's childhood on a remote farm. I was taken with the juxtaposition of the abundance in its pages and the intimation of cold, and of darkness. The island is so close to the Arctic Circle that at this time of year there are just four hours of daylight. Christmas fables here have an eerie edge. Instead of jolly Saint Nick and glowing-nosed reindeer, Icelanders have the 13 Yule Lads, trickster imps all, and a cat named Jólakötturinn who lurks in the gloaming, devouring naughty children on Christmas Eve.

These are grim legends from a far-flung place that was settled by wandering Vikings 12 centuries ago and, at 325,000 inhabitants, is still sparsely populated. Yet they are also tales of magic. Like the volcanoes that lie just beneath the island's surface, at the heart of Icelandic culture, there's heat. In spite of the near-eternal nights—or perhaps because of them—Christmastime is full of warmth and light. Icelanders, I'd heard, throw themselves into the holidays with a fierce joviality, lading tables with game and pristine seafood, earthy breads, and delectable desserts. I'm lucky that my fascination with Iceland has brought me here this year, because I'm craving these seasonal comforts more than usual. My husband of a dozen years and I have just called it quits, and I need some proof that light can outshine the darkness.

The doorbell buzzes and Nanna bustles out of the room, then back in again, her grandson Úlfur, 12, now in tow. Gold-rimmed glasses and short sandy hair frame a pale, serious face as he quietly surveys this American stranger in his grandmother's kitchen. He's just in time to help make *laufabrauð,* or leaf bread, a delicate flatbread that blisters and crisps when dropped in hot oil. As Nanna rolls dough and mans the fryer, Úlfur uses a leaf bread iron, a rolling stamp attached to a metal rod, to produce imaginative geometric designs: triangles, chevrons, herringbones, and crosshatches. "In the past, making leaf bread was the only time of the year the men of the family came into the kitchen to cook," Nanna tells me, proudly assessing his work. An array of beautifully decorated breads is soon fanned out across the counter. I sample a warm one. It shatters and then melts in my mouth, buttery and just this side of savory.

All this cooking, Nanna tells me, is in preparation for *Þorláksmessa,* which honors Saint Thorlak, Iceland's patron saint, on December 23. The holiday, a Catholic tradition that caught on with Iceland's Lutheran majority, is set aside for huge, festive luncheons at which *skata,* fermented skate, is served, to signal the end of the Christmas fast. The meal precedes the Christmas Eve feast, a moment of decadence in what historically was an austere life. It makes a sort of sense, I think: The bounty seems even more enjoyable when something rotten is eaten before it.

Still, I get Nanna's drift when she tells me that she herself can't stand the putrid fish. Her buffet features comfort foods instead—glazed ham and smoked lamb, pickled herring and homemade terrines, and the host of cookies and cakes she's been making. With the day wearing on, Nanna starts in on her last task, prepping the dense, sweet dark rye bread that she'll bake at a very low temperature overnight to mimic the traditional lava-pit method. The bread was once commonly baked in holes in the ground heated naturally by Iceland's copious geothermal steam.

"I was a very bad cook until I was about thirty," she tells me as she works. "About that time my husband and I divorced, and after that I didn't have to make everything like his mother. I became a better cook when I started doing things my own way." I think of my fractured family and wonder what my own future might bring.

Chocolate-cornflake cookies, *marens-kornflexkökur* (see page 93 for recipe), cool in Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir's Reykjavík kitchen.

Cookies and the vínarterta crowd the table. All around me friends and family chatter and laugh

On the following morning, for my first Saint Thorlak's party of the day, I arrive at the home of Kjartan Ólafsson and Kaja Gunnarsdóttir, a couple I met in New York a few weeks back. Kjartan, a seafood retailer and former critic for the Icelandic food magazine *Gestgjafinn,* throws a massive *skata* luncheon every year. Forewarned, I've donned my most dispensable clothes, stowing a spare outfit to change into afterward. Kjartan and Kaja greet me at the door, he dressed in white and she in red, complete with matching high-top Converse sneakers, a modern-day Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Kaja, a vivacious brunette, kisses me on each cheek and leads me toward the kitchen. But I stop short at the threshold, my eyes tearing up from the ammonia fumes coming from the boiling *skata.* Kjartan laughs and cracks open a window. In addition to the skate, there are cod fillets baking in the oven. Boiled new potatoes, a simple salad, and rye bread with butter round out the menu.

Kaja pours us each a *brennivín,* the local aquavit. We clink glasses, utter "Skál!" and down our drinks, the caraway-flavored distillate heating my throat. Guests begin pouring into the kitchen, and Kjartan and Kaja dole out the skate. I douse mine with melted mutton fat as instructed, and then take a small bite. It's not as bad as it smells, but I won't be a *skata* convert after all. Instead I load up on cod, spooning an unctuous sauce of butter and chopped boiled eggs over the top. Before I know it, it's time to head to Nanna's. I change clothes in the driver's seat of my rental car.

Nanna's apartment is crammed with people circling a massive spread. Cookies and the *vínarterta* crowd the far end of the large table. The ham takes the place of honor at the head, orbited by a reindeer terrine, pâtés of chicken liver and smoked mackerel, and the smoked lamb, shavings of which will top buttered dark rye bread. There is also home-pickled herring, citrus-glazed salmon, cured goose breast, salted beef tongue, a mash of salt cod, and an assortment of cheeses. I fill a plate. All around me friends and family chatter and laugh.

As I finish the last bite, I realize I haven't seen Nanna yet. Finding her where she always is, in her kitchen, I want to ask her about her husband, whether she ever misses him. But I can't say the words aloud, and it's too cheerful an occasion for such conversation. So I offer instead to help clean the kitchen, even though I know that she will refuse.

The next day is Christmas Eve. Kaja and Kjartan are heading to Kaja's sister Þorgerður Gunnarsdóttir's house to celebrate. Kjartan has said apologetically that they would welcome me to the meal, but they don't want to upset the older generation by altering the long-standing custom of including only family for this most intimate of gatherings. I understand. I was raised in a Scandinavian sect of Evangelical Lutherans; this clannish exclusivity is reminiscent of

Christmas grouse with berry sauce, caramel-glazed potatoes, and spiced cabbage with blueberries. Recipes begin on page 93. Facing page: Gunnar Eyjólfsson gets a kiss from his granddaughter Katrín Kristjánsdóttir.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Laufabrauð, leaf bread (see page 94 for recipe), is eaten as an accompaniment to Christmas dinner. The intricate patterns are created with a leaf bread iron like this one.

Þorgerður Gunnarsdóttir prepares a sauce for ptarmigan for Christmas Eve dinner at her Reykjavík home.

our own holidays growing up. I have accepted their invitation to come over beforehand, though, to peek in on the cooking.

When I arrive, Þorgerður is breaking down the carcasses of small birds. They turn out to be ptarmigan, a wild Icelandic grouse. She makes a sauce from the wings and legs, flavored with thyme and bilberries, to accompany the seared and thinly sliced breast meat. When it's done, I snap up a piece, mopping up the sauce, savoring the ferrous quality of the meat, which is tempered by a subtle spiciness from the grouse's diet. Langoustine soup simmers on a back burner. Þorgerður ladles me a portion, topping it with tender tail meat, whipped cream, and minced chives. The rich crustacean stock is bolstered with cream and curry powder.

As evening descends, the family changes into their holiday best. The sisters' parents arrive, and I take this as my cue to exit. As I pull on my coat, Kjartan invites me to join them for Christmas mass the next day. Like much of Iceland's population, he is Lutheran, but Kaja's family is Catholic. Though I haven't been to church in many years, I agree to meet them.

I head back to my hotel, where I've made a reservation for my own Christmas Eve dinner, along with the other travelers unrooted for the night. Afterward, I reach out with holiday greetings to my family. It's almost midnight when I call my grandmother in California; it's the eve of her 98th birthday. She's happy to hear from me, and I tell her I'm in Iceland.

"Well, if that doesn't beat all," she responds in her unflappable Midwestern manner. "Is Jay with you?" I realize with a sinking feeling in my gut that she doesn't know the news.

"Grandma, there's something I need to tell you," I begin.

I walk to the church in darkness on Christmas morning. Kaja and Kjartan meet me on the front steps along with Gunnar, Kaja's father, and we enter together. The priest's homily begins in English, and then flows into Icelandic interspersed with Latin. As the geometric panes of stained glass windows begin to glow, saturated with light from the rising sun, I let the known and unknown languages wash over me.

After the service everyone congregates in the fellowship hall for coffee. As we finish our cups and get up to go, Gunnar lags behind. Though I've known this kind man only a few days, I feel a sense of camaraderie between us. He has welcomed me, like the others have, into his circle, inviting me to share in his faith and traditions. I turn to him with a "Gleðileg jól," merry Christmas, and kiss him on both cheeks. He reaches out and cradles my cheek with one hand. He presses his other thumb between my brows, sweeping it almost, but not quite, in the sign of the cross. His voice rings with compassion as he tells me, "Now your sight will be clear. Now your mind will be clear." Somehow Gunnar has seen through my visitor's careful manners to my sadness, which is softened now with the warmth that my new friends have shown me. I thank him. Then we walk through the door together to join the others.

The Recipes

From top: Icelandic dark rye bread (see page 93 for recipe); a church on the shores of Lake Úlfljótsvatn, east of Reykjavík.

Icelanders' holiday tables are filled with game, seafood, and delectable desserts

Caramel-Glazed Potatoes

(Brúnaðar Kartöflur)

SERVES 4

Potatoes soak up a buttery caramel glaze in this simple Icelandic side dish (pictured on page 89).

- 2 lb. small waxy potatoes
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter

Boil potatoes in a 6-qt. saucepan of water until tender, 12–15 minutes. Drain potatoes; let cool and then peel. Add sugar and 2 tbsp. water to pan; simmer over medium-high until syrup is golden, 6–8 minutes. Stir in butter and potatoes; cook until glazed, about 5 minutes.

Chocolate-Cornflake Cookies

(Marens-Kornflexkökur)

MAKES 2⅓ DOZEN

Cornflakes bring a pleasing crunch to these fluffy, chewy chocolate meringues (pictured on page 87).

- 4 egg whites
- 1 cup sugar
- 4½ oz. semisweet chocolate, roughly chopped
- 3 cups cornflakes
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Heat oven to 300°. Using an electric hand mixer, beat whites while slowly adding sugar until stiff peaks form. Fold in chocolate, cornflakes, and vanilla. Space tablespoon-size amounts of batter 1" apart on parchment paper–lined baking sheets; bake until crisp, about 20 minutes.

Christmas Grouse with Berry Sauce

(Jólarjúpa með Berjasósu)

SERVES 4

Ptarmigan, wild grouse, is lavished with a sauce of thyme and bilberries, an Icelandic cousin of blueberries, which make a good substitute (pictured on page 89).

- 4 8-oz. grouse or partridge (see page 100)
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 carrot, roughly chopped
- 8 cups chicken stock
- ½ cup dried blueberries
- ½ cup fresh blueberries
- ¼ tsp. dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed and chilled
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 Remove breasts from partridges, leaving bones attached to carcasses. Discard skin; chill breasts. Chop carcasses. Heat oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high. Cook carcasses until browned, 6–8 minutes. Add carrot; cook until soft, 5–7 minutes. Add stock, dried and fresh blueberries, thyme, and bay leaves; boil. Reduce heat to medium-high; cook, skimming fat as needed, until reduced by half, about 1 hour. Strain stock and return to pan; simmer until reduced to 1 cup, 20–22 minutes. Simmer cream in a 1-qt. saucepan until reduced by half, 8–10 minutes; whisk into stock. Remove from heat; whisk in 2 tbsp. butter, salt, and pepper. Keep sauce warm.

2 Melt remaining butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high. Season reserved breasts with salt and pepper. Cook, flipping once, until browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast reads 130°, 3–4 minutes. Slice breasts; spoon sauce over the top.

Cod with Egg and Butter Sauce

(Þorskur með Eggja og Smjörsósu)

SERVES 4

Hard-boiled eggs pair with rich butter to make the luscious sauce for this baked cod dish (pictured on page 95) from Icelandic home cook Kjartan Ólafsson.

- 4 8-oz. skinless cod fillets, pinbones removed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 eggs, hard-boiled, peeled, and roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp. minced parsley
- Lemon wedges, for serving

Heat oven to 350°. Place cod on a baking sheet and season with salt and pepper; drizzle with oil. Bake until cod is cooked through, about 15 minutes. Melt butter in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium; stir in eggs and cook until eggs are heated through, 1–2 minutes. Divide cod between plates; spoon sauce over the top. Garnish with parsley; serve with lemon wedges.

Creamy Langoustine Soup

(Humarsúpa)

SERVES 4

This rich, curry-laced soup (pictured on page 95) is adapted from a recipe by home cook Þorgerður Gunnarsdóttir.

- 2 lb. shell-on whole langoustines
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 carrots, minced
- 2 stalks celery, minced
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 tsp. paprika
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 12 cups fish stock
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. mild curry powder
- 1½ cups heavy cream
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 tbsp. minced chives

1 Remove heads and shells from langoustines and lightly crush; chill tail meat until ready to use. Heat 1 tbsp. butter and the oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high. Cook shells, carrots, celery, and half the onion until vegetables are soft, 6–8 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, paprika, salt, and pepper; cook 2 minutes. Add stock; simmer until reduced by half, about 2 hours. Strain stock.

2 Wipe pan clean and add 4 tbsp. butter; melt over medium. Cook remaining onion and the garlic until soft, 3–4 minutes. Stir in curry powder; cook 1 minute. Add 1 cup cream and the wine; cook until reduced by half, about 20 minutes. Add reserved stock; boil. Reduce heat to medium-high; cook until slightly thickened, about 30 minutes. Keep soup warm.

3 Whip remaining cream in a bowl into semi-stiff peaks. Melt remaining butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high. Season langoustine tails with salt and pepper; cook, flipping once, until cooked through, 3–5 minutes. Divide soup between bowls and top with langoustines; garnish with whipped cream and chives.

Icelandic Dark Rye Bread

(Dökkt Rúgbrauð)

MAKES 2 LOAVES

Slow baking gives this loaf (pictured on page 92), from Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir's *Icelandic Food and Cookery* (Iðunn, 2014), its dense crumb and deep color.

- Unsalted butter, for greasing and serving
- 3 cups dark rye flour (see page 100)
- 1½ cups whole wheat flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 1 cup golden syrup (see page 100)

Heat oven to 200°. Grease 2 loaf pans with butter. Whisk flours, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in a bowl. Stir in buttermilk and syrup to form a smooth dough. Pour dough into prepared pans and cover

Vínarterta, a cake of cardamom-scented shortbread with prune filling, is an adaptation of a Viennese classic

with aluminum foil; bake until cooked through, about 8 hours. Let cool slightly and unmold; serve with butter, if you like.

Leaf Bread

(Laufabrauð)

MAKES 25

This crisp flatbread (pictured on page 90) is decorated with intricate designs, which are cut into the dough before frying. For tips on making them, visit SAVEUR.COM/LEAFBREAD.

- 3½ cups flour, plus more
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3½ tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. whole milk, heated to 115°
- Canola oil, for frying

1 Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Using two forks or your fingers, cut butter into flour mixture, forming pea-size crumbles. Stir in milk until dough forms. Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth. Divide dough into twenty-five 1-oz. balls; working with 1 ball at a time, roll dough into a 7" disk, about 1/16" thick. (Cover remaining dough with a damp towel to prevent dough from drying out.) Using a paring knife and working outwards from the center of disk, cut rows of nested V's ¼" apart. Use knife to lift the tip of every other V; fold each tip back to cross over the V behind it, pressing the dough to adhere. Store cut dough disks between parchment paper and cover with a damp towel until ready to fry.

2 Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 400°. Fry 1 dough disk at a time, flipping once, until crisp, about 30 seconds. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Shortbread and Prune Jam Layer Cake

(Vínarterta)

SERVES 8–10

This special-occasion cake features layers of shortbread and prune jam under a thin coffee glaze (pictured on page 95).

- 2½ cups pitted prunes
- 1¾ cups granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- 3½ cups flour, plus more
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cardamom
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
- ¼ cup brewed coffee, chilled

1 Bring prunes, ¾ cup granulated sugar, the cinnamon, cloves, and ¾ cup water to a simmer in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high; cook until prunes are soft and the syrup has thickened, about 20 minutes. Let cool slightly and then transfer to a food processor; purée until smooth and set purée aside.

2 Whisk flour, baking powder, and cardamom in a bowl; set aside. In another bowl, and using an electric hand mixer, cream remaining granulated sugar and the butter until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients and the milk until dough forms. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface; knead until smooth, 1–2 minutes. Shape dough into a ball and cover with plastic wrap; chill 1 hour.

3 Heat oven to 375°. Divide dough into 6 balls. On a lightly floured surface, and working with 1 ball of dough at a time, roll dough into a 7" disk, about ⅛" thick. Place disks on parchment paper–lined baking sheets; bake until golden and cooked through, about 25 minutes; let cool slightly. To assemble, place 1 disk on a baking sheet fitted with a wire rack. Spread with ⅓ cup reserved prune purée. Repeat layering process with remaining disks and purée, ending with a disk. Whisk confectioners' sugar and coffee in a bowl until smooth and pour over cake; chill until icing is set, about 10 minutes. Transfer cake to a cake stand or plate to serve.

Spiced Cabbage with Blueberries

(Kryddað Rauðkál með Bláberjum)

SERVES 6–8

Cookbook author Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir braises cabbage with warm spices, fruit, and jam for this festive, tart-sweet side dish (pictured on page 89).

- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- ½ cup red currant jam
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 large head red cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 tart green apple, such as Granny Smith, cored, peeled, and roughly chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Melt butter in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high. Cook onion until soft, 5–7 minutes. Add blueberries, jam, vinegar, cinnamon, ginger, cabbage, apple, salt, pepper, and ¼ cup water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook, covered, until cabbage is tender, about 1 hour.

Venison Terrine

(Dádýrakæfa)

SERVES 6–8

Venison is a great substitute for the traditional reindeer meat in this rustic cranberry-and-pistachio-studded terrine (pictured on page 95). For hard-to-find ingredients, see page 100.

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 small white onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ⅛ tsp. ground cloves
- 1 lb. boneless venison, chopped
- 8 oz. pork fatback, chopped
- 8 oz. venison or chicken liver
- 3 tbsp. tawny port
- 2 tbsp. potato starch
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup pistachios, roughly chopped
- ⅓ cup dried cranberries
- Boiling water, for baking
- Fresh red currants and parsley sprigs, for garnish (optional)

Heat oven to 200°. Grease a 1½-qt. terrine mold with 1 tbsp. oil. Heat remaning oil in a 10" skillet over medium-high; cook garlic and onion until soft, 5–7 minutes. Add thyme, ginger, and cloves; cook 1 minute and transfer to a food processor. Add venison, fatback, liver, port, potato starch, salt, pepper, and eggs; purée until smooth. Transfer mixture to a bowl; fold in pistachios and cranberries and spread into prepared mold. Cover with aluminum foil and place in a 9" x 13" baking pan; pour boiling water into pan to come halfway up sides of terrine. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center reads 160°, about 2 hours. Let cool; garnish with currants and parsley sprigs, if you like.

Cod with egg and butter sauce, *þorskur með eggja og smjörsósu* (see page 93 for recipe).

Creamy langoustine soup, *humarsúpa,* (see page 93 for recipe).

Venison terrine, *dádýrakæfa,* garnished with red currants and parsley (see page 94 for recipe).

Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir's *vínarterta,* shortbread and prune jam layer cake (see page 94 for recipe).

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY (COD AND SOUP)

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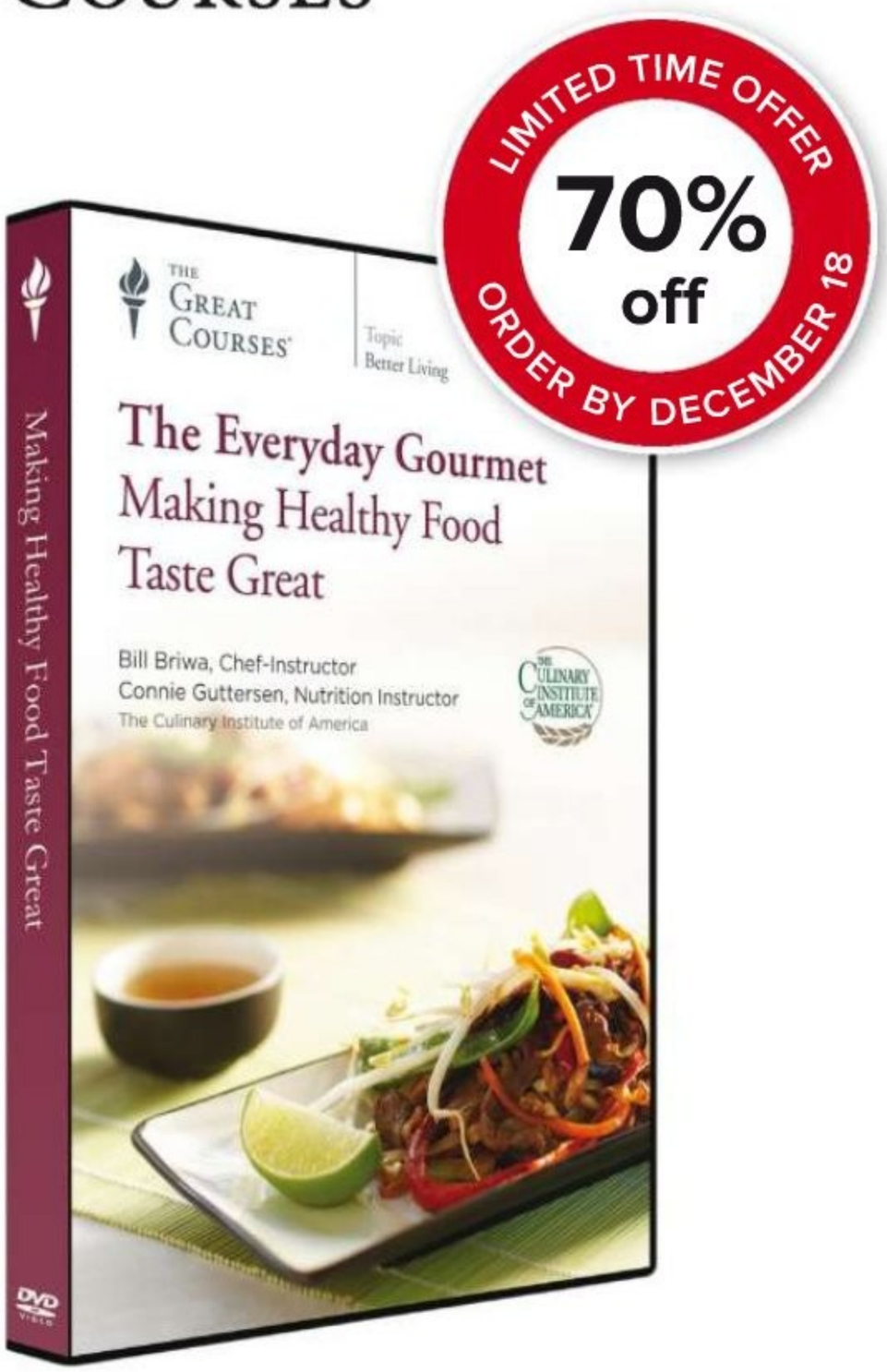

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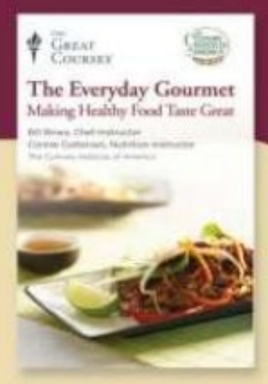

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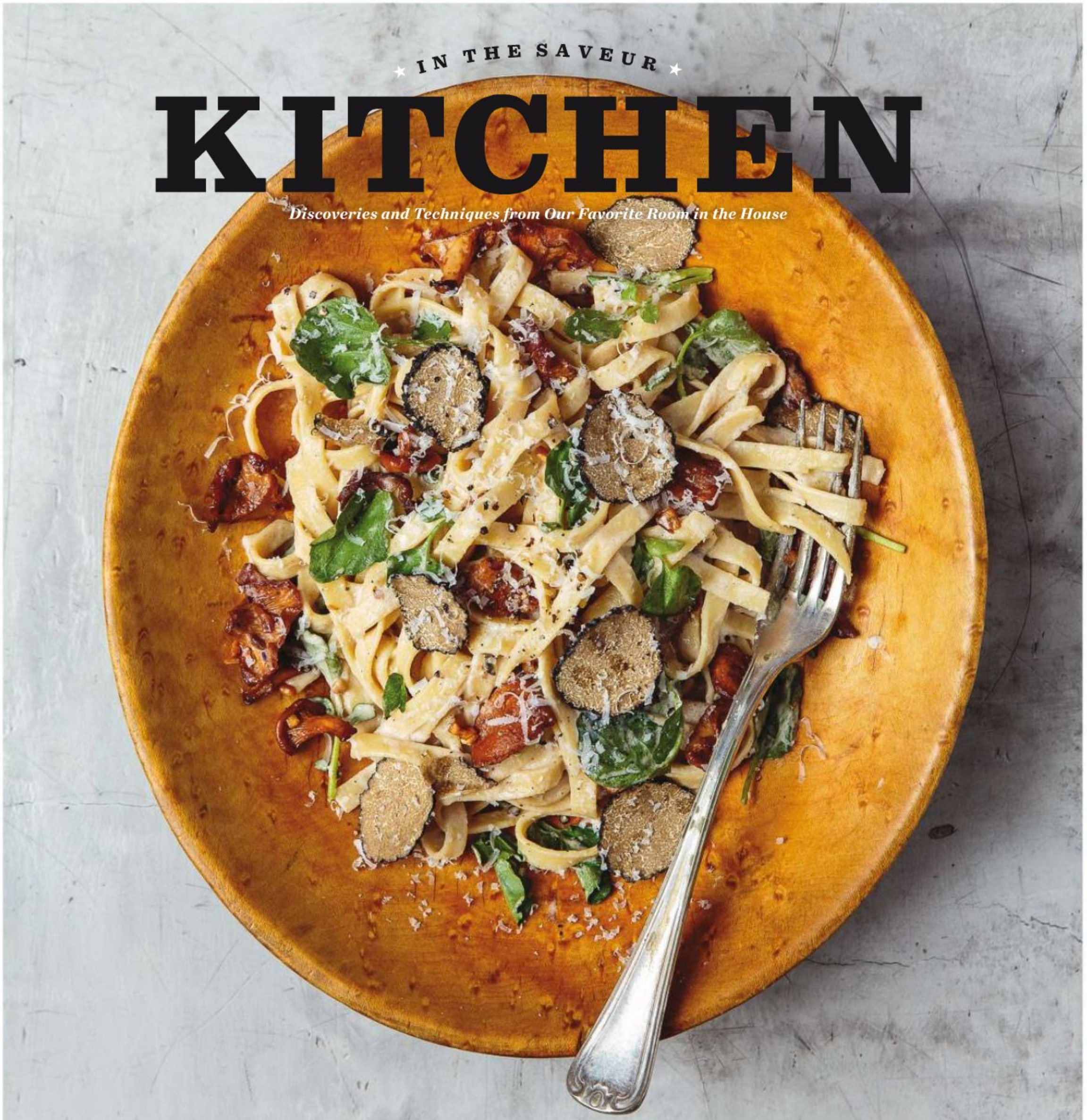


IN TRUFFLES WE TRUST

Do-it-yourself infusions using the world's most prized fungi

Truffle salt, truffle honey, truffle-infused chocolate—a lot of these products are less than delicious, but that's not the truffle's fault. Blame it on cheap "truffle" oil made with 2,4-Dithiapentane, a synthetic flavoring that's a far cry from the fresh fungus's earthy brilliance. At the Oregon Truffle Festival, however, I found that chefs were using the real deal to enhance ingredients. Here's how: Wrap a fresh truffle in a paper towel to protect it from moisture. Then nestle it with another ingredient—whole eggs, butter, salt—in an airtight glass container, and place it in the fridge. After two or three days, the truffle will have imparted its heady perfume to its cabinmate. Then shave the truffle for use afterward—a fresh one will keep its potency for up to seven days. You can also steep truffles in dairy for dishes like tagliatelle with black truffle cream sauce (above). Turn the page for the recipe. —*Kellie Evans*

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Tagliatelle with Black Truffle Cream Sauce

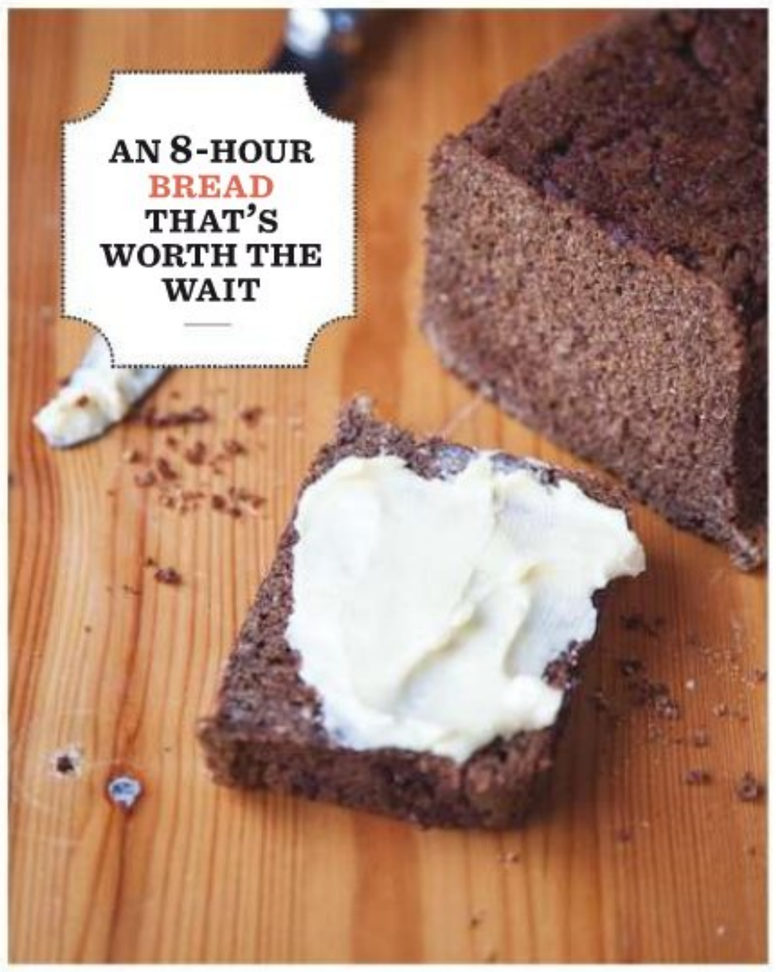
SERVES 6

For this luxurious dish (pictured on page 97), chef Robin Jackson, of Knight Inlet Lodge in British Columbia, lavishes pasta in a truffle-infused cream sauce and crowns it with chanterelles, lavender, pecorino, and shavings of truffle, which release their seductive aroma in the steam.

- 1 1-oz. black truffle, preferably from Oregon (see "Buried Treasure," page 36)
- 3 cups heavy cream
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 oz. chanterelle mushrooms, halved
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 tsp. minced thyme
- 1 lb. dried tagliatelle
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ⅓ cup grated parmesan
- ¼ tsp. dried lavender
- 3 oz. watercress, trimmed
- Grated Pecorino Romano, for garnish

1 Mince one-third of truffle; stir into cream. Cover and chill 6 hours.

2 Melt butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high. Cook mushrooms and garlic until golden, 6–8 minutes. Add wine and thyme; cook 8 minutes. Add reserved truffle cream; simmer until thickened, 10–12 minutes. Cook tagliatelle in salted boiling water until al dente, about 7 minutes. Drain pasta; add to skillet. Add parmesan, lavender, salt, and pepper; toss to coat. Garnish with watercress and Pecorino Romano; shave remaining truffle over the top.



Why bother to bake a bread for 8 hours? That was our question when testing Icelandic dark rye bread (see page 93 for recipe). On the island, loaves are steamed underground in geothermal fields for nearly 24 hours. You can achieve a similar result in an oven set at ultralow heat. The long, low cooking deepens the bread's flavor and color. Given time to transform, the enzymes in the rye flour convert starches into sugars, and amino acids and free sugars go through reactions that lead to caramelization. The glucose in the golden syrup used in the dough helps retain liquid during cooking, making for a dense, moist, sweet-malty bread. Worth it? You bet. —*Farideh Sadeghin*

Tart Up Your Cocktails

The Roffignac (page 52) includes a shrub, a vinegar-based syrup. A fermented shrub is tangier. —*K.E.*

Fermented Raspberry Shrub
Stir 4 cups each champagne vinegar, raspberries, sugar, and water in sterilized jar. Cover; store in a cool place for 1 month; strain. Makes 12 cups.

Stovetop Raspberry Shrub
Place 4 cups each champagne vinegar, raspberries, sugar, and water in a 1-gallon resealable plastic bag; seal bag, squeezing air out. Bring a large pot of water to a boil; remove from heat. Submerge bag in water and let sit 45 minutes; strain shrub. Makes 12 cups.

FROM TOP: ARIANA LINDQUIST; CHRIS GRANGER

MAKE WHIPPED CREAM IN A JAR

Freshly whipped cream is far better than that stuff out of a can. But as the cream splatters during whisking, it can be messy to make. I devised a cleaner method one night in a friend's tool-challenged kitchen. The trick is to ditch the whisk and bowl and instead use a Mason jar like a cocktail shaker. Combine 1 cup heavy cream, 2 tbsp. confectioners' sugar, and 1 tsp. vanilla extract in a 1-qt. glass jar. Screw the lid on the jar and freeze it for 15 minutes. This helps firm up the walls of the cream's butterfat cells, so they can trap and hold air bubbles. Shake the jar vigorously until semisoft peaks form, 3–4 minutes. Makes 2 cups. —*K.E.*

Golden Oldies

The classic French puff pastry shells **vol-au-vent** serve as the flaky cups for seafood Newburg (see page 80 for recipe). If you use store-bought dough, they're easy to shape. —*K.E.*

❶ Lay two 10" x 13" sheets puff pastry on a work surface. Using a 3½" round cutter, cut 4 circles out of each sheet of pastry. Transfer 4 circles to a parchment paper–lined baking sheet.

❸ With dull edge of paring knife, make shallow, angled cuts along outside edges to aerate dough so it puffs when cooked. Carve shallow circles into the bases along inside edges of rings.

❷ Use a 2" round cutter to cut centers out of the remaining 4 circles; discard centers or save for another use. Brush circles with beaten egg and top with rings; brush tops of rings with egg.

❹ Chill 20 minutes. Bake at 425° until golden and crisp, 10–12 minutes. Cut out puffed centers to use as lids; set aside. Fill vol-au-vent with seafood Newburg; garnish with parsley and top with lids. Serves 4.

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY (5)

PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered ingredients and information too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!

BY KELLIE EVANS

Hakurei turnips

Fare

Use **Red Star fresh yeast** from Whole Foods ($3 for 2 oz.; wholefoods.com) to prepare bialys (see page 26).

Routes

Buy **Guinness Extra Stout beer** ($3 for 12 oz.) and **Plugrá butter** ($3 for an 8-oz. block) from Whole Foods to make sticky toffee pudding (see page 35).

Memories

To prepare Indonesian-style chicken wings (see page 40), buy **tamarind pulp** ($13 for 14 oz.; kalustyans.com) and use it to make tamarind paste; order **candlenuts** ($13 for 6 oz.; amazon.com); buy **Taste Nirvana unsweetened coconut water** from Whole Foods ($5 for a 24-oz. bottle); and order **galangal** from Temple of Thai ($6 for 4 oz.; templeofthai.com).

Drink

Prepare wassail (see page 44) using **Blandy's 5-Year-Old Bual madeira** ($27 for 750 ml; astorwines.com) and **Farnum Hill Extra Dry cider** ($12 for 750 ml; liquorandwine outlets.com). Make a *Rakomelo* (see page 44) with **Yeni Raki,** a Turkish anise-flavored liqueur ($30 for 750 ml; shopmerwins.com). Buy **frozen passion fruit pulp** ($2 for 12 oz.; amazon.com) to prepare a *Canelazo* (see page 44). Use **Scottish steel-cut oats** ($3 for 24 oz.; bobsredmill.com) to make an Atholl brose (see page 44). Make an espresso martini (see page 54) with **Giffard Vanille de Madagascar liqueur** ($35 for 750 ml; klwines.com). Prepare an Ozark Speedball (see page 54) with **Buffalo Trace White Dog whiskey** ($16 for 375 ml; astorwines.com). Purchase **Dave's Coffee cold-brew coffee syrup** ($11 for 16 oz.; davescoffeestore.com) to make a White Nun (see page 54). Use **Cocchi Americano Rosa** ($17 for 750 ml; shopmerwins.com) and **Sorel liqueur** ($27 for 750 ml; astorwines.com) to prepare a Santa Rosa (see page 56). Make an Orchard and Vine (see page 56) with **Lillet Blanc** ($16 for 750 ml; klwines.com) and **Rothman & Winter Orchard Apricot liqueur** ($23 for 750 ml; drinkupny.com).

Down Home in Georgia

Order a **smoked ham hock** ($5 for 1 lb.; teetsfoodstore.com) to prepare field pea gratin (see page 64). Prepare roasted turnips with buttered greens using **Hakurei turnips** from melissas.com (price varies by season) or visit your local Asian grocer.

Boston Uncommon

Use **Ducktrap finnan haddie** (cold-smoked haddock; $12 per lb.; lobsterstogo.com) to make finnan haddie chowder (see page 80). Make smoked bluefish pâté with hardtack crackers (see page 82) using **light rye flour** ($10 for 6 lb.; bobsredmill.com), **smoked bluefish fillet** ($26 per lb.; davescapecodsmokehouse.com), **pickled mustard seeds** ($16 for 12 oz.; ftgreenefarms.com), and **sea beans** ($18 for 12 oz.; melissas.com).

Northern Lights

To plan a trip to Iceland, contact **visiticeland.com**. Fly **Icelandair** (icelandair.us) direct from Boston, New York, and Seattle to Keflavík International Airport. Use **dark rye flour** ($12 for 6 lb.; bobsredmill.com) and **Lyle's Golden Syrup** ($8 for 16 oz.; amazon.com) to make Icelandic dark rye bread (see page 93). Make Christmas grouse with berry sauce (see page 93) with **grouse** ($35 for 1 bird; exoticmeatmarkets.com).

Kitchen

Prepare tagliatelle with black truffle cream sauce using **Oregon truffles** (see SOURCE on page 36).

Moment

Make Japanese New Year's soup (see page 106) using ***kamaboko*** (Japanese fish cakes; $4 for 5 oz.) and ***kiri mochi*** (glutinous rice cakes; $9 for 14 oz.), both available from sunrisemart-ny.com.

Kamaboko (Japanese fish cakes)

INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

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A GUIDE TO EVENTS, PROMOTIONS & PRODUCTS

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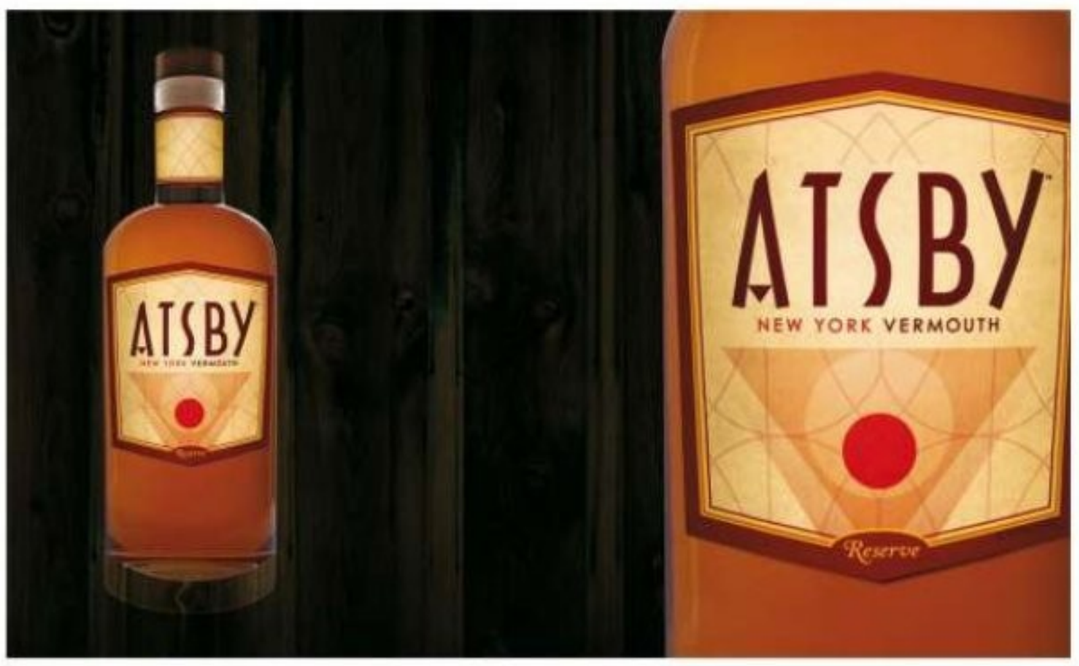

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New Year's Morning In Japanese homes on the first day of the year, the dish to eat is *ozoni*, a soup composed of pink-rimmed fish cake, daikon, carrot, and shiitake mushrooms floating in a rich dashi (kelp and bonito broth) along with mochi, chewy rice cakes, which are oven-toasted until they resemble fire-licked marshmallows. The preparation varies by region. Sometimes chicken broth is used; Napa cabbage or pork can be added. Wherever it is served, *ozoni* is said to bring good luck, but for me, the medium is the message: I feel blessed just to have this steaming bowl in front of me, ready to be devoured in the company of loved ones. —*Nancy Matsumoto*

Japanese New Year's Soup

(Ozoni)

SERVES 4

- 4 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1" pieces
- 4 oz. daikon radish, peeled and sliced ¼" thick on the bias
- 1 carrot, sliced ¼" thick on the bias
- 4 oz. kamaboko (Japanese fish cake; see page 100), sliced ¼" thick
- 1 cup spinach, stems trimmed
- 1 tbsp. sake
- 1 tsp. soy sauce
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 kiri mochi (glutinous rice cakes; see page 100), 1" x 2", about ½" thick
- Mitsuba or parsley sprigs, for garnish

1 Place shiitakes in a bowl. Bring 1 cup stock to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan and pour over shiitakes; let sit until softened, 4–6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer shiitakes to another bowl and discard stems. Pour stock back into pan, discarding any dirt or sediment.

2 Add remaining stock and the chicken to pan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; add daikon and carrot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is cooked through, 6–8 minutes. Add reserved shiitakes, the sliced fish cake, spinach, sake, soy sauce, and salt; cook until spinach is wilted, about 2 minutes. Keep soup warm.

3 Heat oven to 425°. Place glutinous rice cakes directly on an oven rack; bake, turning as needed, until browned in spots and puffed, 6–8 minutes. Divide rice cakes between 4 bowls and ladle soup over top; garnish with mitsuba sprigs. Serve hot.

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