

COOL-SEASON
COMFORT FOOD



35 IDEAS FROM
SMALL GARDENS

Sunset

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2014
Winners!

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ULTIMATE
GUIDE
to

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Mitchell Butte,
MONUMENT VALLEY, AZ



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October



Garro is totally at ease and in charge in the kitchen. Even at other people's parties.

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Our full guide to nutrition and good cooking:
sunset.com/cookingguide.

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WINE COUNTRY



A panorama of wine editor Sara Schneider's office. We check frequently to make sure she doesn't get walled-in by bottles.



PEGGY NORTHPROP,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

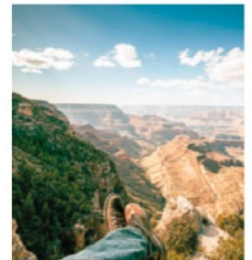
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VISITORS TO SUNSET are always wowed by our Test Kitchen (especially if they get a taste of something). They're equally impressed by our Test Garden—this summer we had a glorious cutting garden, plus a patch of 'Glass Gem' corn that was easily one story tall. But it's our wine editor's office that always stops visitors in their tracks. The path to Sara Schneider's desk is mined with Merlot—and Pinot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and every other varietal. Her view is of a floor-to-ceiling wine rack. Wine bottles serve as bookends and paperweights on her desk. Everyone takes a picture.

I admit that when I first arrived at *Sunset* and saw staffers carrying open wine bottles through the halls en route to an afternoon tasting, I tsk-tsked. No adult supervision! This cannot stand! Then I got the picture. Westerners drink 10 million glasses of wine per week, and everyone in the world wants to travel to our wine-growing regions to partake. It's our *job* to keep up.

Which is why we're so excited about the *Sunset* International Wine Competition. You'll find results of this year's judging—a mammoth effort involving 50 judges, 75 backroom organizers, 4,000 glasses, and 40 pounds of palate-cleansing roast beef—beginning on page 94. Once again this year, Safeway will be featuring our winning wines on its shelves, and Sara will be pouring medal winners at our *Sunset* Savor the Central Coast event in San Luis Obispo County, September 25–28 (tickets at sunset.com/savor). If you sign up for the *Sunset* Wine Club, you can even get a selection of winners delivered straight to your door each month, along with recipes and tasting notes by Sara (sunsetwineclub.com). We think you'll be as wowed as we are.

One last thing: Just in case you're getting the impression that we put together this magazine in a wine-soaked haze, we follow Sara's example and use spit cups. Almost always. Well, most of the time ...



Where in the world is Tom Story?

Our staff photographer clocked more than 1,400 miles in his rented Jeep for our cover story on the Great Southwest. We have room for only a fraction of his images in this issue, so be sure to download our interactive edition for more: sunset.com/allaccess. And follow Tom on Instagram: [@sunsetphoto](https://www.instagram.com/sunsetphoto).

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BEST OF THE WEST

WHAT WE'RE TRACKING THIS MONTH



How did the bird thing start? There was an injured bird on the side of the road—one of those doves they release at weddings. I took it to a vet. I didn't know anything about birds.

How many birds do you have now? Several hundred. Parrots, finches, lorikeets—34 species, many endangered.

Rarest? Probably the Victoria crowned pigeons [left]. They're the modern-day dodo bird. Before it became extinct, the dodo was the world's largest pigeon. Now this is the world's largest. They're from New Guinea. Rooster-size, very curious and friendly. Big babies. And [humans are] destroying their habitat and hunting them to extinction.

What do you feed the birds? Chopped papaya, blueberries, apples, seasonal fruit. If we all ate like these birds, we'd be a lot healthier.

You used to work in venture capital. Which is harder, business or birds? When you're in business, you can have a day off. With birds, you don't.

And you're a weight lifter too? I won a gold medal at the Pan American Masters games.

Are the birds impressed? I thought they might be, but no.

You raised a family along with the birds. Did your kids think you were crazy? Yes. They thought we were the nuttiest house on the planet. But when they told their teacher, "The parrot ate my homework," it was really true.

BEST
SECOND
ACT

Bird by bird

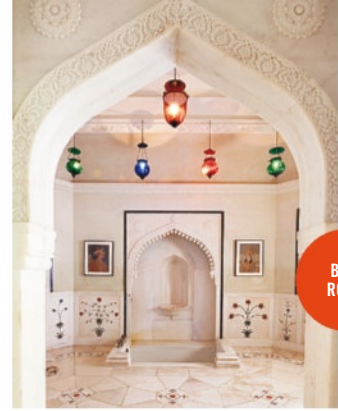
The license plate frame on the truck parked outside the house is one clue: CRAZY BIRD LADY. Then there are the squawks and whistles being lobbed over the front-yard shrubbery. In a serene suburb on the San Francisco Peninsula, Michele Raffin has created Pandemonium Aviaries—a refuge for some of the rarest birds in the world. She tells the story in her new book, *The Birds of Pandemonium* (Algonquin Books; \$25). We stopped by to talk about her unlikely journey from business exec to bird whisperer.

Photograph by MICHAEL KERN

“Our city’s 3-D printer is officially plugged in and ready to feed our hungry. We are still in an early stage of figuring out how it works, but the manual indicates that dinner-for-all is in our city’s not-too-distant future ... I have browsed the possibilities on an array of inspiring websites ... Friends, it would be possible to print out a pizza *shaped like the state of Oregon!*”

BEST PARODY (OR IS IT?)

—The Mayor (who bears a curious resemblance to Kyle MacLachlan), quoted in *The Portlandia Cookbook*, due out this month from Clarkson Potter



BEST ROOM

A REAL FIXER-UPPER

Our nominee: the marble bathroom in the Mughal Suite, in Doris Duke’s Honolulu mansion, Shangri La. This month, the suite—which was built in the late 1930s and includes Duke’s own bedroom and her dressing room—will be open to visitors for the first time. *Tour from \$25; starts Oct 15; shangrilahawaii.org.*

THE SHARING ECONOMY, CONT'D



BEST ONLY IN THE WEST

Picture an entire city turned into one vast artisanal farmers’ market. Basically, this is what a new

Denver city ordinance may be creating, by letting residents sell produce from their gardens, eggs from their backyard hens, and low-risk “cottage foods” (honey, jams, spices, and baked goods not requiring refrigeration) that they’ve made in their own kitchens. Get your \$20 permit and set up shop right in your front yard, or in your living room, or in your garage—anywhere on your property, that is, from 8 a.m. till dusk, seven days a week. And because this is Colorado and we know you’re wondering, the sale of homegrown pot (and pot brownies) is definitely not allowed. denvergov.org/homebusiness.



BEST DESIGN FESTIVALS

Building societies

If you can’t wait till February’s Modernism Week to get your fix of Palm Springs fabulousness, this month’s three-day version brings walking, house, and double-decker bus tours (those stop at the old Tramway gas station, above, our favorite landmark); parties; and even a yard sale. *Oct 10–13; modernismweek.com*. Meanwhile, up in Oregon, Design Week Portland offers a broader scope, going beyond architecture and interiors to product, graphic, and retail design—check out the window-dressing competition on October 6. *Oct 4–11; designweekportland.com*. For a full month’s worth of fun, though, head to San Diego, where the local AIA chapter is throwing Archtoberfest. On the agenda: lectures, exhibitions, films, craft-beer happy hours, the notorious Orchids & Onions awards for good *and* bad design ... what’s not to love? *Oct 1–31; archtoberfest.com*.

BEST INNOVATION



Daylight savings

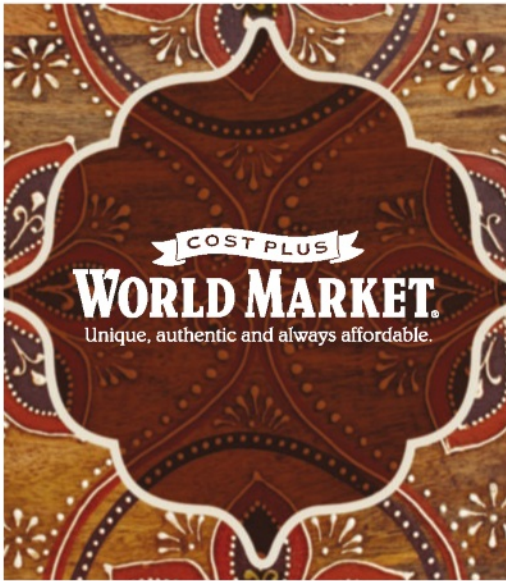
When the days get short, cyclists get nervous—not only do you need to see where you’re going, but you must be seen as well. The single-speed (or fixed-gear—the hub is convertible) Hotel bike from Burbank’s Pure Fix Cycles solves the second problem: The paint on its rims lets you time-shift daylight, providing an hour of glow for every hour the bike sits in the sun. To see where you’re going, though, you’ll still need to buy a good headlight ... or those Zero Dark Thirty night-vision goggles. \$399; purefixcycles.com.



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BEST FINDS

ADOBE DREAMING

Can't embark on your own Southwest road trip (page 52) just yet? No matter—create a red rock oasis at home instead.

1. You know what would be great in this red-clay bowl from L.A.'s Someware Goods? Frito pie. Just saying. *Diamond deep serving dish, \$95; somewaregoods.com.*
2. The hand-painted canvas used to create this purse was found in rural Colorado. *Cheyenne Clutch, \$138; 11 by 11 in. (opened flat); clarkandmadison.com.*
3. To many Native American tribes, the center of a compass symbolizes balance and harmony. *Crossroads knit pillow, \$159; 22 by 22 in.; pendleton-usa.com.*
4. Brighten your morning with a stoneware coffee-filter holder handmade by Southern California's Kat and Roger. *\$48; katandroger.com for retailers.*
5. Though Someware's sinuous ceramic trivet might make you think twice about reaching for seconds, don't worry. It won't bite. *Polka Snake, \$52; somewaregoods.com.*
6. In this tasseled bag from Seattle boutique Moorea Seal, a Northwest icon—Pendleton wool—takes on a Southwestern palette. *Coco Portfolio, \$94; 11 by 14 in.; mooreaseal.com.*
7. Compose your own pattern with wooden bangles made in Orange County, California, by sisters Jackie and Lauren Sepulveda, aka Voz Collective. *Various color combinations and sizes; \$30/set of 3; vozcollective.com.*

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BEST UPDATES

This Halloween, keep a little something on hand for the

grown-ups accompanying their mini ghouls: modern takes on the junior set's favorite sugar highs. Instead of Bit-O-Honey, give out Money on Honey caramels by Droga in Los Angeles. For Pop Rocks, sub the Pop Corn Pop Bar from San Diego's Chuao Chocolatier. Forgo the Snickers for Xocolatl de David's Raleigh Bar, out of Portland. Swap out the Twizzlers for Jacobsen Salt Co.'s Salty Black Licorice, also from Oregon. And in place of Cracker Jack, serve Hudson River Popcorn Company's small-batch caramel popcorn, which, despite its distinctly Eastern name, is made—just like this magazine—in Menlo Park, California. *Money on Honey*: \$17; *droga chocolates.com*. *Pop Corn Pop Bar*: \$6; *chuaochocolatier.com*. *Raleigh Bar*: \$3; *shopxocolatl.com*. *Salty Black Licorice*: \$15; *jacobsensalt.com*. *Caramel Popcorn*: From \$3.99; *hudsonriverpopcorn.com*.



A dozen different veggie burgers you can throw on the grill.



LAKE EFFECT

BEST TASTE OF THE DELTA

Fish farms—are they the inevitable future of sustainable seafood, or an environmental nightmare in the making? As with all complicated issues, the answer lies in the details. Since 2005, the Passmore family's 86-acre aquaculture outfit near Sacramento has been selling sustainably raised sturgeon, bass, trout, and catfish—all Seafood Watch "best choices"—plus caviar to the likes of Thomas Keller and Meadowood's Christopher Kostow. Now, Passmore Ranch Provisions will deliver the same fresh, not frozen, fish to your doorstep—along with the assurance that you've done the right thing. Boxes from \$33; passmoreranch.com. 🐟

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BE HERE NOW



HOLE-IN-THE-WALL

*Olympic National Park,
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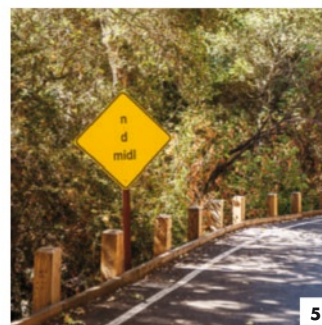
“Olympic’s coast is rugged wilderness. You can bike it for miles and miles. The ocean? Cold year-round. You could put your feet in the water—that’s all we’d recommend.”

—RAINEY MCKENNA, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER, OLYMPIC N.P.



DISCOVER

1. View of the South Bay from atop The Mountain Winery. **2.** Casa de Cobre's crab and shrimp salad. **3.** Hakone Estate & Gardens. **4.** Enjoy some horseplay at Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards. **5.** Outdoor artwork at Montalvo Arts Center.



A PERFECT DAY IN

SARATOGA, CA

Michelin-starred dining, mountaintop concerts, and top-notch wineries fuel this small-town slice of Silicon Valley. *By Andrea Minarcek*

Tunes with a view

Good wine, no traffic—that's what you'll find in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Four wineries in one afternoon? No problem. If you do happen to hit a string of brake lights, chances are there's an alfresco concert at

The Mountain Winery, built atop a 2,000-foot-high peak. The summer music and comedy series ends with 1980s throwbacks Hall & Oates on October 16, but the winery itself is open year-round. Sample estate-grown Pinot Noir and

Chardonnay on the patio, which has views reaching out to the South Bay, or take a tour and see early photos of the winery snapped by Ansel Adams. *Tasting from \$10, concert tickets from \$23; 14831 Pierce Rd.; mountainwinery.com.*

Bites for every budget

Downtown Saratoga is a mix of storybook (white picket fences, 19th-century storefronts) and brag book, with some of the best restaurants in the South Bay. If you want to go big,

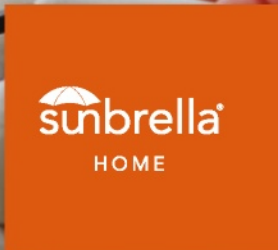


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GETTING HERE

Saratoga is about an hour's drive southeast of San Francisco on I-280 south.

dinner at Michelin-starred **Plumed Horse** is still a worthy splurge. The decadent black pepper and parmesan soufflé, filled with Dungeness crab fondue, is reason enough to opt for the eight-course tasting menu. Down the street, **Sent Sovi's** wine lounge sets you up with a small-plates alternative, as well as 25 wines by the glass. For weekend brunch, you can't do better than shrimp and grits on the shaded front patio of **Casa de Cobre**. *Plumed Horse*: \$\$\$\$; 14555 Big Basin Way; *plumedhorse.com*. *Sent Sovi*: \$\$\$; 14583 Big Basin; *sentsovi.com*. *Casa de Cobre*: \$\$; 14560 Big Basin; *casadecobre.com*.

Zen in the heart of Silicon Valley

Less than 10 miles away from the headquarters of Apple and Netflix is the best place to unplug on the Peninsula: **Hakone Estate & Gardens**, the oldest Japanese estate garden in the Western Hemisphere. The

18-acre wooded retreat has waterfalls, a koi pond, a bamboo garden, and in October, fall foliage. The gardens are planted so that there's color all year. That means flaming maples this month, flowering plums in winter, cherry blossoms in spring, and water lilies come summer. But it's not all leaf peeping. Zen meditation and karate classes were recently added, along with outdoor operas like *Madame Butterfly*. And earlier this year, Hakone unveiled a meditation garden, designed by a team of master landscape designers flown in from Japan. \$8; 21000 Big Basin; *hakone.us*.

Saddle up and sip

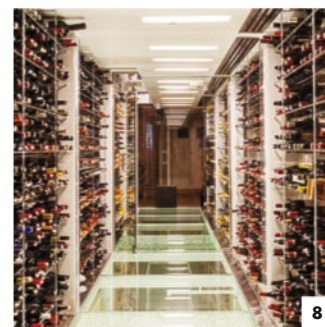
After a 27-year career as a NASA test pilot, George Cooper needed a retirement hobby. He borrowed some vine clippings from a neighbor and started making Cabernets for family dinners. A few years later, **Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards** was born. These days, the family-owned winery produces Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and juicy Cabernet Franc, plus a series of blends called Test Pilot, featuring pictures of aircraft Cooper once flew on the bottles. To work up a thirst, you can saddle up for an hourlong horseback tour of the vineyards and surrounding parkland. \$10 tasting, horseback tours \$45/hour; 22645 Garrod Rd.; *cgv.com*.



6



7



8

6. Another quiet day in downtown Saratoga. 7. At the Montalvo Arts Center, you can hike, catch an art exhibit, or take in a concert. 8. Plumed Horse, Saratoga's fanciest restaurant, has one Michelin star and more than 2,500 wines in its cellar.

An art walk in the woods

It's a steady 1,100-plus-foot climb to Lookout Point at the **Montalvo Arts Center**, but you won't hear anyone at the top complaining. The sweeping views of the South Bay are worth the shortness of breath, as is the collection of modern art you'll see along the way in this 175-acre park that acts more like a hikeable open-air

museum. If you're looking to take it easy, tour the gardens, 1912 Mediterranean-style villa, and redwood canyons with an art docent. Or take in a concert at the carriage house turned music hall. This month, the 300-seat venue will host jazz pianist Keiko Matsui (Oct 23) and rock and blues legend Leon Russell (Oct 24). Free entry, docent-led tours \$10; 15400 Montalvo Rd.; *montalvoarts.org*.

BY THE NUMBERS

28

Number of wineries and tasting rooms within a 30-minute drive of central Saratoga. *scmwa.com*.



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THE REAL SONOMA COUNTY

Three Wine Country homegrowns share their secrets on the land of Sauvignon Blanc and heritage peaches. *As told to Erin Klenow*



JAYME POWERS
Owner of Sigh sparkling-wine tasting room, sighsonoma.com.

MATEO GRANADOS
Chef-owner of Mateo's Cocina Latina, mateoscocinalatina.com.

DANAE BLYTHE UNTI
Owner of catering company Poor Man's Butter Guacaria, poormansbutter.com.

Take me to your favorite winery.

JAYME POWERS: For tasting, I like **Gundlach Bundschu**. It's the oldest family winery in California and has the most beautiful grounds. They tour you around the vineyards on this ATV-type thing called a Pinzgauer. Delicious wines too. I'm a sucker for their Cab Franc and Gewürztraminer, which pairs well with so many foods. There's a great poster in the tasting room that reads, IF YOU CAN'T SAY, "GUNDLACH BUNDSCHU GEWÜRZTRAMINER," YOU SHOULDN'T BE DRIVING.

How about a good post-tasting meal?

DANAE BLYTHE UNTI: My husband and I go to **Diavola** so often, it's like our living room. You can't get better Italian food in Sonoma County. I like to order a Bambino, a Sicilian-style thick-crust pizza. Dino, the chef, is always trying new toppings like foraged mushrooms and nettles. I don't eat meat, but I hear the carpaccio is great. \$\$\$; 21021 Geyserville Ave., Geyserville; diavolapizzeria.com.

GUNDLACH BUNDSCHU
\$50; 2000 Denmark St., Sonoma; gunbun.com.

"They tour you around the vineyards on this ATV-type thing called a Pinzgauer."



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LASALETTE
\$\$\$; 452 First St. E., Sonoma; lasalette-restaurant.com.

"They do a fisherman's stew that's dynamite, kind of like cioppino."



JP: There's a Portuguese restaurant called **LaSalette**, just off Sonoma Plaza, that's really good. They do a fisherman's stew that's dynamite, kind of like cioppino. Plus, they have a cool tasting menu, where you can pick three, five, or seven dishes, like fried Sonoma goat cheese or escargots. They let you go where you want with it.

And when you want to get outdoors?

MATEO GRANADOS: We spend a lot of time on the Russian River. Best thing to do is go to **River's Edge Kayak and Canoe Trips** at Healdsburg Memorial Bridge. They'll set you up with a 5- or 15-mile paddle, and you can stop at picnic and swim spots along the way. There's no better place on a warm day than just floating underneath the bridge.

Your favorite shop?

DU: Right off the Healdsburg square, **ret.ro.fit** has vintage home decor with artful modifications. The owner works with local artists and carries lots of



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Travel

interesting repurposed stuff like luggage turned into tables. It's like she takes flea market finds to the next level.

JP: The window displays at **J. James Sonoma** always pull me in. It's one of my favorite shops for gifts. I got a gorgeous hourglass there, filled with white sand. And they carry books—I bought one titled *Stuff Every Man Should Know*, a modern-day pocket-size guide to being a gentleman. *122 E. Napa St., Sonoma; jjamessonoma.com.*

A stellar produce market?

MG: One of my favorite producers in the county is **Dry Creek Peach & Produce**. They grow the best heritage peaches you'll find anywhere: white, yellow, 30 varieties. They're usually stocked to mid-September, but after that you can buy jams and other good things. In the spring, when the flowers are blossoming, I like to bike there.

What's there to do at night?

JP: Catch a performance at **Sebastiani Theatre**. I've been going since I was a kid. They just put on *The Full Monty* with Sonoma's mayor, who took his clothes off for the role. And they're always screening new indie flicks. **DU:** Every year, I go to see *Witchie Poo*; it's a Halloween extravaganza for families. So fun. **JP:** The architecture is cool too. Built in the 1930s, it's a weird mix of art deco and Italian Renaissance.

Does Sonoma have a signature cocktail?

JP: I used to work at the **Swiss Hotel**. Great place to hang out—good food, warm



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Built in the
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HEALDSBURG SHED
\$; 25 North St., Healdsburg;
healdsburgshed.com.

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atmosphere. They serve a drink called the Glariffie, which stands for Glacée Irish Coffee. The manager's grandfather invented it. When his wife was still alive, we'd take a jug from the bar to her house and swap it for a full one. Rumor is that it's made with 13 liqueurs and chilled espresso, but she'd peel the labels off the bottles and recycle them before we could see what they were. No one's finding out exactly what's in this drink. But it's basically part secret espresso concoction, part Powers Irish Whiskey, and part water, shaken, with vanilla cream on top. *18 W. Spain St., Sonoma; swisshotelsonoma.com.*

Can you recommend a place to bed down?

MG: I appreciate what **h2hotel** is doing with their sustainability approach. **DU:** Yes, they have a green roof, and the aesthetic is so fresh. Not to mention they're very close to Healdsburg's center. **MG:** You notice the care they've taken with the materials and the craftsmanship. **DU:** My favorite perk is that they have a fleet of bikes the guests can borrow for a nice Wine Country ride.

A good breakfast on my way out of town?

MG: Sunday mornings, I go to breakfast at **Healdsburg Shed**. They make clean, healthy food. Like a porridge of little grains or brown rice mixed with millet and farro. Add a little butter to that, mix it together—so good! My daughter *loves* the Belgian waffle, made with cornmeal and buckwheat. Airy, light. Breakfast shouldn't just be about filling up. It's also about satisfying the palate, and they do that. 🍷





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AH, WILDERNESS

WANDERLUST

The 1964 Wilderness Act kept millions of acres in the West unspoiled by man or machine. Does it still work in 2014? *Sunset* takes a hike to find out.

By Peter Fish

Early morning on a trail in Southern California's San Bernardino National Forest. Cathedral beams of light filtering through pines, chirps of birds, a poky end-of-season creek flowing with just enough water to make a quiet burble.

I'm on the Vivian Creek Trail, in the San Gorgonio Wilderness. From its start at 6,400 feet, the trail winds 9.3 miles to the 11,502-foot summit of San Gorgonio Peak. Though it's been a year since I've done anything resembling a serious hike, this is the trail I'm going to take today. Consider it my small part of an anniversary celebration. Fifty years ago, the peak and the mountains around it helped change the West, the nation, the world.

A LAW UNLIKE ANY OTHER

To understand why the Wilderness Act of 1964 was an epic achievement, you need to become, briefly, a public-lands nerd. There are different categories of federally owned land. The ones everybody loves are the national parks—those marquee destinations that crowd Facebook feeds (Look! It's Uncle Kevin at Yosemite!) and Ken Burns documentaries (Look! It's Teddy Roosevelt at Yosemite!). Then there are the less glamorous public lands, managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, which comprise many more square miles than do the national parks. And they were always meant to be hardworking—set aside in part to be logged, drilled, mined, and grazed.

But, in the 1920s and '30s, conservationists began to understand that many of these lesser-known lands were—in terms of scenery and the plant and animal species they sheltered—fully as precious as any national



Even near
L.A., solitude
can be
found—and
measured.



park. And they were often more unspoiled, unblemished by roads, hotels, visitor centers, or snack bars. For decades, conservationists pushed to establish a new class of public land: wilderness. In the fall of 1964, Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act. It designated 55 wilderness areas, almost all in the West. Within them, there would be almost no mining, no drilling for oil, no roads. These would be places where we interfered with the planet as little as possible. The act was the first of its kind anywhere in the world.

LEARNING TO LOVE WHAT ISN'T THERE

Among 1964's crop of wildernesses are places that have since become outdoor icons—the Ansel Adams Wilderness in California's Sierra Nevada, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in Montana. Others, like San Gorgonio, are mostly known within their region.

Which isn't to say that San Gorgonio is an unimpressive piece of territory. The 147-square-mile wilderness centers on San Gorgonio Peak. Named for a minor martyred saint—Gorgonius of Nicomedia or of Rome, depending on what you read—Gorgonius is the highest mountain in Southern California. From its summit you can, on a clear day, see north to the Sierra Nevada and west to Catalina Island.

"Especially here in Southern California, there's a need for solitude," says Jarome Wilson, president of the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association, a private volunteer group that helps maintain the area. "You can be in parts of the wilderness and not see anybody for days."

As for me, I've opted to hike one of the most popular trails in the wilderness—the 18.5-mile round-trip up the Vivian Creek Trail to San Gorgonio's summit. The first thing you notice about hiking in a wilderness area is what isn't there. No roads. No high-tension lines. No developed campgrounds. In this case, just the mountains you're rising into.

The second thing you notice is that with the scenery and the absence of distractions, you start feeling happy. All the middle-age worries you began the hike with—the performance of your 401(k), the strange noise the car is making, your kids' grades—drop off, one by one, in favor of creek, trees, a scattering of late-season wildflowers.

"WHEELS ARE MECHANICAL"

The idea of government-designated wilderness contains a contradiction—one that people who work with wilderness ponder a lot. It's this: To keep these places untouched by humankind, humankind has to manage the hell out of them.

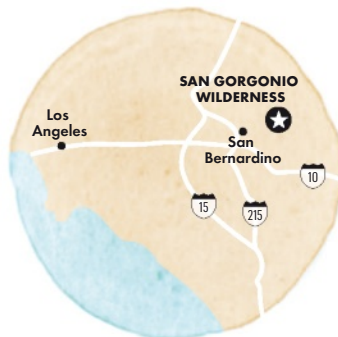
The week before my San Gorgonio hike, I traveled into the Sierra Nevada to attend a conference of U.S. Forest Service wilderness rangers and managers. Think Comic-Con for outdoorsy types, with denim and Patagonia jackets replacing the X-Men and Avengers outfits.

One of the conference's speakers was Christina Boston, who is in charge of all the Forest Service wilderness areas (64 of them) and wild and scenic rivers (21) in the Pacific Southwest Region. What was striking about the 1964 Wilderness Act, Boston told me, is how beautifully it was written. "Compared with a lot of legislation, it's very poetic," she said, as in the passage that defines wilderness as *an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where*

man himself is a visitor who does not remain. "But it doesn't tell us how we take the beautiful language in the act," Boston added, "and then apply it to the real world."

In practice, that means that wilderness managers go to enormous lengths to tread lightly on these lands. Start with the near-complete prohibition against mechanical equipment. If rangers need to remove a tree that's blocking a trail, they pair up and use a crosscut saw, not a chain saw. Supplies are packed in by mule, not by ATV nor even by cart. ("Wheels are mechanical," Boston explained.)

At the same time, wildernesses are monitored with all the high-tech precision 21st-century science can attain. Air quality, water quality, encroachment of invasive plants are all measured, as are the effects of light pollution and noise pollution. Even that most intangible of wilderness qualities, solitude, is quantified—how many other people would an average camper see from his or her tent? And how many is too many?



SEEING SAN GORGONIO
The San Gorgonio Wilderness lies east of San Bernardino and about 70 miles east of Los Angeles. Access requires a permit, available from the San Bernardino National Forest's Mill Creek Ranger Station; (909) 382-2882.

Two good sources for trail directions are the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association website (sgwa.org) and John W. Robinson and David Money Harris's *San Bernardino Mountain Trails* (Wilderness Press, 2006).

LET IT GO

Late morning. Still a fine hike, but I can tell it is going to be harder than I expected. I'm nearing the halfway point and feeling the 8,000-foot elevation. I stop for a rest.

The effort has been worth it, though. As a native Southern Californian, I'm often on the defensive about the region's natural beauties. Too many people think it consists solely of crowded beaches and freeway on-ramps. But right now I'm looking

out at grandeur: a steep canyon whose opposite wall is composed of sheer cliffs and ragged peaks that would do credit to the Sierra or the Rockies.

"Most of Southern California has a view of San Gorgonio," Wilson says. "But they don't know what's up here." Wilson and the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association are key to keeping the area visitor-friendly. Management policies are set by government agencies. But in an era of tight federal budgets, much of the on-the-ground work gets done by volunteers like the SGWA. They build and maintain trails, they clean up graffiti. They give campfire talks that introduce the San Gorgonio to Southern Californians who are not necessarily outdoors-savvy.

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As the sun set, we watched the light dance through the ornate paper lanterns of the hidden square. I could've stood there forever, amongst the vibrant reds and ancient temples. Still, I was eager to get back to the ship for hand-crafted cocktails and dancing in the Palm Court. With panoramic sea-scapes and city splendor painting the backdrop of our every step, I found myself captivated by the beauty of Asia.



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“We get people showing up on trails in their flip-flops,” Wilson says. “People worry about being eaten by bears.” (Not likely, though black bears do live in the wilderness.) “And I had someone ask if all the rocks on the trail will be removed.”

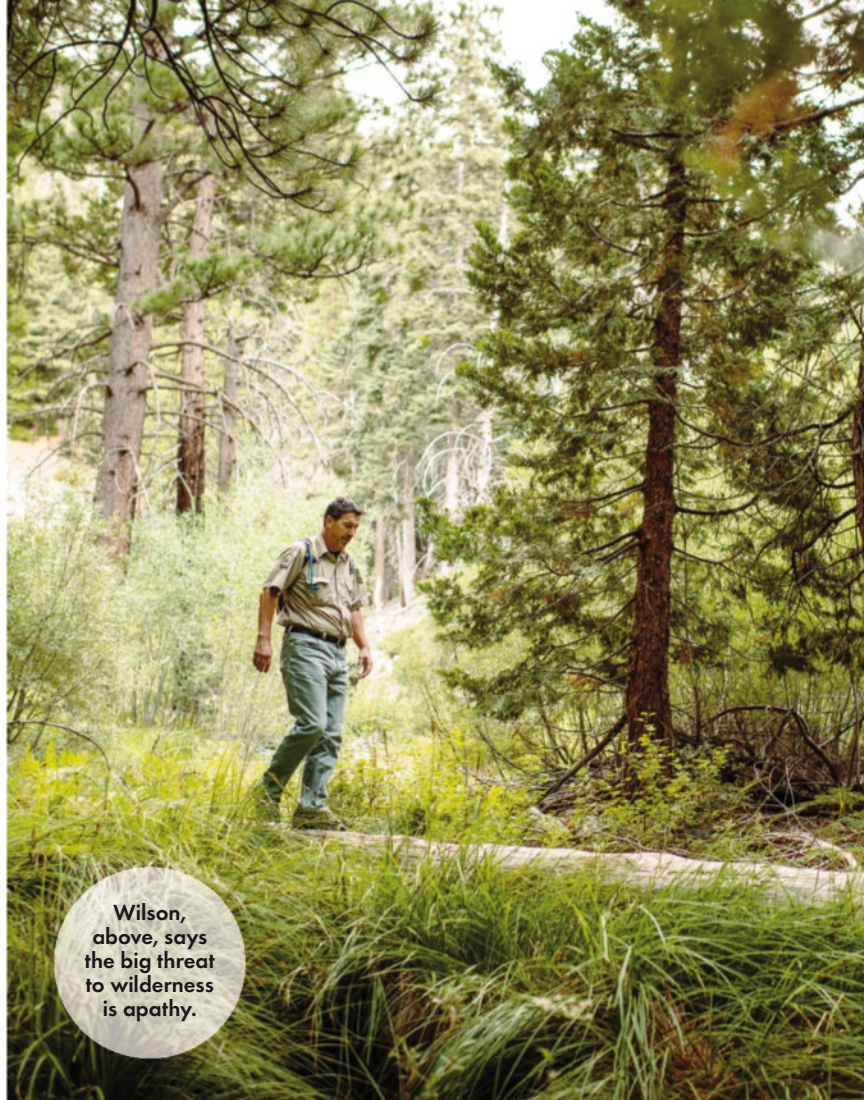
Mostly, Wilson says, the volunteers push the idea that wilderness is important. “This is an area where we’re not in charge,” he notes. “We’re the dominant species on the planet. But here we decide we don’t need to be dominant. We can take the backseat.”

By 1 p.m., I’m feeling *in* the backseat, as if the Vivian Creek Trail had kicked me there. I’m thinking that maybe it kicked me out of the car entirely.

By this point I’m not thinking about the place of wilderness on a changing Earth. I’m putting one foot in front of the other.

The thing about a trail up an 11,000-foot mountain is that it never stops climbing for long. Almost every step is up. For a brief spell when the path dawdles across a flat meadow, I entertain myself by devising a spin-off of the TV series *Dawson’s Creek*. I conjure up *Vivian Creek*, in which Michelle Williams and James Van Der Beek leave Capeside and take a long, long hike up a mountain and worry that they haven’t brought enough water.

Then the trail abandons the meadow and begins switchbacking up a long slope of broken boulders that



Wilson, above, says the big threat to wilderness is apathy.

sparkle harshly in the sun. I see another hiker descending. He’s in his 60s, white hair and white beard, carrying a walking stick, one of those stork-thin guys with zero percent body fat. In my experience, all these guys are retired aerospace engineers who after their hike go home and chart the day’s mileage and elapsed time on an old Kaypro computer.

“How is it at the top?” I ask.

“Beautiful. As always.”

“Is it hard?”

“Not if you know what you’re doing.”

He bounds off with his walking stick and superior stride.

Things don’t get better after that. The mountains start doing that annoying thing mountains do on tough hikes—moving around each other. You glimpse a high peak ahead of you and think, That must be San Gorgonio, I’m almost there. The trail turns, and another, higher peak rises behind it. Then another.

There’s a second annoying thing that happens to me in moments of physical duress: I get a song stuck in my head. In this case, it is “Let It Go” from *Frozen*. As I trudge on, Idina Menzel ricochets between my ears: “Let it go, let it go, I am one with the wind and sky.” Let go of what? I think. My day pack? The whole idea of hiking to the top of this mountain? I remember that *Frozen* is a Disney movie and that, in the early 1960s, Disney had considered building a ski resort on the slopes of this very mountain. If that had happened, I’d be gliding up to the peak in a chairlift, not dragging my boots on a dusty trail.

Let it go, let it go, let it go.

Great Cooking Starts With Great Ingredients

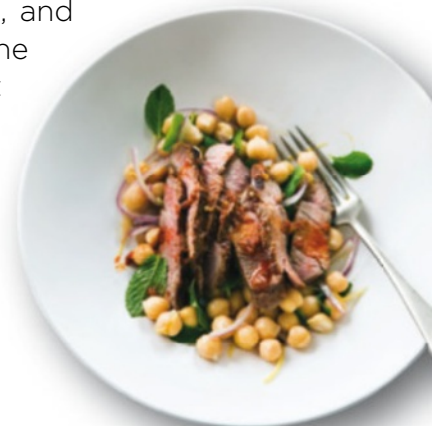


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In *Cook Taste Savor*, you'll learn the secrets to selecting, cooking and enjoying 16 of the West's most versatile — and iconic — foods, from avocados and artichokes to berries, chiles, fresh lamb, crab, and more. With guidance from the editors of *Sunset* magazine, the region's premier lifestyle resource, you will discover the secret to Western chefs' and home cooks' success in the kitchen: starting with the freshest ingredients is the easiest way to delicious meals.

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— “IT’S EASY TO DESTROY WHAT YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND” —

Today, 50 years after the Wilderness Act became law, there are 758 wilderness areas in the United States, totaling roughly 109 million acres. Most are on national park and U.S. Forest Service lands, but there are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM wilderness areas as well. The act has aided in the protection of endangered species like the gray wolf, woodland caribou, and California condor.

But despite these successes, the people who love and work with wilderness can’t help feeling uneasy about the future. Part of it is maintaining a constituency for wilderness in an increasingly distracted culture. “The biggest danger is apathy,” Wilson says, “people not knowing what’s out there. If you don’t know a place, it’s easy to say, sure, let them build a road through it. It’s easy to destroy what you don’t understand.”

There is a more global threat, one that is oddly echoed in *Frozen*, in the line that says, “I am one with the wind and sky.” Wildernesses are indeed at one with those things. As they change—as the planet’s entire climate warms—wilderness managers are by no means sure what to do.

“How do we manage wilderness in an era of climate change?” Boston asks. What happens if warming temperatures, say, cause an animal species to dwindle in the southern Sierra? “Do we start moving them north?” she asks. We could work as hard as we can to maintain the purity of our wilderness areas, and they could still disappear.

— VIEW FROM THE TOP —

The last mile and a half up San Geronio Peak is a killer. I’m thirsty, headachy, and halting every 500 yards. At one stop, I meet up with a guy who’s descending the mountain. Sweaty and disheveled and leaning on two walking poles—“both my knees are shot,” he informs me—he’s not in good shape either. On the other hand, he’s going down the mountain. How far to the summit? I ask. Maybe a mile, he says. Up that ridge, across a saddle, and up to the top.

I go. By this point I’m not thinking about song lyrics, or the place of wilderness on a changing Earth. I’m putting one foot in front of the other. Then I’m at the top. There’s a view—too hazy to include Catalina but a broad swath of Southern California. I’m too exhausted to appreciate it. There’s a metal box and one of those notebooks hikers sign at the top of peaks. I’m too tired to sign it.

The sense of triumph comes later. Not on the hike down, which isn’t as easy as I thought it would be, but hours later when I’m chugging gallons of celebratory iced tea at a Starbucks in San Bernardino. I look back at the mountains and the whole hike sweeps before me—trees, creek, canyons, cliffs, mountaintop, the moments of tedium, pain, and beauty. If anybody asked whether it was worth protecting the planet to protect places like this, I’d say yes. If anybody asked, I’d say it was the best hike of my life. 🐾

MORE WILDERNESS TO EXPLORE

ANSEL ADAMS WILDERNESS, CA

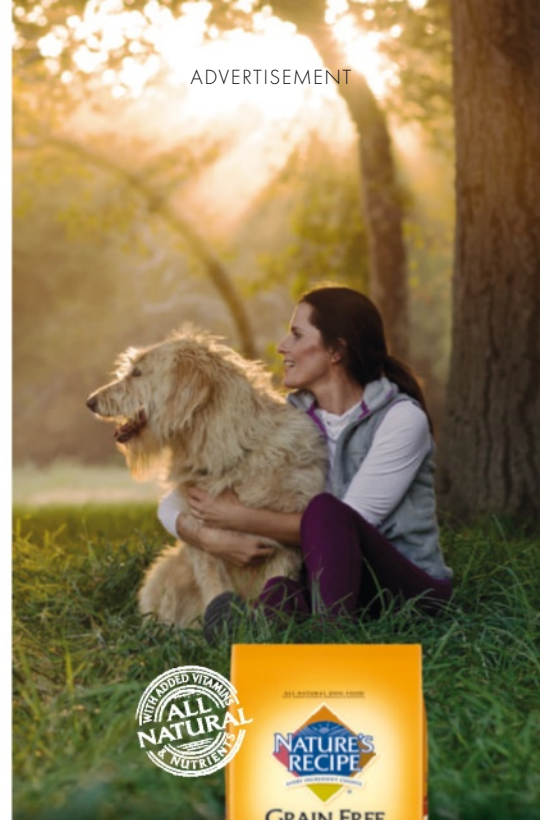
Named for the famed photographer, this High Sierra refuge is one of the most popular wildernesses in the system, with the John Muir and Pacific Crest Trails traversing it. wilderness.net.

BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS AREA, MT

“The Bob,” as it’s known, is serious wilderness, straddling the Continental Divide and home to grizzly bears, lynx, and gray wolves. Best explored in summer or early fall and maybe on a guided trip. wilderness.net; bobmarshallwildernessoutfitters.com.

GILA WILDERNESS, NM

North of Silver City, this wilderness scores big on conservation cred—famed ecologist Aldo Leopold helped make this the nation’s first wilderness area. And the scenery—the Mogollan Mountains, the cliff-bordered Gila River—is little short of spectacular. Fall and spring are especially good times to explore. wilderness.net.



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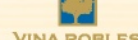
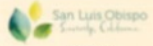
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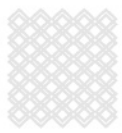


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Home & Garden



SMALL SPACE,
BIG DREAMS



GARDEN PARTIES

We challenged five garden-design teams to create scaled-down outdoor retreats—with ideas for any yard.

Low-water oasis

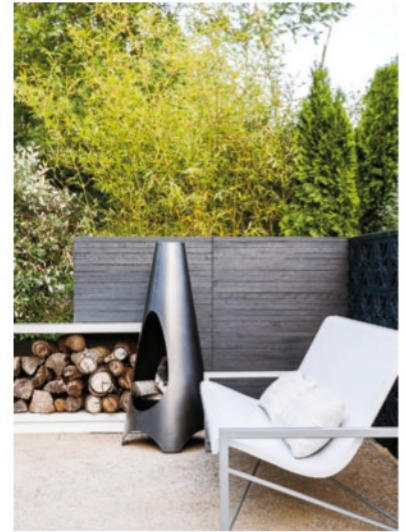
A DESERT-INSPIRED GARDEN

p. 38

If we've proved anything with our Small Space, Big Dreams column, it's that downsizing is not a downgrade. For our 17th annual Celebration Weekend open house in June, we took that theme outdoors. Five design teams transformed 25- by 25-foot plots into space-smart outdoor retreats where the only thing missing is a cold drink.



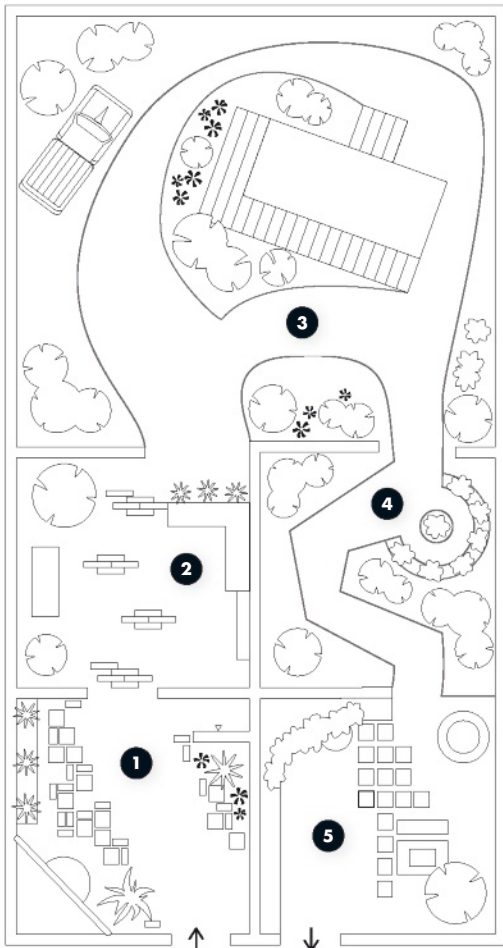
1. DESERT MODERN



2. URBAN CALM



3. WOODLAND RETREAT



4. EDIBLE BOUNTY



5. TROPICALI

By JOANNA LINBERG

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SANTA CRUZ

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big



GARDEN 1

DESERT MODERN

For gardeners across the West, the word “drought” can be a buzzkill—but not for Sunset editors Johanna Silver and Lauren Hoang. “A low-water garden doesn’t have to look stark and xeric,” Silver says. Their Palm Springs–inspired space proves it.



MEET THE DESIGNERS
 Lauren Hoang, *Sunset* garden design assistant, and Johanna Silver, associate garden editor

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY Section off portions of a tiny garden. “It can actually make it feel bigger and create more usable space,” Silver says. A large tiled wall separates the outdoor shower, right, from the seating area, above, giving each space the feeling of a distinct room.

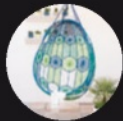
DESIGNER SECRET Draw on color and water to make a hot spot seem cool. Hoang and Silver painted the low walls Kelly-Moore Ivory Mist (KM4926-1), chose

gray-green plants, and used frost-colored tiles for the shower. “The outdoor shower doesn’t need to be on to be refreshing—it’s the sense of water that’s essential,” Hoang says.

GARDEN HACK Build a platform. “The act of taking a step up gives you the illusion of being in a different place,” Silver says. Their 12-inch-high platform laid with cut (read: less expensive) stone, above, sets apart the hanging chair and offers ad hoc seating for a crowd.



Yuccas in bowls mimic water fountains.



Hanging seating creates a casual vibe.



Inexpensive painted breeze-block adds a graphic touch.

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Shown: Aspen Yarn-Dyed Flannel Bedding, Classic Blanket, Wilton 3-Tier Table, Mirage Rug and Chambray Voile Panels.



GARDEN 2

URBAN CALM

Is it a garden if there aren't many plants? Yes, says landscape designer Beth Mullins, who turned her plot into a minimalist escape that's perfect for city living.



MEET THE DESIGNER
Beth Mullins, Growsgreen
Landscape Design;
growsgreen.com.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY
Use furniture to carve up space outdoors. Although the garden has a small footprint, Mullins packed it with multiple destinations: a table for eating alfresco, an over-size L-shaped bench for lounging, and a fire feature, left, with a heated bench for chilly nights.

HARDSCAPE M.O. "My obsession is contrasting different textures," Mullins says.

She blanketed the ground in crushed oyster shells for a bit of shine. That played off the rustic wood of the bench and planters, which in turn sets off the smooth concrete tabletop. The interplay of textures "emphasizes what's unique about each of them," Mullins says.

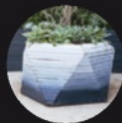
PLANTING APPROACH
Envisioning this space as a garden in a city, Mullins wanted to put something

green overhead. It's minimal—just two potted Swan Hill olive trees—but bringing the canopy closer to the scale of a human makes an urban space friendlier.

DESIGNER SECRET Pay attention to backgrounds. Mullins put a planter in the backside of the bench and filled it with *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, both to be a soft shield for anyone who sits there—and to add silver sheen to the space.



Stacked wood becomes quiet art.



An ombre paint job softens the lines of the olive trees' geometric planters.



Dudleya succulents pick up on the silver and gray colors in the furnishings.

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GARDEN 3

WOODLAND RETREAT

Any lone lawn can be transformed into a wild-around-the-edges woods. Landscape designer and contractor Kasorn Piamsukon shows how to fast-track a mature, natural look.



MEET THE DESIGN TEAM
Kasorn Piamsukon with Ground Cover Landscaping; groundcoverlandscaping.com.

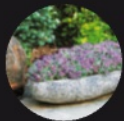
PLANTING APPROACH Grasslike *Carex*, conifers, ferns, and heucheras are exactly what you'd see in the Sierra Nevada. Here, they're dispersed to mimic the randomness of a forest floor. "It's also important to use a lot of small plants in a woodland garden," says Piamsukon. She filled in with tiny grasses.

HARDSCAPE M.O. Re-create the aged look of a grown-in woodland with salvaged wood, like what's used for the chairs and deck. Although the fence, right, isn't salvaged, Piamsukon's husband and business partner, Eksel Perez, built it using uneven boards that have the same texture as reclaimed wood.

GARDEN HACK For instant gratification, Piamsukon recommends purchasing a range of plants in the four sizes available at the nursery: 4-inch and 1-, 5-, and 15-gallon. The different elevations give the garden a head start to looking filled in. Still impatient? Add other old-age cues like boulders.



Stick to a leafy green color palette; only a few flowering plants were used here.



Plant *Teucrium cossonii majoricum* in low troughs to add foliage to seating areas.



Chickens provide a reason to get outside and enjoy the garden.



The Sunset Tiny House

We brought a 172-square-foot house to our campus for Celebration Weekend and gave it a big mission: Make us rethink how much space we really need. After opening all the drawers and marveling at the size of the closet, many of us were ready to move right in. But even if you're not, this Mica from Tumbleweed Tiny House Company still holds lessons in stretching space.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY

Use color to define each room. It might seem counterintuitive, but painting each room a different hue gives your eyes a reason to travel through the space, tricking you into thinking there's more to see. For the largest area, use a quiet neutral such as Kelly-Moore San Francisco Fog, KM5822.

DESIGNER SECRET

Large-scale landscape photographs look like another window. We divided this blown-up photo by *Sunset* staff photographer Thomas J. Story into fifteen 8½-by-11-inch pieces, framed each one, and hung them all in a close grid to mimic looking through windowpanes. A mirror on the opposite wall doubles the effect.

ROOM HACK

Take everything to the ceiling. The shelves and curtain rod (hung with Sunbrella panels) reach the ceiling to make the best use of the space and add height.





MEET THE DESIGNERS
Leslie Bennett, Stefani Bittner, and Christian Cobbs, Star Apple Edible Gardens; starappleediblegardens.com.



GARDEN 4

EDIBLE BOUNTY

This garden has a secret: Virtually every plant in it can be put on your plate or in a vase. It doesn't look like a typical edible garden, which is exactly the point.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY "We wanted to introduce curves to make the garden loose," Bennett says. "You walk through and don't know what's at the other end."

WATER-WISE TIPS Swap annuals for less-thirsty perennial edibles, even if it means finding unusual varieties like evergreen

huckleberries—"blueberries' low-water cousin," says Bittner. Other picks are edible bamboo, (which they used to form a hedge), pomegranates, and evergreen pineapple guavas.

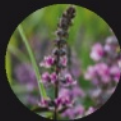
PLANTING APPROACH Stave off a chaotic look by sticking to a color palette. The team kept their plants in shades of purple,

silver, and green, with a touch of orange and red. Even the chairs, above, fit the scheme.

HARDSCAPE M.O. Exercise restraint. "You can have almost anything in a garden that has crisp, clean hardscaping," Cobbs says. They took a cue from the *Sunset Tiny House* and created 24-inch-high planting

beds out of food-safe Cor-ten steel. Decomposed granite forms the paths.

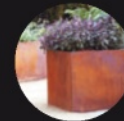
GARDEN HACK Your arm's reach is a handy measuring tool. Any bed you'll harvest from should be narrow enough to reach what's planted in the middle. Another tip: Divide beds by use, like salad or tea.



Plant something fragrant like purple magic basil where you'll brush against it.



Don't overlook edible flowers, such as bee balm.



Plant edibles in food-safe materials: wood, stone, inert metal.

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GARDEN 5

TROPICALI

This isn't Bali; this is your backyard—or it could be if you follow garden designers Davis Dalbok and Brandon Pruett's method for creating a lush setting.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY Evoke a sense of mystery. Mexican weeping bamboo arches over the entrance to the garden, above, slowly revealing the view as you walk in.

PLANTING APPROACH Mix saturated colors and big plants with a lot of foliage. "We didn't use any-

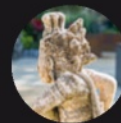
thing muddled in color," Pruett says of their palette. Giant philodendron and *Buddleja* (butterfly bush) gave the team a lot of texture and foliage per plant—a smart money-saving idea.

GARDEN HACK Build a living wall. Dalbok and Pruett constructed a metal frame and wove vertical grow

strips from Plants On Walls in and out of the grid before filling them with more than 600 plants, including shade-loving coleus, heuchera, and calibrachoa. "The 'Million Bells' variety fills in so fast and gives you great color," Dalbok says. The cantilevered top mimics a cliff face and adds depth to the garden. 🌿



Turn cobbles on their tall side (rather than lengthwise) for a toothy edge.



A Bali-inspired guardian sculpture is an easy hit of style.



MEET THE DESIGNERS
Davis Dalbok and Brandon
Pruett, Living Green Design;
livinggreen.com.



Cannas bring a tropical look to temperate climates.

SPONSORS

Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com; Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

BUILD TEAM

C Ramos Landscaping; Lyngso Garden Materials, lyngsogarden.com; o'donnell lane, odonnell-lane.com.

PLANTS & TREES

Cactus/succulents Cactus Jungle, cactusjungle.com; Succulent Gardens, sgplants.com.

Herbs Morningsun Herb Farm, morningsunherbfarm.com.

Plants Bamboo Pipeline, bamboopipeline.com; Flora Grubb Gardens, floragrubb.com; Lisa Arnold Nursery Sales, lisaarnoldnurseries.com; Living Green Design, livinggreen.com; Orchard Nursery, orchardnursery.com; Pacific Nurseries, pacificnurseries.com.

Trees Pacific Nurseries, pacificnurseries.com; Tree Movers, treemovers.com.

DESERT MODERN

Breezeblock Calstone, calstone.com; Central Home Supply, centralhomesupply.com.

Furniture Potted, pottedstore.com.

Glass mulch Building Resources, buildingresources.org.

Hanging chair Anthropologie, anthropologie.com.

Paint Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com.

Pots Pottery Merchant, potterymerchant.com.

Shade sail Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Tile Heath Ceramics, heathceramics.com.

Tile installer Wishart Tile, wishart-tile.com.

Towels Coyuchi, coyuchi.com.

URBAN CALM

Accessories Jen Kuroki, etsy.com/shop/lovebugkiko; Owl Creek Ceramics, etsy.com/shop/owlcreekceramics.

Breezeblock Calstone, calstone.com; Central Home Supply, centralhomesupply.com.

Concrete tables Growsgreen Landscape Design, growsgreen.com.

Cushion fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Firepit Modfire, modfire.com.

Geometric planters Growsgreen Landscape Design, growsgreen.com.

Heated bench Galanter & Jones, galanterandjones.com.

Paint Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com.

Pavers Peninsula Building Materials Co., pbm1923.com.

Pillows Chanee Vijay Textiles, etsy.com/shop/chaneevijaytextiles; Outra, etsy.com/shop/outra.

Reclaimed wood furniture Growsgreen Landscape Design, growsgreen.com.

Stone planters Sevenstone, etsy.com/shop/sevenstone.

Upholsterer Thomas Story, (415) 420-7079.

WOODLAND RETREAT

Edging & lumber Broadmoor Landscape Supply, broadmoorlandscape.com.

Furnishings Flora Grubb Gardens, floragrubb.com.

THE SUNSET TINY HOUSE

Awning fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Chair Serena & Lily, serenaandlily.com.

Curtain fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Deck Ground Cover Landscaping, groundcoverlandscaping.com.

Floor Shaw Floors, shawfloors.com.

Floor installer Slaughterbeck Floors, slaughterbeckfloors.com.

Hardware Rocky Mountain Hardware, rockymountainhardware.com.

Linens Coyuchi, coyuchi.com.

Paint Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com.

Photo display Sunset.

EDIBLE BOUNTY

Builder McCutcheon Construction, mcbuild.com.

Furniture Flowerland Nursery & Store, flowerlandshop.com.

Steel fabricator IronGrain, irongrain.com.

TROPICALI

Accessories & artifacts Living Green Design, livinggreen.com; Richard Gervais Collection, richardgervaiscollection.com.

Balinese furnishings Living Green Design, livinggreen.com.

Benches & firepit Ore, ore containers.com.

Stone sculpture Christiansen-Arner Stone & Water Sculpture, christiansenarnersculpture.com.

Tumbled glass Building Resources, buildingresources.org.

Vertical garden Plants On Walls, plantsonwalls.com.

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CALIFORNIA

Your CHECKLIST

**PLANT**

For harvest early next summer, set out garlic now. Break bulbs apart, then select the largest cloves. Plant them 4 to 6 inches apart and 3 to 4 inches deep in garden beds, with the pointed end up.

Continue planting cool-season crops such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, collards, and kale.

Grow daffodils in drifts under oak trees. The bulbs will bloom just before the trees begin to leaf out; both need no summer water. For a naturalized look, toss the bulbs under the tree canopies, then plant each bulb where it lands.

Sow radishes for a quick harvest. 'French Breakfast', ready in 28 days, is oblong with a red top and white bottom. 'Purple Plum' also matures in 28 days with bright purple skin. 'Early Scarlet Globe' has red skin and white flesh, and is ready in just 22 days. Seeds are available from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co. rareseeds.com.

**MAINTAIN**

Remove spent blooms of alstroemeria, coreopsis, cosmos, echinacea, and scabiosa to encourage plants to keep flowering.

Replenish planting beds with 2 to 3 inches of organic mulch such as shredded bark, straw, or wood chips.



"Harvest the ornament-like fruits when they are deep orange and firm."

JOHANNA SILVER,
ASSOCIATE GARDEN EDITOR

Protect seedlings of cool-season crops from pests with floating row covers, available through Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply. groworganic.com.

Refresh butterfly bush (*Buddleja*), lavender, lion's tail (*Leonotis leonurus*), and salvia by pruning back a third to a half of new growth.

**HARVEST**

Dig sweet potatoes before the first frost. For best flavor, cure your crop in a cool, dry place for at least two weeks.

**GO**

Attend Garden for the Environment's free "Life After Lawn" workshop to learn how to ditch your thirsty grass and what to plant in its place. Oct 25; Seventh Ave. at Lawton St., San Francisco; gardenfortheenvironment.org.

For an impressive selection of cactus, succulents, grasses, and natives grown locally, pay a visit to Cactus Jungle Nursery & Garden. 1509 Fourth St., Berkeley; cactusjungle.com.

**IDEA WE LOVE**

Persimmon party

By midautumn, the leafy canopies of 'Fuyu' persimmon trees practically glow in this front yard in Atherton, California. But the real show happens after the leaves drop, says homeowner Denise Shackleton: From early November through December, the fruits hang like Christmas ornaments from the branches. In the rest of the yard, designed by the team at Star Apple Edible Gardens of Berkeley, orange blooms of 'The Third Harmonic' alstroemeria echo the persimmon foliage's sunny hues, while silvery green euphorbia, purple iris, lavender, and dark phormium add a cool contrast. starappleediblegardens.com. ▲



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SPOOKY SQUASH

Trade a traditional jack-o'-lantern for a diorama this year. It's easier than forcing a toothy grin out of a rind with a paring knife—and looks cooler too.

Project & styling by Ana Monfort

TO MAKE
Cut the stem and a few inches of the rind around it out of the top of the pumpkin, then scoop out the seeds. Cut a rectangle out of the face of the pumpkin. Position rubber animals and miniature trees—available at craft stores—in the “window,” poking the tree trunks into the flesh if needed. Place an LED candle inside.

DIGITAL BONUS
Three more ways to carve or decorate a pumpkin: sunset.com/pumpkins.



SNEAK PEEK!



1

Idea House Style

GET THE LOOK

SUNSET ASKED THE EXPERTS AT DISC INTERIORS, DESIGNERS OF OUR LA IDEA HOUSE IN MANHATTAN BEACH, FOR TIPS IN CREATING THEIR SIGNATURE LAID-BACK, WARM CALIFORNIA STYLE.

1 ART

2 TEXTURE

3 COLOR



2



Krista Schrock and David John Dick are principals of DISC Interiors in Los Angeles.

Artwork instantly personalizes interior spaces and tells a story about who lives in the home. Organizing art to display can sometimes be daunting. The first step is framing. For a quick gallery wall, select a frame profile that you like, buy it in various sizes in the same color, and group together on a wall. This is a fun way to display kids' art, your favorite travel photos, or vintage family portraits.

This is often an unsung element in designing a space. Texture adds dimension and warmth to a home. Just adding a large woven basket or a beautiful throw to a room adds both visual and tactile interest. In *Sunset's* LA Idea House, we brought in handmade ceramics, fabrics, rugs, and window coverings as textural elements that really lend to the home's definitive look. Indoor plants, like the fiddle leaf fig, are an easy way to add instant texture.

We love all-white interiors. Bright white paint throughout the Idea House reflects the abundant natural light, as well as showcases the artwork. To provide balance, we brought in black as a bold accent: in the cabinetry, countertops, tile, and artwork. People often don't think of their flooring as a color in the home, but it is part of the overall palette. In the Idea House, natural white oak floors add a soft, warm touch to the spaces.



3

SEE MORE OF THE SUNSET IDEA HOUSE IN OUR NOVEMBER ISSUE.

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Photos courtesy of DISC Interiors and Smith+Noble

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And this road trip isn't merely good—it's the best in the world. So what are you waiting for?

*The Painted Desert's
Tepees, in Petrified
Forest National Park.*

BY MATTHEW JAFFE / PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY







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Sedona

ROMANCE, RED CLIFFS & MYSTICISM

OUR ROAD TRIP WILL LEAD YOU for weeks into the wild heart of the American Southwest. It is just possible, then, that you may want some pampering as your first stop on the journey—a luxurious launch pad into adventure. Sedona offers that, extravagantly, along with the chance to experience the Southwest at its most romantically alluring. Turn off the interstate onto State 179, and the ground begins to take on a pinkish cast as Sedona's monumental red rocks come into view. The eroded mesas are a ceremonial gateway onto the Colorado Plateau, the region that you'll be exploring. Although Sedona is best known (and frequently lampooned) for its spiritual vibe, it's not as if the town, with its galleries, upscale restaurants, and spa-laden resorts, is the exclusive domain of wide-eyed mystics. And given Sedona's many Native American sites and dreamscapelike terrain, the area does seem to have a certain power to it. Just take a hike on the Brins Mesa Trail and down into Soldier Pass. Look out on the sandstone turrets rising above the forest. Then eavesdrop as a self-anointed shaman at the Seven Sacred Pools explains the flow of energy from the Earth's core to the area's vortices. Who can really say? But Sedona will make a believer out of just about anyone. visitsedona.com.

TIP / The last half of October is prime time for fall color in Oak Creek Canyon as maples and oaks put on a spectacular show. For directions, visit sedona.net/sedona-fall-colors.





Clockwise from top: Sedona cliffs; room at El Portal Sedona; jicama-orange salad at Elote Cafe; El Portal Sedona courtyard.

SOUTHWEST VOICES

I first got interested in Mexican cuisine when I was chasing a girl through Mexico. We got married, and I saw the richness of the culture from the inside, and picked up ideas and menus. We're not together anymore. She's gone but the food is still here. The cascabel chile sauce is from my former mother-in-law, and there are a lot of memories in that sauce, a lot of emotion. I used to camp in Sedona as a kid, and I still love it here. Some days I hike, some days I ride my motorcycle—and there are roads where you can still go really fast. It's quite a place, quite a way of life.

JEFF SMEDSTAD

Chef-Owner, Elote Cafe, Sedona, AZ

ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

ELOTE CAFE

The long wait is part of the ritual at this wildly popular no-reservations spot, but with margaritas and terrace seating, it goes by quickly. Signature items include lamb adobo, tomato and Oaxaca cheese salad, and smoked pork cheeks over a corn cake. \$\$; 771 State 179; elotecafe.com.

EL PORTAL SEDONA

With such details as log-beam ceilings, river-rock fireplaces, and flagstone floors, the suites in this Arts and Crafts-style adobe have a rustic elegance that beautifully captures the romance of the Southwest. From \$259; elportal.sedona.com.





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WINSLOW

PARADISE RESTORED

NO TOWN HAS MORE ROAD-TRIP CRED than Winslow: A major stop on the Santa Fe Railway and on Route 66, Winslow was for generations the gateway to Arizona's tourist wonders. And one of the greatest wonders was right in town. After designing a chain of spectacular hotels for the Santa Fe Railway and noteworthy buildings in Grand Canyon National Park, Mary Colter envisioned her final railroad hotel, La Posada de Winslow, as the 19th-century hacienda of a Spanish ranching family. In her design, La Posada has a rambling quality, as if succeeding generations had added on to the estate. So Colter would appreciate that three contemporary Southern Californians saved her 1929 masterwork, and that they, too, have left their mark. When Allan Affeldt, his painter wife, Tina Mion, and sculptor Daniel Lutzick arrived in Winslow in 1997, La Posada was a gutted ghost. The trio began the long—and still ongoing—process of resurrecting the hotel. They restored period details and brought in vintage, hand-painted furniture to replace original pieces sold off decades ago. Today, hotel guests can sip margaritas at The Turquoise Room restaurant, watch some of the 90 trains that rumble by daily, and appreciate the way in which past and present combine to create something unforgettable. *From \$119; laposada.org.*

TIP / Daniel Lutzick is an accomplished sculptor, and you can see his works at the Snowdrift Art Space, his studio and gallery located in a onetime department store built in 1914. *By appointment only; snowdriftart.com.*



ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

THE TURQUOISE ROOM

Chef-owner John Sharpe's Southwest cuisine pairs well with the decor in La Posada's restaurant. Keep it local with the Churro lamb sampler, which includes one variation with tomatillo and green chile. \$\$\$; 305 E. Second St.; theturquoiseroom.net.

METEOR CRATER

Twenty miles west of Winslow, see where the Big Bang is more than theory: 50,000 years ago, an asteroid slammed into Earth at 26,000 mph to create a nearly mile-wide crater. \$18; meteorcrater.com.

STANDIN' ON THE CORNER

The spot made famous by the Eagles' 1972 hit "Take It Easy" is now a city park on W. Second St. For more local color, grab a burrito at nearby Brown Mug Cafe (\$; 308 E. Second St.; 928/289-9973).

From far left: Brown Mug Cafe, downtown Winslow; The Turquoise Room; Snowdrift Art Space.

SOUTHWEST VOICES

We came to Winslow in our mid-30s with nothing to lose. They paid us \$250,000 to take La Posada. People in Winslow thought, If you're dumb enough to take it, God bless you. I can remember going to Flagstaff and people would ask, "Why Winslow?" as in "What did you do that was so bad that you have to live in Winslow?" But for an artist, Winslow is a treasure trove where I can create art with bits of pieces of town, and deal with a Mormon rancher or a Native American artist making fetish dolls, then have artist James Turrell come through and want to work with us on the visitor center.

DANIEL LUTZICK Artist, Winslow, AZ



Clockwise from far left: Brantley Baird; Chevelon Creek Bridge; Rock Art Ranch petroglyphs.





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Rock Art Ranch

BEAUTIFUL MYSTERIES



ON THE WAY TO ROCK ART RANCH, the rental car sends a rooster tail of red dust into the sky southeast of Winslow. Past the main gate, owner Brantley Baird and his dog, Brandy, wait in a Chevy pickup parked near impressive slabs of petrified wood. Still lean and rangy in his 70s, Baird is every inch the Arizona cowboy. After a lifetime here, he knows his land's secrets and will share them with people interested enough to drive down the backroads to his ranch. First, Baird leads the way to unexcavated Native American pithouses, where pottery shards lay out in the open. In one spot, he shows off a primitive map, pecked into a flat rock probably centuries ago, that depicts local water sources. But the highlight is the petroglyph canyon that gives the ranch its name. For several hundred yards, the rock art covers the cliffs on both sides of Chevelon Canyon. Some panels, like one depicting a hunt, are easy to interpret. Others are less obvious, as are abstract petroglyphs that may be 7,000 years old. Who painted them? The ranch sits at what was a convergence point between the ancient Puebloan, Mogollon, and Sinaguan cultures, so the possibilities are numerous. "We get lots of archaeologists, and they're the ones who go to school to learn it all," says Baird. "I got my ideas too. Truth is, I can't say that anybody really knows for sure." *Rock Art Ranch: Tours \$35; by reservation only; (928) 288-3260.*

TIP / Before the ranch turnoff, Territorial Road crosses a one-lane bridge over Chevelon Creek. Recently restored, the 1913 span is one of Arizona's oldest and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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PETRIFIED FOREST

ROCKS OF AGES

MOST PEOPLE detour quickly through Petrified Forest National Park from Interstate 40, and the fact is that just a short visit delivers the goods. There are easy-to-reach overlooks of the orange- and white-banded hills of the Painted Desert (part of Petrified Forest, although people often think of them as separate). And just off the park road, you can see slabs of petrified wood that even with their psychedelic swirls of reds, violets, and greens, do look unmistakably like fallen trees—right down to the bark. Consider taking extra time to appreciate exactly what you're looking at. The logs are the remains of trees that lived *200 million years ago*. They grew not in the Arizona desert, but in semitropical forests 1,500 miles to the south before continental drift transported them north. The trees slowly turned to stone after being submerged in bogs where minerals replaced the organic material and took the form of the wood. So sure, there's a lot of driving ahead—and no shortage of kitschy tourist traps on I-40. But what's a few extra minutes when you can touch a world that stretches back eons? *\$10/vehicle; nps.gov/pefo.*

TIP / Red rock fatigue is an aesthetic hazard in the Southwest. Find relief in a cooler palette at Blue Mesa, where the 1-mile trail leads into hills striped with pale purples and grays. And don't miss lovely Painted Desert Inn, now a museum.



Clockwise from left: Blue Mesa formation; Southwestern pottery; Painted Desert Inn.





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ROADSIDE
ESSENTIALS

EL RANCHO HOTEL

Stop in for drinks in the handsome 49er Lounge. historicalranchohotel.com.

JERRY'S CAFE

A no-nonsense classic for enchiladas and chiles rellenos. 406 W. Coal Ave.; (505) 722-6775.



Clockwise from left: El Rancho Hotel, Gallup; Bill and Minnie Malone; Hubbell Trading Post's Rug Room; New Mexican food at Jerry's.

GALLUP

|| A BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS ||

GALLUP IS BOTH crossroads and border town. While most of today's visitors come through (and quickly) on Interstate 40, Gallup has been a major railroad town since the 1880s and a long-time stop for drivers on Route 66. That historic highway's motels make Gallup a living museum of vintage neon (none better than the Blue Spruce Lodge's sign touting steam heat). And El Rancho Hotel, with its incongruous combination of a plantation-style façade and a rustic, lodgelike lobby featuring split logs and Navajo rugs, is one of the finest surviving roadside attractions anywhere in the Southwest. The town also serves as a bridge between Anglo and Native American worlds. The Zuni Reservation lies just to the south, with several other traditional pueblos to the east. And the Navajo Nation wraps around Gallup on the north and west. This makes Gallup a trading hub for the Southwest's Indian Country, and if it lacks the adobe romance of a Taos or Santa Fe, it offers high-quality Native American jewelry, textiles, and pottery—at better prices too. thegallupcbamber.com.

TIP / Commanding a mesa top 90 miles southeast of Gallup, the Pueblo of Acoma is one of North America's oldest continuously inhabited communities, settled in the 12th century. You see it on guided tours (\$23) leaving from the cultural center at the mesa's base. acomaskycity.org.





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HUBBELL *Tradingpost*

⇒ THE MOST HISTORIC
CORNER STORE IN THE WEST ⇒

HERE'S THE STORY. In 1878, a man named John Lorenzo Hubbell established a trading post on the Navajo Nation. A little improbably—he was only 25 and at that point spoke little Navajo—he became the premier Navajo trader of the late 19th and 20th centuries. His descendants lived on the property into the late 1960s. Now a National Historic Site, and run by a nonprofit organization, Hubbell's operates much as it has for nearly 140 years. Navajo weavers bring in their handcrafted rugs—spun from the wool of shaggy Churro sheep, a herd of which graze outside—and pick up groceries and other provisions. Nearby, the Hubbell House, with its ceiling of ponderosa pine vigas and 18-inch-thick adobe walls, is much as it was when the family last lived there. Those vintage Native American baskets, hanging between the vigas? They were nailed to the ceiling by John Lorenzo Hubbell's daughters. *Tour \$2; nps.gov/butr.*

TIP / They don't come cheap (a tiny rug will run \$100, large ones up to \$20,000), but you'll find superb-quality Navajo rugs at Hubbell Trading Post, along with turquoise jewelry and Hopi baskets. Also good for rugs and jewelry is former Hubbell trader Bill Malone's shop in Gallup. *Bill Malone Trading Company; 235 W. Coal Ave.; (505) 863-3401.*



Canyon de Chelly's White House ruin; right, Sheep Rock.

S **DIGITAL BONUS** Hop in the car with photographer Tom Story—see his Southwest road-trip video: sunset.com/southwestvideo.





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CANYON DE CHELLEY

TRAGEDY & TRIUMPH

AFTER YOU SKIRT a hardscrabble section of the Navajo town of Chinle, Canyon de Chelly National Monument—which you can practice pronouncing, Canyon de *Shay*, on your drive—feels like a red rock paradise. Sandstone cliffs enclose a series of connecting canyons, where local kids cool off in shallow creeks, and cottonwood trees, glowing with golden leaves in fall, line the banks. Tucked away in side canyons are orchards of peaches, apricots, and apples, plus well-tended plots of corn. Many of the farms still have log hogans, the traditional six- or eight-sided Navajo house, while high on the canyon walls, cliff dwellings, some 1,100 years old, attest to Canyon de Chelly's deep and in many ways tragic history. On one cliff face, local Navajo say the petroglyph of a horseman near a crack in the rock prefigures Kit Carson's 1864 arrival and the subsequent massacre and capture of most of the Canyon de Chelly's residents. In Canyon del Muerto—the Canyon of Death—some 300 Navajo took refuge atop an 800-foot-high butte, now known as Fortress Rock, and outlasted the siege. Many of the area's Navajo trace their ancestry back to those survivors. For them, Canyon de Chelly is not just a beautiful haven for the traditional ways, but a stronghold. A Navajo Masada. *Canyon entry \$2, overlooks free; nps.gov/cach.*

TIP / Although you can drive to overlooks of Canyon de Chelly (don't miss 750-foot-high Spider Rock), the canyon comes most alive when you explore its interior with a guide like Adam Teller—a storyteller and historian with deep ancestral ties to the area. *From \$150; canyondechelly.net.*

ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

SACRED CANYON LODGE

This Navajo-owned hotel just inside the monument has basic Southwest-style rooms, a trading post, and a cafeteria. *From \$99; sacredcanyonlodge.com.*



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MESA VERDE

|| CITY LIFE IN THE YEAR 1100 ||

IT BLOWS IN COLD AND FAST, an out-of-season storm that surprises visitors on the ranger-led tour of Cliff Palace. Some are in shorts, and as hail and some snow begin to ice the ladders and trail down to the cliff dwellings, the ranger scrambles to get everyone under cover. But there was a reason that Ancestral Pueblo people built this 150-room complex here, around 800 years ago. Within the deep alcove, even as thunder bangs through the canyon and curtains of water cascade down from the overhang, everyone stays dry. Weather changes quickly at Mesa Verde National Park—the most significant remnant of ancient America in the United States, with nearly 5,000 archaeological sites. Once the storm passes, sunlight splashes on Spruce Tree House, considered the best preserved of the park's 600-plus cliff dwellings. Beyond Spruce Tree House, on the moderate 3.2-mile Petroglyph Point Trail loop, thunder is replaced by the tap of a woodpecker and the drip of melted snow trickling from the trees. *\$15/vehicle; nps.gov/meve.*

TIP / Drive 10 minutes east from the Mesa Verde park entrance and you come to another Southwestern landmark: Nathaniel's of Colorado, where Master Hatter Nate Funmaker produces some of the finest cowboy hats west of the Pecos. A rabbit-fur Rancher will run you \$450 (a beaver \$825), but even if you're not in the market for a cowboy chapeau, Nathaniel's is a must-see. 140 N. Mesa St., Mancos, CO; nathanielsofcolorado.com.



ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

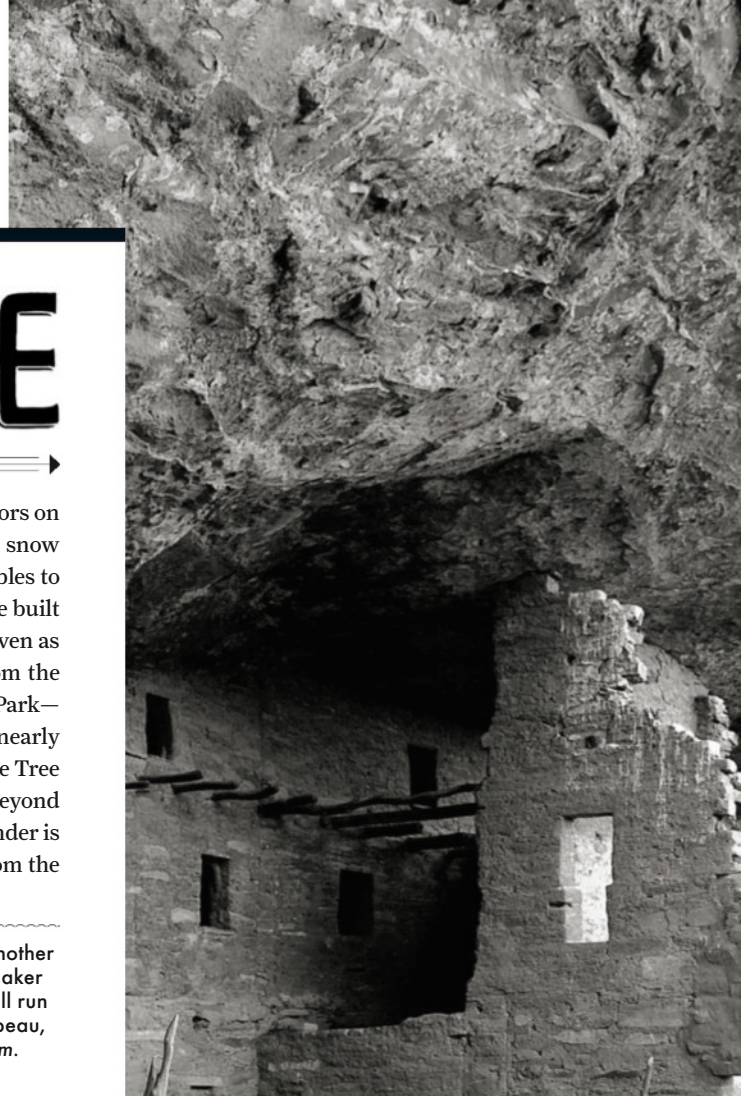


ABODE AT WILLOWTAIL SPRINGS

Down a gravel road from the main highway but with easy Mesa Verde access, these cabins on 60 wildlife-filled acres look out across a small lake to the La Plata Mountains. From \$249; willowtailsprings.com.

OLIO

This intimate spot is a showcase both for works by local artists and for the culinary artistry of chef-owner Jason Blankenship, whose changing menus include such specialties as Colorado buffalo tenderloin with mushrooms and a roasted poblano relleno. \$\$\$; 114 W. Grand Ave., Mancos, CO; oliomancos.com.





From far left: Abode at Willow-tail Springs; ranger Kimberly Accardy at Mesa Verde N.P.; hatmaker Nate Funmaker.

**SOUTHWEST
VOICES**

I make about 350 hats a year, but I rarely do one in a day. Instead, I like working on an assortment of hats, all at different phases of the process. It can take three months. I want ideas to simmer, and I have to take side notes and photos so I can keep in mind a customer's face, chin, and head shape. Because it doesn't matter if it's a high-quality hat when it ends up looking ridiculous on you. The hats sell for \$400 to \$800, and the bulk of my customers can afford nice things. They'll pay good money for a once-in-a-lifetime hat like these. But I also get cowboys who eat, drink, and sleep ranching. They'll tell me, "This isn't a prop, Nate. I'm going to wear it. I gotta have it last."

NATE FUNMAKER Master Hatter, Mancos, CO



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MONUMENT VALLEY

AMERICAN IDOL

STRADDLING THE UTAH-ARIZONA BORDER, weathered red mesas and buttes rise hundreds of feet from a vast plain and into an even bigger powder blue sky. For millions of people around the world, Monument Valley is the West. Sacred to the Navajo, it has costarred as setting for films from the classic (John Ford's *Stagecoach*) to the, um, less acclaimed (Seth MacFarlane's *A Million Ways to Die in the West*). Here, in a landscape seemingly designed for Imax, a half-real, half-mythical America came to life: wagon trains and cavalry charges and Native American horsemen silhouetted against the horizon. Access to outsiders is limited to the 17-mile main road into Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park or tours with Navajo guides. One way to get inside the familiar views is to hike the moderate 4-mile Wildcat Trail loop. The trail drops along dune slopes of fine red sands before following washes on the valley floor. Instead of simply observing the valley from a remove, you're now part of the landscape as the trail circles the West Mitten Butte, one of the most famous formations. And suddenly you feel part of an epic too. \$20/up to 4 people; navajonationparks.org.

TIP / For one of the best views in the Southwest, drive up U.S. 163 to the twisty gravel Moki Dugway on State 261 and the Muley Point overlook. You'll look down into the serpentine Goosenecks of the San Juan River and see Monument Valley, miles in the distance.





Clockwise from top: View Hotel overlooking the valley; Grand Canyon's Lipan Point; state line sign; horse roaming Monument Valley.



ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

THE VIEW HOTEL

Modern as it is, this hotel successfully blends into the landscape, and, as its name would suggest, offers outstanding vistas of some of Monument Valley's most classic formations from its rooms, all of which have balconies. The hotel also just opened a group of cabins. The best bets at the restaurant are the traditional dishes, especially the green chile stew and a red chile pork posole. From \$159; monumentvalleyview.com.



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ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

EL TOVAR DINING ROOM

Even if you don't stay at the hotel, you'll definitely want to dine in the park's grandest restaurant, with its old-school service, native-stone and pine construction, and murals of Native American tribes. Decidedly less formal, the adjacent cocktail lounge serves small plates and is a lively spot where canyon guides and locals often come to kick back. \$\$\$; 1 El Tovar Rd.; (928) 638-2631.

CONDOR TALK

You may not spot one of these endangered birds, but the ranger-led programs offer a new understanding of their life cycles and ongoing protection efforts. 11 a.m. daily through Nov; outside Lookout Studio at the South Rim near Bright Angel Lodge; nps.gov/grca.

DESERT VIEW WATCHTOWER

If you go into only one Mary Colter building at the South Rim, this is the one, thanks to its unique circular design, vintage Hopi murals, and some of the canyon's finest views. About 24 miles east of Grand Canyon Village on State 64 at Desert View; nps.gov/grca.

GRAND CANYON

SO MUCH TO LOOK AT

"THAT IS SO COOL," says a 20-something woman. Then her boyfriend solemnly intones, "It is *definitely* one big-ass canyon." Another young woman nearby, overwhelmed to the point of exasperation, declares, "There's just so much to look at! You can only look for so long!"

Yes, Grand Canyon National Park is a lot to take in. Patience is a virtue, whether you're hoping to catch the canyon under just the right light or spot one of the condors that were reintroduced to the area in 1996.

These endangered birds with 9½-foot wingspans are out there. To spot one, you scan a chasm a mile deep and 10 miles wide at the South Rim. And when you finally see one, there's no mistaking it for anything else. They are, to borrow a phrase, definitely big-ass birds. Condors are also curious, and at prime spots, like the Rim Trail, they'll ride the thermals and come in for a look. Sometimes a condor will glide 20 feet above the trail, close enough for hikers to hear the silky rush of air through feathers. If that seems an almost impossibly majestic experience—well, that's a Grand Canyon specialty. \$25/vehicle; nps.gov/grca.

TIP / For an uncrowded canyon view, look for an unmarked parking area just west of milepost 246 on the rim side of State 64. From there, an easy trail leads to secluded Shoshone Point.

OF TIME AND THE CANYON

BY KEVIN FEDARKO

HIGHWAY 64 is a two-lane stretch of blacktop that qualifies as one of the most remarkable roads anywhere. Follow it west from the trading post of Cameron, on the far edge of the Navajo Reservation, and toward the Grand Canyon, and you move forward while hurtling backward through centuries and eons.

The first time I drove this path, I was behind the wheel of my pickup truck, two days out of Santa Fe and pushing hard for Lee's Ferry, a breach in the cliffs to the north where the road descends to the Colorado River, and where I was to join my first trip as a whitewater guide. Dazed from the road, I failed to register—until the moment I arrived—that I was following the route traced by Spanish soldiers who, nearly 500 years earlier, had stumbled into one of the most important discoveries in the history of American exploration.

They came out of the Painted Desert late in the summer of 1540, drawn north by the legend of Cibola, seven cities whose treasures—gold and silver, emeralds and turquoise—were said to defy belief. A dozen horsemen, they were led by a young captain named Don García López de Cárdenas, who had been ordered to chase down rumors of a “great river” in the heart of the desert. As September spilled into October, they made their way across a flat, piñon-dotted landscape until, without warning, the ground gave way and they gazed into one of the defining features of the New World: the greatest testament on Earth to the power of water, the beauty of bare rock, and the fearsome magnificence of deep time.

That seminal point of contact—said to be the first of America's natural wonders discovered by Europeans—is believed to have taken place along Highway 64 somewhere near a place known as Desert View.

Today, Desert View lies just inside the eastern gateway to Grand Canyon National Park. And even now, it affords a sense of just how dizzy and disorienting the moment must have been when Cárdenas and his companions halted their march and gazed across one of the longest and deepest gorges on the planet. The official chronicles of their expedition offer not a single detail on what those men might have said or done as they stared

into the abyss. If they were anything like me, it's a reasonable guess that they halted in silence and stared.

In the centuries since, a canyon's worth of words have poured out to capture that view. The strata of stone surging toward the sky. The light that floods the abyss each morning and claws its way back out at night. The most accurate statement that can be made that language is inadequate to the task.

It is possible that Cárdenas remained forever unmoved by the vision laid before him. He was chasing a harder grade of wealth than beauty, and the canyon seemed to contain none of it. After failing to find a route to the bottom, he did the only thing that made sense from the perspective of a 16th-century fortune seeker.

He turned around and left.

Pointing his horsemen in the direction from which they had come, he led them back toward his commander, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado. When they returned to Mexico in disgrace in 1542, they were denounced for having failed to find a single thing of value. At the time, no one could have understood that the scene which Cárdenas had glimpsed near Desert View would one day be prized more than the mythical riches of Cibola.

As for me, unlike those fortune seekers, I discovered that it was impossible to leave the canyon. Something about that place—the light, the wind, the immensity of the space between the walls—held me fast.

And so I stayed. First for six summers as a river guide, riding the great river at the bottom of the abyss. Then I sat down at my desk and spent another four years putting together a book that tried to capture in words the wonder of a place that renders words irrelevant.

As for the path that those conquistadores once traveled, it is still there, and you can travel it today. If you make the effort, you can do something that lay beyond the reach of Cárdenas and his men. Which is to **take in** the glory of that place not only through their eyes, **but** simultaneously through your own. ▾

*Kevin Fedarko is the author of **The Emerald Mile: The Epic Story of the Fastest Ride in History Through the Heart of the Grand Canyon** (Scribner, 2013). He lives in Flagstaff.*



The Grand Canyon, near Desert View Watchtower.

I discovered that it was
impossible to leave the canyon. Something
about the place held me fast.





BY MARGO TRUE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY

FOOD STYLING: ROBIN VALARIK; PROP STYLING: KELLY ALLEN

THE BLACKSMITH COOKS

For years, Angelo Garro's workshop has been a magnet for stars of the food world. Now, he's inviting everyone to the table.



Almond
PESTO PASTA





Angelo Garro in his kitchen at Renaissance Forge, San Francisco.

THE FIRST TIME

I visited Angelo Garro, for lunch at his Renaissance Forge in San Francisco, he'd left the door ajar for me. I'm not sure what I expected—probably not a grim urban kitchen, since the Forge is in a gritty alley near an auto body shop—but stepping over the threshold was like plunging into a dream. The room was dark and lairlike, stacked with twisted iron rods and thick sheets of metal. Enormous plastic trash cans full of fermenting grapes sat in the gloom, under a white bedsheet patched with duct tape, and the entire place smelled like a wine cave. A constellation of curious objects—a carousel pony, fencing foils, a bulky old accordion camera—hung overhead. Opera soared in the air.

Garro makes architectural wrought iron for a living, but his Renaissance Forge is an enchanted world for food connoisseurs. His dinner parties are legendary outpourings of generosity, with practically everything made from scratch, using ingredients he's hunted and gathered around the Bay Area. For decades, Garro has cooked mainly for people he knows—a circle that includes Alice Waters of Chez Panisse and director Francis Ford Coppola—but that's changing. This fall he'll start offering classes at the Forge, teaching students how to find food in nature and cook by the seasons, the way his family did in Sicily when he was a boy.

"Come in, come in!" shouted Garro, from somewhere at the lighted end of the place. I walked past a mass of inscrutable tools that looked positively postapocalyptic (two of them, I later learned, were forges capable of heating to 2,000°). Abruptly the roof ended, opening into a tiny courtyard with a barbecue still smelling of roasted meat and a fig tree growing up into the sky. The kitchen next to it was the most fantastic place of all, a tornado of cookware and equipment and produce—and, hanging from a skylight, a gigantic Murano glass chandelier. Lit by the sun, it was ethereal.

The creator of all this welcomed me in, politely disregarding what must have been my thunderstruck expression. Garro is in his mid-60s, roundish and slightly rumped. He looks like Jack Nicholson, only happier, and has a Sicilian lilt in his voice that 30 years in America have not erased. He has taken Waters eel-fishing, picked olives with cookbook author Peggy Knickerbocker, led mushrooming expeditions for NPR hosts The Kitchen

Sisters, and taught Michael Pollan how to kill and butcher a wild boar, an experience that Pollan unflinchingly described in his 2006 best seller *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (he called Garro "my forager Virgil"). Whenever Garro goes on an expedition, a few friends—or more—come with him. "I like to share knowledge," said Garro. "I'm not one of those guys who have too many secrets."

Then he raised a finger and both eyebrows. "Except for my salt." A pile of it—a speckled mix of sea salt, wild fennel, and other spices—rested in a bowl on the table. At the urging of friends, he put his Omnivore Salt, based on his grandmother's recipe, on Kickstarter a year ago. The promo video was narrated and edited by German filmmaker Werner Herzog—also a friend, part of the force field of the Forge. "Angelo is like a medieval man who makes his own wine and grappa, cures his own olives and meat, and makes salami," Herzog intones on the video with feverish intensity. "And a long time ago, he created his own spiced salt..." Garro asked for \$30,000 and ended up with more than \$141,000. "People started asking me for marketing advice," he told me, smiling in disbelief. (Now Omnivore Salt is in stores nationwide; he plans a spicy red pesto next.)

Garro had decided to cook a vegetarian lunch—surprising, given his legendary prowess with boar and eel. But vegetables are close to his heart too, he explained. Meat was scarce and expensive in Sicily when he was growing up. "Many days we had just vegetables." Today, we would have a tomato almond pesto from Trapani, on the western side of Sicily. "But I make mine a little richer and better. Actually, there are no new recipes. It's like painting. You are copying Michelangelo, but you put in a little of yourself too."

He cranked handmade fettuccine dough through a little pasta machine until thin and supple, and then passed it through the cutter. As the noodles ribboned down, he scooped them up and flung them on parchment with a flourish. "Like what's-his-name—Emeril. Bang!" Then he picked the leaves off the basil. "You know what? We're gonna measure." He stuffed leaves into a cup until he had three cups' worth. Later he changed it to two, then back to three, and ended up putting two entire bunches of basil into his beat-up blender. The tomatoes, so ripe they were splitting, went in skin and all. It smelled like a late-summer garden. "It's not an accident that I live by the seasons," Garro said. "It's an unconscious memory that connects me to fall, winter, and summer." In his Kitchen Sisters interview, he said that in Sicily, he could tell by the smell what time of year it was—orange season, persimmon season, olive season.

He sprinkled in a bit of sugar to balance the acidity of the tomatoes, and then glugged in some olive oil. "You know, cooking is not rocket science. It's know-how. If you worry about it, it's not going to taste good." This hit home with me, a lifelong and overly trusting recipe-follower. He simmered the sauce with ground almonds, and as soon as it began to look creamy, tasted a little spoonful. "Delicious! I love it."

Garro is totally at ease and in charge in the kitchen. Even at other people's parties: Anya Fernald, the CEO of the sustainable meat company Belcampo, told me she was halfway through cooking dinner once for a group at the company's ranch near Mt. Shasta. "Angelo couldn't stand not cooking something," she said. "So he went out and shot a quail and roasted it over a fire for Viola, my 2-year-old. She just sat there at dinner and gnawed on that quail."

Knickerbocker says that whenever she invites him to dinner, he brings homemade pasta and heads right to her kitchen. "But it's always a really fun party, because I realize it's not all up to me."

And here we were, sitting down to lunch a little more than an hour after Garro started cooking, with a bottle of his own Pinot Noir and a lively salad of sliced fennel, shallots, and oranges on the table. The pasta was simple but resoundingly flavorful. "You know, you could put in sausages if you want, organic from Trader Joe." Garro was serious. Despite his chef friends, he doesn't spurn the places where ordinary cooks shop; Alemany Farmers' Market, where the produce is both excellent and reasonably priced, is his favorite. "It's the people's market." He spent just a few dollars on today's lunch.

GARRO GREW UP in and around Siracusa, the son of a citrus broker. His mother ran a small restaurant on the coast. His paternal grandmother had a garden "like Eden, with cherries, peaches, walnuts, persimmons, many varieties of table grapes. She had 600 olive trees and would make oil for the entire family." Fruit grew everywhere, and when he and his friends would go swimming in the Anapo River, they'd take juicy bites of peaches from the trees that grew along the banks.

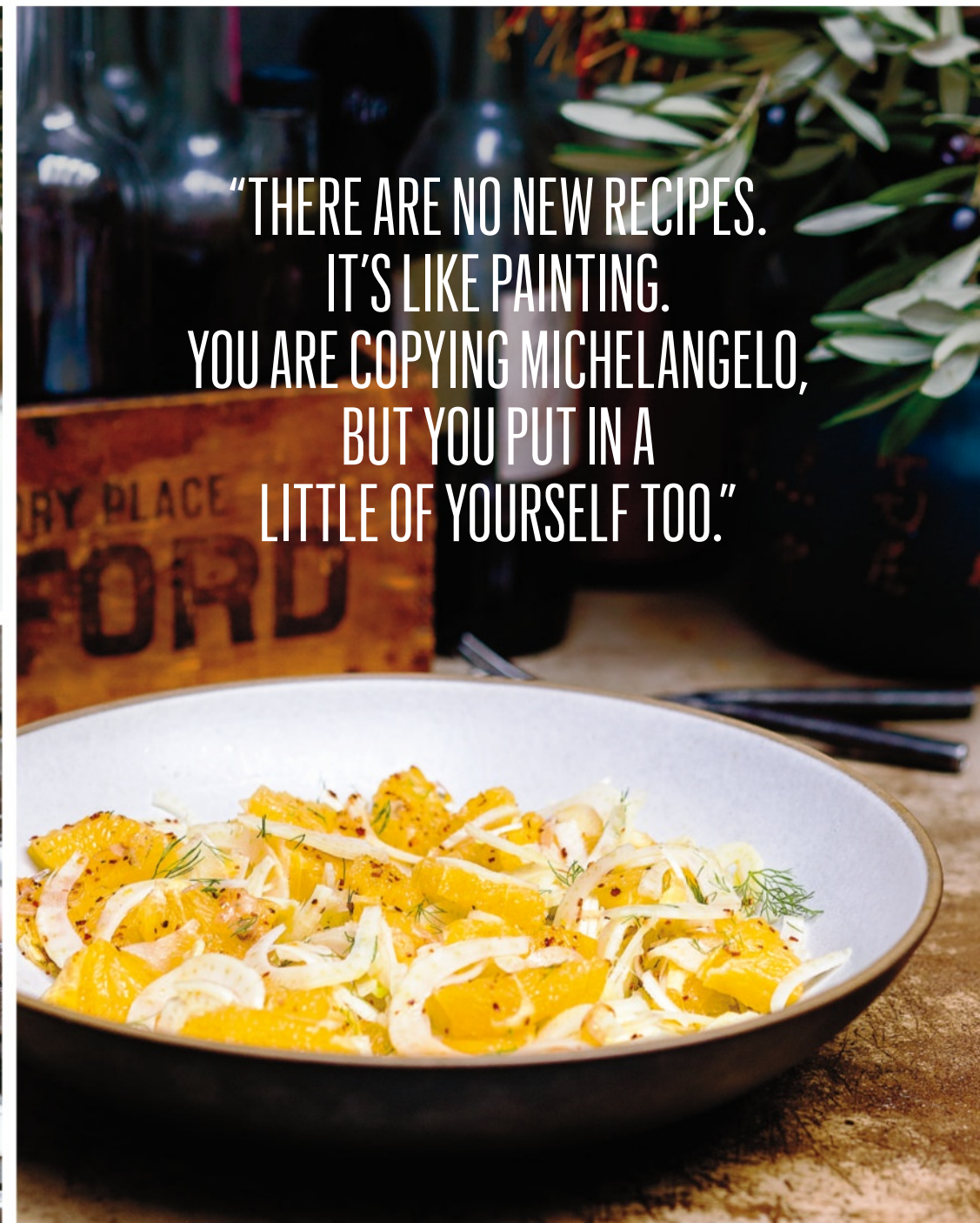
Disenchanted by Sicily, he left for Switzerland at 18 to apprentice to a master blacksmith. "If you were at all creative or had a sense of curiosity, you couldn't wait to get the hell out. It was too small and small-minded. When I saw clouds rushing across the sky, I dreamed about where they were going." Once he was in Switzerland, though, he literally hungered for his past. "I used to keep my mother on the phone for hours, asking about recipes. 'Hey Mamma, how do you cook the pasta vongole?' Then when I went home for vacation, I cooked with her and my grandma and paid attention. Before I knew it, I was very popular in Switzerland. My friends would say, 'We'll bring the wine and the guitar. You cook.'"

While returning from one trip home, Garro was stopped at the border. His papers weren't in order, it seemed, and he ended up in the Italian army (service was mandatory then). There he met a fellow soldier, a professor of philosophy and religion. "He changed my life," said Garro. "I was a high-school dropout with no guidance... He made lists for me of the Italian and French classics, and that was how I began to educate myself."

Garro still devours opera, film, painting, and literature, and all kinds of artists have come to eat at the Forge. "It's a salon," says Davia Nelson, one of the Kitchen



Opposite from top left: Garro cranks out fresh pasta dough; the start of pesto; his drill press; Fennel, Shallot, and Orange Salad; his orange-peel "pilot goggles"; mosto cotto.



"THERE ARE NO NEW RECIPES.
IT'S LIKE PAINTING.
YOU ARE COPYING MICHELANGELO,
BUT YOU PUT IN A
LITTLE OF YOURSELF TOO."



FIGS IN
MOSTO
COTTO
with
FRESH
RICOTTA



Sisters. “You meet film directors there, opera singers, dancers, composers.”

It was time for dessert: sautéed figs and ricotta. Garro decided he’d make the cheese from scratch, right then and there. “Why not? It’s so easy!” Milk, half-and-half, and salt went in the pot. As it heated up, he remembered how he and his father, out hunting, would come across shepherds making ricotta over wood fires. “We would ask for scoops, and they would give them to us. Once I asked for five.”

As soon as the milk seethed in the pot, he squeezed in lemon juice. Instantly it separated into fluffy curds and watery whey. He lifted the curds out into a bowl, and *ecco*, there it was: ricotta. “So now, as a ritual, we have to drink the whey.” He’d done this with his father on those hunting trips. I was skeptical but took a sip. The salty, slightly milky broth was delicious, and I had to admire the thrift of it.

While it was still warm, Garro spooned the ricotta over fat purple figs that he’d sautéed in butter with his *mosto cotto* (wine-grape syrup) and a splash of homemade balsamic vinegar. “Oh, my God,” he cried. “I love my figs!”

ALL DAY LONG at the Forge, the doorbell rings, and so does the phone (actually, it trumpets the opening of *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, the opera based on the novel by his friend Amy Tan). People just want to be with Garro. During the monthlong World Cup, he had his projector screen down and friends filling up the front room watching soccer while he cooked pasta for them. How many friends? I asked. “Oh, I don’t know, around 40.” Every day.

After *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* was published, Garro was besieged with requests to cook and go hunting. It was too much, mainly because he couldn’t get to know everyone, which for him is the whole point of food and life. “You can’t have 1 million friends. You can only have about 100 that you stay close to.”

After the army and working for the smith in Switzerland, Garro followed a woman he’d met there to Toronto; then he married a San Franciscan, and they moved here in 1983. He found work at the Forge, which had been a blacksmith shop for at least a century, and soon bought it. His brother-in-law—Prairie Prince, the drummer for The Tubes—began introducing him to people, including Knickerbocker, who seems to know or be separated by one degree from everyone interesting in the city.

Then on his birthday, in 1987, his wife asked, “What would you like to do today?” He said, “Catch eels under

the bridge!” He met up on the north side of the Golden Gate with friends and *their* friends, one of whom happened to be Waters. “I didn’t know who she was, but she was very charming.” He wrapped the eels in foil with some chanterelles he had foraged and a little balsamic vinegar, and grilled them on a hibachi. “Alice said, ‘This is my dream—from the water to the plate.’ She invited me to her house for dinner, and that was the beginning of our friendship. And because of Alice, the chefs thought I had some secret or something.”

Pretty much ever since then, Garro has cooked the Feast of the Seven Fishes, the traditional Italian Christmas Eve dinner, with Waters and others (he and his wife are now divorced). “Only with Angelo, it’s more like 11 or 12 fishes,” says Nelson, a regular. “He has a lot of gusto,” says Waters, when I ask what he’s like to cook with. “He attacks the food. I remember him just ripping the skins off the eels and hanging them on the fence in my backyard to save for a belt for my daughter, Fanny. And he certainly knows how to make food taste good.”

Garro has no desire to open a restaurant, although he’s been asked several times. It’s too stressful, he says, and unsatisfying. “It’s not true. It’s all make-believe.” For him, cooking must connect to friends or it’s meaningless. And he dismisses his growing fame. “I just do the same things I’ve always done.”

So what does he think of the current craze for foraging and hunting? “Not long ago, I passed a parking lot in San Francisco where there was some kind of, what do you call it, pop-up,” he says. “Someone had brought a feral boar to roast, from Texas. It was a phenomenon! All these Google kids lined up around the block, like sheep. I think it is a need to socialize.”

Which he doesn’t disagree with; for him, hunting and foraging are best when they’re communal. “Angelo takes a lot of young cooks into the wild, and his enthusiasm is so infectious, it changes them,” says Paul Bertolli, who makes cured meats under his Fra’ Mani label. “For a cook used to dealing with ‘product,’ to find the food and take it all the way to the plate is transformative.”

“ANGELO
HAS
A LOT
OF
GUSTO.
HE
ATTACKS
THE
FOOD.”

—ALICE WATERS

“Angelo has always had a whole lineup of people willing to work, to be part of whatever he’s doing,” says Cal Zecca Ferris, one of his oldest friends. It could be hunting or bottling wine or curing olives. “I think it comes back to the fact that everything Angelo does is authentic. There’s no trying to be, wanting to be, or pretending to be. He just *is*.”

Right before I left, I asked Garro if I could see his curing room, a nook behind the main forge area. Dozens of prosciutti and salami hung in a dedicated fridge there, and when he opened the door, a spicy, meaty fragrance wafted out. A flotilla of barrels and boxed-up bottles of his wine surrounded the fridge. “Take one,” he urged. “I only have 600!” I went home with two bottles, Garro’s handwritten labels scrawled right on the glass. —>

ALMOND PESTO PASTA

SERVES 4 TO 6 (MAKES ENOUGH PESTO FOR A SECOND BATCH) / 45 MINUTES

Besides his own fresh fettuccine or macaroni, Garro likes to serve this pesto with springy, curly Twins or Ringlets pasta from Baia Pasta, an Oakland company. (Its co-owner, Renato Sardo, learned to make pasta from Garro.) If you have Garro's Omnivore Salt, use it instead of the salt, pepper, and chile flakes.

4 very ripe red medium-size tomatoes, such as Early Girl

4 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
½ tsp. sugar

6 oz. very fresh basil leaves (about 4 cups loosely packed); save a few leaves for garnish

About ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tsp. salt

½ tsp. each pepper and red chile flakes

1½ cups freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano cheese, plus more for serving

⅔ cup raw, skin-on almonds

1 lb. fresh or dried pasta (for Garro's fresh fettuccine recipe, go to myrecipes.com)

1. Bring a pot of generously salted water to boil. Meanwhile, core and quarter tomatoes. Add to blender along with garlic, sugar, and about half the basil, and blend just until coarsely puréed. Add 1 tbsp. oil if needed to loosen it up.
2. Add remaining basil, ½ cup oil, the salt, pepper, chile flakes, and 1½ cups cheese to blender and pulse to coarsely purée the basil.
3. Grind almonds in a clean coffee or spice grinder until they're about the texture of coarse cornmeal.
4. Boil pasta until just tender, 2 to 3 minutes for fresh and about 15 for dried. Meanwhile, pour half the sauce into a medium frying pan and bring to a simmer over low heat. Whisk almonds into sauce and let simmer gently until creamy-

looking, about 2 minutes. If it doesn't look creamy, add 1 to 2 tbsp. water. Remove from heat.

5. Pour remaining sauce into frying pan (swirl a bit of water into sauce clinging to sides of blender and add that too).
6. Drain pasta, reserving ½ cup pasta water. Put pasta back in pot and stir sauce into pasta. Reheat over low heat, stirring occasionally and adding pasta water if it looks too thick, until pasta absorbs sauce slightly, about 4 minutes. Serve immediately, sprinkled with more cheese and a few torn basil leaves.

MAKE AHEAD *Sauce, up to 1 week, chilled; up to 4 months, frozen.*

PER SERVING 621 Cal., 53% (328 Cal.) from fat; 24 g protein; 37 g fat (10 g sat.); 52 g carbo (7 g fiber); 608 mg sodium; 82 mg chol. V

FENNEL, SHALLOT, AND ORANGE SALAD

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 30 MINUTES

Choose a high-quality extra-virgin olive oil here—it makes a big difference. Garro loves to use spicy-sweet blood oranges for this salad, when they're in season.

3 medium fennel bulbs with stalks and fronds

1 medium shallot

2 large oranges

1 lemon

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

½ tsp. each salt and red chile flakes

1. Trim fronds and stalks from fennel bulbs, setting aside several small fronds for garnish. Cut bulbs in half lengthwise, cut out core, and slice very thinly lengthwise on a handheld slicer. Slice shallot very thinly on slicer (you should have about ¼ cup), and put both in a large salad bowl.
2. Trim peel from oranges. Working over bowl to catch juices, cut oranges into thirds straight down through top of fruit; then cut crosswise into thick

pieces and let fall into bowl.

3. Cut lemon in half crosswise. Set a strainer over same bowl to catch seeds and, twisting a fork into each lemon half, juice them into bowl.
4. Add oil, salt, and chile flakes to bowl and toss salad gently but thoroughly. Taste and add more salt and chile if you like. Toss again and top with fennel fronds.

PER SERVING 152 Cal., 55% (83 Cal.) From fat; 2.2 g protein; 9.7 g fat (1.4 g sat.); 18 g carbo (5.2 g fiber); 256 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/VG

FIGS IN MOSTO COTTO (GRAPE SYRUP) WITH FRESH RICOTTA

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 45 MINUTES

Mosto cotto (also called *saba*) is nothing more than the freshly pressed juice of wine grapes, simmered down to a syrup. It's fairly expensive at specialty markets, but Garro makes his own, from grapes grown in a friend's vineyard. If you can't find wine grapes, try the method on the next page—it's a good approximation of the real thing.

RICOTTA

½ gallon whole milk

1 cup half-and-half

2 tsp. rock salt or 1½ tsp. kosher salt

Juice of 1 large lemon (about ¼ cup plus 1 tbsp.)

FIGS

1½ tbsp. butter

6 to 8 ripe figs (any kind)

1 tbsp. sugar

½ cup mosto cotto (see recipe, facing page)

1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar*

1. Start ricotta: Pour milk, half-and-half, and salt into a large heavy-bottomed pot and bring to a bare simmer over medium heat, stirring every now and then to prevent scorching, 25 to 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, cook figs: Melt butter in a

medium nonstick frying pan over medium heat. Slice figs in half and set cut side down in butter in a single layer. Pour in 2 tbsp. water and sprinkle with sugar. Let figs cook until they start to soften, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to low.

3. Pour in mosto cotto. Let figs simmer until quite soft and mosto cotto is as thick as honey, about 7 minutes. Add balsamic vinegar and remove from heat.
4. When milk reaches a bare simmer, pour in enough lemon juice to separate it into thick, fluffy white curds and watery, greenish whey (if this doesn't happen immediately, add more lemon juice). Push curds gently once or twice but resist the urge to stir—that will make them gritty. Turn off heat.
5. Scoop ricotta into a medium-mesh

colander set in the sink. Let liquid drain 10 to 15 minutes; ricotta should be moist but not wet.

6. Spoon about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup ricotta onto each of 4 small plates and add 2 or 3 fig halves. Drizzle with syrup from pan and serve.

**Look for reasonably priced cask-aged balsamic vinegar, sometimes labeled "condimento." Avoid cheap "instant" balsamic vinegar, which has colorants and sugars.*

MAKE AHEAD Ricotta and figs, each up to 2 hours at room temperature, covered, or up to 1 day, chilled (let them come to room temperature before serving).

PER SERVING 489 Cal., 34% (164 Cal.) from fat; 12 g protein; 18 g fat (11 g sat.); 71 g carbo (2.4 g fiber); 576 mg sodium; 55 mg chol. GF/V

MOSTO COTTO (GRAPE SYRUP)

MAKES $\frac{1}{2}$ CUP / 1½ HOURS

Put 1 qt. unsweetened **white grape juice** in a wide pot with 2 tbsp. **dark brown sugar** and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup *each* **raisins** and **prunes**. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer and cook until it's as thick as maple syrup, to about 1 cup, $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1½ hours. Add 2 tbsp. cask-aged **balsamic vinegar** and simmer another 15 minutes. Cool, then strain, pushing on fruit with the back of a spoon. Keeps, chilled, at least 2 months (save fruit for another use, like spooning over ice cream). ▲

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PEAK
SEASON



TURN ON TO TURNIPS

*Forget all childhood associations
with this root vegetable.
These recipes will
make you a
convert.*

*Cool-season
comfort*

SHORT RIBS
AND TURNIP STEW

p. 84



PEAK SEASON

KOREAN-STYLE BRAISED SHORT RIBS and TURNIPS

SERVES 6 / 2½ HOURS

Cooked till they're sweet and mellow, turnips are less fibrous than the daikon traditionally used in this homestyle stew, and they make a good bridge between the beef and salty-sweet braising liquid.

5 lbs. bone-in beef short ribs,
cut into 2½-in. pieces
1 sweet apple, peeled and cored
½ cup soy sauce
¼ cup dry sherry
⅓ cup sugar
½ tsp. pepper
1-in.-long piece fresh ginger,
peeled and thickly sliced
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
1 shallot, chopped
3 large carrots, peeled and trimmed
1½ lbs. purple-top or Tokyo turnips
(see page 86), peeled and trimmed
6 green onions, divided
1 tsp. each toasted sesame seeds and
toasted sesame oil

1. Put ribs and 5 cups water in a wide 8- to 10-qt. pot and bring to a rolling boil over medium-high heat (ribs will not be completely covered). Skim any foam that rises to the top and boil for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 1 hour, partially covered and stirring occasionally, skimming any foam and fat that rise to the top.
2. Coarsely shred apple and add to pot with soy sauce, sherry, sugar, pepper, ginger, garlic, and shallot. Continue to cook, partially covered and stirring occasionally, until ribs are tender when pierced with tip of a small knife, about 1 hour; skim fat during cooking.
3. Meanwhile, cut carrots into 2-in.-long pieces. Cut purple-top turnips in half, then into 1-in.-thick wedges (leave Tokyo turnips whole). Cut 4 green onions into 2-in.-long pieces and thinly sliver remaining onions; set slivered onions aside.
4. Add carrots, turnips, and the 2-in. pieces of green onion to pot. Continue to cook, partially covered and stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Carefully tip pot and skim off as much fat as possible from liquid with a wide metal spoon.
5. Stir in sesame seeds and sesame oil. Serve sprinkled with slivered green onions.

MAKE AHEAD *Through step 2 up to 1 day, chilled; lift off and discard fat before reheating.*

PER SERVING 1,020 Cal., 71% (726 Cal.) from fat; 44 g protein; 81 g fat (34 g sat.); 28 g carbo (3.7 g fiber); 1,388 mg sodium; 178 mg chol.

TURNIPS ANNA

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 1½ HOURS

Pommes Anna, a classic French dish of thinly sliced potatoes, takes on an appealing sharpness in this turnip version. Although you can use any pie pans, metal ones brown the turnips most evenly; you'll also need a handheld slicer.

About 6 tbsp. butter, melted, divided
6 oz. sliced bacon
½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2 tbsp. flour
½ tsp. minced fresh thyme leaves,
plus several thyme sprigs
½ tsp. kosher salt
¼ tsp. pepper
2 lbs. small to medium turnips (any variety),
peeled and ends trimmed

1. Generously brush a 9-in. pie pan with some butter. Preheat oven to 400° (if using metal pans) or 425° (if using glass or ceramic) with a rack set in lower third of oven.
2. Brown bacon in a medium frying pan until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain on paper towels, then chop.
3. Combine bacon, cheese, flour, minced thyme, salt, and pepper in a small bowl.
4. Thinly slice turnips into rounds with a handheld slicer. Arrange one-sixth of turnips in a layer in pie pan, starting from center, working outward in concentric circles, and slightly overlapping slices. Evenly sprinkle a heaping 2 tbsp. bacon-cheese mixture over turnips and drizzle with about 2 tsp. butter. Repeat to use all ingredients, ending with turnips.
5. Lightly butter bottom of another 9-in. pie pan and set on top of turnips. Fill upper pan with pie weights or dried beans; set pans on a rimmed baking sheet to catch bubbling butter.
6. Bake until edge turns golden brown, 50 to 55 minutes. Carefully remove top pie pan and weights and continue to bake Anna until browned on top, 10 to 15 minutes more.
7. Loosen Anna from pan with a knife and invert onto a plate. Top with thyme sprigs.

PER SERVING 214 Cal., 71% (152 Cal.) from fat; 6 g protein; 17 g fat (10 g sat.); 10 g carbo (2.3 g fiber); 487 mg sodium; 47 mg chol. LC



PICKLED TURNIP and TURNIP GREENS SALAD

SERVES 4 / 1¼ HOURS

Whether you use peppery purple-top turnips or the sweeter Tokyo variety, this salad is excellent with a bowl of rice, braised short ribs (page 84), or even a burger. A handheld slicer makes quick work of the prep.

**3 bunches Tokyo turnips with greens*
or 2 medium purple-top turnips
with greens**

1¾ tsp. kosher salt, divided

⅓ cup distilled white vinegar

5 tsp. sugar

1 tsp. apricot jelly or jam

1. Trim greens from turnips, discard any discolored leaves, and trim tough stems. Cut greens into 3-in.-long pieces (you should have about 5 heaping cups) and put in a medium nonreactive bowl. Add ½ tsp. salt and massage into greens until evenly distributed.

2. Peel turnips and thinly slice on a handheld slicer. Put in a large nonreactive bowl, add 1 tsp. salt, and mix until evenly distributed. Set greens and turnips aside at room temperature 1 hour for salt to pull water from vegetables, massaging

them once or twice. Greens will turn dark green and sliced turnips will become wilted and slightly translucent.

3. Pour 6 cups cold water and plenty of ice over sliced turnips and set aside 10 minutes to crisp. (No need to ice greens.)

4. Meanwhile, stir vinegar, sugar, jelly, and remaining ¼ tsp. salt in a medium nonreactive bowl until sugar dissolves. Squeeze out as much excess liquid from greens as you can. Coarsely chop greens and add to vinegar mixture.

5. Lift ice from turnips, then drain turnips and squeeze out as much liquid as you can. Add turnips to bowl of greens and toss until well combined. Serve cold.

**Find turnips with greens at well-stocked grocery stores and farmers' markets. Or buy trimmed turnips plus 3 oz. (5 heaping cups) bagged turnip greens or mustard greens. ▾*

PURPLE-TOP TURNIPS

Aka regular turnips. If you find them with greens attached, separate before storing in the fridge so both parts stay crisp.

TOKYO TURNIPS

These sweet, tender little globes, available at farmers' markets, are starting to show up in grocery stores.

PER SERVING 68 Cal., 4% (2.8 Cal.) from fat; 1.8 g protein; 0.3 g fat (0 g sat.); 16 g carbo (3.7 g fiber); 360 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/VG

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In the SUNSET KITCHEN

TIPS FROM
OUR TEAM



BOOK SMARTS

SPLATTER-FREE PURÉED SOUP

In her new book, *Mastering My Mistakes in the Kitchen* (Harper-Collins, 2014; \$35), *Food & Wine* editor Dana Cowin writes about the first time she made carrot soup in a blender: “It exploded out of the top and splattered all over the walls, the stove, and my sweater.” She learned how to avert this disaster from Portland chef Jenn Louis of Lincoln restaurant:



Fill the blender only halfway with soup ingredients.



Remove the plug in the lid to let steam escape.



Drape it with a towel to catch any splatters. Then purée away.



from
ANITA FLORA
Boise

WINNING READER RECIPE JAM TART

To create this tart, reader Anita Flora added a few shortcuts to her mother’s original fruit crostata recipe: “I used jam instead of fruit and changed the topping to a crumb rather than a lattice, which makes it easier and quicker.” **SERVES 8 TO 10 / 1¼ HOURS**

- 3 cups flour
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1 jar (12 oz.) jam or preserves, such as plum, apricot, or orange marmalade
- Powdered sugar for dusting (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 375°. In a food processor, whirl together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, salt, and butter until dough is very crumbly, about 2 minutes. Add yolks and pulse until dough just comes together. Or, you can combine ingredients (dry first, then the yolks) in a large bowl using a pastry blender.
2. Grease a 10-in. tart pan with a removable rim. Press about three-quarters of dough into bottom of pan (no need to press dough up the sides). Spread jam over dough, leaving a ½-in. border around edge. Crumble remaining dough over jam to form topping.
3. Bake until lightly browned and jam is bubbling, about 40 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes before removing from pan. Dust with powdered sugar, if you like.

PER SERVING 416 Cal., 33% (138 Cal.) from fat; 5.1 g protein; 16 g fat (9.3 g sat.); 66 g carbo (1.1 g fiber); 57 mg sodium; 100 mg chol. LS/V

KNOW-HOW | Primo pumpkin seeds

Crunchy roasted pumpkin seeds (*pepitas*) are having a big moment in the Test Kitchen—we’ve been using them to top all kinds of fall salads and soups. But use the wrong ones, and you’ll be disappointed. White seeds in the shell deliver a mouthful of chewy fiber, pre-roasted kernels can be stale, and fresh ones are a pain to clean. Instead, buy raw, shelled kernels and pan-toast briefly until they’re popping and fragrant. For a video lesson, go to sunset.com/pumpkinseeds.





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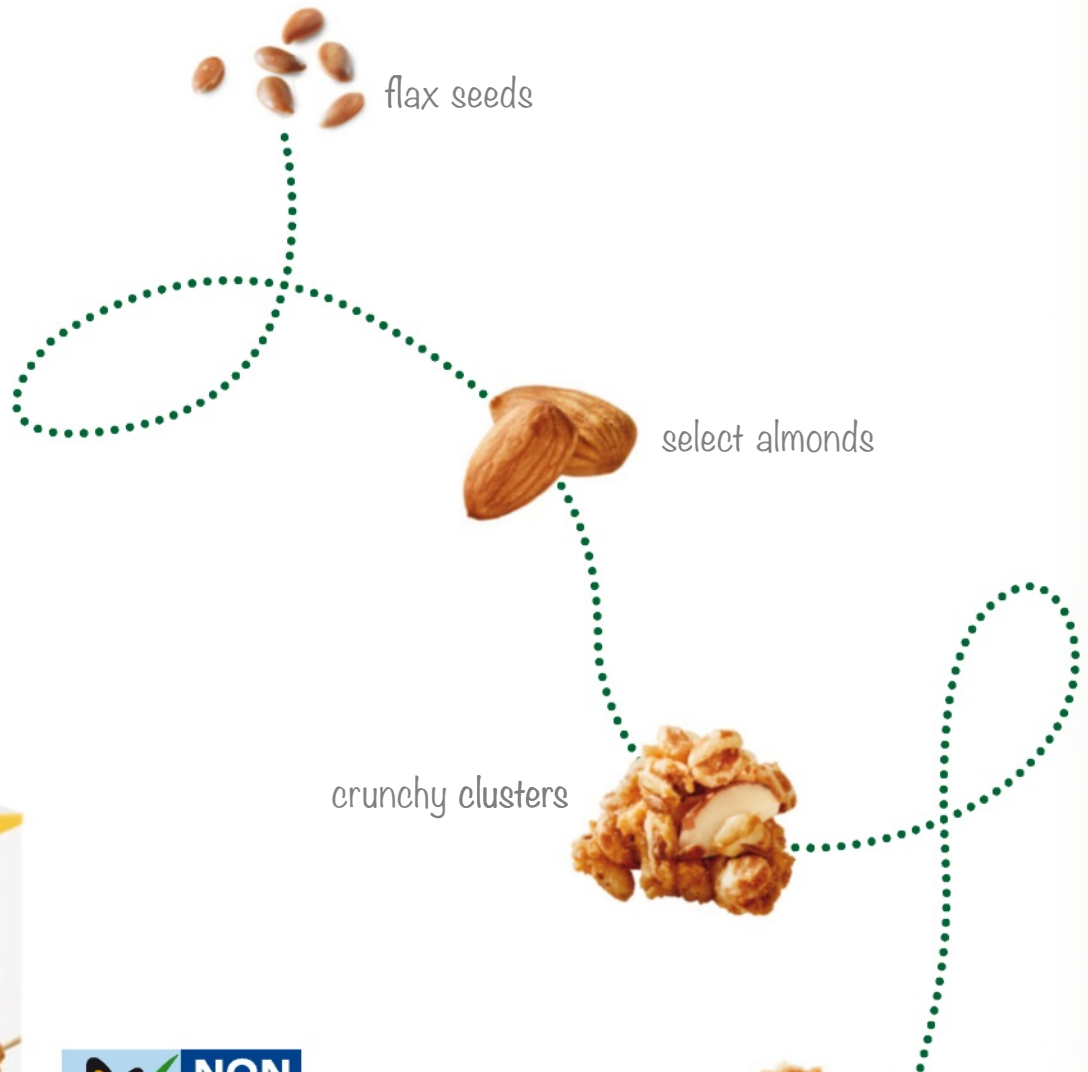
Mother Nature runs hot and cold. To keep ahead of her requires hands-on work in the vineyard and in the winery. Shoot positioning, leaf pulling, cluster thinning. Maceration, fermentation, aging. At each stage, the winegrower must draw on both intuition and science.

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In the **SUNSET KITCHEN**



GARDEN TO TABLE

Heirlooms on ice

To extend tomato season all the way through winter, Test Kitchen manager Angela Brassinga freezes the fruit solid on a baking sheet (so they don't stick together), then pops them into heavy plastic bags. They're great in any recipe calling for cooked tomatoes: Just thaw slightly and rub off the peel.



WE'RE LOVING ... | **Sesame salt**

Take a cue from the Japanese and sprinkle sesame salt (*gomasio*) on rice, eggs, grilled salmon, even ice cream. Author and ocean advocate Maria Finn makes her own version of this nutty, savory seasoning—which she calls Lightly Salted—using Pacific-harvested flake salt, black sesame, and Northern California seaweed. A portion of sales helps support protected marine areas. \$10 for 2.75 oz.; getlightlysalted.com. ▲

KITCHEN TALK **BEST BRUSSELS SPROUTS**

This month we asked our Facebook friends for their brussels sprouts secrets. Add your ideas at sunset.com/kitchenconversation.

“Roasted in a cast-iron skillet with thick-sliced bacon, kosher salt, plumped yellow raisins, and dates, then topped with crushed pistachios.”
—FRANK LARSON



“Baked with cream and bread crumbs.”
—CHELSEA CATTO

“Raw, shredded finely, with pomegranates, toasted walnuts, pecorino, EVOO, lemon, salt, and pepper.”
—CHRISTIANE SMITH

Better eating starts with flax seeds.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ANNABELLE BREANEY (2); FOOD STYLING: FANNY PANJ; JEFFERY CROSS

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FAST & FRESH

WEEKNIGHT COOKING

Recipes in 30 minutes or less

CHILE-GLAZED STEAK with SPICY KETCHUP

SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES

In this twist on steak frites, a sweet-spicy glaze works as both a marinade and a dipping sauce for fries. For a deeper flavor, marinate the steak a few hours and up to 1 day ahead. We like to serve it with store-bought sweet-potato fries (pictured), or make your own by grilling sweet-potato wedges with the steak.

- 3 tbsp. chipotle hot sauce, such as Cholula brand
- 2 tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup ketchup
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cracked black pepper
- 1 1/4 lbs. flank steak

1. Heat a grill to high (450° to 550°). In a small bowl, combine hot sauce, brown sugar, vinegar, and ketchup. Put half the mixture in a shallow bowl and

reserve the other half to serve as ketchup. Season steak with salt and pepper. Add steak to bowl and turn to coat; marinate 10 minutes.

2. Grill steak, brushing occasionally with any remaining marinade as you go, 5 minutes per side for medium-rare. Remove from heat and let rest 5 minutes.
3. Serve with reserved ketchup and, if you like, fries.

PER SERVING 250 Cal., 29% (72 Cal.) from fat; 30 g protein; 8 g fat (3.3 g sat.); 13 g carbo (0.2 g fiber); 708 mg sodium; 52 mg chol. GF/LC



THAI-STYLE MUSSELS with HERBS

SERVES 4 / 20 MINUTES

We like to eat these delicately flavored mussels with rice, but thin rice noodles are also good. A generous squeeze of lime at the end is essential.

- 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 4 stalks lemongrass, ends trimmed and stalks smashed
- 1 small yellow onion, sliced into rings
- 2 whole dried arbol chiles* or 1/2 tsp. red chile flakes
- 1 can (14.5 oz.) coconut milk
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 tbsp. Thai or Vietnamese fish sauce
- 2 each large basil and mint sprigs, separated into leaves and stems
- 2 lbs. mussels, scrubbed and debearded*
- 1 lime, cut in wedges



1. Heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add oil and heat until shimmering. Cook lemongrass and onion, stirring frequently, until onion begins to caramelize and turn golden, about 8 minutes.
2. Stir in chiles, coconut milk, wine, fish sauce, and herb stems. Bring mixture to a simmer.
3. Add mussels and cover pot. Cook until mussels open wide (discard any unopened ones), 4 to 5 minutes.
4. Transfer to a serving bowl. Sprinkle with herb leaves. Serve with lime and rice.

*Find arbol chiles in Mexican markets or your grocery store's Latino-foods aisle. If the mussel "beard" (stiff threads protruding from the shell) is still attached, pull it off. ▲

PER SERVING 387 Cal., 78% (303 Cal.) from fat; 10 g protein; 34 g fat (20 g sat.); 8.6 g carbo (0.4 g fiber); 551 mg sodium; 18 mg chol. GF/LC

West Essentials

{ OUR PICKS FOR WHAT'S ESSENTIAL IN THE WEST }



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ALL ABOUT LOGISTICS

Almost 11,000 bottles (multiples in case the first bottle is corked or otherwise off) organized and triple-checked against entry records; 4,000 glasses washed and polished—more than once a day; flight after flight poured to uniform height (shown top left), rolled out to the judges, and arranged in precision formation.



AND THE VERDICT IS...



They sipped, they spit, they argued. More than 50 judges winnowed nearly 3,000 wines down to the very best. The result: a list you can count on.

By Sara Schneider

TRY AS I MIGHT, I'm incapable of convincing anyone that my job as *Sunset* wine editor (ergo, professional wine taster) is tough. What could be hard about having to sip a little wine most days? I give you the 48 hours of our *Sunset* International Wine Competition—this year, April 28 and 29—as proof that the *job* of tasting, of judging, can be beyond grueling.

With close to 3,000 wines entered this year, we gathered more than 50 judges—all among the West's most respected palates. Working in panels of three, each judge tackled about 100 wines a day (a new glass every 3 minutes or so), tasting for varietal character, soundness, and complexity. To keep their focus and give each wine its fair shake, those judges needed a great deal of protein for breakfast, vast quantities of roast beef to cleanse their palates between flights of tannic red wine (tasted in the morning when palates were fresher; white and sparkling in the afternoon), and coffee on cue at 3 p.m. Spitting was a given, for pure survival.

Through flight after flight, the panels discussed each wine—winemakers sharing opinions about quality, sommeliers reacting to style... Disagreements (as in all professional wine competitions) were common. But as the experts shared details and conclusions, truth came out about every wine. (A scribe assigned to each panel kept careful notes.)

When the process is airtight (see logistics at left) and the judges are truly experienced tasters, the results of a competition like ours mean something. A *Sunset* medal is an endorsement to be trusted (go to sunset.com/2014medals for our whole list for 2014). And from the judges' scores emerge exciting trends, groups of wines that are at the top of their game, and special values among thousands of bottles on shop shelves now. Here are some especially compelling discoveries among this year's Gold Medal winners.





“This tasting order—Pinot, Merlot, Cab, then Pinot Grigio—is a great plan. Sip a little white after red, and you avoid purple teeth and wine fatigue.”

—LESLIE SBROCCO, AUTHOR, *WINE FOR WOMEN*; KQED HOST, *CHECK, PLEASE!*

TOP REDS OVER \$40

We all know that some whopping wine prices are based on reputation and scarcity. In a tasting like ours—blind to price—the true cream rises to the top. These reds are pricey but worth it.

- Aratas 2010 Petite Sirah (Napa Valley; \$45)
- Betz Family 2011 “Besoleil” (Columbia Valley; \$45)
- Dry Creek Vineyard 2011 “The Mariner” Meritage (Dry Creek Valley; \$45)
- Gamache 2010 Vineyard Select Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley; \$55)
- Halter Ranch 2011 Estate Reserve “Ancestor” (Paso Robles; \$50)
- Hendry 2009 Hendry Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley; \$55)
- Huge Bear 2010 “Ursa Gigantes” (Sonoma County; \$45)
- Meadowlark 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Barbara County; \$50)
- Mi Sueño 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley; \$70)

- Obsidian Ridge 2010 Obsidian Ridge Vineyard “Half Mile” (Red Hills, Lake County; \$60)
- Palmeri 2011 “High Elevation” Van Ness Vineyard Syrah (Alexander Valley; \$42)
- Robert Mondavi 2010 Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville, Napa Valley; \$55)
- Silverado Vineyards 2010 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley; \$58)
- St. Francis 2011 “Rockpile Red” (Sonoma County; \$50)
- Willamette Valley Vineyards 2012 Bernau Block Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley; \$55)
- William Hill 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley; \$40)



BACK IN THE GROOVE

PINOT NOIR REBOUNDS



Remember how the movie *Sideways* put Pinot on the map 10 years ago? Mediocre versions flooded the market to satisfy demand. Now, it seems we’re recovering. This year’s class of Pinots won a higher percentage of Gold Medals than any other category.

- Acacia 2012 Pinot Noir (Carneros; \$28)
- Black Stallion 2012 Pinot Noir (Los Carneros; \$28)
- DeLoach 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley; \$24)
- Dutton-Goldfield 2012 Dutton Ranch, Emerald Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir (Green Valley of Russian River Valley; \$58)
- Francis Ford Coppola 2012 Director’s Cut Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Sonoma County; \$27)
- Huge Bear 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley; \$45)
- MacMurray Ranch 2012 Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands; \$35)
- Patz & Hall 2012 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast; \$46)
- Roblar 2012 Gold Collection Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills; \$50)
- Schug 2012 Pinot Noir (Carneros; \$30)
- Sonoma-Cutrer 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Sonoma County; \$34)
- Sonoma Hills 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley; \$23)
- Stemmler 2012 Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir (Carneros; \$44)
- Stephen Ross 2012 Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands; \$25)
- Taft Street 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley; \$24)
- Talley 2012 Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley; \$36)

RESPECTABLE AGAIN

A NEW DAY FOR CHARDONNAY

These Gold Medal bottles range in style but impressed our judges with their balance. (Looks like Chard might be growing out of its awkward excessive-butter-and-oak phase.)



- Black Stallion 2012 Limited Release Chardonnay (Napa Valley; \$32)
- Clos Du Val 2012 Chardonnay (Carneros; \$28)
- Franciscan 2012 "Cuvée Sauvage" Chardonnay (Carneros, Napa County; \$40)
- Fritz 2012 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley; \$25)
- Jordan 2012 Chardonnay
- (Russian River Valley; \$30)
- Kimmel 2012 Chardonnay (Mendocino County; \$32)
- Lost Canyon 2012 Ruxton Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley; \$35)
- Miner 2012 Chardonnay (Napa Valley; \$30)
- Red Car 2012 Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast; \$35)
- Rodney Strong 2012 Chardonnay (Sonoma County; \$17)
- Scott Family 2012 Dijon Clone Chardonnay (Arroyo Seco; \$25)
- Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 2012 "Karia" Chardonnay (Napa Valley; \$35)
- ZD 2012 Chardonnay (California; \$37)

"I love combing through the results after the fact, to see if I really did like something I've always considered a standard-bearer—like King Estate Pinot Gris."

—TIM TEICHGRAEBER, WINE AND SPIRITS WRITER



BEST BUYS



Our judges tasted \$15 wines alongside \$50 wines, without knowing which was which, and these wallet-friendly bottles held up. Better than most weeknight wines, they'll do you proud for any occasion.

- Alamos 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza, Argentina; \$13)
- Buena Vista 2013 Vinicultural Society Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma; \$15)
- Casa Silva 2012 Cuvée Colchagua Carmenere (D.O. Valle de Colchagua, Chile; \$15)
- Clos du Bois 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (North Coast; \$15)
- Columbia Winery 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley; \$12)
- Hahn 2012 Merlot (Central Coast; \$14)
- Jones of Washington 2011 Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon (Wahlukle Slope; \$15)
- Las Rocas de San Alejandro 2011 Garnacha (Catalayud DO, Spain; \$14)
- Lock & Key 2011 Meritage (North Coast; \$12)
- Louis Jadot 2012 (Beaujolais Villages AOC; \$13)
- Lucinda & Millie 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendocino County; \$11)
- Montes 2012 Classic Series Cabernet Sauvignon (D.O. Colchagua Valley, Chile; \$13)
- Paul Mas Single Vineyard Collection 2013 Savignac Vineyard Carignan (Pays d'Hérault IGP, France; \$14)
- Prunotto 2012 Fiulet (Barbera d'Asti DOCG, Italy; \$15)
- Renwood 2011 Zinfandel (California; \$15)
- Sofos 2010 Agiorgitiko/Cabernet Sauvignon (PGI Corinth, Greece; \$12)
- Sokol Blosser NV 3rd Edition "Evolution Red" (American; \$15)
- Adelaida 2012 "Version" (Paso Robles; \$50)
- Alexandria Nicole 2013 Destiny Ridge Vineyard Estate Grown "Shepherds Mark" (Horse Heaven Hills; \$24)
- Bokisch 2013 Clay Station Vineyard Verdejo (Borden Ranch, Lodi; \$18)
- Dunham 2012 Lewis Estate Vineyard Riesling (Columbia Valley; \$20)
- Halter Ranch 2013 "Côtes de Paso Blanc" (Paso Robles; \$28)
- King Estate Signature Collection 2013 Pinot Gris (Oregon; \$17)
- La Cana 2013 Albariño (Rias Baixas DO, Spain; \$17)
- Navarro 2012 "White Roan" (Mendocino; \$18)
- Palmina 2012 Honea Vineyard Arneis (Santa Ynez Valley; \$20)
- Troon 2013 "Foundation '72" Vermentino (Applegate Valley, Southern Oregon; \$18)
- Winter's Hill 2013 Pinot Blanc (Dundee Hills, Oregon; \$17)



BREAK OUT GREAT WHITES

This is the year to try stellar whites that aren't Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc.

“As an Oregonian, I’m partial to Pinot, and these 2012s are great! (Even those from California.) But the Washington red blends are knockouts too.”

—COLE DANEHOWER, PUBLISHER,
ESSENTIALNORTHWESTWINES.COM



AFFORDABLE CABS



What we all need most are mid-range Cabernets that overdeliver for their price. Here are eight among hundreds tasted that hit that sweet spot.

Barrister 2010 Bacchus Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley; \$31)

Katherine Goldschmidt 2012 Crazy Creek Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley, Sonoma County; \$20)

Lapostolle 2012 Apalta Vineyard Cuvée Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley, Chile; \$25)

Mantra 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander

Valley, Sonoma County; \$30)

Napa Cellars 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley; \$26)

Pearmund 2012 Silver Creek Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Virginia; \$25)

Trentadue 2012 “La Storia” Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley, Sonoma County; \$35)

Uppercut 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley; \$25)



Hear Sara! Catch wine editor Sara Schneider each week on David Wilson’s *Grape Encounters*: grapeencountersradio.com.

SARA’S TASTING TIPS

DO IT LIKE A PRO

I don’t suggest taking on 100 wines in a day, but when it comes to tasting like the professionals (check out Cole Danehower’s style above), I can say: “Do try this at home.” What you uncover will punch up your pleasure.

USE a thin-rimmed glass with a bowl large enough to swirl the wine exuberantly without sloshing it over the top.

TILT the glass and twirl it slowly, looking at the wine’s color against a light backdrop. The denser it is,

the more flavors and textures likely have been extracted from the skins. The viscosity of the rivulets (the “legs”) when you right the glass hints at alcohol level—thicker usually means higher.

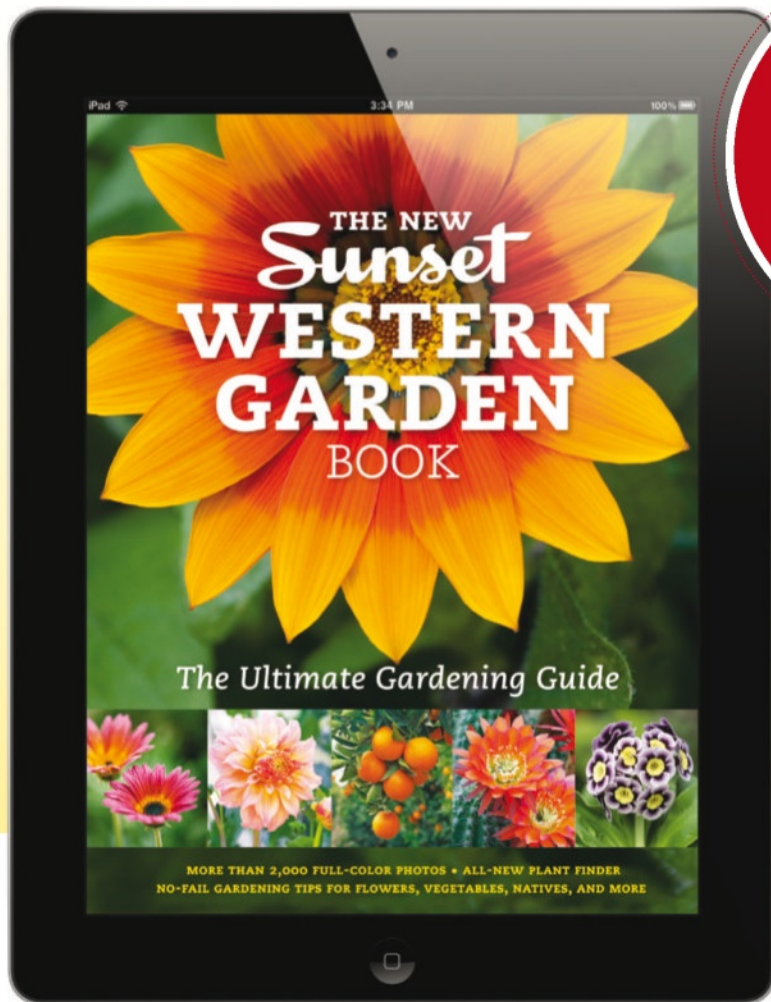
GIVE the wine a good swirl and stick your

nose in the glass, taking a few short, sharp sniffs. Register what you smell: citrus, flowers, stone fruit, red or black fruit, herbs, spices? Those flavors should follow.

TAKE a sip and let it roll over your tongue for a good three or

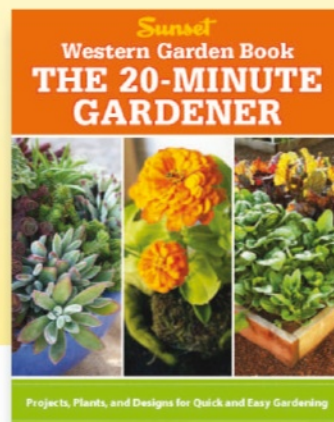
four seconds. Do you taste the same flavors? Are they simple or complex? Is the wine tannic (a drying effect), and are the tannins rough or smooth? Does the taste of the wine last long? Do you like it?

SPIT (optional).



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ASK SUNSET

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT LIFE IN THE WEST? WE HAVE THE ANSWERS.



Q: Friends from around the country are planning a rendezvous for mid-October. One recommended Yosemite. Is that a good time to go? —ALLISON BLIZZARD, HOUSTON

October is one of our favorite months in Yosemite National Park. The waterfalls can be dry, yes. But there's good fall color in the valley—maples and black oaks. And the temperatures are autumnally perfect: 70s daytime, down to high 30s at night. Tioga Pass and Glacier Point Roads are usually open through the end of October so you have access to the high country. And there are 200,000 fewer visitors than in July. Even so, if you have your heart set on staying at The Ahwahnee hotel, we'd recommend a weekday visit.



Q: My daughter and son-in-law want to plant a low green groundcover, hardy enough to walk on and also handle the winters up here. Suggestions? —FRAN, TRUCKEE, CA

That's a pickle. Walkable groundcovers are the holy grail of plants anywhere, especially in the rugged High Sierra. For a lawn look-alike, try creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra*). It tolerates shade,

and varieties such as *F.r.* 'Jughandle' tolerate drought. 'UC Verde' buffalo grass (pictured at left) is another good choice—it's pretty and quite tough, though slow to fill in and turns brown in winter. Besides grasses, there's Roman chamomile ("Treneague" is nonflowering and needs no mowing) or woolly thyme with silvery foliage—great between pavers. For slopes, consider greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*); it isn't walkable, but it's a graceful Sierra native. ☺

Q: I plan to cook with my Halloween pumpkin. How long can I keep it out before it goes bad?

—A.M., MILL VALLEY, CA

Carved pumpkins are pretty much kaput after a day, but a whole pumpkin is a tricky devil—its edible lifespan varies widely, based on the pumpkin's integrity (gouges are the kiss of death) and weather conditions (cool and dry is ideal). The longest we've seen an unblemished pumpkin last is about three months, stored in the fridge. As long as your pumpkin remains firm and heavy without soft spots and with a rigid stem still attached, it's good. By the way, standard pumpkins from the patch make fine jack-o'-lanterns but lousy pies—their flesh is fibrous and bland. Instead, shop at produce markets for cooking pumpkins—prettier than the carving kind and *much* tastier. Sugar Pie is a good bet, since it's small and easy to handle. But our Test Kitchen favorite, with flavorful, deep orange flesh, is Cinderella (also sold as Rouge Vif d'Etampes).



Email your questions about Western gardening, travel, food, wine, or home design to asksunset@sunset.com.

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A 46-mile trip to watch your daughter's soccer game.

A 123-mile trip to watch your other daughter's softball game.

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