

ISSUE 03 - 2017

#figchronicles

from the heart & minds of the girl & the fig in Sonoma



off the vine





#figchronicles

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when you are visiting us don't forget to hashtag your photographs with
#figchronicles



#figchronicles from our guests

#figchronicles

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#figchronicles in Cuba

SUMMER FUN IN SONOMA

It is not all about wine tasting in Sonoma County. Sometimes we think it is, but one thing that attracted me 25 years ago and actually got me to move here - was the diversity of activities that are available. Whether or not you are a hiker, a sports fanatic, a foodie, a race car wanna-be, or a zipliner we have that for you too! So here are a few things that we think you may enjoy! Hope you are planning on spending some time in Sonoma County this summer!

NOTABLE EVENTS

June 2-11	Healdsburg Jazz Festival Downtown Healdsburg healdsburgjazzfestival.org
June 2-4	Sonoma Historic Motorsports Festival Sonoma Raceway, Sonoma svra.com
June 9-10	Huichica Music Festival Gundlach Bundschu Winery Sonoma wwwgunbun.com
June 9-10	Peggy Sue Car Show Santa Rosa www.cruiseforpeggysue.com
June 11	Sonoma County Hot Air Balloon Classic Keiser Park, Windsor schabc.org
June 23-25	Toyota/Save Mart 350 Nascar Sonoma Raceway, Sonoma sonomaraceway.com
July 4	Old Fashioned July 4th Parade Sonoma Plaza, Sonoma
July 14-16	Gay Wine Weekend Sonoma Valley outinthevineyard.com
July 16	Wine Country Half Marathon Napa to Sonoma destinationraces.com
August 3 - 13	Sonoma County Fair Santa Rosa www.sonomacountyfair.com
August 12-13	Gravenstein Apple Fair Sebastopol gravensteinapplefair.com
September 2-3	Wine Country Weekend Green Music Center, Rohnert Park sonomawinecountryweekend.com



Sonoma Stompers Baseball

Founded in 2014, the Sonoma Stompers have garnered local and national support by providing a fun, community atmosphere that is pitch perfect. On the national level, the Stompers have received attention for the team's 2016 homerun additions of female athletes Kelsie Whitmore, whose Stompers memorabilia was recently enshrined into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, and Stacy Piagno. These additions made the Stompers the first co-ed professional baseball team since the 1950's to have more than one female player on the roster simultaneously.

The Sonoma Stompers play ball at Peoples Home Equity Ballpark at Arnold Field, located at 180 1st Street West, Sonoma, CA 95476. The 1,400-seat stadium is in the heart of Sonoma, just off the historic plaza.

Stompers players, coaches and office staff have made it a priority to make appearances at schools, libraries, food banks, fundraisers, community events and senior living centers throughout Sonoma County. Also new for 2017, every Stompers home stand will feature and benefit a non-profit organization in the Sonoma community, and the team will be raising money and awareness for fantastic causes such as Boys & Girls Club of Sonoma Valley, the Sonoma Valley Ed Foundation, La Luz, Make A Wish, the Mentoring Alliance and more.



EVENT | DATE | OPPONENT | GAME TIME

Opening Night Jun. 13 Vallejo Admirals 6 p.m.
Saint Francis Corkscrew Night Jun. 15 Vallejo Admirals 6 p.m.
Sweet Scoops Night Jun. 23 San Rafael Pacifics 6 p.m.
Father's Day the Remix Jun. 24 San Rafael Pacifics 5 p.m.
Out at the Ballpark/LGBTQ Night Jun. 25 San Rafael Pacifics 5 p.m.
Marty Lurie Night Jun. 29 San Rafael Pacifics 6 p.m.
Independence Day & Fireworks Jul. 4 Pittsburg Diamonds 6 p.m.
Women in Sports Day Jul. 6 Pittsburg Diamonds 6 p.m.
Sweet Scoops Night Jul. 14 Pittsburg Diamonds 6 p.m.
Napa Night Jul. 20 San Rafael Pacifics 6 p.m.
Bocce Ball Night Jul. 22 Pittsburg Diamonds 5 p.m.
Sunday Punday Jul. 23 Pittsburg Diamonds 5 p.m.
Sweet Scoops Night Jul. 28 San Rafael Pacifics 6 p.m.
Key & Peel Night Aug. 8 Vallejo Admirals 6 p.m.
Sweet Scoops Night Aug. 18 Vallejo Admirals 6 p.m.
Fan Appreciation Weekend Aug. 19-20 Vallejo Admirals 5 p.m.

For more information and the complete Sonoma Stomper schedule, please visit www.StompersBaseball.com.

ALL YEAR LONG

- Animal Watching at Safari West**
Santa Rosa
www.safariwest.com
- Star Gazing at Ferguson Observatory**
Sugarloaf Ridge Park, Kenwood
www.sugarloafpark.org
- Charles M. Schulz Museum**
Santa Rosa
www.schulzmuseum.com

Transcendence Theatre Company

Broadway Under the Stars” in Wine Country
A Summer Concert Series
Presented by Transcendence Theatre Company
In Sonoma Valley, California
June - September

From June through September on select weekends, visitors to Sonoma County can conclude a day of wine tasting by attending “Broadway Under the Stars,” the signature musical concert series presented by Transcendence Theatre Company in the open-air Winery Ruins of Jack London State Historic Park.

The Huffington Post raved:
“Joyous, uplifting ... the most unforgettable evening of my summer.”

An award-winning series of Broadway-inspired concerts featuring performers from New York and Hollywood — artists who come to the Sonoma stage directly from recent Broadway appearances. More than a standard musical revue, each concert weaves an eclectic mix of popular music and Broadway songs into a spectacular performance.

The event begins with picnicking amidst the Park’s sprawling vineyards — food trucks or gourmet picnic baskets spread out in the meadow, local wineries pouring and pre-show music cast a magical spell of communal festivity. Sunset heralds the start of the show and the stage begins to sparkle as dusk descends and the Broadway stars sing and dance under a starlit nighttime sky. Since their inception in 2011, Transcendence Theatre Company shows have been experienced by over 81,000 patrons and raised over \$267,000 for Jack London State Historic Park.

Another Openin' Another Show!
June 16 - 8, June 23 - 25, June 30 - July 2

Fantastical Family Night
July 14 - 15

Fascinating Rhythm
August 4 - 6, August 11 - 13, August 17 - 20

Gala Celebration
September 8 - 10

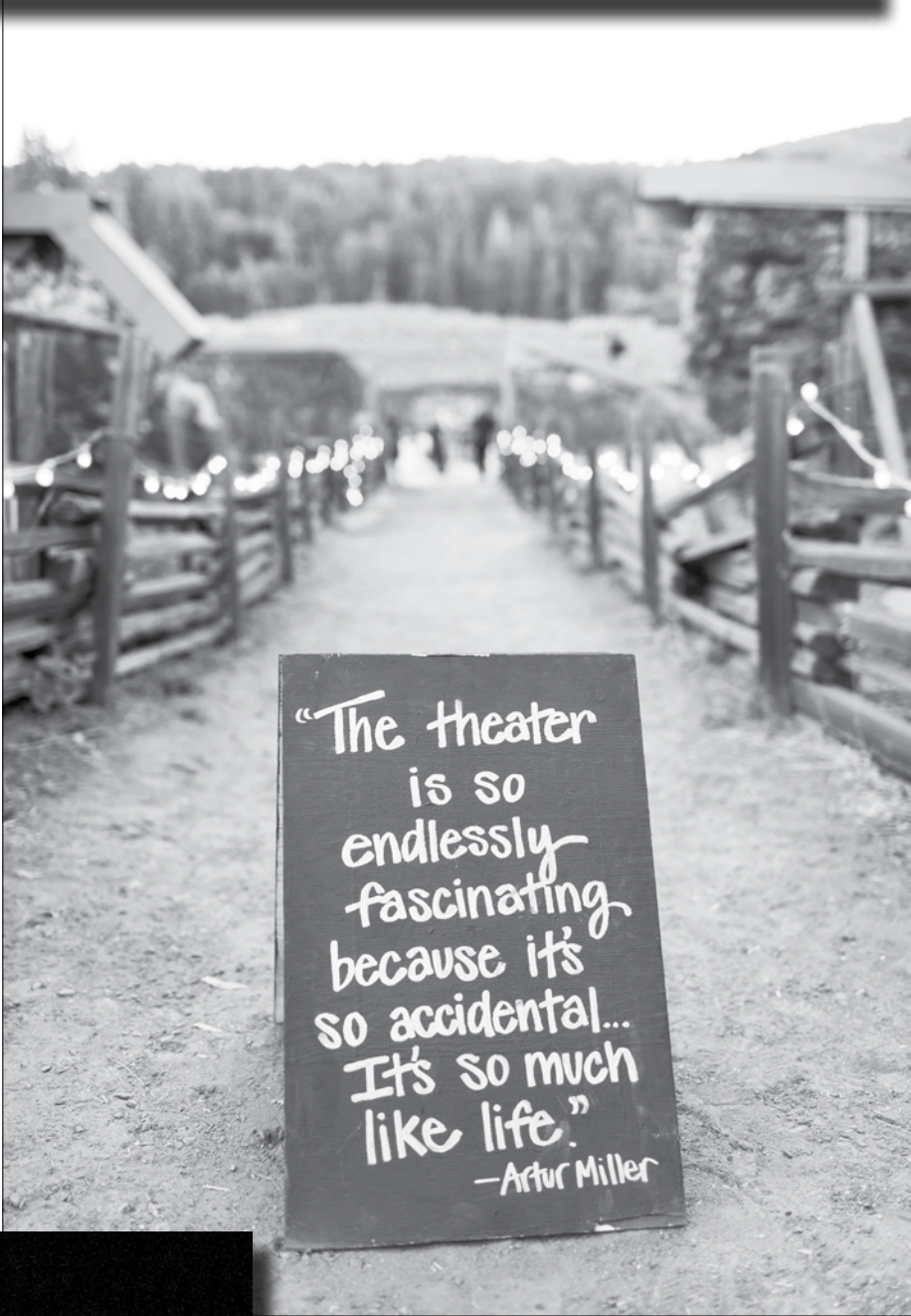
Giving Back

Transcendence Theatre Company is committed to creating extraordinary experiences in people’s lives that inspire them to live their best life and make a profound difference in the world. With a deep belief that art is service, Transcendence Theatre Company is committed to bringing art to everyone.

In the last five years, Transcendence outreach programming brought artistic workshops & direct arts access to over 1200 individuals, among them a broad range of youth, at risk teens, adults with disabilities, and people suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia. These distinctive programs were in addition to robust and motivational education activities sponsored by Transcendence Theatre Company.



Founders; Stephen Stubbins, Amy Miller and Brad Surosky



PURCHASE TICKETS
at
www.BestNightEver.org

the fig rig
will be at Jack London State Park
for pre-concert dining on
July 2, July 14, August 5 - 6,
August 11 - 12, August 18,
September 8

SHAKING IT UP!

JOHN WILSON IN ACTION



MUDDLE



MEASURE



SQUEEZE

Strawberry Liberté

makes 2 cocktails

2 oz St George Reposado Gin
1 oz Lillet Blanc
4 strawberries muddled
2 dashes lemon juice
6-8 dashes orange bitters

Muddle the strawberries in a mixing glass. Add the remaining ingredients with ice and shake vigorously. Strain into a coupe or martini glass and garnish with edible flower petals.

Cucumber - Mint Lemonade

makes 2 cocktails

3 oz Hanson's Cucumber Vodka
6 slices of cucumber
10 mint leaves
8 oz lemonade
splash club soda

Muddle 4 of the cucumber slices with the mint leaves in a mixing glass. Add the vodka, lemonade and soda with ice and shake. Pour into a highball glass and garnish with the remaining cucumber.

Granada Suerté

makes 2 cocktails

3 oz Suerte Tequila
5 oz Pomegranate Juice
1.5 oz Simple Syrup
Juice of 2 limes
2 oz soda

Combine the first 3 ingredients in a mixing glass, shake. Pour into a highball glass. Splash with soda. Garnish with a lime wedge on the rim.

Lavender Mojito

makes 2 cocktails

3 oz Silver Rum
3 oz Lavender Simple Syrup
2 oz lime juice
12 mint leaves
4 oz soda water
2 lime wedge

In a mixing glass muddle the mint leaves with ice. Add all ingredients except for the lime wedge and shake. Pour into a pint glass, fill with ice as needed and garnish with lime wedges.



SHAKE



STRAIN



GARNISH

Tips For Creating a Signature Cocktail For Your Event

by: Durae Hardy

Creating a signature cocktail for your wedding or event might seem like a simple task at first glance. Of course, the most important consideration is choosing something that you love – one that represents you and your spouse-to-be & adds to the aesthetic you’ve created for the occasion.

But, there’s much to consider – for wine country weddings in particular, it’s important to inquire before booking your venue what limitations might be in place regarding alcohol. Some wineries restrict hard alcohol, require a minimum purchase of the estate wines, or pour their label exclusively.

Also, the geographical limitations of the site should be considered, as well as the scope of staffing that you have in mind. In general, plan for 1 bartender per 50 – 75 guests, depending on your crowd’s consumption, how hot it is that day, the complexity of the bar menu, and so on.

Reasons why we think you’ll want to choose a signature cocktail for your event:

Set the scene – if this is to be the welcome beverage of your reception, it’s the perfect opportunity to share something uniquely you – it can be sweet and meaningful, or simply stunning and delicious. Either way, we think the glass you greet your guests with should make an impression.

Another argument for the signature beverage is simplicity. A large group of party-goers on a hot summer day can keep a bartender scrambling. Fewer ingredients to stock in an off-site bar will make for a smoother flow to service & less delay, which can translate to costs saved as well as a better experience for your guests.

Once you’ve decided you want a signature cocktail for your event, you must choose which one!

Here’s our advice:

Choose vodka. Really. Vodka is the most universally popular spirit, and appeals to the broadest range of palettes. There are also endless variations on how it can be incorporated, and drinks can be designed to please the connoisseur to the amateur. Vodka also pairs well with fruit, and this paves the way for creating a non-alcoholic option that is equally celebratory and special.

Consider the weather. The obvious rule-of-thumb here is that in warmer weather, something light and refreshing will appeal to all; while in cooler weather, a martini or whiskey-based drink (like a sazerac) can be the perfect warm-up!

If you do have your heart set on offering a “built” cocktail, like an old fashioned or mojito, as your signature drink, be sure to plan ahead. Everyone’s been to at least one party where elaborately-constructed drinks and inadequate prep had you waiting in line at the bar all night. Avoid this pitfall by a) hiring a professional & b) staffing up based on the complexity of your menu.

If you have chosen a wedding site that does not permit hard alcohol, it’s still possible to offer a signature cocktail at your event! Sparkling wine concoctions are a wonderful alternative, as are recipes that substitute for a lower-octane spirit.

Now, the fun part. Tasting! Your bartender should be able to help you with suggestions on which ingredients are in season and where to procure the best produce. Once you’ve narrowed your choices down to a few recipes, it’s time for a tasting.



Strawberry Liberté



Granada Suerte



Lavender Mojito



Cucumber Mint Lemonade

Meet the Makers:

Jamie Mickelson, Sonoma Mountain Beef Co.

Many of us are looking for the place where passion and talent cross paths with purpose and utility – and it seems as though Jamie Mickelson has cracked the code.

A Glen Ellen native, Jamie launched her ranching operation, Sonoma Mountain Beef Company, in 2015 after earning a bachelor's and master's in Agri-business at Cal Poly.

By the age of nine she'd already taken up the family mantle of raising and showing cattle and was holding her own in the arena. Not totally surprising since Mickelson is of the 5th generation of the Kunde family, who've been farming, ranching, and vinting in Sonoma County since German immigrant Louis Kunde (Jamie's great-great grandfather) arrived in the United States in the late 1800s.

The family homestead has since been home to a dairy, pig farm, and in the 1940s cattle were introduced to the property. (Long-time residents of the valley might even remember brothers Bob and Fred Kunde's butcher shop, Jamie's grandfather and great-uncles, which operated on the ranch at that time.)

"We're continuing a family tradition," Jamie explains, while touring the fig team around her digs in late spring of this year.

The ranch itself, built by Jamie's grandfather and nestled among old vines, orchards and assorted barns, paddocks, and outbuildings ("everything is still painted white, because that's how my grandfather loved it," she relays with obvious affection) serves as home base for Jamie's endeavors, but her cattle graze pastures throughout the county, as far west as the Petaluma coast.

But as the saying goes, this ain't her grandfather's ranching operation - Jamie brings a modern sensibility to the family tradition and it's a poignant illustration of the old becoming the new.



An emphasis on local sourcing and sustainability informs all of her business decisions. After roaming open pasture until reaching maturity, Jamie's animals are finished on local grain, and processing is handled by Golden Gate Meat Company in Santa Rosa. Her product is then sold directly to select Sonoma restaurants as well as at year-round farmers' markets in Sonoma and Napa.

Sonoma Valley is rightly known as a foodie's paradise, and the local food movement is having its moment here as well as across the country. But Jamie felt strongly about moving beyond current trends in foodie-ism and providing something she knew was needed, was of superior quality and at its core sustainable in the long term.

Since the beginning, Mickelson prioritized breeding and responsible, local sourcing over often-restrictive buzzwords of the moment, "grass-fed" and "organic." Her strategy places a heavy emphasis on the Hereford genetics (only cattle with white faces stay in her program), pasture raising to ensure quality of life for the animals, and proper stewardship of the land.

"What I find now that I've been in the market is that consumers want a high quality, locally and humanely raised source of beef that they can feel good about feeding to their families," she observes.

"When consumers invest in the purchase of a rib eye steak, roast, or hamburger, they expect a great tasting experience." To deliver that quality with consistency is a tall order for an exclusively grass fed product, which is where Mickelson feels her brand earns its distinction. Beyond 100% local sourcing she says, "I can pretty much guarantee a great tasting product every time."

Of keeping it local, Jamie goes on to say, "maybe it's my generation, but I'm a firm believer in buying, selling, and supporting local. Small businesses are the backbone of our community, and I don't want to see that change."

So, what's next for Sonoma Mountain Beef Company?

"My vision is big!" the young rancher proclaims while we take in rolling valley views from the top of her grassy pasture. From this vantage point, there's little room for doubt.

Find Sonoma Mountain Beef Co.'s product on the girl & the fig's menu in our Sonoma Mountain Beef Co. Burger.

Shop the online store at www.sonomamountainbeef.com, or catch Jamie at the following local markets:

Valley of the Moon Certified Farmers Market
www.sonomaplazamarket.com

Sonoma Farmers Market
www.svcfm.org

Napa Farmers Market
www.napafarmersmarket.org



Meet the Maker: Joe Matos Cheese Factory

excerpts from *Plats du Jour, the girl & the fig's Journey Through the Seasons in Wine Country*



There is one cheese I simply cannot imagine doing without, a cheese that is essential to our grilled cheese sandwich and the Croque Monsieur: Joe Matos' "St. Jorge." It's a semi-soft, pale-yellow cow's milk cheese reminiscent of Havarti but with more bite to it. I like eating it out of hand or in a sandwich; it melts nicely but still retains its flavor. We've had Joe's cheese on our menu since 1997 and it was one of the first California cheeses I tasted when I moved here. It's another ingredient that is quintessential Sonoma County—the product of two people, a herd of cows, and a lot of hard work.

Driving down the rutted dirt road to the Matos farm in Santa Rosa doesn't give you a clue about the intensely-flavored cheese that sits in the aging room. Past the wooden fences, acres of grass, a friendly dog, and a large brown barn lies a plain white door. This is where the magic happens. Joe and Mary Matos have been making this particular cheese for five generations, and "it's the only type of cheese made where I come from," says Mary. The family is from the town of St. George in the Azores, an island in Portugal, but the Matos' settled in Petaluma, California, in 1965. Joe taught Mary how to make the cheese and Mary made it in her home kitchen for family and friends until they moved to Santa Rosa in 1980 and built the cheesemaking facility. Joe is a compact man in a baseball hat who moves efficiently around the farm and

refers affectionately to "the boss," his silver-haired, tough-talking wife Mary.

The Matos' use milk from their herd of 37 Jersey and Holstein cows—"I don't want anyone else's milk," says Mary. Joe takes care of the cows and milks them while Mary and her two assistants ("the ladies," as they're called) make the cheese six days a week. They make 10 to 13 wheels each day, "depending on how much milk we have," says Mary.

The cheesemaking room is actually quite small. A large stainless steel vat dominates the small white room. The milk is heat treated and then poured into the vat. When we first started serving the cheese, it was a raw milk product. However, the county caught up with them and they've been heat treating the milk since 2000. The curds and whey are separated in the vats and then the cheese is transferred to presses in a small cement-floored room. Joe made the presses himself from cement and metal weights; the cheese is entirely handmade except for the heat treating machine. (When Mary first started making cheese she used a coffee can with holes punched in it and a wooden press to shape it.) After the cheese is shaped and pressed, it's transferred to the aging room, a narrow room filled with brown wooden shelves that reach ten feet high. The wooden shelves allow the cheese to

breathe and age evenly. Mary checks the cheese every day, and it's turned over once a day and rubbed with a dry rag. "It gets tangier the longer it ages," says Mary. "It has to be aged properly." The cheese ages for two to eight months and is then cleaned and scraped ready for customers—chefs, wholesalers, and locals—to pick up. (The cheese is shipped around the country, as well.)

It was lovely watching Mary's eyes light up when we visited the farm. She proudly told us the story about how a few years ago she shipped a wheel of her cheese to the priest in her hometown in Sao Jorge. He claimed it to be finer than the original versions there on the islands. I am not surprised—a combination of an age-old tradition, Sonoma County's terroir, and good animal breeding would do it! A sense of pride like that only keeps the quality and intention high in the production of a family cheese.

Don't expect to find St. Jorge in your local grocery store. "We keep making it a little bit at a time," says Mary. "That's how I was raised." You might find it in local cheese shops in Sonoma County and some specialty stores but you can always find it on our menu.





the sandwich

The perfect sandwich is an artform unto itself. Whether your tastes run from the traditional to the esoteric, you're a beef medium-rare, sliced thin, and dunked in jus type, or if fare of a lighter assortment (think lightly grilled veggies with a sweet drizzle of basil oil) suits your fancy - the simple sandwich stands alone in its singular ability to be all things to all people.

We took the pursuit of the perfect sandwich to an expert, Chef Matt Spector. His advice:

"A sandwich should be treated as any composed dish on a plate. You need balance; if your veggies are gone and there's still meat on your plate, it is not balanced. Think of composing the texture the way you would any dish: in each bite you want the crunch of bread, snap of vegetables, a little bit of acidity (pickles, vinegar, mustard), and so on. You need to choose the right bread for the right ingredients, and the 'meat' of your sandwich is a fine line between too much of a good thing and not enough."

Some of the 'FIG' staff weigh in with their favorites:

Chef **Matt's** favorite sandwich:
Peanut butter and jelly. Satisfying, fast, and easy.

Jonathan R. has a few favorites depending where he is ...
when at "the fig" - Pork Belly Sandwich;
at the cafe - Chef's burger;
at Junie's in St. Helena - Italian combo with everything

Jennifer W.'s favorite:
Simple Turkey, Provolone and Pickles

Laura D.'s favorite:
Caprese Sandwich or the girl & the fig CATERS! salami & pear sandwich

Kelly M.'s favorite:
Salami on dark rye, sharp cheese, mustard and pickles

Janice favorite:
BLT on wheat toast or a Burger.

Ariel A.'s favorite:
Grilled cheese with ketchup on the side.

Megan B.'s favorite:
Dutch crunch roll, cranberry sauce, mayo, lettuce, roasted turkey and bacon.

Sydney D.'s favorite:
Turkey with stuffing and cranberry.



No matter which sandwich you indulge in, the plate is not complete until you add a pickle. In our kitchens, we make both bread & butter and dill pickles. Here is a recipe that should keep you in pickles for at least a month of sandwiches!

Bread & Butter Pickles

- 10 pounds pickling cucumbers
- 3 onions, julienne
- 1 cups salt
- 10 cups apple cider vinegar
- 5 cups sugar
- 1.25 teaspoons tumeric
- 1.25 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 1.25 teaspoons anise seeds
- 1 star anise
- 1 teaspoons allspice whole
- 1.25 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1/4 cup garlic cloves

Slice cucumbers on the curved bottom blade of mandoline. Make sure to set blade to its largest setting.

Place cucumbers and onions in a perforated pan and marinate with salt. After two hours, rinse the cucumbers and onions and let drain.

Bring the apple cider vinegar and sugar to a boil until the sugar is completely dissolved. Add the spices and simmer for 5 minutes. Place the cucumbers and onions in a very large container and cover with the heated mixture. Find something to place over the cucumbers to weight them down.

Place in the refrigerator and allow cucumbers to brine for at least 24 hours.



ironypoisoning@VisualHunt



Our Guests' Favorite Sandwich

Fried Green Tomato BLT
Serves 6

- 6 Brioche buns
- 2 pounds sugar-spiced bacon, see below
- 1 head romaine, sliced thinly
- 1 cup black pepper aioli, see below
- Fried Green Tomatoes

- Sugar-Pepper Bacon
- 2 pounds thickly sliced bacon
 - ½ cup brown sugar
 - ½ tablespoon ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place brown sugar and black pepper in a large bowl. Place sliced bacon in bowl and coat evenly with mixture. Place on a cooking rack and cook in oven until browned and bacon is crisp (about 18-22 minutes)

- Black Pepper Aioli
- 1 egg yolk
 - 1 garlic clove, pressed
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup olive oil
 - ½ teaspoon lemon juice
 - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

Whisk egg, garlic and salt in a bowl with 1 teaspoon water. Whisking constantly, slowly add olive oil in to form an emulsion. Stir in lemon juice and pepper.

- Fried Green Tomatoes
- 4 green tomatoes
 - 1 cup buttermilk
 - ½ cup panko
 - ¼ cup cornmeal
 - ¼ cup flour
 - ¼ cup grated Vella Dry Jack cheese (can substitute Parmesan)
 - 1½ teaspoon chipotle powder
 - 1½ teaspoon paprika
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon pepper

Slice off ends of tomatoes and portion remainder into three slices per tomato. Place the buttermilk in a shallow bowl. In another bowl mix together panko, cornmeal, flour, cheese, chipotle, paprika, salt & pepper. In a heavy bottom skillet, heat oil up to 350 degrees. Place green tomatoes in buttermilk, allow excess buttermilk to fall free, and toss in flour mixture. Place tomatoes in oil and cook for 1 minute on each side, remove and season lightly with salt & pepper.

To assemble:
Toast buns, and place a small spoonful of aioli on the bottom. Take the remaining aioli and mix with the romaine. Place the romaine on the bottom of the buns, top with 2 slices of fried green tomatoes, then bacon, then bun top.

Camping or Glamping

Natural beauty abounds in Sonoma County and when warm weather returns it beckons us all out to enjoy.

A new arrival on the scene of outdoor adventuring (and one that we're very big fans of) is "Glamping."

The purists among us would argue that for one to truly immerse themselves in the natural world, a total departure from the comforts of home is required. But those of us of less-adventurous sorts or who believe that no vacation is a vacation without good coffee, good eats, and hot showers, glamping can be the perfect compromise.

There are still plenty of arguments in favor of embracing the great outdoors minimalist-style, and certainly there's no replacement for communing with nature in its true and unadorned state, completely unplugged. But there's something to be said for finding the best of both worlds - especially for those fleeting summer weekends that seem to disappear before your very eyes.

And either way, s'mores are on the menu.

Camping

Austin Creek State Recreation Area

17000 Armstrong Woods Road, Guerneville
23 campsites

secluded pond, hiking, proximity to Armstrong Woods

Salt Point State Park

25050 Highway 1, Jenner
20 miles of hiking, horseback riding, fishing
Over 100 campsites

Sonoma Coast State Park

7095 Highway 1, Bodega Bay
coastal campsites located in three separate areas

Bodega Dunes

2485 Highway 1, Bodega Bay
98 campsites, showers, restrooms, overnight & day use

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

2605 Adobe Canyon Road, Kenwood
4000 acres, 25 foot waterfall
47 meadow family campsites

Doran Regional Park

201 Doran Beach Road, Bodega Bay
112 campsites, EV charging station

Springlake Regional Park

393 Violetti Road, Santa Rosa
30 campsites
swimming lagoon, boating, hiking

Glamping

Autocamp Russian River

14120 Old Cazadero Road, Guerneville
www.autocamp.com
*Airstream Suites, Luxury Tents
Firepits, Store, Wi-Fi, Lawn Games*

Safari West African Tent Camp

3115 Porter Creek Road, Santa Rosa
www.safariwest.com
*Luxury Tents, Wildlife Preserve, Continental Breakfast,
Private Bathrooms, Hot Showers, Massage Available*

Camp at Boon

14711 Armstrong Woods Road, Guerneville
www.boonhotels.com
Luxury Tents, Shared Bath Facilities, Breakfast

Treehouse Rentals

www.glampinghub.com
varies based on treehouse

Sonoma Broadway Farms

20675 Broadway, Sonoma
www.sonomabroadwayfarms.com
Dorm Bunkhouse, Camping, Farm, Yoga, Meals, Firepit

Westerbeke Ranch

2300 Grove Street, Sonoma
www.westerbekranch.com
*Cabins for Groups of 16+, Pool, Hot Tub, Volleyball,
Meals, Massage Available*



photo by Denys Nevozhai



Photo by Myles Tan

Photo by Roya Ann Miller



Photo provided by Autocamp



This is one of the best times of year to soak up everything that’s wonderful about living in Sonoma County. Of course, there’s a fantastic array of Farmers’ Markets in every town and enclave you might visit, but there’s something to be said for breaking up the weekly grind, cruising a country road, and tasting an heirloom tomato in the very spot it was grown. The friendly faces of your local farmers are always an added bonus.

Now is the time! Harvest season is upon us and the weather is fine. Here’s a listing of local on-farm stands and markets around the county:

Saturday Harvest Market at Sonoma Garden Park

April 20 - October 22
Saturdays, 9 – 12
19996 7th St E, Sonoma

Live Oak Farm Stand

Monday - Saturday, 10 – 5
1030 Lohrman Lane, Petaluma

Tierra Vegetables Farm Stand

Thursday-Friday 10 - 6, Saturday 10-5, Sunday 10 - 4
Airport Blvd & Highway 101, Santa Rosa

“The Red Barn” at Oak Hill Farm

Saturdays, May – December, 9 – 3
15101 Sonoma Highway, Glen Ellen
(Just north of Madrone Rd, eastern side of Hwy.12, turn in at the giant tree root)

Sweetwater Spectrum

Tuesdays, 10 - 12:30
730 W. Spain Street, Sonoma

First Light Farm Stand

Wed-Sun 11 - 5
4588 Bodega Avenue, Petaluma
Featuring organic veggies, u-pick flowers, local meat & eggs

Laguna Farm

Open to the Public Fridays 10 - 3
1764 Cooper Road, Sebastopol

Dry Creek Peach & Produce

Fri, Sat, & Sun, 12 – 5 in July, August, and the first half of September
2179 Yoakim Bridge, Healdsburg
(Please call 707-433-8121 to confirm store status and hours)

What’s Up Farm

Sunday, Monday & Friday 11 – 5
385 Mark West Springs Rd, Santa Rosa

Crane Melon Barn

Open September 1 – October 31, 10 – 6
4935 Petaluma Hill Road, Santa Rosa
(Please call 707-795-6987 to confirm store status and hours)

Preston of Dry Creek

Daily 11 – 4
9282 W. Dry Creek Rd, Healdsburg
(farm store is adjacent to tasting room)

Valley of the Moon Certified Farmers Market

Tuesdays (May 3 - September 26) 5:30 - Dusk
Sonoma Plaza

Sonoma Valley Certified Farmers Market

Fridays 9 - 12:30
Arnald Field Parking Lot - 241 West First Street

Kenwood Community Farmers Market

Sunday, June 4 - September 24 10 - 2
St. Patrick’s Church on Hwy 12, Kenwood

Santa Rosa Farmers Market

Wednesdays and Saturdays 8 - 1pm
Luther Burbank Center - 50 Mark West Springs Road

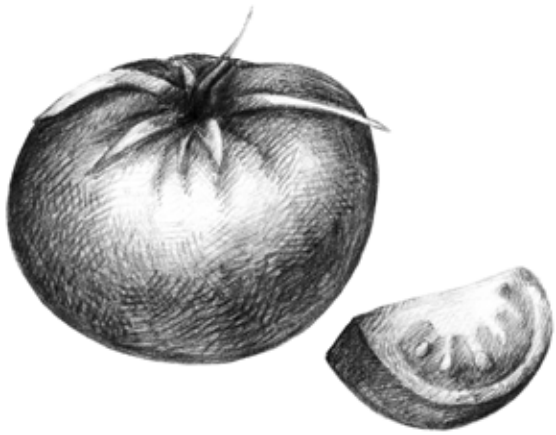
Now go hug a farmer!





heirloom
tomato
varietals





Our tomato plants are going in as we are writing this. KLauren & Ray have selected Yellow Zebra, Brandywine, Black Krim, Sungolds and Patano Romanesco for a start! Think Sweet & Juicy! Here are a few of the Heirloom Tomatoes that we have planted in the girl & the fig FARM over the years.

Mortgage Lifter

Mortgage Lifter is a classic heirloom tomato with a terrific tale. In 1940s Logan, West Virginia, a radiator repairman crossed four of the biggest tomatoes he could find to produce this beauty. He sold seedlings of it, using the proceeds to pay off his \$6,000 mortgage in six years. All these years later, it still a popular tomato among West Virginia gardeners and does very well in other parts of the country, too. Plants bear extra-large beefsteak tomatoes with few seeds and mild flavor. www.bonnieplants.com

Gold Medal

Introduced as Ruby Gold by John Lewis Childs of Floral Park, New York, in his 1921 catalog. Ben Quisenberry renamed it Gold Medal and listed it in his 1976 catalog: "The sweetest tomato you ever tasted. The yellow with streaks of red makes them very attractive and a gourmet's joy when sliced." Bi-colored tomato—orange-yellow splashed with tomato pink. www.seedsavers.org

Hillbilly

This ancient heirloom hails from the hills of West Virginia, where they know a superb tomato when they see one! Huge, mild-flavored, beefsteak-type fruits weigh 1 to 2 lbs. a piece, and are colored a most unusual orange-yellow, streaked and mottled in attractive shades of red and pink. www.totallytomato.com

Pink Brandywine

This is fairly certain, Brandywine is a tomato that found its way into the Seed Savers Exchange collection in 1982. It got there via an elderly (now deceased) Ohio gardener named Ben Quisenberry, who received the variety from a woman named Dorris Sudduth Hill. She stated that they had been in her family for over 80 years. I do not know where Dorris came from – hence, where the tomato originated. www.webgrower.com by Craig LeHoullier

Green Zebra

The Green Zebra was bred by Tom Wagner and introduced in 1983 by Tater-Mater Seed. The tomato ranges in size from 1½ to 2½ inches in diameter. The skins are yellow-green with darker green vertical stripes. They have an emerald green flesh and are mild flavored yet fruity and tart. The tomatoes start to get soft as they turn from green to yellow. www.victoryseeds.com

Since we first began our “farm project” years ago, we’ve harvested tens of thousands of tomatoes. We’re always learning about what methods work best in our farm’s microclimates, and we have set out to break our own records again this year.

After an exceptionally rainy winter and spring, Sonoma is finally enjoying long, sunny days that are warm enough to set out our starts. There are generally approximately 65 to 85 days from seed start to your first tomato harvest and in a culinary or market garden, that's far too much time to allot row space to nurturing seedlings. For that reason, we start our seedlings in a greenhouse or cold frame 6-8 weeks before our projected planting dates.

Starting Seedlings:

Begin seedlings indoors in a warm and protected location. Set tomato seeds into good quality planting mix and sprinkle a bit of soil over them. Seeds germinate best at 68 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Water – but don't over water! A good rule of thumb is to water until soil is moist, but not wet. Overwatering encourages fungal disease and other issues for young plants.

Seeds will germinate in 5-12 days. Maintain seedlings in a sunny location, being mindful of overwatering and sunburn, until they've developed “true” leaves and are a few inches tall. At this point, they can be gradually introduced (for short periods of time) to the outdoors. Plants are ready to move to the garden after all chance of frost has passed and they are roughly eight inches tall.

Hardening Off & Planting:

Choose a location in your garden that will receive a minimum of six hours full sun each day throughout the remainder of the season, has amended, nutritious soil, and easy access to water (tomatoes are notorious water and nutrient hogs).

About one week before you are ready to plant outdoors, it's time to begin “hardening off” your starts. This is an important part of the growing process because until now fragile seedlings have been very sheltered, and won't fare well if they haven't been gradually acclimated to the outdoor environment.

This should be done carefully, and of course it is all dependent on climate and your specific growing conditions. For our “babies” at the farm project, we begin by leaving the door of the greenhouse open just to let in a bit of cooler night air, but still leaving the plants in the greenhouse.

Our next step is to bring them out during the day to adjust, but always returning them to their safe warm greenhouse at night. Knowing how fragile they still are, we keep them in a sunny location but are always mindful of burning on particularly warm days.

After approximately one week of hardening your seedlings off, they're ready for the garden. Plant tomatoes about four feet apart. Tomato seedlings can be planted deeply, with just one or two leaves above the soil line. Finish with a feeding of compost around the base of the plant, and water deeply.

Trellising:

Now that your plants are thriving in the garden, it's time to talk about tomato trellising.

All the compost we add to soil in the “off” season gets things off to a great start. Even though tomatoes are a vigorous vine and usually produce profusely in our climate, there are a few easy tips that anyone can use to maximize and manage the ripening of their tomato harvest.

There are countless creative ways to trellis tomatoes. The idea, of course, is to keep them off the ground where fruit will rot or collect pests. At the farm project, we make use of what's called “the Florida Weave.”

It's an ideal system for fully-ripe, disease free plants and fruit, and also makes for more efficient harvest times. So, we set stakes early, run bailing twine from front-to-back between each stake and plant, and simply add rows of twine as the plants grow.

Pruning and Harvest:

Timely pruning of tomato plants is also important to their growth and yields.

When the first flowers have set on a vine, it is time to remove the “sucker” branches or side shoots. These grow to become main branches, draw energy from the plant that should go to fruit production, and also create shady, moist habitats that encourage plant disease.

This is a continual process as the season progresses. About 10 weeks from the first frost date in your area, you should begin to clip the new blossoms off of the plant, because they won't have time to ripen and will draw energy from the plant.

One final pruning should take place one month before frost: topping the plant will put its final growth toward finishing those last fall tomatoes, so that they might even make it, ripe, onto your Thanksgiving table!



Illustration Source: www.chestofbooks.com

tomato recipes

Heirloom Tomato Gazpacho

Serves 6

- 4.5 pounds heirloom tomatoes
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded & diced
- 1 cup fennel, diced
- 1 cucumber, peeled & chopped
- 1 red onion, chopped
- ¼ cup sherry wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup Pernod
- ½ tablespoon minced garlic
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped thyme
- ¼ cup chopped tarragon
- sea salt & pepper

On the bottom of the tomatoes, score an ‘X’ with a knife. In a boiling pot of water, blanch the tomatoes for 30 seconds to loosen skins. Place the tomatoes in ice water and drain. Remove the skins from the tomatoes and discard. Cut the tomatoes in half. Working over bowl, gently squeeze the tomato halves to release seeds and juices. Reserve the tomato meat. Strain the juices, pressing on solids to extract as much juice as possible. Discard the seeds. Chop the reserved tomato meat.

Transfer the chopped tomatoes and tomato juice to a large glass bowl. Add the red pepper, fennel, cucumber, red onion, vinegar, olive oil, Pernod, garlic, and herbs. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour. Puree half of the the gazpacho mixture in a blender until smooth. Add the puree to the rest of the gazpacho and mix well. Season with salt and pepper.

Chill at least 2 hours and up to 1 day. Serve cold.

Heirloom Tomato & Watermelon Salad

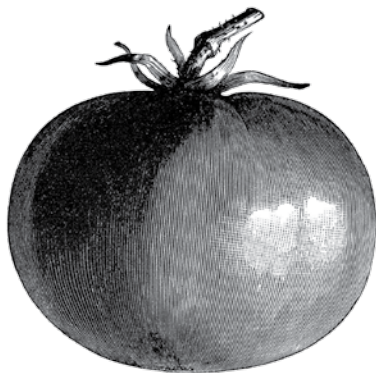
Serves 6

- For the vinaigrette:
- 1 medium yellow tomato, blanched, peeled & seeded
 - 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 - 1 tablespoon champagne vinegar
 - ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 - Salt and white pepper to taste

- For the salad:
- ½ cup feta cheese
 - 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 1 pound seedless watermelon, rind removed, sliced into ½ 2-inch rounds, cut into cubes
 - 2 pounds assorted heirloom tomatoes, assorted slices and wedges
 - 2 tablespoons fresh marjoram leaves, for garnish
 - Maldon salt, for garnish

To prepare the vinaigrette: Place the yellow tomato in a blender. On medium speed add the mustard and then the vinegar. Slowly add ½ cup of olive oil. Taste and season with salt and white pepper as needed and set aside. In a separate bowl, crumble the feta and mix it with 3 tablespoons olive oil.

To serve: Divide the heirloom tomato slices, wedges and the watermelon cubes equally between 6 plates. When plating, arrange the slices, wedges and cubes and garnish with a bit of feta. Drizzle the vinaigrette over each portion and garnish with the marjoram leaves. Add a touch of Maldon salt to the salad if desired.



Fried Green Tomatoes

Serves 4 - 6

- 4 green tomatoes
- 1 cup buttermilk
- ½ cup panko
- ¼ cup cornmeal
- ¼ cup flour
- ¼ cup grated Vella Dry Jack cheese (can substitute Parmesan)
- 1½ teaspoons chipotle powder
- 1½ teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Slice off ends of tomatoes and portion remainder into three slices per tomato. Place the buttermilk in a shallow bowl. In another bowl mix together panko, cornmeal, flour, cheese, chipotle, paprika, salt & pepper. In a heavy bottom skillet, heat oil up to 350 degrees. Place green tomatoes in buttermilk, allow excess buttermilk to fall free, and toss in flour mixture. Place tomatoes in oil and cook for 1 minute on each side, remove and season lightly with salt & pepper.

Heirloom Tomato Galette

Yield: 2 Galettes

- Dough:
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
 - 1/3 cup polenta meal
 - 1 teaspoon sugar
 - 1¼ teaspoon salt
 - 3 ounces unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces and chilled
 - 3 tablespoons olive oil
 - 2 ounces ice water

- Filling:
- 4 tablespoons goat cheese
 - 2 heirloom tomatoes, sliced in 4's, top and bottom removed
 - 1 teaspoon thyme, chopped
 - 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
 - 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
 - salt & pepper
 - egg

In a mixer combine the flour, polenta, sugar, and salt. Add the butter until it is evenly distributed but still in large, visible pieces. Add the olive oil and ice water and mix until the dough begins to come together.

Gather the dough with your hands and shape it into a disk. Wrap the disk in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375°. Divide the dough in half. Lightly flour the dough and roll out to 10 inches. Use a 9 inch plate as a template and trim the dough edges. Sprinkle the dough with 2 tablespoons of the goat cheese in the center of the dough.

Place the tomato slices on top in the center 5” diameter of the dough. Sprinkle with thyme, garlic and drizzle with olive oil. Lightly season with salt & pepper. Sprinkle the remaining goat cheese over the tomatoes. Lift pastry edge and fold over filling to make a pleated border. Mix egg with 1 teaspoon of water and “brush” dough with mixture. Bake galette for 18-23 minutes or until dough has nicely browned.

Remove from the oven & serve immediately.

Charred Tomato Vinaigrette

Yield: 2 cups

- 1 pound tomatoes (mostly red)
- 1/2 cup picked mint leaves
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt/Pepper

Slice tomatoes in half and grill until soft and slightly charred. Puree tomatoes and place puree in pan and reduce by 1/3. Finely chop mint. Place puree back in blender and add oil and vinegar. Finish by adding mint and seasoning.

Green Tomato Relish

Yields: 2 cups

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 green tomatoes
- 2 scallions
- 1 tablespoon minced shallots
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon chopped tarragon
- 2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
- ¼ cup sugar

Preheat grill. Remove stem and core from tomatoes. Slice tomatoes into ¼” slices. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of oil over tomatoes and scallions and season lightly. Place tomatoes and scallions on grill and cook until softened. Allow items to get some color on grill. Allow to cool and dice into ½-inch pieces. In a saucepan heat remaining oil and sauté shallots until translucent. Add mustard, tarragon, vinegar and sugar and cook until sugar has dissolved. Add in tomatoes and scallions and cook until mixture is almost dry. Chill before serving.

Roasted Tomato Sauce

Yield: 2 quarts

- 10 pounds roma tomatoes
- 4 ounces garlic cloves
- 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 tablespoons olive oil blend
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

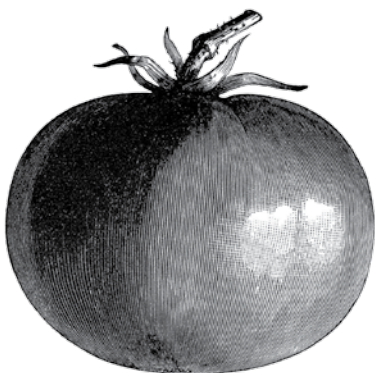
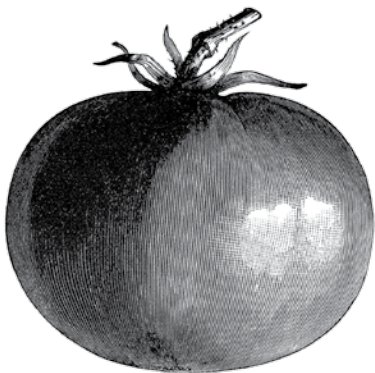
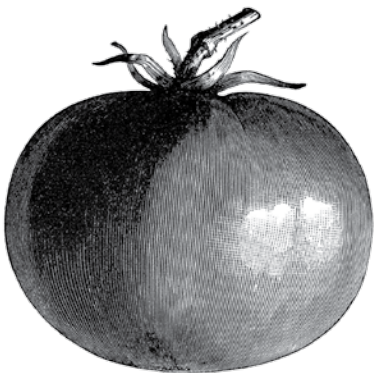
Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Quarter and remove top of tomatoes. In large bowl mix all the ingredients together. Lay out tomatoes on a large sheet pan and roast until soft (about 30 minutes). Place tomatoes in the blender and process until smooth. Adjust seasoning if necessary.

Tomato Confit

Yield 1 quart

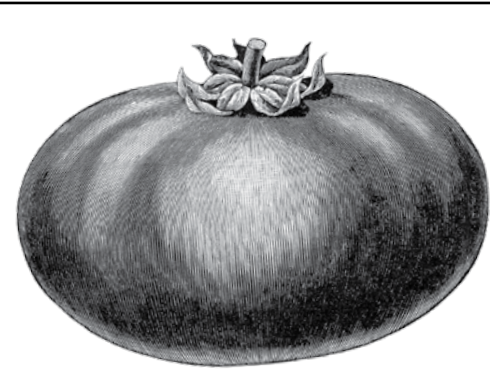
- 5 pounds roma tomatoes, peeled and sliced 1/4-inch thick
- ½ bunch thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons blended olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Lay sliced tomatoes on sheet tray with parchment paper, sprinkle with thyme, olive oil, salt and pepper. Bake for approximately 45 minutes until slightly dried. Let cool and store in closed containers.



Do you have some favorite tomato recipes that you want to share with us? If so please send them to figgirl2@gmail.com.

seed saving



The movement back to heirloom seed varieties is apparent at nearly every farmers' market, nursery, and eatery in Sonoma County these days. The variety in colors, shapes, and textures (not to mention flavors!) of these beauties is one of the most enjoyable parts of any food excursion.

Sadly, 95% of the vegetable varieties that were available in the early 1900s have been lost. The resurgence of interest in heirloom varieties has helped to preserve and protect these seeds and their histories.

"There's been a lot of movement back to heirloom varieties because people want to preserve the agricultural heritage that is locked into those seeds and develop a lineage of place with each variety," said Paul Betts of the High Mowing Seeds Organic Company.

There's some debate as to which vegetables are considered "heirloom," but in general terms, the plant must be open-pollinated and have originated more than 50-100 years ago. Most often, they are seeds that have been hand selected and passed down through generations within families and communities.

Most open-pollinated plants will reseed themselves from season to season just as nature intended, but if you're preserving seeds to replant in your garden, a few plants need a little extra help.

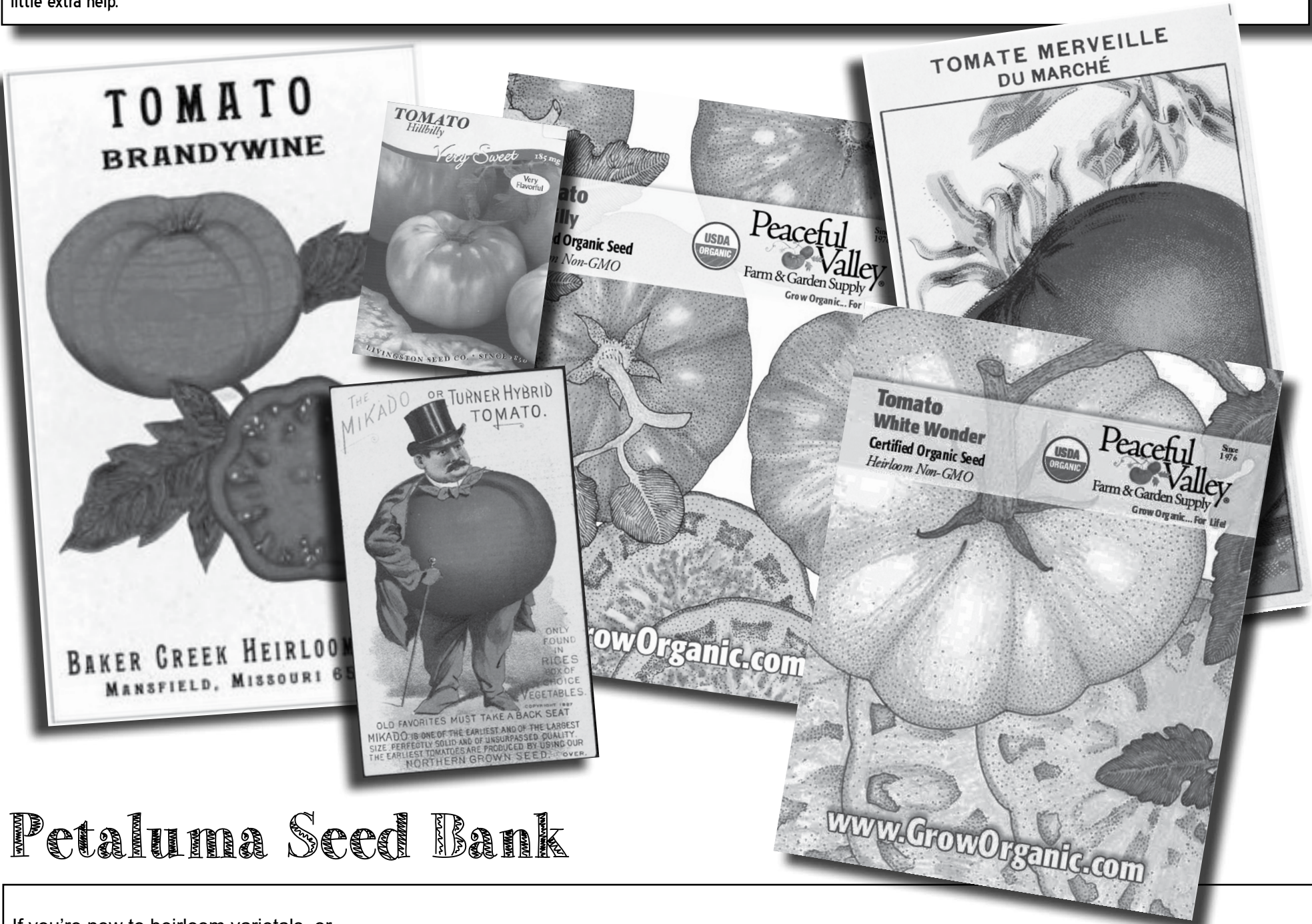
An example of this is the tomato. In order to ensure germination of your tomato seeds from season to season, a few simple steps are required. In essence, one must mimic the effects the tomatoes lifecycle. Unassisted, the fruit would drop from the plant to the ground, go through a period of decomposition, and then seeds would germinate again when the conditions were right.

The decomposition of the tomato acts as a fermentation chamber for the seeds - removing germination inhibitors in the sheath of the seed and treating some seed-borne diseases.

To recreate these conditions, choose a ripe heirloom tomato from your garden. Slice the tomato in half and squeeze the pulp (and seeds) into the vessel of your choice. There should be a fair amount of tomato juice that transfers along with the seeds. Cover with a lid and set aside for three days, stirring occasionally. Bubbles will develop, indicating that fermentation is active.

After three days, it's time to extract your seeds. The simplest method is to fill the vessel with fresh water (at roughly three times the volume of the pulp). The pulp will float to the top, which can then be poured off and discard. Strain the seeds from the bottom through a mesh or sieve. At this point seeds may be air dried on a screen or drying plate. As they dry, any clumped seeds will be easy to separate.

When seeds are completely dry to the touch, store in an airtight container. Seeds will remain viable for several years!



Petaluma Seed Bank

If you're new to heirloom varietals, or interested in expanding your seed collection, there's an array of options available!

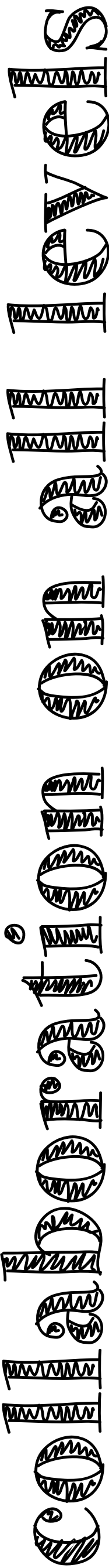
Our go-to source for seeds – especially rare, gorgeous heirlooms – is the Petaluma Seed Bank. Housed in historic downtown Petaluma in the building that was, in its former life, the Sonoma County Bank, The Seed Bank is Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company's west coast location.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company was created in 1998 by Jere Gettle and offers one of the largest selections of mail order heirloom seeds in the world. Beyond helping to preserve and protect rare seeds, the Gettle family's philanthropic efforts include providing free seeds and education to school and community gardens as well as to many of the world's poorest countries.

The Petaluma Seed Bank is also a tremendous community resource to growers here in Sonoma County, hosting speakers' series and classes, and offering expert advice to any gardener who happens to pop in.

Learn more at www.rareseeds.com.

Interview with Designer Patti Britton



We have been producing a 'House Wine' for ten years. This started in 2007 with our first release of Très Bonnes Années in celebration of our 10 year anniversary. By summer's end we'll have created an additional eight wines in collaboration with some of our favorite winemakers. On the page 22, I will let you know about the fabulous winemakers that we collaborate with to create these wines.

Wine Labels & Design the girl & the fig label has been around for three years. We started with a Rose, added a Viognier, then Grenache Blanc, Grenache, and, this year, Syrah. We also have a white blend under the girl & the fig but with a different label.

Resident artist Julie Higgins' original art is always featured on the Très Bonnes Années label.

We have three new labels debuting this year, Sonoma Roadside, Projet de Vie and Mes Amis Français.

Our wine labels are designed by Patti Britton of Britton Design. Patti and I have been working together for the past 20 years on everything from logos, brochures, product labels and most of all our wine labels. Collaborating with Patti is always fun as I love to see what she will come up with as I try to describe what I am looking for. Sometimes we hit it on the nail and sometimes we need to have a few rounds of revision.

Sonoma Roadside is the name of the property where The Rhône Room (our wine studio) and the girl & the fig Farm reside. It was only fitting that we add a label that tied into the nature of the property. The vintage illustrations are from children's books.

The label on the Projet de Vie Syrah was designed by Patti, but the art is an original by Alice Pennes, who also happens to be Sam Coturri's wife. Sam is the winemaker who created this Syrah.

With Patti's many awards and accolades, I feel lucky to have her as our designer. These labels are becoming an important part of our brand, and we want the look to be as enticing as the flavors inside the bottle.

How did you get into design? More importantly, how did you begin designing wine labels?
I graduated from California College of Arts and Crafts and was looking for a job. After several interviews with top graphic designers in San Francisco, I was hired by Primo Angeli Design in San Francisco. Primo Angeli was known for his food packaging - brands like Molinari Sausage, Del Monte, Shasta, Henry Weinhard beer - so that was my introduction to food packaging design. I learned a lot about packaging and the importance of making it stand out from the crowd. That was pre-computer, so everything was done by hand. I put together mock-ups using spray paint, airbrushing, color pencil, gouache paint, and transfer rubdowns for type. At that job I was treated as the new kid, helping designers with presentations. Once in a while I'd get to design, like for yogurt covered corn nuts, and I was even in the running for naming the corn nuts. My "Comets from Pluto" suggestion didn't make it! I worked on Lucca Delicatessen ravioli packaging, Shaklee, and a cereal. I also helped out for the first time on Christian Brothers wine, and met Brother Timothy. At that point some people were laid off, including me. Hired at another small San Francisco studio, I became the sole designer for a husband and wife team whose main clients were Robert Mondavi Winery, Opus One, Guenoc, Domaine Chandon, and Merryvale. I worked long hours, alone, coming up with concepts in the mid-80s for wine packaging and point-of sale, creating painted backdrops, art directing, answering the phone, going to photo shoots and press checks. After five years of that I found that the owners were taking credit for my concepts. I decided to start my own small studio in 1990 at Sansome & Vallejo in San Francisco. Opus One realized I had created their designs so the director found me! We had lunch in Napa Valley and Opus One became one of my clients for 13 years. Shortly after and several SF parking tickets, I moved to Sonoma. That first few years at Britton Design, I created designs for E&J Gallo, Galante Vineyards, Kendall-Jackson, Peter Haywood, Buena Vista Winery, Gundlach-Bundschu, and Viansa Winery.

What do you like best about designing wine labels?
I like figuring out the story for the design. I think that having a story helps sell the wine, especially in a tasting room. There are many consumer products out there, and even more wine brands than 30 years ago when I started. Every brand should convey a personality. For the girl & the fig Grenache Rosé, I was having a tough time at the beginning with the story. Like Sondra says: "that's not us." I finally walked up to

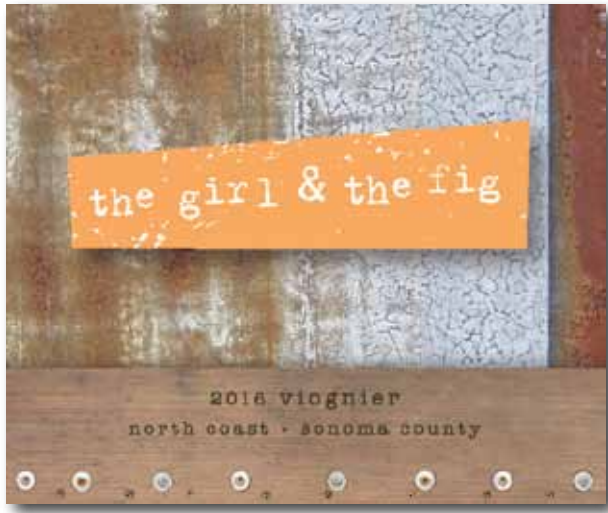
the restaurant with my Canon Power Shot camera and took photos of the galvanized fence and refurbished wood on a partly sunny afternoon. It was good timing because we had heavy rains hours later and the wood was soaked. Including the screws in the label design sealed the deal with the design. Another example is when I was hired by Ferrari-Carano Winery to come up with the design for their new Sangiovese blend, "Siena." Rhonda Carano said she wanted the wine to look like a red blend coming from the Earth. How the heck was I going to do that? After looking at the hillsides in Dry Creek Valley and seeing the reddish dirt that is so good for red grape vines, I decided to make the label look like a chunk of dirt. I even had them FedEx me some dirt from the hills. I designed an asymmetrical ragged edge label using a dry sponge in black paint to get a textured background, and an old toothbrush dipped in black paint, flicking the toothbrush with my thumbnail to get the flecks for another texture. They just came up with the plans for the Villa Fiore winery and had a 5 foot drawing which I thought would be nice to have on the label. I drove it to Berkeley to get a scan. Then I developed an "FC" monogram to be ghosted in the background which is now on all of their marketing materials. That was 25 years ago. I recently designed their 25th Siena packaging to be released this summer. The brand still looks fresh after all these years.

What was your favorite wine label project to date and why?
Oh, that's like asking me who my favorite child is! Wine label design is kind of like giving birth...there is the concept, the design, printing, bottling. Then, once it's developed, you send it out into the world to see how it does! The most successful and top 5 projects of mine have been the original wine packaging for Viansa Winery and Italian Marketplace that I worked on with Sam Sebastiani. We met at the winery in 1990 and I was looking around and saw these beautiful frescos painted on the walls. I thought that the frescos needed to be included in the design so that the consumer is taking a little bit of the winery home with them as a memory. The first package I designed was the Thalia Sangiovese in a 375ml bottle. The wine sold out in a matter of weeks and the tasting room wasn't offering a tasting then. I think that's proof that package design can sell the product based just on the design. Thalia was a two-part label with the upper label in an arch with a fresco of "Thalia" and her mate. The lower band held the type with an outer blue border. Sam and I created probably 15 packages for different varietals, most of the time having a special bottle for each varietal. I won 86 design awards for Viansa alone.

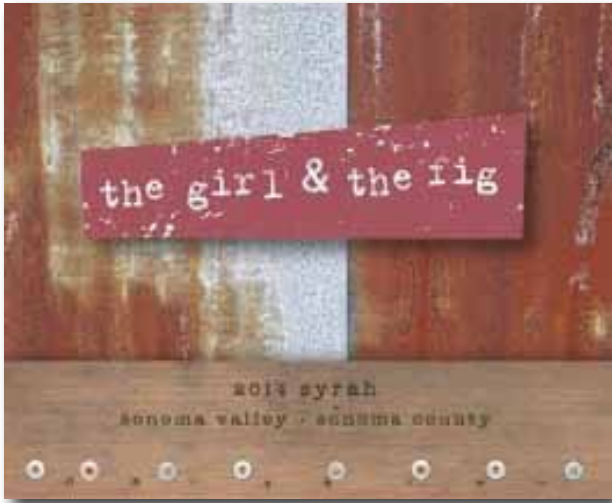
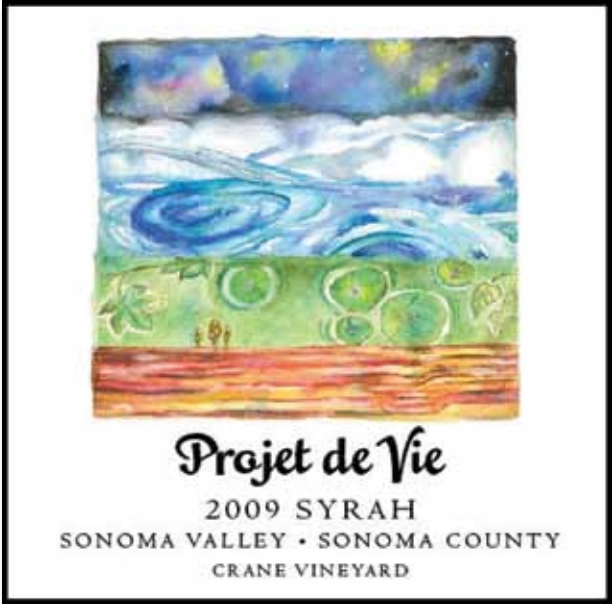
What aspects of designing a wine label are most important to sell wine?
Knowing what the demographic is and knowing the price point. Is it going to be on the bottom shelf (less expensive wine), middle shelf (medium price), or top shelf (expensive)? Maybe the wine is going to be sold only at the winery or out of a tasting room. Designing a \$10 bottle of wine is a lot different than a \$60 bottle of wine. Most of the time lower price wines meet to speak more loudly to get the consumer's attention. They can be more colorful and quirky, and higher priced wines may be more restrained. Doing the research and looking at the competition is really important. Wine package design is like making a mini-poster without anyone in the food and wine aisle trying to sell the product. Go to a department store and there is a sales guy in the TV department willing to answer any questions. That doesn't always happen in the wine aisle. The product needs to stand out among the competition and land in your shopping cart. If you haven't tried the product before and are buying it based on the design, but then like the actual product, the consumer becomes a repeat customer.

Do you notice any new trends in label design?
Trends come and go, and I don't tend to follow them. I like to give the client what they need, not necessarily want they want. There are a few more brands in boxes and cans though... that's a trend.

How is designing wine labels different from designing food labels?
It's not really much different, except food that products don't have the dramatic price points that wine packaging does (possibly with the exception of olive oils). Boutique food products can be more subdued and upscale looking. If food products are for the grocery store chains, there will be starbursts with "NEW!" or "NEW FLAVOR!". You wouldn't dare put that on a wine label. With both wine and food labels, it's about brand recognition and being memorable. Both food and wine labels need a great logo for branding and sometimes a subhead. There is a lot of time spent with the layout of the nutritional facts and ingredients for the FDA with food labels. Wine labels are required to show the varietal and appellation. They don't need to show every detail of what's in the wine unless it's a blend.



Go Ask Alice

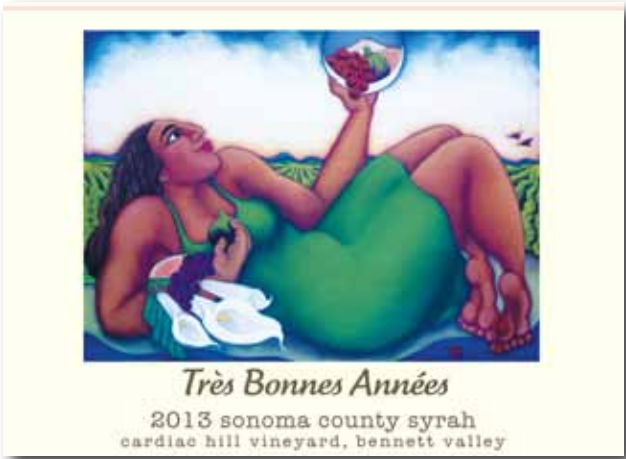
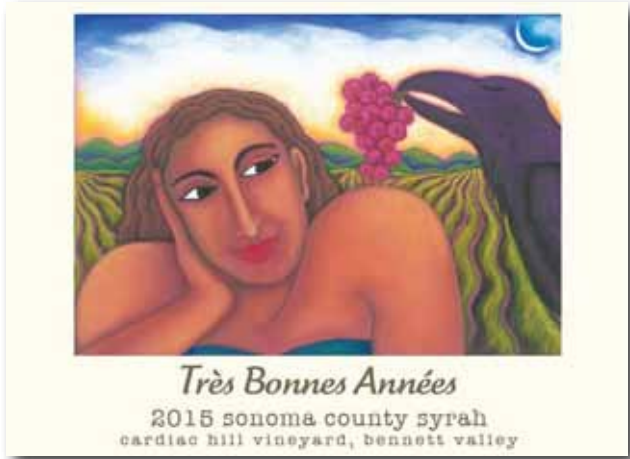


When Sondra requested that I create a label for the Sixteen600 and the girl & the fig wine collaboration, she explained that Projet De Vie was meant to reflect feelings of partnership, collaboration, unity & kinship. To me, it translated to the idea that it takes so many people, acts of nature, and lifetimes to make wine. I wanted to translate the name into a visual story – but how does one visually narrate a story that encompasses everything that goes into this crazy, complex life; and, on top of that, to distill and capture the beautiful, messy story of life in a way that also tells the story of wine.

Then I saw it – in a way that only creating allows me to see. I saw what everything has in common: the basic elements of Earth, Air, Water, Fire, alongside time and space. I created a design to reflect the most simple of complex ideas – you can look at each one of these elements separately, but when they’re together they create life.

Each layer of this image represents one of the elements. From the bottom, up you’ll find EARTH, PLANTS, WATER, AIR, and COSMOS depicted. All of these aspects of the natural world are necessary to be a human, and also necessary to make an amazing bottle of wine.

I chose to use watercolor because of the inherent fluidity of the medium. I used moving water with color to create the natural movement that you see within of the elements. I hope that this label art can help with drinker to ponder where the wine comes from and how the wine came to be in their hand. Even more than that – how grape growing and wine practices affect not only the wine, but the earth as well.



Resident Artist: Julie Higgins

Julie's art has been hanging in our restaurants for almost 20 years. Her first showing to our guests was in Glen Ellen in 1998. When we moved to the Sonoma Plaza, we decided that her art should be on permanent display.

Her art has become iconic in the restaurant as the fun, whimsy, bright colors and deep meanings align with the philosophy of the girl & the fig. Though the woman in the pastels is not 'the girl' or even a self portrait of Julie it adds to our concept.

In 1999, we launched our first food product and it was then that Julie agreed to let us use one of her pieces for the label that Patti Britton designed. Later in 2007, she then gave us the rights to label our signature wine; Très Bonnes Années.

Julie's creativity continues to inspire me and most of all I can call her one of my dearest friends. I am honored to be able to offer her work for sale and love the idea that her stories are hanging in homes of 'figfriends' all over the world.

A bit about Julie:

Julie was born and raised in Hutchinson, Kansas; a medium-sized Midwest community built on salt mines, farming and the bible belt. It is a landscape of wide open space populated by conservative salt of the earth folk. She attended the University of Kansas, first as a ceramic major and later in sculpture and painting. She was deeply influenced by the figure and sensual organic form, which seem to provide endless inspiration to me.

When she moved to the Skagit Valley region of Washington State, she realized that pastels were ideally suited for exploring the color and sensual compositions of the region's landscape. Pastels offered her a more immediate study of form and color. Working primarily with soft pastel due to its vibrant color and tactile quality, the process is very intuitive, with color, form, imagery and symbols often leading from one to the next.

Her art evolved into a language of symbols by telling a story using the figure and landscape to create sensual compositions of bold color. She later moved to the coastal community of Mendocino, California, a very beautiful rural area. Her day to day travels out and about Mendocino take her from the ocean through redwoods to vineyards and rolling hills, continually inspiring her to illustrate symbolically this sensual environment.

Her work is a constant process of story telling and pushing through the mundane of life into the magic, and the imaginary, which deeply connects her to the world. Her art is best described as how feelings, emotions, and play set in an ever nurturing landscape with juicy earthy women, sensual form and lots of color can evoke. Her process of working with symbols helps her connect with the spirit, and continue her exploration of life and purpose through my art.

To read more about Julie and to see her available pastels for sale, visit her website at www.artistjuliehiggins.com.

the talent behind the wine

Sam Cotturi

Winery Sixteen 600

Projet de Vie

Projet de Vie is a collaboration by Sam Cotturi, the girl & the fig and Alice Pennes. Sam Cotturi has been one of our partners in wine for Grenache Day each year. When he found himself with some 2009 Syrah, we were excited to work with Sam's wife and artist Alice Pennes to create a label that is a watercolor of the layers of the earth much like the wine itself. This might be as close to St. Joseph as we'll ever get in Sonoma Valley Syrah. The cool climate and long hang time combines for a profile that is more northern Rhône than southern Sonoma. The savory fruit of Syrah takes on feral characteristics and is braced by aromas of fresh saffron and miner's lettuce with a mineral note that has rich, iron-like quality. At once both bold and rustic, this Syrah is full-bodied, textured and lasting. Much like its northern Rhône counterparts, this wine took patience but is finally emerging from a steely exterior after more than 2 years in barrel and 6 years in bottle.

Doug Margerum

Margerum Wine Company

the girl & the fig Rosé

We have been carrying Margerum Wine Company wines on our list for over a decade. Doug has been involved in food & wine his whole life. His family owned the WINE CASK, a restaurant with one of the most impressive winelists that garnered many awards. When he sold the Santa Barbara restaurant in 1994 his goal was to commit and devote all of his energy towards his wine company. He concentrates on making limited quantities of wine made from both the grapes on his estate as well as other Santa Barbara vineyards. Margerum carefully selects the vineyards with meticulous attention to detail in all factors influencing the ultimate quality of the wines, including pruning, soil, climate, and farming methods. This is the 3rd Rosé vintage that we have released. For this wine, Doug sends us different batches of Grenache, Cinsault, Counoise, Syrah and Mourvedre juice and we become mad scientists creating our blend. We send back the results and luckily Doug adds his finishing touches and makes us a beautiful wine.

Jordan Kivelstadt

Kivelstadt Cellars

the girl & the fig Bistro White Blend

Jordan started Kivelstadt Cellars after traveling the world making wine in Australia, Chile and Argentina. His passion continued back in California where he released his first vintage in 2007. He is also the CEO of Free Flow Wines, a wine on tap company focused on sustainability and quality for the hospitality industries. Our first collaboration with them is a delightful table wine featuring Roussanne, Marsanne and Viognier from the Naggiar Vineyard in the Sierra Foothills. This is a food friendly white blend that has gone through native malolactic fermentation and spends its entire 6 months in barrel on the lees. The wine is un-fined and unfiltered. We are also lucky to have Kivelstadt Cellars right in our Glen Ellen backyard.

Adam Webb

Cochon Winery

Sonoma Roadside Cinsault

Adam Webb, originally from Oklahoma comes to us by way of his lovely Cochon Wines that we have had the privilege to pour at our restaurants. To be able to collaborate with him is a dream come true as his affinity for Rhône varietals lines up with our passion quite well. This Cinsault, from the oldest vineyard of its kind in the state of California, is from gnarly, head trained vines at Bechthold Vineyard in Lodi planted in 1886 by Joseph Spenker. This small planting of over 130 year-old, bush-vine Cinsault is managed meticulously by Kevin Phillips. Wineries including Bonny Doon Vineyards, Turley Wine Cellars and Jessie's Grove Winery all make their own versions of Cinsault. Sandy soils and micro yielding vines produce fruit with incredible purity and finesse. This extraordinary fruit makes intensely flavored, subtly complex wines. Bechthold Vineyard was named California's Vineyard of the Year in 2014.

Adam Webb

Cochon Winery

Sonoma Roadside Cochon Red Blend

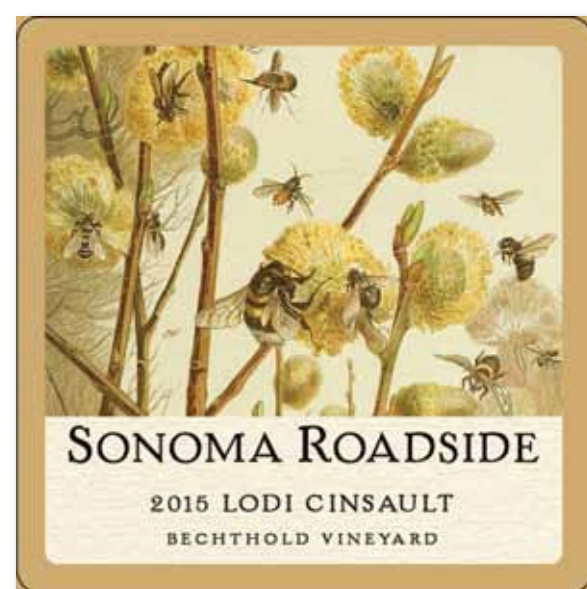
The Cochon Red Blend is also produced by Adam Webb of Cochon Winery. This is a lovely blend of Grenache, Syrah and Cinsault that comes from 6 different vineyards. Adam's goal has always been "to source unique vineyards to make small lot wines to allow the fruit and the vineyard characteristics to speak for themselves." His goal is to produce the purest expression possible. He is known for his usage of native yeast and keeping filtration to a minimum. For this wine, the grapes were punched down by hand three times daily for a period of 2 ½ weeks till each wine was dry. The wines were gently pressed and transferred to a mix of new and seasoned 300 liter French oak Hogsheads, nicknamed HOGS, for malo-lactic fermentation and aging for 24 months, then bottled unfiltered.

Adam Webb

Cochon Winery

Très Bonnes Années

2015 marks the 11th vintage of our Très Bonnes Années. We released this label at our 10th anniversary. This particular version is 95% Syrah with 5% Viognier cofermented with the wine. True to form, Winemaker Adam Webb extracts the finest flavors from the grapes. Using his native yeasts, by-hand punch downs and other natural techniques, the results produce a wine that is a deeply saturated inky, purple color revealing a concentrated core of dense cassis, pure black raspberry fruit and the essence of blackberry liqueur with hints of smoked herbs, charcoal, white pepper, vanilla, toast and savory spices. Displays power and a rich, intense core of ripe black fruit as well as licorice, olive tapenade in a supple, multi-layered, silky textured package. The wine is complex, rich and intense with a medium to full-bodied concentration that is layered, opulent while retaining a purity and finesse throughout.



"I can't quite put words to why I am profoundly comforted by the fact that a wine can also be a place, that mere fermented grapes can coalesce into a product of such rare beauty and meaning." – Randall Grahm

ART IN WINE COUNTRY!

Summer is on its way, and what better way to soak it all up than walking through the streets of Sonoma County and seeing local artwork! Expect to see fascinating neighborhoods, drink some wine, get a bite to eat and even dance to live music during one of these charming community events. Summer is right around the corner – don't miss out on all the wonderful events to enjoy in Sonoma County. These 5 art walks are the perfect date night or for a fun family outing!

Read below for a quick guide to county-wide art walks this summer!

First Friday Art Walk: Guerneville

Monthly event from 3 – 8 pm the first Friday of each month, year round. Local artists, street performers and music, tasting rooms, and shopping. Dress creatively and be ready to join the show!

First Friday Art Walk: Santa Rosa

Monthly event from 5 – 7 pm. Walk throughout downtown Santa Rosa and enjoy art openings and open studio events, music, and refreshments while you admire all the stunning local artwork!

Second Saturday Art Walk: Healdsburg

Monthly event from 5 – 8 pm the second Saturday of each month, running from May-December. Stroll through Healdsburg's historic plaza and experience local art, wine, food, and music.

Luther Burbank Center for the Arts: Santa Rosa

The Luther Burbank outdoor sculpture garden is now open to the public. Come and experience the 16 monumental wood sculptures by Bruce Johnson. Feel free to admire, climb, and take pictures of these magnificent sculptures. (Displays are updated biannually.)

Sculpture Trail: Cloverdale and Geyserville

Choose a trail and experience local artwork while enjoying the great outdoors. Art displays are changed every year in May. Don't miss it!

Need more art? Here are some of my favorites:

Sonoma Valley Museum

551 Broadway, Sonoma
www.svma.org

The Mission Statement for the Museum reads as follows:

"The Sonoma Valley Museum of Art is a magnet of creative energy and cultural inspiration. Its exhibitions and educational programs engage the community in the art and ideas of our time, encouraging curiosity and innovation."

I can personally attest that this is really happening! Not only are the exhibits interesting and engaging but the other programs are certainly enriching the lives of our small town.

Oliver Ranch

Geyserville
www.oliverranchfoundation.org

I hesitate to tell you about Oliver Ranch for the mere fact that it is next to impossible to see. However, there are times that you can take a tour or see a performance in the tower (which I was fortunate to have done a few years ago). Each of the 30 tours a year (spring and fall) benefits a different non-profit organization. Tickets are generally sold through the benefiting group rather than Oliver Ranch, but when there are tickets available, you will be directed to them by the Oliver Ranch website. Take a look at their website, you will find a comprehensive account of the art on the property and a sneak peek into this magical place.



The Donum Estate

Sonoma
www.thedonumestate.com

The Donum Estate has amassed an incredible collection of some of the most respected sculpture artists in the world. To visit the estate is by appointment only and then you will have to decide which is more impressive, the art or the highly rated, limited edition exquisite single vineyards Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

di Rosa

5200 Sonoma (Carneros) Highway, Napa
www.dirosaart.org

What used to be called the di Rosa Preserve has been shortened to di Rosa. Not sure why the change, but the name always made me think of the beautiful property as the wildlife preserve that was about WILD ART not WILD ANIMALS. Either way, I completely recommend a visit as you will find a dynamic collection of Northern California artists like no other. I can remember in our early days in Glen Ellen, Rene Di Rosa used to come over to eat at the bar. He was always so complimentary and enjoyed just about anything we fed him. He opened the di Rosa to the public the same year we opened the girl & the fig in 1997. At that time it was by appointment only, but now you can pop in Wednesday - Sunday from 10 - 4. There is a small charge though you can also take a tour that lasts over an hour and explores what you are not allowed to see on your own.

NOTE: The main gallery will be closed this summer for some renovations. There is still much to see, but I don't want you to be disappointed.



time flies when living life
to the fullest, working hard
and making friends
“twenty years young”



Thank you Sonoma!