

ISSUE 04 - 2017

#figchronicles

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



the root of it all





ONLINE STORE
www.girlfigstore.com

the fig cafe & winebar
13690 arnold drive, glen ellen
www.thefigcafe.com



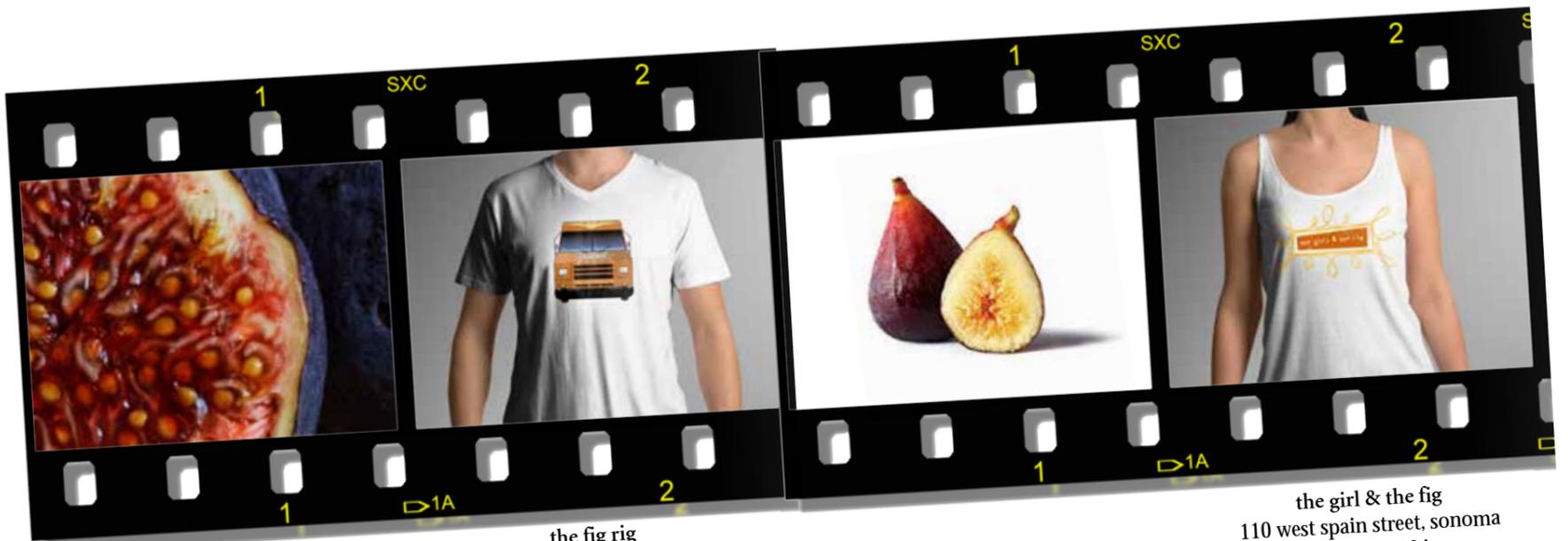
Rhône-Alone
www.therhoneroom.com

Suite D
21800 schellville road, sonoma
707.933.3668
www.figsuited.com



the girl & the fig CATERERS!
21800 schellville road, ste c, sonoma
www.figcaters.com
707.933.3000

the farm project
sonoma roadside
20820 broadway - sonoma



the fig rig
www.thefigrig.com
707.933.3000

the girl & the fig
110 west span street, sonoma
707.938.3634
www.thegirlandthefig.com



#figchronicles

CONTENTS

#figchronicles		
Company Page	02	My Green Things 14
Table of Contents	03	Tale of Two Growers 15
Barbie & Ken	04	Root Vegetables 16
20 Year Anniversary Party	05	The Root of It All 17
Absinthe: Seductive, Mysterious ...	06	Recipes 18
Absinthe Brands & Cocktails	07	More Recipes 19
Listen Up - The WineMakers	08	Two Farms to Know 21
More Podcasts	08	The Rhône Room 22
Julie Higgins, Resident Artist	09	Clubbing - Wine Events 23
Mano Formate Salumi	10	Love is in the Air 24
Ramen Renaissance & Recipes	12	

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



1 @ashleydmeredith



2 @catherinemietek



3 @echasimanjuntak



4 @figgirl



5 @holly_schoolmeester



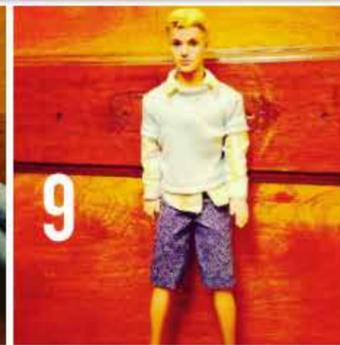
6 @jennywithlime



7 @juleswedge



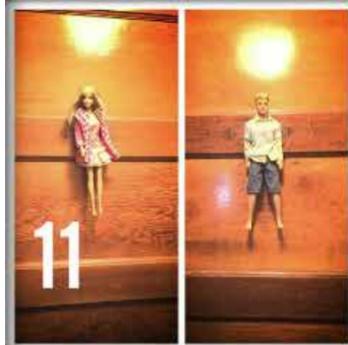
8 @lauradsync



9 @laurjugsu



10 @livelylikeme



11 @nataliex



12 @noellevice



13 @piiasainio



14 @prancingllama



15 @ richardbakare



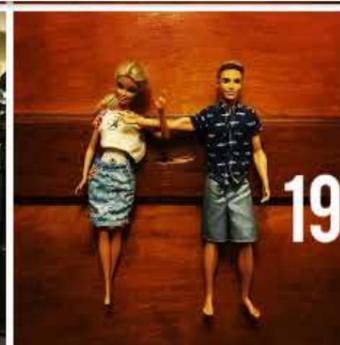
16 @scoutdeb



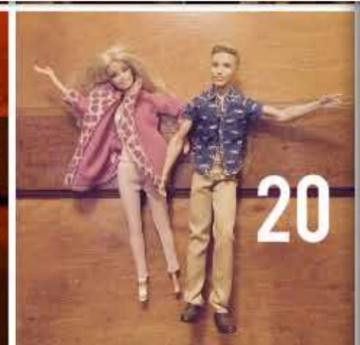
17 @noname



18 @shine822



19 @sonomalacy



20 @teresa_derdiarian



21 @the_eclectic_chemist



22 @thismamaloveslife



23 @marloesscheffers



24 @markesackett



25 @ ma_sohm

#figchronicles from our guests

#figchronicles

Publisher/Curator
Sondra Bernstein

Contributors

Sydney Dean, Durae Hardy, Sage Ryan, John Toulze,
Mark Kaufman, Sondra Bernstein, Julie Higgins, Jenn Adams

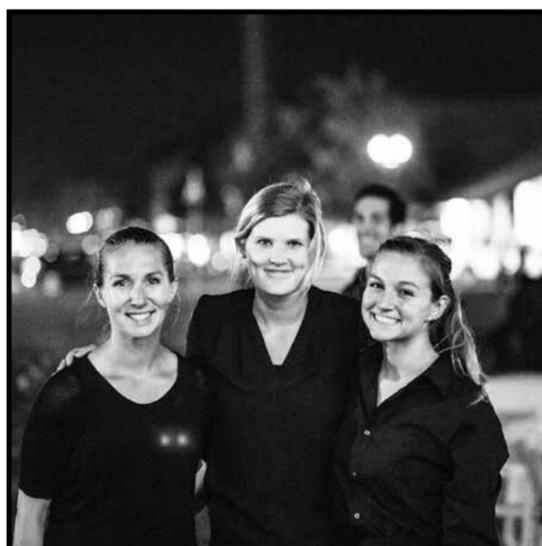
Photographers

Megan Steffen, Sondra Bernstein, Sydney Dean,
Steven Krause, Michele Thomas Photography, Gabriel Jiminez

#figchroniclers

@ashleydmeredith, @catherinemietek, @echasimanjuntak, @figgirl, @holly_schoolmeester,
@jennywithlime, @juleswedge, @lauradsync, @laurjmugsu, @livelylikeme,
@nataliex, @noellevice, @piiasainio, @prancingllama, @richardbakare,
@scoutdeb, @shine822, @sonomalacy, @teresa_derdiarian,
@the_eclectic_chemist, @thismamaloveslife, @marloesscheffers, @markesackett, @ma_sohm

INSTAGRAM PINTEREST
@figgirl @figgirl



#figchronicles in Sonoma - 20 year party

ABSINTHE

Seductive, Mysterious, Misunderstood The Green Goddess of Spirits and her Modern Revival

by: Durae Hardy

THEN: Mention the name 'Absinthe' and you'll likely conjure images of dimly-lit, underground speakeasies, and tumblers of flord green liquid set aflame; or, perhaps, your mind leaps to sidewalk cafes of Ernest Hemingway's 19th century Paris, tables peopled with boisterously conversing artists and writers, dressed as the original 'hipster' and sipping from bubbled goblets (with accompanying slotted spoons). By whatever reputation you know her – as the wayward bathtub gin of her day, or sophisticated sipper

of choice amongst French bohemians – Absinthe will not mind; for The Green Goddess (as the dubiously regarded spirit is often known) is no stranger to controversy. In fact, it might be said that her reputation was built on it. So-named for the primary ingredient *Artemisia absinthium* ("grand wormwood"), Absinthe is believed to have originated in the 18th century near the border of France and Switzerland. A potent blend of distilled botanicals, including wormwood, green anise, and sweet fennel, along with other medicinal and culinary herbs, was being bottled and sold as a cure-all medicinal elixir. (To whom credit is due for the original recipe is a point of debate, though it's generally agreed that attribution goes either to French Dr. Pierre Ordinaire, of Couvet, Switzerland, or, by other accounts, to the Henriod sisters, also of the village of Couvet). Major Dubied acquired this original recipe, and, in 1797, opened the world's first Absinthe distillery, Dubied Pere et Fils.

Absinthe's popularity exploded throughout France over the next 50 years, The Green Ferry was served to French troops as a malaria preventative in the 1840s, and subsequently, Absinthe found friends among rich and poor, Bourgeois and Bohemian. But to be so loved was ultimately to be her downfall.

In 1870 the notorious Phylloxera plague strikes Europe's grape vines, and for the next three decades, wine becomes a scarcity. Happy to step in as the country's go-to gal, French consumption of Absinthe reaches an all-time high at nine million gallons annually. Concurrently, the perfect storm brewed: pressure from a failing wine trade meet stirrings by Europe's growing Temperance movement, both parties in need of a scapegoat handily delivered by one murderous Swiss farmer.

Enter, Jean Lanfray.

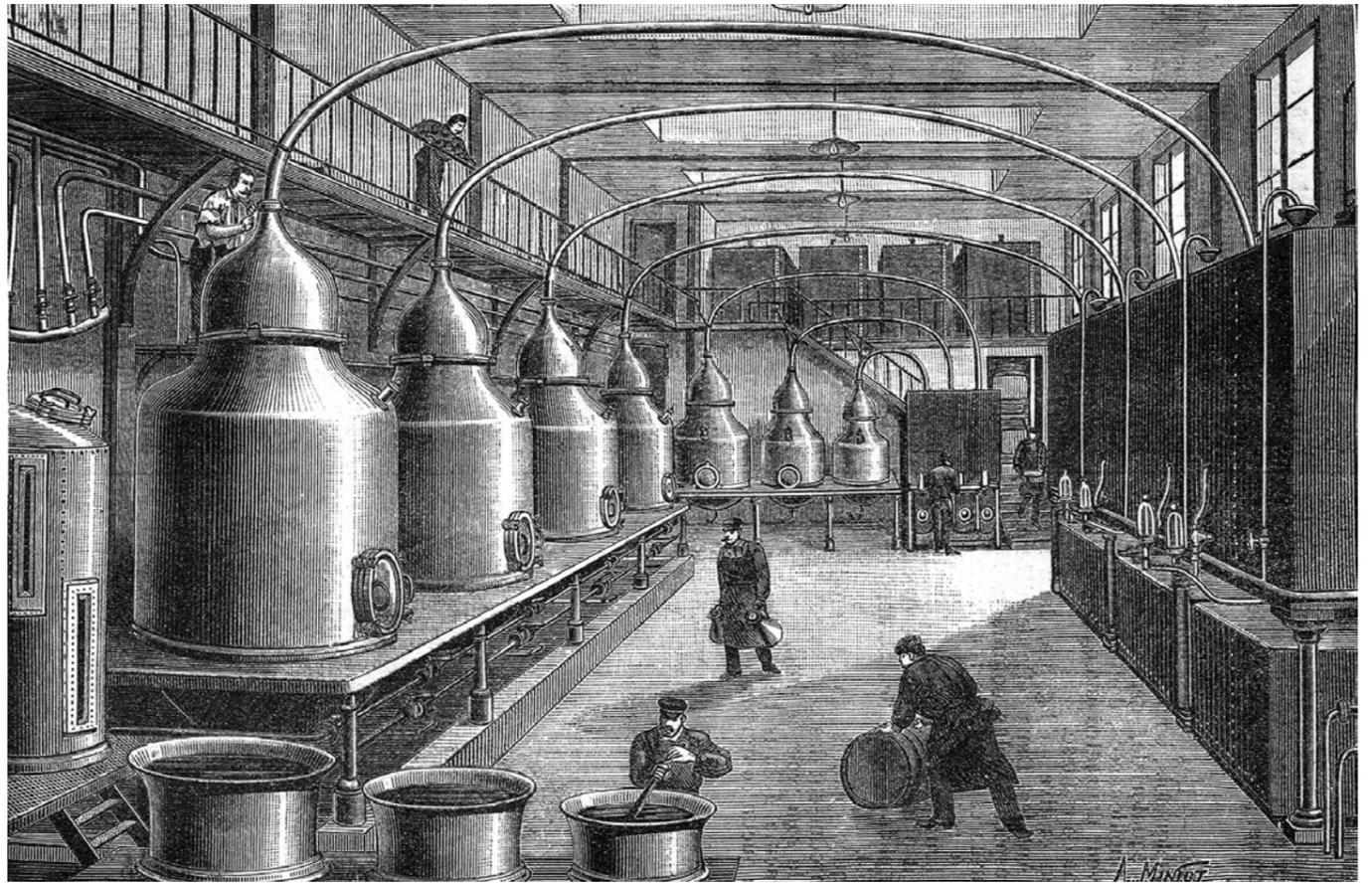
In 1905 in a tiny rural village of Commugny, Switzerland, Lanfray murders his pregnant wife and two daughters in a delirium quickly deemed to be Absinthe-induced. Incredibly, Lanfray survives, and the spectacle of his trial and subsequent media-induced bedlam becomes the catalyst needed to ban Absinthe in countries throughout Western Europe for nearly a century. Adding fuel to the fire were dubious claims of the spirit's hallucinogenic properties, more likely due to the "high volume of neatly disguised, seductively perfumed alcohol" than to the presence of psychoactive ingredients. (ref.)

The Goddess's 200-year reign comes to a close.

TODAY: British Entrepreneur George Rowley is largely credited with the modern revival of traditional Absinthe spirits. In 1998, upon his return from a trip through the Czech Republic and having experienced a relic of the near-forgotten spirit, Rowley arrived in France with the express intention of reversing the roughly eighty-year ban on Absinthe.

In partnership with Marie-Claude Delahay, founder and curator of Le Musee d l'Absinthe, Auvers-sur-Oise, France, the two set about to recreate the original 19th century recipe. Their success became La Fee Absinthe, the first traditional Absinthe to be commercially produced since 1914.

FRIENDS: No longer a novelty of questionable origin, Absinthe has recently developed a cult following of connoisseurs of fine spirits, and become an essential component



to the contemporary barkeep's repertoire as a distinct and complex traditional bitter.

It must also be noted that Absinthe has enjoyed acclaim from some noteworthy friends over the years, including: Oscar Wilde, Arthur Rimbaud, Earnest Hemingway, Marilyn Manson, Vincent Van Gogh, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

the girl & the fig is no stranger to Absinthe. In fact, Pastis is one of Sondra's favorite libations, and to her, Absinthe is the more sophisticated, eccentric cousin and the one you definitely want to hang out with at the party. You will always find at least one Absinthe cocktail on the menu under House Cocktails and the bartenders at the restaurant have a few more recipes in their cocktail repertoire.

REFERENCES:

9 MIND-BLOWING LIQUOR MYTHS DEBUNKED:

<https://www.liquor.com/slideshows/9-mind-blowing-liquor-myths-debunked/2/#gs.4oby4cM>. Accessed Jan. 14, 2018.

Rimbaud's Poison

A poem written by Peggy Amond in 1998 to describe Arthur Rimbaud's love affair with Absinthe

The emerald hour--
when the poet's pain is soothed
by a liquid jewel
held in the sacred chalice,
upon which rests
the pierced spoon,
the crystal sweetness--
ley streams trickle down.
The darkest forest
melts into an open meadow
as waves of green seduce.
Sanity surrendered,
the soul spirals toward
the murky depths,
wherein lies
the beautiful madness--
absinthe.



THE ARTISTIC TOOLS OF ABSINTHE



ABSINTHE COCKTAILS

Some Absinthe brands available in the United States (approximate prices)

PERNOD ABSINTHE (\$75 - \$80)

relaunched in 2013 from their original recipe

ST. GEORGE ABSINTHE VERTE (\$65)

*First legal Absinthe in America
Uses Chardonnay grapes*

VIEUX PONTARLIER (\$60 - \$65)

*small batch
made in France
uses Chardonnay grapes
made in antique absinthe still*

LEOPOLD BROTHERS ABSINTHE VERTE (\$80)

*uses 19th century techniques
distilled grape base
green color from lemon balm & hyssop*

TENNEYSON ABSINTHE ROYALE (\$52-\$55)

*clear liquid
beet distillate base*

EMPEROR NORTON ABSINTHE (\$60)

*made in California
small batches
wormwood imported from France*

DOC HERSON'S (\$42)

*made in Brooklyn
11 botanicals
rosy hue from hibiscus*

DUPLAIS SWISS ABSINTHE VERTE (\$75)

*first absinthe released in Switzerland since
the ban was lifted*

KUBLER ABSINTHE (\$70)

uses real wormwood with Swiss formula

VIEUX CARRE ABSINTHE (\$52 - \$59)

*notes of spearmint
made in Pennsylvania*

VERSINTHE (\$55)

*anise dominated
90 proof*

SAZERAC

Makes one cocktail

Absinthe
1 sugar cube
3 dashes Peychauds Bitters
2 dashes Angostura Bitters
2 oz Rye Whiskey
Lemon Peel Garnish

Rinse a chilled rocks glass with absinthe, discarding any excess, and set aside. In a mixing glass, muddle the sugar cube and both bitters. Add the rye, fill with ice and stir. Strain into the prepared glass. Twist a slice of lemon peel over the surface to extract the oils and then discard.

ON THE MENU AT the girl & the fig!

VERTIGO

Makes one cocktail

1½ oz gin
¼ oz Absinthe
juice of half a lemon
2 oz grapefruit juice
¼ oz Luxardo maraschino liqueur
dash grapefruit bitters

Add ice to a cocktail shaker. Pour in gin, Absinthe, lemon juice, grapefruit juice, Luxardo and grapefruit bitters. Shake cocktail, and then strain into a coupe glass.

ON THE MENU AT the girl & the fig!

A FLOWER FOR VINCENT

Makes one cocktail

½ oz Absinthe
¾ oz gin
¾ oz lemon juice
¾ oz St Germain
¾ oz Grand Marnier

Swirl the absinthe in a coupe glass to coat the inside, then spill out the excess. In a cocktail shaker, add the remaining ingredients and ice. Shake well, and strain into the prepared glass. Garnish with a lemon twist.

ABSINTHE DRIP

Makes one cocktail

1½ ounces Absinthe (can substitute Pernod)
1 sugar cube
3 ounces of cold water
1 absinthe spoon

Fill an absinthe fountain with ice water.

Pour the absinthe into an absinthe glass and place an absinthe spoon topped with the sugar cube across the rim. Position the glass under a spigot of the fountain and slowly drip water over the sugar cube until the sugar dissolves and the absinthe turns completely opaque. (You will need roughly 5 ounces of water per ounce of absinthe). Stir briefly before serving.

CORPSE REVIVAL NO. 2

Makes one cocktail

1 oz gin
1 oz Lillet Blanc
1 oz Cointreau
1 oz fresh lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon absinthe
Maraschino cherry for garnish

Add ice to a cocktail shaker. Pour in gin, Lillet, Cointreau, and lemon juice. Add absinthe to a separate cocktail glass and swirl to coat sides of glass. Shake cocktail, and then strain into the glass. Garnish with a cherry.

DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON

Makes one cocktail

1½ oz Absinthe
4½ oz Champagne

Pour Absinthe in a flute or a coupe glass and top with Champagne or sparkling wine.

CHRYSANTHEMUM

Makes one cocktail

1 teaspoon absinthe
1 oz Benedictine liqueur
2 oz dry vermouth
1 cup ice cubes
1 thin strip orange peel

In cocktail shaker, stir together absinthe, Benedictine liqueur, and vermouth. Add ice and stir for one minute, then strain into martini glass. Squeeze orange peel over drink, making sure oils fall into glass, then drop peel into drink and serve.

Sources for products and more information:

www.maisonabsinthe.com
www.absintheonthenet.com
www.absinthiana.com
www.absinthespoon.com
www.absinthes.com
www.wormwoodsociety.org



Listen up: The WineMakers



by:
Mark Kaufman

The WineMakers Podcast Weekly Sonoma Wine Shows

Since early 2017, four guys, each well-immersed in the Sonoma wine community, have been recording live weekly podcasts focused on wine. Listen to any of their archived podcasts and you may hear an extended interview with one of Sonoma's independent wine makers or a local restaurateur, a discussion on important Sonoma events, or just the four of them talking about, tasting and enjoying wine. With over 11,000 downloads of their 32 archived shows, the typically 45-minute episodes have found a following among food and wine lovers.

The idea of creating weekly, wine-infused podcasts was conceived of John Myers. John has been hosting wine shows on Sonoma's KSVY-FM for the last six years and, at one time or another, had each of the podcast members on his show. Over time, The Host, an enthusiastic wine lover, developed friendships with the three other partners, including:

- The Sommelier, Brian Casey; previously Wine Director of the girl & the fig and currently Sommelier at Santé at Fairmont's Sonoma Mission Inn.
- The Winemaker, Bart Hansen; 30 years making wine and, for the last 10 years, Cellar Master at Lasseter Family Vineyards and owner/winemaker at his own label, Dane Cellars
- The Wine Hound, Sam Coturri; part owner of Winery Sixteen 600, born and raised in the family vineyard on the southern slope of Sonoma's Moon Mountain

Sitting down with a glass of wine and listening to the podcasts, one gets an appreciation of the abundant wine knowledge and camaraderie that has developed between these four friends. Whereas each podcast does have a theme, everyone brings in episode ideas. John then sets the schedule, sends info, articles, and tags items of interest to the team. As if on a quest, they all trade articles, hit the Google universe to research supportive information, and think about the upcoming episode in preparation to the live show. Listening in, you can tell right away that these guys really enjoy their crafts, unapologetically love wine, have an insatiable curiosity and communicate as if we listeners have joined them in their living room, sharing food and learning something new about wine.

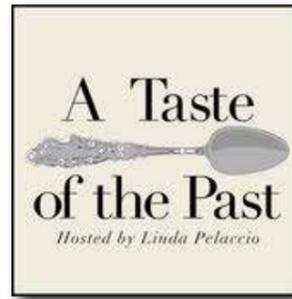
The goal of the average episode is to de-mystify wine by talking about how wine is best grown, made, and consumed, while at the same time humanizing the industry. Messages such as red, white or rose wine can be enjoyed at any time or, that bubbly isn't just for the holidays, infuses their shows. They typically open a couple of bottles of wine and talk about what the wine is, where it's from, its sense of place, what food may pair well with it, and share their infectious enjoyment of it. You know that they are passionate and serious about wine, but they don't take themselves seriously.

When asked about the movement of Sonoma vineyards towards Rhône varieties, they described Sonoma's supportive climate which shares many similarities with France's Rhône Valley. Not surprisingly, there is an ongoing dialog among Sonoma vintners with Rhône District winemakers, sharing passion, knowledge and the love of Rhône varietals. On the subject of continual improvement of California's Rhône varietal wines, they've described a number of factors, including more experience making the wines, growing Rhone grapes in the right places, the availability of more mature vines, expert vineyard management, better wine making decisions, and Sondra Bernstein's influence over the last 20 years. Her exclusive focus on Rhône varieties in her restaurants, events, and now her new Rhône Room tasting bar, has helped lead the Rhône-Alone wine movement.

Each of the team members hope to make connections with their listeners through feedback and suggestions for future podcasts. You can find past episodes and comment at:

<https://radiomisfits.com/category/twm/>
or search for the Wine-Makers on iTunes Podcasts.

more podcasts to listen to:



"Linda Pelaccio, a culinary historian, takes a weekly journey through the history of food on **A Taste of the Past**. Tune in for interviews with authors, scholars and culinary chroniclers who discuss food culture from ancient Mesopotamia and Rome to the grazing tables and deli counters of today."

"**Radio Cherry Bombe** features interviews with the coolest, most creative women in the world of food. Each week, host Kerry Diamond, co-founder and editorial director of the indie magazine Cherry Bombe, talks to the chefs, bakers, pastry chefs, stylists, writers, cookbook authors, and others making it happen."



"**Inside Winemaking** provides direct access to the people in charge of creating world-class wines. Napa Valley winemaker, Jim Duane, hosts interviews with some of the top winemakers in California and beyond. Each week the Podcast features a winemaker, grape-grower, or technical wine pro and dives deep into their background and expertise."

"**GrapeRadio** is a James Beard Award-Winning Audio and Video Program discussing wine related topics. Show topics cover issues such as the enjoyment of wine, wine news and industry trends – the hallmark of the show is interviews with world class guest (winemakers, vineyards owners, wine retail/wholesale leaders, restaurateurs and sommeliers)."



"**Wine for Normal People** is a podcast for people who like wine but not the attitude that goes with it. We talk about wine in a fun, straightforward, normal way to get you excited about it and help you drink better, more interesting stuff."

"**Burnt Toast** is a podcast from Food52 for people who never stop wondering about food. Join host Kenzi Wilbur, plus a rotating cast of guests, for controversial cooking topics, food culture, and occasional good-spirited debate."



"American Public Media's **The Splendid Table**, hosted currently by Francis Lam, is public radio's culinary, culture, and lifestyle program that celebrates food and its ability to touch the lives and feed the souls of everyone."

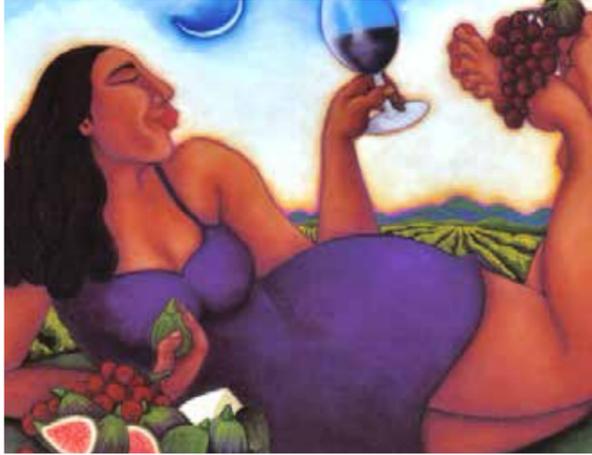
"**Spilled Milk**, a conversational podcast by the Oregon-based writers Molly Wizenberg and Matthew Amster-Burton, bills itself more as a "comedy podcast about food" rather than a food podcast."



JULIE HIGGINS RESIDENT ARTIST

by:
sydney
dean

If you're familiar with Julie's work, you know that animals, nature, plants, Earth, soil, luscious fruit, the environment and the abundance of it all each play a part within Julie's pieces. As we sat in the fig café, Julie described to me how the natural environment and landscapes of Northern California and Sonoma County influence her work. "I volunteer with the Salmon Restoration Organization as a member of The Mendocino Eco Artists, so you'll see a lot of fish pop up in my pieces. Calla lilies are also something I enjoy painting, because I love the structure and form of them. I have a fascination with ravens, which are abundant



in Mendocino. You'll also see pomegranates in some of my pieces too. That's inspired by the mythical story of Persephone, you know, from Greek Mythology."

If you're not familiar with the story of Persephone, here's how the mythological tales goes: Persephone was the daughter of Demeter, who was the Goddess of Vegetation. In the world in which they resided it was always summertime, with greenery always blooming and the sun always at its highest peak. One day, the Earth trembled and the ground split open to reveal the Underworld. Out of the cracked Earth appeared Hades, the God of the Underworld, who snatched Persephone and returned back into the Earth with her. For days, Demeter searched for Persephone, but to no avail. As the time in which Persephone was away lengthened, the Earth grew colder and the greenery receded. Meanwhile, Persephone became Queen of the Underworld, as she came to the realization that Hades was not frightening, but rather lonely. However, Persephone knew that she could not eat or drink anything from the Underworld, as this would force her to remain there forever. When Demeter finally discovered where Persephone was, Hades agreed to return her from the Underworld, but not without first giving Persephone a pomegranate. As a result of eating six pomegranate seeds, Persephone would now spend six months a year in the Underworld, and six months on Earth. The six months she spent away from Demeter in the Underworld became winter, as the Earth grew cold and barren. When she returned after six months each year, the Earth would again get warmer, and bloom into the colors of summer. Essentially, this is the mythology of how our seasons on Earth came to be. And, these seasons and the abundance each brings are a meaningful aspect to Julie's work, and even more so to her work with the girl & the fig.

As I talked with Julie further, it became apparent that mythologies, cultures, and the natural environment all play a large part in each of her pieces. Her background of growing up in Kansas, a large state built on farming and agriculture, also plays a role. Julie's father grew up on a farm with a farming family. Her grandparents on both sides grew up growing their own food in "Victory Gardens" during World War I and World War II. Julie's childhood spent in Kansas influences the symbols she uses in her pieces. "I like to include red shoes in some of my work, since I'm from Kansas.

The woman in the Fig Mambo piece at the girl & the fig is wearing red shoes."

Julie also noted that the creative spirits' of her parents had a profound influence on her art. "My mother and father were creative people. My mother taught Home Economics

and made all of our clothes growing up, and my father would create beautiful stained-glass pieces and window treatments. He also created colorful side tables with tiles as well. The house we lived in was colorful, vibrant, and full of life. Growing up surrounded with all of that color and creativity inspires my art.

The colors and whimsical characteristics I use throughout my pieces today are very much inspired by the color and creativity I was surrounded with growing up."

From her hometown of Kansas, Julie has traveled a lot and lived in several beautiful, scenic places. She's traveled and lived in regions from the coast to the redwoods and through the rolling hills. Each region she's lived in fuels her imagination along the way. In college, Julie attended the University of Kansas where she studied ceramics, sculpture, and painting. From college, Julie moved to the Skagit Valley region of Washington State, where she discovered her love for pastels. While she had a passion for ceramics, she did not enjoy the colorless quality of clay, but loved that pastels allowed her the instant gratification of working in vibrant color. Admirers of Julie's work often tell her that they see references to Mayan or Polynesian cultures in her work. "This isn't intentional," she says. "It's most likely influenced by all the traveling I have done."



From Washington, Julie traveled on to the coastal community of Mendocino County. In 1998 in Glen Ellen, a mutual friend introduced Julie to Sondra, proprietor of the girl & the fig. Many might not know that the original location of the girl & the fig was in Glen Ellen, where the fig café & winebar resides today. At the time, Sondra had rotating art shows at the girl & the fig in Glen Ellen. After meeting, the connection between Julie and Sondra clicked, and Sondra asked Julie to show her art at the girl & the fig in Sonoma year-round. Today, Julie's art not only graces the walls of the girl & the fig and the fig café & winebar, but it also appears on the girl & the fig's Fig Food labels, as well as the Très Bonnes Années Syrah. Julie described to me the first time she connected with Sondra: "It was an incredible opportunity for me at the time, and continues to be! When I met Sondra, I surprisingly already had a love for figs. My pieces were already inspired by natural elements, but after connecting with Sondra and creating pieces for the girl & the fig, that inspiration definitely intensified."

Connecting with Sondra was the beginning of a point in which Julie's art began to evolve. As we sat in the fig café, Julie showed me images on her iPad of her earlier work in pastels. These pieces comprised a series of darker paintings featuring snakes, which as a whole mimicked a darker time in Julie's life. As she scrolled through her photo library, she began to show me the work that comprised her second series of pieces. These pieces consisted of women emerging from pods, almost as if a tiny ray of light was beginning to creep out from the darkness of her earlier work. The next series of pieces we viewed were the pastels she created after beginning her journey with the girl & the fig. All of a sudden, the women from the pods had become one "juicy, colorful, vibrant, strong woman". I asked Julie if this woman was in fact the representation of "the girl." "This is the question that I get asked the most. People want to know who this woman is."

Julie described to me how this woman represents more than just "the girl." This woman is a representation of the evolution of Julie's life. While painting the series of snakes in her earliest work, Julie was at a darker time in her life. As her work progressed and more color emerged, Julie cites "creating from a more delightful headspace" as the main reason for this shift. In her most recent work during the last twenty years, Julie has evolved her love for the natural environment, while simultaneously being influenced by Sondra's farm-to-table mission. All in all, Julie's work mimics the natural progression of her journey through life, as well as a celebration of life itself and all that this planet and Mother Earth provide to us. The woman seen throughout her pieces at the girl & the fig is both a representation of this journey, as well as from her inspiration from working with Sondra for the past twenty years.

As we sat in the fig café and talked about her work, Julie and I gazed at several of her paintings hanging on the wall. Displayed next to us was a piece titled "Très Bonnes Années", which Julie created for the girl & the fig's 10-year anniversary milestone. If you look closely, you can see a total of 10 figs within the painting. For the girl & the fig's 20-year anniversary this past summer, Julie created a piece titled "Goddess of Figs," which includes a total of 20 figs within the painting, if you count halves and all.

Part of Julie's creative process is using symbolic shapes, like the figs, a number of times throughout a variety of her pieces. These shapes and symbols help to tell the story that lies within each piece. Julie also described how she enjoys experimenting with these shapes, and the figures in each piece, in a unique way. "Many people ask me about the fluid positions and shapes that the woman in each piece takes. This is mostly a result of playing with proportion. I love to manipulate the shape of each figure so that it fits within the layout of the paper, which often results in the woman being posed into these fluid positions."

By the end of our conversation, I realized that one thing's for sure - Art is a powerful thing. The whimsical shapes, energetic colors, and relaxing tones in Julie's art come together to capture the true experience of "Wine Country," all in one piece. Julie's art has the ability to lighten your spirit. And, in recent times, this ability for art to convey unexplainable words and emotions is as important as ever.

As a result of the North Bay Fires, Julie is graciously donating 20% of the proceeds from the sale of all framed art, paintings, and prints to fire relief efforts. Her art can be viewed and purchased from the girl & the fig in Sonoma, the fig café & winebar in Glen Ellen, or directly from Julie's website, www.artistjuliehiggins.com. Be sure to also follow Julie on Facebook, at [@artistjuliehiggins](https://www.facebook.com/artistjuliehiggins).



MANO FORMATE

the girl & the fig's

Cured Meat & Salumi Brand

(excerpts from Plats du Jour)

About fifteen years ago, the only salumi you could get was from a specialty supplier, usually imported, but cured meats have taken off in the past three years; many chefs and restaurants around the U.S. are making their own. We started making salumi when we had ESTATE, our Italian restaurant (closed in 2011), and we increased our cured meat production as part of our menu concept. With the success and quality of the few items we started to make, we realized that we could attempt to produce all of our cured meats for the company.

Now we make our own pancetta, sausage, mortadella, salame, and bacon. "My first attempt to make salumi was in 1998 when I tried to cure my own prosciutto leg," says John. "I cured it for a year in the walk-in, and no one would try it but me. Their loss; it was delicious." After that first successful foray into cured meats, and lots of studying, experimenting, and trial and error, we've perfected our salumi process. John, along with our chefs including Dustin, devote one day each week to salumi production and we go through between 200 and 300 pounds of pork (including 10 to 20 bellies) each week based on the level of business.

Salumi is air-dried, salted, cooked, smoked, or processed with a combination of methods. John has developed recipes and ratios for each type of salumi, though "salumi is essentially controlled spoilage," says John, "but you spoil it your way."

There are four elements that are crucial in making any type of salumi. The quality of the meat is the most important factor. Using the right temperatures at the right time is the next key component; if it's too hot the risk of bacteria skyrockets, and the fat literally melts. Fat is like butter—once it melts you can't put it back together and it's useless. (If you're grinding your own meat and it starts to smear like butter, the meat has gotten too warm and you should start over.) Because of this, we keep everything extremely cold; we even freeze the grinder attachment. Our favorite time to make salumi is on cold winter days; that should tell you how important the temperature is!

Balancing the pH (acidity) levels is also critical, because this is what prevents spoilage. Fat is another critical ingredient. We use back fat, and the fat ratio changes according to the type of salumi. The fat should be fresh. If you're making your own salumi, you can buy fat from any reputable butcher. John age-cures the fat (called lardo) and uses it to top pizzas and salads. A high-quality lardo should melt in your mouth.

Finally, the use of nitrates and nitrites are important to prevent botulism, spoilage, and to enhance color and flavor. These are chemical compounds that are frequently used in salumi products. They come in synthetic form but they also occur naturally in vegetables like carrots and spinach. (Celery has the highest level of naturally occurring nitrates, and celery juice is the most common ingredient in nitrate-free meat products.)

We believe that to get a premium product you have to start with good meat. We use a variety of breeds, knowing that the breed will change the flavor the same way the feed might. Flavorings are where the salumi maker can get creative. We only use dried herbs and stay fairly traditional in the Italian sense, selecting fennel and anise seeds, black pepper, and pimentón, depending on the recipe. Fresh herbs are never used because of their moisture content, which increases the risk of bacteria.

Here's an abbreviated step-by-step guide to our salumi products:

Applewood Smoked Bacon: Before we smoke the bacon, we season the pork belly with salt, brown sugar, and spices for four days. On the fifth day, we remove the bacon from the cure, wash it, and then hang it for another day. We use a home smoker loaded with applewood to smoke our bacon. The bellies hang in the smoker for two hours, and we make sure the temperature doesn't get too high or the fat will melt and make a mess. The bacon is then transferred to a 275°F oven for about two and a half hours until the internal temperature reaches 130°F. Fresh bacon, wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, freezes nicely for up to four months.





Pancetta: Pancetta is a salt-cured salumi made from a pig's belly. It's essentially the Italian answer to bacon, except that it isn't smoked. We make our pancetta both in slabs and rolled. We rub the bellies with the cure mix (which includes sugar and dried spices such as coriander, mace, nutmeg, thyme, and anise seed) and place them in plastic bins in the refrigerator for five days. We remove the pancetta from the bins, rub the bellies again, put them back in the bins, and refrigerate for another five days. We scrape off the salt mixture, wipe the bellies clean, and lay the bellies in the refrigerator for two more days, uncovered. Then they're ready to be rolled and hung. They will hang for at least three weeks before they are usable.

The salt rub draws out moisture and the result is a sliceable, somewhat moist, and very flavorful meat. You can eat pancetta raw because it's cured, but we dice it and sauté it for salads and pizzas. Pancetta stays fresh in the freezer, so you can keep it on hand to add to salads, soups, stews, or simply a pan of roasted vegetables.

Mortadella: Mortadella is basically a sausage/luncheon meat made of finely ground heat-cured pork and at least 15% of pork fat. Mortadella originated in Bologna Italy where it was created in the mid 1600s. The mortadella that we produce in our kitchens has pistachio nuts, garlic, coriander, nutmeg, cayenne and black peppercorns. We use the finished product both on our charcuterie plates in finished dishes like our pressed sandwich or on a pizza.

Salami: Salami is an Italian dried sausage, a generic term for pork that is encased and fermented (salami is the plural form of salame). Making salami takes many steps. Among the many steps in making salami include: grinding the meat, stuffing the meat in casings, inoculating, fermenting, and then aging.

We start by measuring the ingredients with a keen eye for accuracy. Trimming the meat is crucial to a high-quality product; you have to cut out the silver skin to get beautiful textured salami. The trimmed meat is transferred to a meat grinder and ground to the size and texture for the particular salami that is being made. The meat is then transferred to a work surface where we add the seasonings (pimentón, saba, oregano) and then we use our hands to work the meat. It's similar to making bread: you have to work it enough but not too much. Certain meats bind more than others, which affects the texture.

The ground meat is then fed into casings. We use a combination of collagen and natural casings (we get ours from butcherandpacker.com). The key with casing salami is eliminating any air pockets. The air pockets will create imperfections, which can affect fermentation, taste, and texture. We always save a small amount of the mixture from each batch as a "test case" to monitor fermentation and pH levels, which we enter into our Salumi logbook for quality control.

Salami production relies on bacteria, just like in cheese, and the white film on the outside of salami is actually a thin layer of mold (like the bloom on cheese). The mold can be white or blue-green and both are completely harmless. "It's all about the bacteria and mold cultures," says John. The bacteria is essential for transforming the meat and creating the texture and flavor notes, while the mold assists as a flavor enhancer and acts as a natural regulator for the outside of the salami. As John notes, the Italians never inoculated their meat; they relied on wild bacteria and mold that was naturally found in their meat cellars, much like wine.

We converted an old baking proof box into our salami 'fermenter'. The temperature is set to 75°F to 105°F; (depending on the type of salami), the perfect environment for what John calls "controlled spoilage." Temperature is crucial; too hot and the fat will melt, and the salami will cook. If it's too cold, the fermentation process won't begin. After three to five days in the 'fermenter', we move the salami to the aging room, a 10- by 10-foot converted walk-in refrigerator. Monitoring temperature, humidity, and air movement are crucial to the production of slow-aged, traditional-type salami. From beginning to end, the process can take as long as six months to develop the flavors and texture we desire. Salami can last up to ten years at room temperature; it just gets drier as it ages. Just be sure to store it in a breathable material like paper or cheesecloth, not plastic wrap.

The next time you visit the girl & the fig, order a charcuterie plate and taste our meat goodness!



Ramen Renaissance

Just add hot water? Not anymore!

For most of us here in the US, we know Ramen by the compact package that sells for less than a dollar of hard noodles with a seasoning pack. They arrived in the US when they were exported by Nissin Foods back in 1971, the first called Oodle of Noodles and later changed to Cup of Noodles.[1]

Because of the incredible melting pot that we have in the US, it is no wonder that we can find amazing ramen shops in just about every big city. You can even find great ramen in the most unexpected places.

What is Ramen?

"Ramen is a Japanese dish. It consists of Chinese-style wheat noodles served in a meat or (occasionally) fish-based broth, often flavored with soy sauce or miso, and uses toppings such as sliced pork (chāshū), dried seaweed (nori), menma, and green onions (negi). Nearly every region in Japan has its own variation of ramen, from the tonkotsu (pork bone broth) ramen of Kyushu to the miso ramen of Hokkaido"[1].

You can find more than thirty regional ramens in Japan, which is no wonder why you will find so many variations in ramen in the United States. Not surprising there are over 20,000 ramen restaurants in the greater Tokyo area. [2]

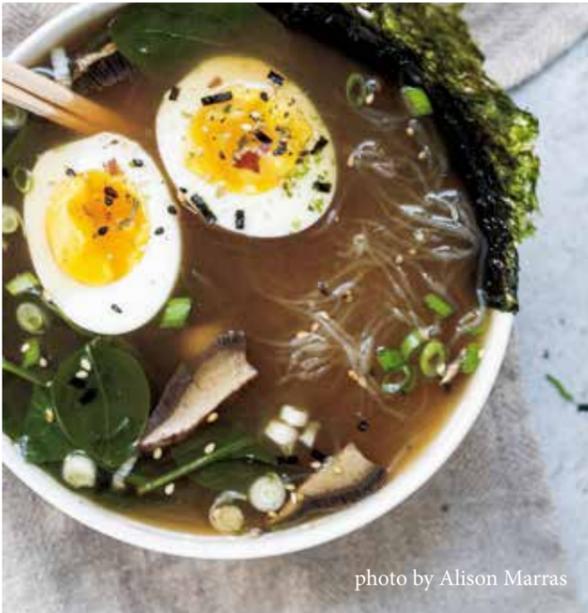


photo by Alison Marras

Start with Soup and Noodles

The soup stock: here there are really no rules, but there are four basic ramen styles.

Shoyu: (soy) ramen has a base of soy product, which in Japan there are many varieties with broader flavors than what we are accustomed to

Shio: (salt) is a lighter version of Shoyu, but the base is made by boiling salty products like dried seafood, or seaweed to a thick reduction used to season the broth

Miso: ramen is made by reducing fermented bean paste, or miso, into a rich liquid, and using that sauce or 'tare' to flavor the broth

Tonkotsu: is made by slow cooking pork bones overnight or multi nights to get a rich creamy-white broth which results in a rich fatty taste of the bones

The bottom line is this is where the unami* must come through. Whether the broth is made with chicken, pork or seafood or a combination of all, it comes down to the style of flavor wanted for the type of ramen you are preparing.

Sources:
[1]Wikipedia
[2]Serious Eats www.seriousseats.com
[3]Ramen Chemistry - www.ramenchemistry.com
[4] Emily Saladino for Zagat
[5]Ivan Ramen . www.ivanramen.com

Tare: Translates as sauce. Salt, and soy sauce start as the base and other ingredients are added like mirin, dashi, vinegar, sake, spices, garlic, ginger and oils. Typically tare is combined with the broth in a ratio of 1 to 10. The delicate balance of the quantity of tare in a bowl of ramen is essential to creating the perfect ramen. Too little, and the soup will seem weak and flavorless - Too much and the flavor will be overwhelming.

Dashi: "broth made from a variety of umami-heavy ingredients from the ocean. Most commonly these are kombu (a kind of kelp), katsuobushi (dried bonito flakes), or little dried fish like niboshi (a type of immature sardine). Dashi can also be made with mushrooms, with shiitake being among the most common." [3]

Noodles: there are several different varieties of noodles that can be served as Ramen. They are primarily made from wheat, brine, alkaline mineral water, salt and eggs. You can also have noodles made of rice flour that are gluten free. The real difference in preference is the size and shape and this is categorized by these different elements; the thickness, the percentage of water, the degree of the wave or shape and the color. The noodles will definitely make a difference in the flavor of the soup, and using the right noodle with the rest of the components is critical.

"Those who take their ramen seriously stress the importance of diner speed. Noodles, even high-alkaline ones, are at proper consistency only five minutes after being served. As a result, rapid-fire slurping is both acceptable and encouraged." [4]

Oils: flavored fats that float on the soup surface.

Toppings: Toppings run the gamut - nothing is off limit now. You will find basic, traditional ingredients like; bamboo shoots, green onion, soft cooked eggs, toasted nori, enoki mushrooms, baby corn, bok choy and greens.

Toppings you must try:

Chashu: tender, seasoned pork belly marinated in mirin and soy sauce.

Bonito: flakes of dried tuna

Wakame: slightly sweet version of nori

Menma: seasoned and fermented bamboo shoots

Takana: pickled mustard greens

Togarashi: One of our seasonings for our Ramen table that consists of varying amounts of Sichuan pepper, dried citrus peel, sesame seeds, hemp seeds, ginger, garlic, shiso, and nori.

"Ramen really should be eaten when it's at its freshest, at its hottest. The longer it sits, it starts to suck up the soup into the noodles because, obviously, the noodles are made of flour. They're a sponge and they're just going to change what it is I originally made for you."
Ivan Orkin (owner of Ivan Ramen Slurp Shop [5])



Brussels Sprout Kimchi

large wide mouth canning jar

2.5 lbs. Brussels sprouts
1 yellow onion
3 Tbs. fresh garlic, crushed
2 bunches of scallions (approximately 6-8)
4 oz. good quality sea salt
3 Tbs. soy sauce
2 Tbs. fish sauce
4 Tbs. clam juice
2 Tbs. coriander seeds, toasted
2 Tbs. fennel seeds, toasted
2 tsp. chili flakes
1 wide mouth canning jar (with lid)

Thinly slice Brussels, yellow onion and scallions; combine in large mixing bowl. Sprinkle salt over chopped vegetables and massage leaves until they begin to soften and release liquid; add enough water to the bowl to cover and place a heavy plate or dish on top in order to fully submerge; allow to stand at room temperature for a minimum of one hour. Transfer slaw to colander and rinse thoroughly under cold water; allow to drain for 20 minutes

Meanwhile, in a small mixing bowl combine garlic, soy, fish sauce, clam juice, coriander seeds, fennels seeds, and chili flakes; whisk thoroughly.

After 20 minutes, gently squeeze any remaining water from chopped vegetables and return them to your large bowl; add seasoning brine; work ingredients together until leaves are completely coated.

Pack the entire contents into the jar; be sure to press kimchi so that it is fully submerged in the brine, with at least one inch of headspace to allow room for fermentation/expansion.

Cover the jar with cheese cloth (secured with a rubber band) and ferment for 3-5 days; check kimchi at least once a day, pressing contents down with the handle of a clean spoon to be sure that they remain well below the liquid line.

When kimchi is actively bubbling and aged to taste, transfer jar to fridge for storage; kimchi may consumed immediately or aged for a week (or more) before use.

Ramen & the fig

You may be surprised to find out that the girl & the fig has an affinity towards Ramen. During the cold months (Winter) in Sonoma, we have Wednesday Night Ramen Pop-Ups at Suite D, offer Ramen on Thursday Nights at the fig cafe and even serve it off of the fig rig in a myriad of locations. We have experimented with traditional styles of Ramen and certainly created many of our own original bowls. We pride ourselves on our delicious kimchi, pastrami chashu and Togarashi eggs. If you find yourself in Sonoma during our cold months take a look at our website or facebook page to see where we are! Hopefully sometime this year you will find our Noodlehouse to be called Noodlespring to be open in Boyes Hot Springs. We will keep you posted!



Marinated Soft Boiled Egg with Togarashi [Adapted from 2]

Makes 6 eggs

1 cup water
1 cup sake
1/2 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup mirin
1/2 cup sugar
6 eggs
Togarashi

Combine water, sake, soy, mirin, and sugar in a medium bowl and whisk until sugar is dissolved. Set aside.

Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Pierce fat end of each egg with a thumbtack to make a tiny hole (this prevents them from cracking and eliminates the air bubble at the end). Carefully lower eggs into water with a wire mesh spider or slotted spoon. Reduce heat to maintain a bare simmer. Cook for exactly 6 minutes. Drain hot water and carefully peel eggs under cold running water (the whites will be quite delicate).

Transfer eggs to a bowl that just barely fits them all. Pour marinade on top until eggs are covered or just floating. Place a double-layer of paper towels on top and press down until completely saturated in liquid to help keep eggs submerged and marinating evenly. Refrigerate and marinate at least four hours and up to 12. Discard marinade after 12 hours. Store eggs in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 3 days. Reheat in ramen soup to serve. Dip egg in Togarashi before putting in ramen bowl.

Burnt Garlic-Sesame-Chili Oil [Adapted from 2]

Makes 1 cup

1/4 cup canola or vegetable oil
12 medium cloves garlic, minced (about 4 tablespoons)
1/4 cup roasted sesame oil
2 red red spicy chilies, finely minced
6 tablespoons toasted black and white sesame seeds
1 teaspoon sugar
Kosher salt

Combine canola oil and 10 cloves minced garlic in a small saucepan and cook over medium-low heat, stirring, until it starts to brown. Reduce heat to low and continue to cook, stirring frequently, until garlic turns completely black, about 10 minutes (garlic will become very sticky in the process).

Transfer mixture to a heat-proof bowl and add sesame oil. Transfer to a blender and blend on high speed until completely pulverized, about 30 seconds. Return mixture to saucepan and add chilies and remaining garlic. Cook gently over low heat until chilies and fresh garlic begins to bubble. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

Grind sesame seeds in a mortar and pestle or a food processor until roughly ground but some large pieces still remain. Stir sesame seeds and sugar into oil mixture. Season to taste with salt. Transfer to a sealable container and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.

Pork Belly Chashu

Serves 6

2 pound slab of boneless pork belly, skin-off
1 cup water
1/2 cup soy sauce
1 cup sake
1/2 cup mirin
1/4 cup black mission figs, chopped
1 oz Worcestershire sauce
6 scallions, roughly chopped
6 whole garlic cloves
2 bay leaves
One 2-inch knob ginger, roughly sliced
1/2 cup koji
1/2 oz dried wood ear mushrooms (cans substitute shitake)

Place pork belly in a shallow non-reactive roasting pan. Heat 1 cup water, soy sauce, sake, mirin in a medium saucepan over high heat until boiling. Add remaining ingredients and let sit for 10 minutes. Pour over pork belly and marinate overnight.

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Cover pork belly, transfer to oven and cook, turning pork occasionally, until pork is fully tender and a cake tester or thin knife inserted into its center meets little resistance, 2 to 3 hours. Transfer contents to a sealed container and refrigerate until completely cool.

When ready to serve, remove pork belly and strain broth. Reserve broth for another use. Slice pork belly into thin, (it might help to cut it in half lengthwise first).

Reheat pork belly slices in soup broth with noodles and other garnishes. Alternatively, heat a small amount of reserved broth in a skillet and heat pork slices in broth until hot or reheat with a blowtorch, charring its surface. Serve.



Green Things



by: Sage Ryan

If you've ever visited any of our three locations, (the girl & the fig, the fig café, or Suite D), you may have noticed that each location is decorated with an assortment of green pottery.

Why exclusively green pottery, you ask? It just so happens that collecting various pieces of green pottery is one of Sondra Bernstein's passions and hobbies.

Sondra calls them her "green things." For over thirty-five years she has been collecting them from flea markets, garage sales, antique shops; she has received them fondly as gifts and has been known to do a late night binge on Etsy or Ebay. You might call this an addiction, so much so that in the early 2000's, she self-imposed a \$12.00 limited per piece spending. (Whether or not she still abides by that is a secret unknown!)

Green pottery primarily originates from China but is also valued in Korea, Thailand, and Japan. Green pottery derives its color from a green ceramic glaze called Celadon. Celadon dates back to around 206-220 AD and was first used on stoneware.

The creation of these wares entailed first applying liquefied clay, (that contained high levels of iron), to the stoneware prior to glazing. Due to the iron's interaction with the glaze during firing, it produced an assortment of unique shades of green. The colors of Celadon pottery typically range from a pale, sea-foam green, to a dark, avocado-like green; often resembling shades of Jade.

Fun Fact: In the 14th century many people believed a superstition that suggested Celadon dishware would change color if the food or liquid in it had been poisoned.

During the late 1800's many U.S. pottery companies began to produce Celadon pottery. A few of the more well-known companies were The Hull Pottery Company, McCoy Pottery Company, and lastly The Haeger Potteries. Due to the decline in pottery's popularity these businesses discontinued the production of Celadon pottery.

Today, Celadon pottery is a lot less common than any other type of colored pottery. The rarity of Celadon pottery truly makes Sondra's collection an exceedingly special accomplishment, and (we think) adds to the unique charm and personality of the restaurants. Next time you visit us, have a closer look!



Pottery Companies

McCoy

Nelson McCoy Pottery Co.
1910 - 1990

Roseville, Ohio

McCoy pottery was made in Roseville, Ohio. Nelson McCoy and J.W. McCoy established the Nelson McCoy Sanitary and Stoneware Company in Roseville, Ohio, in 1910. The firm made art pottery after 1926. In 1933 it became the Nelson McCoy Pottery Company. Pieces marked McCoy were made by the Nelson McCoy Pottery Company. Cookie jars were made from about 1940 until December 1990, when the McCoy factory closed.

www.mccoypottery.com

Hull
U.S.A.

Hull Pottery
1905 - 1986

Crooksville, Ohio

Hull pottery was made in Crooksville, Ohio, from 1905. Addis E. Hull bought the Acme Pottery Company and started making ceramic wares. In 1917, A. E. Hull Pottery began making art pottery as well as the commercial wares. For a short time, 1921 to 1929, the firm also sold pottery imported from Europe. The dinnerwares of the 1940s (including the Little Red Riding Hood line), the high gloss artwares of the 1950s, and the matte wares of the 1940s, are all popular with collectors. The firm officially closed in March 1986.

Haeger Potteries
1852 - 2016

Kane County, Illinois

Haeger Potteries, Inc., Dundee, Illinois, started making commercial artwares in 1914. Early pieces were marked with the name Haeger written over an H. About 1938, the mark Royal Haeger was used in honor of Royal Hickman, a designer at the factory. The firm closed in 2016.



Van Briggles
1899-current

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Van Briggles Pottery was started by Artus Van Briggles in Colorado Springs, Colorado, after 1901. Van Briggles had been a decorator at Rookwood Pottery of Cincinnati, Ohio. He died in 1904 and his wife took over managing the pottery. One of the employees, Kenneth Stevenson, took over the company in 1969. He died in 1990 and his wife, Bertha, and son, Craig, ran the pottery. She died in 2010. Craig, who is the chief designer, continues to run the pottery. Some of the old pieces are still being made and new designs are also being made. The wares usually have modeled relief decorations and a soft, matte glaze.

Roseville Pottery
1890 - 1953

Roseville, Ohio

Roseville Pottery Company was organized in Roseville, Ohio, in 1890. Another plant was opened in Zanesville, Ohio, in 1898. Many types of pottery were made until 1954. Early wares include Sgraffito, Olympic, and Rozane. The Rozane line was Roseville's first line of handmade art pottery and was marked Rozane. Later lines were often made with molded decorations, especially flowers and fruit. Most pieces are marked Roseville. Many reproductions made in China have been offered for sale the past few years.

J. A. Bauer Pottery
1885 - 1962

Paducah, Kentucky

Bauer pottery is a California-made ware. J.A. Bauer bought the Paducah Pottery in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1885. He moved the pottery to Los Angeles, California, in 1909. The company made art pottery after 1912 and dinnerware marked Bauer in 1930. A line of Bauer solid-color dinnerware, called "Plain Ware," was the first solid-color American dinnerware. The factory went out of business in 1962.

Shawnee
USA

Shawnee Pottery
1937 - 1961

Zanesville, Ohio

Shawnee Pottery was started in Zanesville, Ohio, in 1937. The company made vases, novelty ware, flowerpots, planters, lamps, and cookie jars. Three dinnerware lines were made: Corn, Lobster Ware, and Valencia (a solid color line). White Corn pattern utility pieces were made in 1945. Corn King was made from 1946 to 1954; Corn Queen, with darker green leaves and lighter colored corn, from 1954 to 1961. The Corn King and Corn Queen lines of dinner plates, teapots, and salt and pepper sets were molded and colored to resemble ears of corn, with kernels of corn and leaves. Shawnee produced pottery for George Rumrill during the late 1930s. The company closed in 1961.



Franciscan
1875 - 1984

Los Angeles, California

Franciscan is a trademark that appears on pottery. Gladding, McBean and Company started in 1875. The company grew and acquired other potteries. It made sewer pipes, floor tiles, dinnerwares, and art pottery with a variety of trademarks. The company made china and cream-colored, decorated earthenware. Desert Rose, Apple, El Patio, and Coronado were best-sellers. In 1936, the name used in advertisements and marks was changed from Franciscan Pottery to Franciscan Ware. The company became Interpace Corporation and in 1979 was purchased by Josiah Wedgwood & Sons. The plant was closed in 1984 but a few of the patterns are still being made.

A Tale of Two Growers

By: Mark Kaufman

One has been raised in the soils of Sonoma, planting and managing over 700 acres of organic vineyards throughout the region since the 1970's. The other has been managing the renown Bien Nacido vineyards near Santa Maria for over 18 years. Each of them have their own wineries which complement their grape growing expertise. How do their experiences vary, and how does climate and soil, the 'terroir' as the French call it, show its hand both in the vineyard and in the bottle? How do they both deal with Mother Nature's surprises as well as the issues and expectations of multiple winemakers? It may seem that they each have an impossible task, but these two have become renown both for their stewardship in the vineyard as well as their ability to work with demanding winemakers, including the pressures of harvest.



Phil Coturri

Phil Coturri is a treasured Sonoma icon. Growing up on his parents' property on Sonoma Mountain, he gravitated to grape growing after being challenged by Myron Freiberg to "grow grapes like you grow your garden". That was in 1979. From that challenge, Phil stopped using chemical fertilizers and has managed grapes organically ever since. Phil's company Enterprise Vineyard, where he is CEO, manages grapes for several wineries including Repris, Mayacamas, and Kamen. His philosophy boils down to, "less in the vine, more in the glass." When asked how he deals with his clients' different demands in the vineyard, he used a tomato metaphor to illustrate: "You may want the first summer tomato - when you bite into it, it has that bright acidity that crunches when you eat it. Or perhaps you prefer a September autumn tomato - that when you bite into it, it's soft and it drips. They are both ripe. Is one better than the other? That all depends on what you want."

Phil is the vineyard manager, and considers the winemaker to be the ultimate boss. He gets the grapes to the point of the bright ripeness that's wanted by each winemaker, then makes sure the whole vineyard is consistent. As he sees it, his job is to create uniformity out of chaos. He does that by keeping the vines in balance, whether it's carrying two pounds or five pounds, depending on the individual block. He doesn't prune by numbers, but by visualization. He says, "There are rules, but rules can be broken: you apply them as needed to attain the right balance." One may think of Phil Coturri as Sonoma's vineyard whisperer.

Chris Hammell

Chris Hammell has been working in the cooler central coast vineyards for the last twenty-five years, having worked at Cambria and David Bruce wineries before coming to Bien Nacido in 2000. There he manages 700 acres, providing grapes for over fifty clients. During the harvest season, he deals with 690 separate picks, ranging from a half ton to forty-eight tons. Counter intuitively, the smaller the client, the more finicky they can be. Under Chris's domain, Bien Nacido Winery, the owner of the Bien Nacido and Soloman Hills Vineyards, both make wine and sell a decent amount of fruit at a good margins. Bien Nacido is certified sustainable as its foundation. About 10% is organic, but not certified. That's because they need to treat the water, via irrigation, with sulfuric acid to lower the pH in the vineyard. Although the Bien Nacido is a difficult beast to manage, Chris is counted on to know how the various varietals perform within the multiple blocks in the vineyards. His main job is to "farm for other people and tailor to the winery as much as possible".

Chris and Phil grow Rhône varietals, both for their clients and their own labels. The 1990's brought a big influx of Syrah grape planting in California, although Grenache has always had a foothold, typically found in field blend/mixed block vineyards. But Syrah opened the door to the Rhône varietals, where it's dominant in the Northern Rhône and typically blended with Grenache and others in the Southern Rhône, Syrah is a chameleon...it grows well in both hot and cool climates. It adapts to its environment as long as you reduce the fruit on the vine. Without thinning, Syrah can produce five to eight tons an acre, with a corresponding reduction in quality. Syrah was first grafted in 1986 for Bob Linquist of Qupe and, once its high scoring wines were noticed, Syrah spread throughout the central coast. In 2002 Grenache followed suit and has been a mainstay at Bien Nacido ever since. In the cool Central Coast climate, Syrah is one of the last grapes to be picked. In the warmer Sonoma area, the volcanic soils embed a different minerality from Bien Nacido. In Sonoma, the grapes can hang unpicked well into November, allowing them to come into balance, to "complete their marathon of ripeness". In the loam and sandy soils found in Bien Nacido, wines impart an aromatic character unique to its appellation.

To see the differences for yourself, you can find wines at both wineries as follows:

Chris' The Hammell Alliance wines are available at The Rhône Room and through his winery: <http://www.hammellwinealliance.com/>

Phil's Sixteen 600 wines are available at his Sonoma winery on 1st Street in Sonoma or his website: <http://winerysixteen600.com>

Both vineyard gurus see their wines as expressive of where the vines grow. Neither would want their wines to taste like the other's, as each wine reflects its own appellation. The beauty of wine is that, if it is grown and made properly, it will express a sense of place, its 'terroir'. There's a different intensity between the two AVAs (American Viticultural Area). The growing season is more truncated in Bien Nacido, with a cooler, more arid climate. When it comes to Rhône varietals there, the wines are bigger, more "in your face," expressive of its limestone and sandy soils. In Sonoma, with its lush canyons, hotter weather and longer growing season, there's more time for a steady ripening of the Rhône grapes, bringing the sugars and acidity into balance on the vine. In Sonoma, one can say the wine is made in the vineyard, whereas in Santa Maria, there's more room for the tools of the winemaker to enhance the final product during the wine making process.



THE ROOT OF IT ALL

Root vegetables are grown for their underground, edible roots. They are relatively easy to grow and are similar in their needs in the garden. This category also includes:

Bulbs (garlic, shallots, onions),
Rhizomes (ginger, turmeric, lotus root),
Tubers (sun chokes, potatoes),
Taproots (jicama, salsify, radish, carrots),
Tuberous roots (sweet potatoes, yams, cassava).

Root vegetables take over our kitchens all winter long. These are the hearty vegetables that flourish in the winter months, including carrots, salsify, turnips, rutabagas, beets, and parsnips. They taste particularly sweet during winter because the cold encourages the conversion of starch to sugar.

Beets:

Many confessed beet haters change their tune when they taste a roasted beet. Their sweet flavor explodes when cooked properly. Yellow or red, the skin has a deep color that doesn't change with cooking; just be sure to peel them after cooking. The leafy green tops are also edible, and taste wonderful when sautéed or stuffed into ravioli. They are particularly delicious with goat's cheese or Puy lentils. Store beets in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to three weeks.

Salsify:

This root is virtually unknown in the U.S., but the creamy white flesh is delicious boiled, mashed, or used in soups and stews. It has an oyster-like taste when cooked and is sometimes known as "the oyster plant." Peel the thick skin and cut it into short lengths. Salsify discolors very quickly, so plunge immediately into acidulated water after slicing. Simmer for 30 minutes until soft, drain, and sauté in butter. It's in season June through February.

Parsnips:

The sweet, earthy parsnip is underappreciated in the U.S. It can be eaten raw or cooked, but we love to mash it and serve it alongside roasted meats. It's also wonderful in soups and stews. Available year-round, parsnips are at their peak in autumn and winter.

Turnips:

This vegetable is often ignored by American foodies, but one bite of a perfectly roasted turnip will turn you into a believer. They have a wonderful sweet, earthy flavor that comes alive when cooked. You can also substitute them for potatoes for a flavorful mash—just peel them, cook them, and mash them with butter and milk. Peak turnip season is October through February. They can be refrigerated for up to two weeks or kept in a cool, dark place for up to two months. Choose those that smell sweet and have fresh green tops.

Rutabaga:

Rutabaga is essentially a cross between a cabbage and a turnip. It is an oval shaped vegetable with a thin skin that is purple on the top and yellow on the bottom. The inner flesh is pale orange. The young leaves of a rutabaga can also be eaten, but as they get larger the leaves get chewier and coarse. A rutabaga typically weighs 2 - 3 pounds.

Jerusalem Artichokes:

A Jerusalem artichoke or 'Sun choke' is a large, perennial sunflower. Like a potato, it produces edible tubers at the ends of its underground stems. Jerusalem artichokes can be eaten raw, steamed, fried, baked or mashed. They are easy to grow and don't need much attention to maintain.

Heirloom Radishes:

Most people only know radishes as the white-and-red garnish on salads, but heirloom radishes have become more widely available, bringing an array of texture and color to the plate. One of our popular starter plates is a very French way to serve radishes: thinly sliced radishes served with anchovy butter and sea salt.

Radishes are members of the mustard family and have mild, sweet, slightly bitter or peppery flavors depending on the variety. They come in all shapes and sizes, from red and white to even black. The most common is the Cherry Belle variety, a round, bright red radish with a white interior and a mild, slightly sweet flavor. The Watermelon variety has a vivid purple-pink interior, while the long, tubular French Breakfast radish has a pale red exterior and white interior with a mild, slightly sweet flavor. The Sparkler White Tip is a round, bright red radish with white tips and a mild flavor, while the White Icicle is a long, thin variety with a milky white color and a rich, spicy flavor.

Carrots:

Carrots are one of the most popular vegetables in the world. They date as far back as the 200 AD and have played a role in just about every culinary style. They were originally grown for medicinal purposes and included in Ancient herbals, but as the years went by, the easy-growing carrot became a food staple. It is not surprising that this vegetable succeeds both in savory and sweet dishes as the carrot is complementary to spices and herbs.

While some baby carrots were harvested early to avoid crowding, certain types have been bred to eat as baby carrots. One of our favorites is the Nantes variety. Originally from the Chantenay region of France, it's great fresh or for canning. It's considered the sweetest and most tender baby carrot, with red-orange flesh. Because of their delicate skin, baby carrots don't need to be peeled and their small, beautiful shape doesn't need much trimming, either.

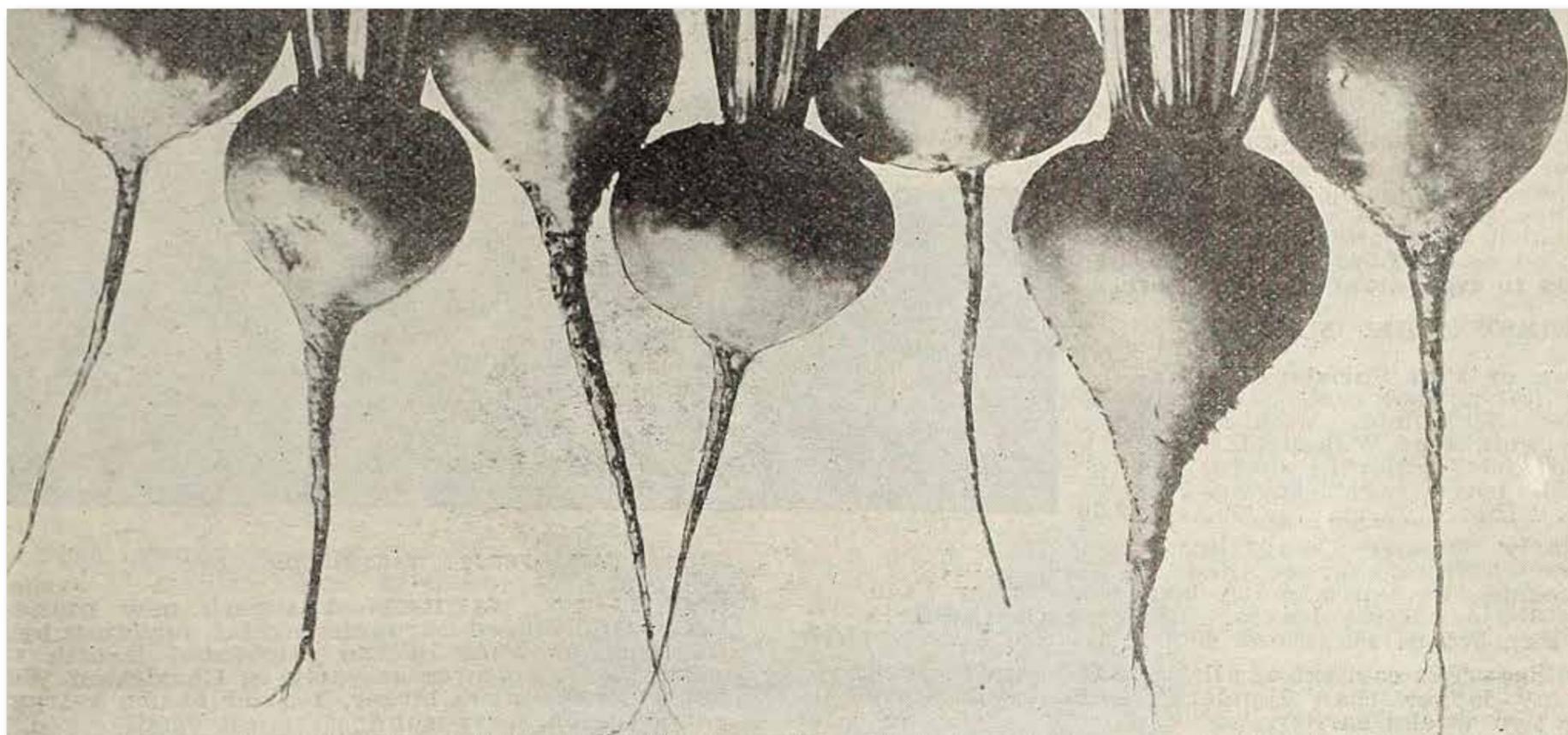
We serve baby carrots sautéed, braised, or roasted but we also love to pickle them; they look beautiful standing upright in glass jars. They also make a wonderful visual and textural addition to a crudité platter, served with dip.

Jicama:

Jicama is a round root vegetable that is thought to have its origins in Mexico and Central America. It is similar in texture to a turnip or a raw potato but tastes more like an apple or Asian pear. Jicama is a wonderful addition to salads, slaws, stir fried dishes and simply eaten with a squeeze of lime, a dash of salt and chili powder.

Ginger:

The root of the ginger plant is used in several ways. It can be consumed fresh, pickled, cooked, dried or extracted into an oil. Ginger has been around for a long time. In ancient times, it was used for both culinary and medicinal purposes. Today, it is still considered a vegetable with many health benefits including reducing pain, nausea and inflammation.



Carrot Soup, Fava Bean Pistou

Serves 6

For the soup:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 small yellow onion, chopped
 2 celery stalks, chopped
 1 leek, white part only, cleaned and chopped
 2 shallots, diced
 4 garlic cloves, crushed
 2 pounds carrots (about 6 carrots), chopped
 Salt and white pepper to taste
 ½ cup heavy cream

For the pistou:

¼ cup pine nuts, toasted
 1 garlic clove, peeled
 2 tablespoons grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
 ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil plus additional for garnish
 ½ cup fava beans, blanched and peeled
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 Salt and black pepper to taste

To prepare the soup:

Melt the butter in a medium-large saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the onion, celery, leek, shallots, and garlic and sauté until the vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes. Stir the vegetables occasionally to prevent browning. Add the carrots and sauté for about 3 minutes while stirring. Add 1½ quarts water and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook until the carrots are just tender, about 5 minutes. Add the heavy cream. Remove the vegetables from the heat and purée immediately in a blender or a food processor. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve and season with salt and pepper to taste.

To prepare the pistou:

Place the pine nuts, garlic, and cheese in a food processor and purée while slowly adding the olive oil until just blended. Add the fava beans and parsley and purée to a creamy consistency. Add more olive oil if necessary and season to taste with salt and black pepper.

To serve:

Garnish each bowl of soup with 1 tablespoon of Fava Bean Pistou and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil.

Pickled Carrots

1 pound young carrots, any color, trimmed, peeled
 1 shallot, peeled, quartered
 4 garlic cloves, peeled
 2 red or green Thai chiles
 2 sprigs tarragon
 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
 1 cup unseasoned rice vinegar
 1 cup sugar
 1 tablespoon kosher salt

Blanch carrots for one minute.

Pack carrots, shallot, garlic, chiles, tarragon, peppercorns, and coriander seeds in a large heatproof jar.

Bring vinegar, sugar, salt, and 2 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan, whisking to dissolve sugar and salt.

Pour pickling liquid over carrots to cover. Let cool; cover and chill at least 24 hours. Keep chilled.

Carrot Purée

Serves 6

1½ pounds carrots, peeled and cut into ½-inch rounds
 1 tablespoon sugar
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 Salt and white pepper to taste

Cook the carrots in a large pot of salted water until they are tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and place the cooked carrots in a food processor. With the processor running, add the sugar and butter and purée until smooth. If the purée is too thick add a small amount (1 to 2 tablespoons) of water to adjust the consistency. Season with the salt and pepper to taste.

Parsnip & Cipollini Soup

Serves 6

For the Chive Oil:

1 bunch chives
 ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Add the chives and blanch them for 10 seconds. Drain the water and transfer the chives to an ice bath. Remove them and pat dry on paper towels, squeezing to remove as much of the excess water as possible. Roughly chop the chives and place them in a blender. Slowly add the olive oil while the blender is on low and process until smooth. Transfer the Chive Oil to a bowl and refrigerate overnight. Strain the oil through a fine mesh sieve, pressing against the solids with the back of a spoon to extract as much oil as possible. Transfer the oil to a squeeze bottle and refrigerate until needed, up to 2 weeks. (Bring it to room temperature before using.)

For the soup:

¼ cup olive oil
 12 cipollini onions, peeled
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 small yellow onion, chopped
 2 celery stalks, chopped
 1 leek, white part only, chopped
 2 shallots, diced
 4 garlic cloves, crushed
 2 pounds parsnips, chopped (about 6)
 Salt and white pepper to taste
 ½ cup heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

In a medium ovenproof sauté pan, add the olive oil and cipollini onions and cook them over medium-high heat until browned on all sides, about 8 minutes. Place the pan in the oven and bake for an additional 10 minutes or until the onions are caramelized and cooked through. Remove the onions from the pan, chop them, and keep warm.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Sauté the onion, celery, leek, shallots, and garlic until the vegetables are soft, about 12 to 15 minutes. Stir the vegetables occasionally to prevent browning. Add the parsnips to the vegetables and sauté for about 3 minutes while stirring. Add 1½ quarts of water and season with salt and pepper to taste. Bring the soup to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until the parsnips are just tender, about 10 minutes. Add the heavy cream. Remove the vegetables from the heat and immediately purée the soup in a blender or food processor. Strain the soup through a fine-mesh sieve and season with salt and pepper to taste. Reheat the soup before serving.

To serve:

Ladle the soup in 6 bowls. Add a heaping spoonful of the onions in the center and drizzle the Chive Oil on top.

Heirloom Radishes,**Anchovy Butter & Sea Salt**

Serves 6

1 pound assorted radishes
 ¼ pound butter
 4 anchovy filets, chopped
 1 tablespoon minced shallots
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
 1½ tablespoons grey sea salt

Clean and trim radishes in cold water.

Combine butter, anchovies, shallots, lemon juice and parsley in a food processor. Blend well. Serve radishes with a side of anchovy butter and a side of sea salt.

Oven Roasted Sunchoke

Serves 6

1½ pounds Jerusalem Artichokes
 3 tablespoons olive oil
 salt and pepper
 2 ounces hard cheese, grated, optional garnish

Preheat the oven at 350 degrees F.

Cut the artichokes in half. In a bowl, mix everything together. Put on a baking tray, flesh-side down and bake in the oven for 45 minutes or until caramelized and tender. Sprinkle with grated cheese before serving.

Lemon Roasted Salsify

Serves 6

2½ lbs fresh salsify roots
 3 ounces fresh lemon juice
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 3 ounces white wine
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 5 tablespoons fresh parsley chopped
 Pinch nutmeg
 Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Rinse and brush the salsify well. Make sure to remove all of the sand and dirt. Peel the salsify and rinse them well under cold running tap water again. While peeling the salsify, let the peeled roots soak in some water with half of the lemon juice. This keeps them from oxidation that makes the white salsify yellow once they are peeled.

Chop the peeled salsify into 3-inch pieces. Add the vegetable oil in a large non-stick pan and place it over high heat until hot. Add the chopped salsify and season with a pinch of pepper, salt and nutmeg.

Quickly saute the salsify for about 4 minutes. Sprinkle with the rest of the lemon juice and the dry white wine. Transfer the cooked salsify to a large baking dish. Sprinkle with an extra pinch of pepper and salt.

Bake the salsify for 40 to 45 minutes until the salsify is soft and golden. Gently stir the vegetables halfway through cooking time. Remove the salsify from the oven, sprinkle with the freshly chopped parsley and extra olive oil.

Check the seasoning and add extra nutmeg, pepper or salt to taste if necessary. Serve hot.

adapted from June d'Arville

Roasted Baby Beet & Blood Orange Salad,**Champagne Vinaigrette**

Serves 6

36 – 40 baby beets, stems removed & washed
 ¼ cup olive oil
 ½ cup Champagne Vinaigrette, below
 3 blood oranges, can substitute oranges or grapefruit
 3 sprigs tarragon, stems removed
 ¼ cup Italian parsley leaves, stems removed
 ½ pound watercress, washed, stems removed
 salt and pepper
 ¼ pound hard cheese, thinly shaved
 zest of 1 lemon

Preheat oven to 350°.

Toss beets in olive oil. Place beets in roasting pan and cover with foil. Roast for 90 minutes. Let cool.

Peel off skins and cut into quarters or halves depending on size. Toss beets with Champagne Vinaigrette, blood oranges, herbs and watercress. Season with salt & pepper. Serve in a large bowl. Garnish with shaved cheese and lemon zest.

Champagne Vinaigrette

Yields: ½ cup

2½ tablespoons champagne vinegar
 1 teaspoon minced shallot
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 2 teaspoons sugar
 5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
 salt and pepper

Combine champagne vinegar, shallots, mustard and sugar. Slowly whisk in olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

If you are looking for more inspiration and recipe ideas, don't forget about our Cookbooks! Both the girl & the fig Cookbook and Plats du Jour are available for sale at www.girlfigstore.com.

Turnip Fries

Serves 6

4 turnips
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh thyme
sea salt and black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Peel turnips and cut into steak fries, about ½-inch thick. In a large bowl, toss all ingredients until turnip fries are well coated. Place in a single layer on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 20 minutes.

Flip fries and bake an additional 15-20 minutes.

Root Vegetable Sugo

Serves 6

2 medium carrots, cut into ½-inch dice and blanched
1 medium parsnip, cut into ½-inch dice and blanched
¼ medium rutabaga, cut into ½-inch dice and blanched
1 medium turnip, cut into ½-inch dice and blanched
¼ cup garlic cloves, peeled and roasted
1 cup pearl onions, cleaned and blanched
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
Salt and white pepper to taste
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, for serving
1 tablespoon fresh oregano leaves, for serving

Place the carrots, parsnips, rutabaga, turnip, garlic, and pearl onions in a saucepot with 1½ cups water and the butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste and simmer over low heat until the vegetables are very soft and most of the liquid has evaporated, about 15 to 20 minutes. (The vegetables should have a brilliant color but will be very soft.)

Serve as a side to lamb, chicken or beef.

Honey-Roasted Root Vegetables

Serves 6

7 tablespoons blended oil
2 small celery root, peeled and cut into ¼-inch batons
2 small rutabagas, peeled and cut into ¼-inch batons
2 small parsnips, peeled and cut into ¼-inch batons
6 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

In a medium ovenproof sauté pan heat 3 tablespoons of blended oil over high heat and sauté the celery root, rutabagas, and parsnips for about 6 to 8 minutes until they start to turn golden brown. Add the honey and toss the vegetables well to coat. Place the vegetables in the oven and roast until they are soft and caramelized, about 5 minutes. Add the butter and stir to combine.

Serve as a side to duck, pork or turkey.

Citrus - Jicama Salsa

Serves 6

6 mandarin oranges, seeded, peeled, chopped
1 blood orange, seeded, peeled, chopped
2 cups jicama, finely chopped
1/3 cup minced red onion
1 medium jalapeno, seeded and minced
1/4 cup parsley, chopped
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon honey
salt to taste

In a medium-size bowl, combine citrus, jicama, onion, jalapeno and parsley.

In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, oil, honey and salt; pour over clementine mixture and toss to combine.

Ginger Pear Compote

Makes 2 cups

4 Bosc pears, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
1 Pink Lady apple, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1½ teaspoons crystallized ginger, chopped
1 tablespoon maple syrup
3 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons orange juice

In a medium saucepan, combine the pears, apples, ginger, maple syrup, water and orange juice. Cook the fruit over medium heat until tender, occasionally stirring and mashing with a wooden spoon, about 20 minutes.

Store in an airtight container in the fridge.

Creamy Golden Mashers

Serves 6

3½ cups Chicken Broth
3 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, cut in 1-inch cubes
1 large rutabaga, about 2 pounds, peeled, cut in 1-inch cubes
5 cloves garlic, skins removed
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup unsalted butter
½ cup creme fraiche

Heat 3 cups of broth with the potatoes, rutabaga and garlic in a large saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat to medium. Cover and continue to cook for about 10 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

Transfer the cooked vegetables to a large bowl and mash with a masher or a ricer. Warm the remaining chicken broth, cream and butter in a small saucepan until the butter is melted, then slowly pour into the mashed vegetables, stirring with a wooden spoon.

Stir in the creme fraiche. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

Mashed Root Vegetables with Bacon Vinaigrette

Serves 6

½ cup apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
4-5 pounds mixed root vegetables (such as parsnips, celery root, turnips and rutabagas), peeled, cut into 1" cubes
½ pound thick-cut applewood-smoked bacon, diced
1 large white onion, diced
1 tablespoon (packed) dark brown sugar
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

Bring vinegar, mustard seeds, and ¼ cup water to a simmer in a small pot; cook until seeds are plump, 20-25 minutes. Drain; set aside seeds and cooking liquid separately.

Place a steamer basket inside a large pot. Add water to a depth of 1". Bring to a boil. Add root vegetables to steamer basket. Cover and cook, adding water by ½-cupfuls if needed to maintain level of water in pot, until vegetables are very tender but not mushy, about 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, place bacon in a large skillet; set over medium-low heat and cook until bacon softens and fat begins to render, about 4 minutes. Add onion; increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion and bacon are browned and crisp, about 10 minutes.

Add reserved mustard seeds to bacon mixture and cook until seeds begin to pop, about 1 minute. Turn off heat and stir in brown sugar and reserved mustard seed cooking liquid. Season vinaigrette to taste with salt and pepper.

Drain vegetables and return to pot. Using a fork or potato masher, coarsely mash. Stir in vinaigrette and parsley; season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Recipe by Victoria Granof

Winter Vegetable Salad**Creamy Black Pepper Dressing**

Serves 6

For the dressing:

½ cup heavy cream
¼ cup grated white Cheddar cheese
1 teaspoon fresh finely ground pepper
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ cup crème fraîche
½ tablespoon fresh lemon juice
Salt to taste

For the vegetables:

1 celery root, peeled and cut into 1-inch diamonds
3 heads baby fennel, cut into quarters lengthwise
2 to 3 medium turnips, peeled, cut into 1-inch diamonds
1 bunch white radishes, sliced in quarters lengthwise
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

For serving:

2 bunches baby carrots, peeled, blanched, and cut in half lengthwise
1 parsnip, peeled and shaved into long strips using a vegetable peeler

To prepare the dressing:

Place a small saucepan over low heat, add the cream, and bring it to a simmer. Add the cheese and pepper and whisk until smooth. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and let it cool to room temperature. Whisk in the mustard, crème fraîche, and lemon juice and season to taste. The dressing can be made ahead and refrigerated for up to 5 days; just be sure to whisk the dressing before using.

To prepare the vegetables:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

In a large bowl toss the celery root, fennel, turnips, and radishes with the olive oil and salt and pepper to taste. Lay the vegetables on a baking sheet and roast them until the edges are browned, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and let the vegetables cool to room temperature.

To serve:

Toss all of the roasted vegetables with the carrots and the parsnip strips. Add a small amount of the vinaigrette and toss to coat. Place a dollop of the dressing on each of the 6 plates and spread the vinaigrette with a spoon. Place the vegetables alongside and serve.

Celery Root Remoulade

Yields: 1½ cup

1 cup Caper Vinaigrette, (below)
1 tablespoon chopped chervil
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 tablespoon chopped cornichons
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
dash of Tabasco
¼ teaspoon paprika
¼ cup grated celery root
salt & pepper

Combine all ingredients and adjust seasoning.

Caper Vinaigrette

Yields: 1 cup

2 egg yolks
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons champagne vinegar
½ cup blended oil
2 tablespoons capers, drained
1 tablespoon whole grain mustard
1 teaspoon chopped tarragon
2 teaspoons chopped thyme
2 teaspoons chopped parsley
salt & pepper

In a blender, combine egg yolks, lemon juice, garlic and vinegar. Slowly whisk in oil. Remove from blender to a bowl and fold in capers, mustard and herbs. Season with salt & pepper.

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



TWO FARMS

TO KNOW

by
Sydney
Dean

Paul's Produce Paul & Candi, Sonoma

In the heart of Sonoma sits 14-acres of land that has been farmed by Paul Witz for over 20 years. This farm, also known as Paul's Produce, is the result of year-round attentive farming with organic principles, extremely diversified cropping, and careful use of manual labor paired with inventive use of machinery.

Paul has been a farmer for much of his life. His roots are in farming, as he grew up farming on his family's cranberry farm in Wisconsin. As Paul began his adult life, he thought he had moved on from farming to explore other things, but was inspired by Bob Cannard Jr. to get back into farming. And, with his land in Sonoma, he has been doing just that for the past 20 years.

Each season Paul farms a variety of produce. He describes his farm as being more diversified than it should be, but believes that this diversification makes for interesting work on his end, which he enjoys. With a lifetime of farming experience, Paul has learned his favorite and least favorite crops to farm over the years. "Parsnips are hands down the most difficult crop for me to grow well, followed by eggplant. On the other hand, head lettuce and chicories are my favorite crops to grow because of their stunning colors, quick turn around, and general market need."



When asked what the most rewarding aspect of being a local farmer is, Paul says that he particularly loves the tools of farming, and the beauty that is inherent within its organization. "I appreciate that being a farmer in Sonoma is respected, and more importantly, supported with enthusiasm and purchase. The recent fires drove home the interdependence that much of our community experiences. This interdependence that we all share makes us stronger as a community."

Today, Paul operates Paul's Produce with the help of Candi Edmondson. While Paul works directly with the earth, Candi manages the backend of the farm, handling phone calls, selling at local farmers markets, and working with chefs to get Paul's Produce into local restaurants.

Outside of living life on the farm, Candi enjoys painting and together Candi and Paul love to create recipes using seasonal produce from their farm. Candi describes celery root fritters as her favorite recipe to make: "I love making celery root fritters. I grate the celery root, mix it with a thick batter of egg and gluten-free flour mix, and I fry it in a hot pan. It's easy and delicious."

You can find Paul and Candi selling their seasonal produce this time of year in Depot Park, right up the street from the girl & the fig, on Friday's from 9am to 12:30pm each week.



Sonoma Garden Park 1996 7th Street East -Sonoma

Located less than two miles from the Sonoma Plaza, Sonoma Garden Park is truly a hidden gem in Sonoma. Sitting on over 6-acres of land, this park is one of the Sonoma community's greatest resources. It all began in the 1970's, when Pauline Bond, a schoolteacher and gardener in Sonoma, left the land as a gift to the City of Sonoma in hopes that it would one day be made into a public park. In 1993, the city of Sonoma partnered with the Sonoma Ecology Center in an effort to begin making Pauline's dream a reality.

With the continued help of the Sonoma Ecology Center's educators, ecologists, horticulturalists, and professional farmers, combined with the efforts of the Sonoma County Master Gardeners and volunteers, Pauline's dream was able to come alive into what is now known as the Sonoma Garden Park. Today, Sonoma Garden Park is both a working farm and a park, boasting over two acres of growing food crops. It is a model of sustainable agriculture, a center of education, and a gathering place for the community. The park itself has several hidden gems within, including chickens, butterfly and bird watching spots, three active beehives, and a magnificent 500-year old Grandmother Valley Oak tree, which can be spotted from all angles of the park.

On the surface, the most rewarding aspect of having a local community park is that it serves as a place to gather. However, as Volunteer Coordinator, Sorrell Allen explains, it is even more rewarding than just that. "Having a community garden is richly fulfilling because it brings together many people from diverse backgrounds to share knowledge, skills, and experiences. The crops and flowers that are grown here reflect that human diversity, beauty, and abundance! Growing food together is one of the most natural ways to build, empower, and inspire a community."

This winter, though Sonoma Garden Park may be slightly barren due to the cold weather, there are lots of interesting crops still growing. Some winter crops you'll find include broccoli, kale, onions, garlic, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts. If you take a walk through the park you might also spot some perennial flowers, which continue to bloom despite the recent frosty mornings. Sorrell and Steve, the Garden Manager of Sonoma Garden Park, are also currently growing fava beans. They explained that these little beans are surprisingly beneficial to the park itself. "We've also planted a few beds of fava beans. This yummy bean is a nitrogen fixer that returns nutrients to the soil."

If you have not discovered or explored Sonoma Garden Park already, now is the perfect season to go! Take a stroll through the park this weekend, and enjoy the quiet, crisp winter air. Or, rent one of two dozen garden plots and start growing your own crops. The Sonoma Garden Park provides the water, space, and sunlight, so all you need is your green-thumb to start growing your own food alongside others in the Sonoma community. The Sonoma Garden Park is also a great place for educational learning. The park offers K-12 events, classes, and camps to teach children about nature, environmental science, and sustainability. In addition, the Sonoma Ecology Center's "EnviroLeader" program teaches high school students the basics of sustainable agriculture and restoration work, while conferring crucial life skills and career skills.

You can also purchase fresh eggs and food grown in the park, at the market in the Straw Bale Barn on the property each Saturday, from May through November. You'll be surprised to discover that the Straw Bale Barn at Sonoma Garden Park is the first straw bale structure to be built in Sonoma. The barn also boasts solar and water-wise features, which help in Sonoma Garden Park's efforts to show the community the beauty and efficiency that can come from a sustainable farm.





The Rhône Room

Those entering Sonoma will receive a warm welcome to wine country with the opening of Sondra Bernstein's Rhône Room at the property Sonoma Roadside, formerly called the Fat Pilgrim.

The Rhône Room concept is, as are all of Bernstein's creations, a collage of many elements. The first layer, a wine studio and lounge, which will serve as a tasting room where guests will enjoy a selection of the girl & the fig's house Rhônes, as well as be introduced to exclusive and lesser-known offerings from local Rhône producers. Wine flights highlighting winegrowing regions, varietals, and blends (both regional and French) will provide an educational component to the tasting experience.

the girl & the fig house wines are a layer unto themselves. Each bottling was developed in partnership with a winemaker with an affinity for Rhônes. Producers Jeff Cohn, Sam Coturri, Kieran Robinson, and Adam Webb have collaborated (along with several others). The lineup of house labels include the girl & the fig, Sonoma Roadside, Projet de Vie, Très Bonnes Années, and the recently created Mes Amis Français, which was made with the Gaillard Family in the Northern Rhône.

Finally, it wouldn't be the girl & the fig's style if there wasn't seasonal produce in mix. True to form, "the farm project," the restaurant's culinary garden, is flourishing just steps from the Rhône Room's newly constructed outdoor patio.

Bernstein describes her vision for the project: "The Rhône Room will be somewhat of a hub; first and foremost tasting, drinking and purchasing wine, but also a place to check in, make a reservation for the restaurant, join the Rhône Around the World Wine Club, see what events are happening in the Valley and have a peek at what's in season on the farm. I want this to be a fun stop for visitors during their Sonoma itinerary and also a place for locals to enjoy a glass of wine."

Winter Hours - Friday - Sunday (12 - 5)
or by appointment - 707-933-3000 x10
20816 Broadway - Sonoma, Ca 95476
www.therhoneroom.com



Clubbing



RHÔNE AROUND the WORLD WINE CLUB

The Passion

For over twenty years, the girl & the fig has concentrated solely on "Rhône-Alone" wines. Though many of our offerings are from California and right in our Wine Country playground, the wine world is continuing to show off their ability to create amazing wines with the traditional "Rhône" varietals originating from the Rhône Valley in France. Through our "Rhône-Alone" Wine Club, we will take you on a voyage that will teach you about these food friendly varietals, the areas in which they grow and the vintners that create them. We will share with you our passion of all things Rhône on this journey. It is our goal to produce small batch wines with some of our favorite winemakers, as well as curating a selection of interesting Rhône varietals that are in limited quantities, hard to find, exclusive & unique.

The Deal

Each bi-annual shipment will include 3 - 12 wines. (Shipments will leave our warehouse mid-month in April and October). Included in your package will be detailed tasting notes, grape varietal information, the inside story about the folks behind the wines and recipes from the girl & the fig to create the perfect pairing. We will keep you posted on Rhône wine events around wine country.

Membership

To become a member you must sign up for one of the Club Options. You will be charged at this time and will receive the current/previous club (if available). After this time your credit card will only be charged when we send you a shipment. After the first year (two shipments), you may cancel your membership at any time.

Sample Shipments

You have the option of selecting 3, 6 or 12 bottles. A year in the "Rhône Around the World" Wine Club may present itself in the following way; you may get our newest wine release or two or a curated selection of both the girl & the fig wines and exclusive wines from our friends.

The Fine Print

We request that club members supply the girl & the fig with any changes, including cancellations, address, credit card and expiration dates at least three weeks prior to the upcoming shipment. If a shipment goes to an old address, the member is responsible for all charges incurred. If a credit card is declined and not updated, your club status may be forfeited. Please notify us by fax, mail or e-mail. If you are going on vacation and would like a club shipment held until your return, please notify us three weeks prior to the scheduled shipment and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

Legal Age

Alcoholic beverages may be sold and delivered only to persons who are at least 21 years old. In placing your order, you represent to us that you are at least 21 years old, and that the person to whom your wine will be delivered is also at least 21 years old. When your alcoholic beverages are delivered, the person receiving delivery will be required to show identification proving that he or she is at least 21 years old. If possible, direct your package to a business address where the shipper can easily obtain an adult signature.

Perks

- **Once you sign up, your wine discount starts immediately.**
- **Wine club shipments will include a surprise gift from our Fig Pantry.**
- **You will also receive a 15% discount on Suite D and Farm Pop-Ups.**
- **After the first year in the Drink Now & Save you will be eligible for comp corkage in our restaurants on all Rhône Wines while your subscription is current (you will receive a membership card to show at the restaurants).**
- **After joining the club you are eligible for up to 4 complimentary tastings per year.**

Ink the Deal

Signup sheets and credit card authorization forms are also available at each of our locations. Let's get you started today!

Just a Splash

3 Bottles
2x per year
10% off Wine

Invite Some Friends

6 Bottles
2x per year
15% off Wine

Drink Now & Save

12 Bottles
2x per year
20% off Wine

Sales Tax and Shipping Fees

Wine Club prices do not include state taxes and ground shipping.

the girl & the fig
Wine Dinner
Saturday, February 24
6:30

Maclaren Wine Dinner
Saturday, March 31
6:30

Passaggio
Wine Dinner
Friday, April 20
6:30

Jeff Cohn Cellars
Wine Dinner
Saturday, May 19
6:30

Upcoming Wine Dinners

purchase tickets at www.therhonerom.com

Dane Cellars
Friday, June 22
6:30

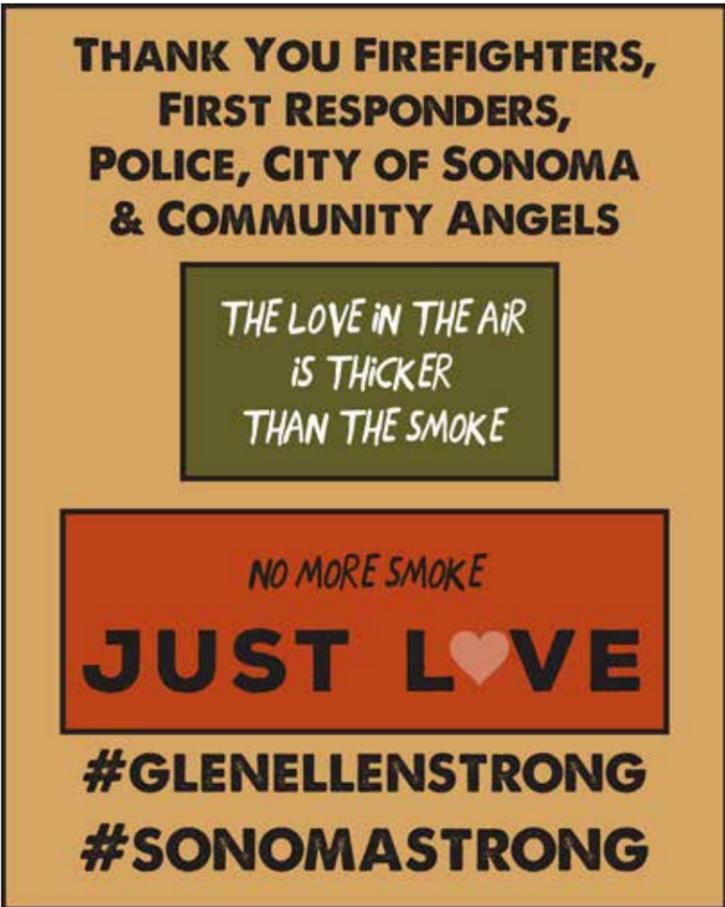
CR Graybehl
Wine Dinner
Saturday, July 21
6:30

KALE
WINE DINNER
Friday, August 24
6:30

Skylark Wine Company
Wine Dinner
SATURDAY,
OCTOBER
27
6:30

Rhône Around Sonoma Passport

Need some more Rhône in Sonoma? We will send you to some of our friends' Tasting Rooms with a new "Rhône Around Sonoma" Passport. Join winemakers at Jeff Cohn Cellars, MacLaren Wine, Passaggio Cellars, Kivelstadt Winery, Dane Cellars, Winery Sixteen 600, Cochon Tasting Bar to taste the best Rhône varietal wines in Sonoma!



We live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. The October fires were devastating and hard to believe that they really happened. So fast - so furious. As we move forward to rebuild, our focus is on gratitude, strength and community. The worst of times brings out the best in humanity and we were truly in the midst of heroes. There will never be enough words or ways to say thank you to the amazing first responders, firefighters and every person that was able to assist in their own way.