

FOOD & Spirits[®]

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Issue 21

The Omaha Metro's Best Guide for Food, Dining, Spirits and Wine.

MAGAZINE | OMAHA EDITION



EVERYDAY EXTRAORDINAIRE



Metropolitan Community College
**INSTITUTE FOR THE
CULINARY ARTS**

A class series for the everyday home cook

Fall quarter

Everyday Extraordinaire: Culinary

The faculty of the Institute for the Culinary Arts, as well as other industry professionals, offer classes in basic culinary skills, advanced culinary techniques and culinary specialties. These classes are all designed for non-professionals but teach the same time-tested techniques that professionals learn, using both hands-on and demonstration techniques.

BASICS OF SAUCE MAKING

Students will be introduced to the basic 'mother sauces': tomato, veloute, bechamel, espagnole and hollandaise. They will learn about roux and stocks and learn how to build upon basic sauces, as well as how to incorporate the sauces into your menu and recipes. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243675	COOK-138N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	11/10-11/10	\$50
243676	COOK-138N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	11/12-11/12	\$50

CANNING & PRESERVING II

This class will focus on safe canning and preserving techniques. Advanced recipes, such as aigre doux, ketchups and chutneys, and pressure canning will be included in this hands-on class. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243678	COOK-161N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	10/06-10/06	\$50
243679	COOK-161N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	10/08-10/08	\$50

CHICKEN: CUTTING AND COOKING

Start with a whole chicken and finish with dinner. You'll learn the insider's tips on chicken fabrication and cookery. Everybody gets to cut up his or her own chicken! (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243630	COOK-165N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	10/13-10/13	\$50
243631	COOK-165N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	10/15-10/15	\$50

CUISINES - CAJUN/CREOLE

You will learn to prepare the following in this cuisines class: Cajun mirepoix, chicken and oseille etouffee, shrimp cocktail, cocktail sauce, raw oysters and oysters Rockefeller. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243627	COOK-140N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	09/22-09/22	\$50
243628	COOK-140N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	09/24-09/24	\$50

CUISINES, CHINESE TAKE-OUT

This course will introduce students to wok-style cookery and to commonly available Chinese ingredients. Students will also cook several popular Chinese take-out dishes. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243632	COOK-145N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	10/20-10/20	\$50
243633	COOK-145N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	10/22-10/22	\$50

GUEST CHEF: JOEL MAHR

Omaha culinary journeyman Joel Mahr received the '2013 Neighborhood Chef Award' from Cooking Light magazine, and he will walk you through the production of a menu comprised of a few signature items from his restaurant in Benson, where he is the head chef and continues to receive rave reviews from locals and national acclaim from critics. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243640	COOK-157N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	11/17-11/17	\$50
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KNIFE SKILLS

If you want to be a home chef, you need to start at the beginning. Knife skills are the fundamental building blocks of the culinary arts. You will use the products you cut to make fresh salsas. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243623	COOK-100N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	09/08-09/08	\$50
243624	COOK-100N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	09/10-09/10	\$50

MERINGUE IS NOT JUST FOR PIE

Learn the techniques to prepare the classic French meringue cake. Dacquoise. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243677	COOK-146N-70	TH	06:00P-09:00P	11/19-11/19	\$50
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PASTA BASICS

This course focuses on methods for made from scratch pasta: pasta dough, pasta production and pasta cookery. In addition, you will produce fresh and flavorful sauces that complement your fresh pasta. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Bldg 22, 30th and Fort streets

243636	COOK-153N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	11/03-11/03	\$50
243637	COOK-153N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	11/05-11/05	\$50

NEW! RIESLING AND FOOD PAIRING STUDIO

An immersion into one of the greatest grapes in the world-Riesling. Hold on as the chef and sommelier for the evening discuss, demonstrate and share the history, food affinity and flavor of this noble varietal. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243629	COOK-164N-70	F	06:00P-09:00P	10/02-10/02	\$75
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THE INCREDIBLE EGG

When you learn the seven functions of eggs, you will not only be able to prepare great eggs but also learn cooking methods that apply to many foods. Prepare classics like eggs benedict, omelets, frittatas and, of course, the most amazing of sauces-hollandaise. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243634	COOK-124N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	10/27-10/27	\$50
243635	COOK-124N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	10/29-10/29	\$50

TROUT: CUTTING AND COOKING

Fabricate a whole trout and learn to make a few classic dishes from the filets. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 22, 30th and Fort streets

243625	COOK-163N-70	T	06:00P-09:00P	09/15-09/15	\$50
243626	COOK-163N-71	TH	06:00P-09:00P	09/17-09/17	\$50

AQUAPONICS: FISH, VEGETABLES & YOU

Combining the best advantages of aquaculture and hydroponics, aquaponics uses the nutrient-rich water produced from raising fish to grow thriving plants! Learn how to raise fish for the dinner table or just for fun along with vegetables, greens and herbs, in recirculating systems of various sizes and designs. Concepts and guidelines of aquaponics will be explained and demonstrated via a working system featuring tilapia. Participants will be provided with plans and sources of materials necessary to build their own moderate sized (70-150 gal.) aquaponics system at home. Class taught by Michael Kaminski. (one session)

Fort Omaha Campus, Building 29, 30th and Fort streets

243279	GROW-002N-01	SA	09:00A-12:00P	09/19-09/19	\$50
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No discounts are available for these courses. All classes are one session, \$50 per person and held Tuesday or Thursday, 6-9 p.m. at MCC's Fort Omaha Campus, 30th and Fort streets, Building 22, unless otherwise noted. The class size is limited to 16 students. For detailed course and registration information, visit mccneb.edu/chh/everydayextraordinaire.asp.



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FOOD & Spirits

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The Market House's Nebraska trout with romesco, fried capers and charred spring onion.

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EXPERTS PANEL



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Michael Campbell Michael Campbell is a songwriter and humor essayist. His “Dumpster” essays close every issue of *Food & Spirits*. *Are You Going To Eat That*, a collection of sixty humor essays, was released in 2009, and *My Turn Now*, his most recent album of 13 original songs, was released in 2015. Learn more at michaelcampbellsongwriter.com.

Jessica Clem Jessica Clem is a freelance writer based in Omaha, Nebraska. A marathon runner and food writer, her favorite way to get motivated to finish a project is the promise of a craft beer. She has a B.A. in English, and an M.S. in Urban Studies, and enjoys traveling, finding typos on billboards, and the smell of a real book. When she is not eating or running, she works as a producer and account executive for Omaha Video Solutions.

Jesse Erickson I’m the college dropout that ended up falling into a job that I love, which is Bartending. I was majoring in English Lit, which is why I love to write. And since I know booze, what better thing to write about? I also have the cutest puppy that has ever existed.

John Finocchiaro John Finocchiaro is a past owner of Finocchiaro Wine Company, Inc., a Nebraska wholesale wine, spirits, and beer distributorship dating back to 1935. He also formerly co-owned Johnson Brothers Finocchiaro, LLC. John is a former Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Specialist of Wine.

Marq Manner Marq Manner is a fan of Americana. He is interested in small town cafe’s, roadside BBQ, getting a hotdog from a stand made in the likeness of George Washington, and the grittier eating atmospheres found in out of the way places.

Jason McLaughlin Jason is a Certified Cicerone, a ranked ‘National’ as a BJCP judge (Beer Judge Certification Program), is a craft beer aficionado, a writer for the Nebraska Beer Blog, and award winning homebrewer living in Lincoln. Jason spends time traveling around the country judging beer competitions, and attending related events. Beer tasting and evaluation is his passion, and he can appreciate a great example of any style regardless of hype.

Eddie Morin I’m Eddie Morin. I’m from Omaha. I run B & G Tasty Foods, and I like eating food, playing video games, and dinking around with my wife and kids. I used to not be so fat. That’s all I really think there is to me.

Charles Schlusell Professional head shaver, Reckless adventurer, Erstwhile Semi-Pro skydiver (amateur lander), Fanatical tomato lover, All round awesome cook extraordinaire!

Ann Summers Ann Summers is not a 40-umthing-year-old rock climber who got shut down in Boulder Canyon and drowned her failure in a microbrewery. She is neither a mother of two, a fan of Latin plant names nor a lover of fine Italian Grappa. You’ll not catch her shooting guns for fun or hollering like a redneck. She hates Shakespeare, and doesn’t call a certain fast food chain “The Scottish Restaurant.” She turns her nose up at organic yellow beets, eschews fresh oysters, and loathes chubby guinea pigs with Violent Femmes hairdos. She is also a dreadful liar.

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Often, throughout the course of running *Food & Spirits Magazine*, I'm reminded of the food bounty that is available to us living in **Omaha**. Of course, chefs and restaurants have noticed this, and particularly in recent years, the dining-out public has demanded that restaurants use ingredients that are fresh and local.

Area restaurants and producers have embraced that challenge and now you can find many places that serve fresh, local and seasonal menus.

"For me, putting together this issue of *FSM* served as a wonderful reminder of the many great things the Midwest has to offer in the food and spirits arena."

For me, putting together this issue of *FSM* served as a wonderful reminder of the many great things the Midwest has to offer in the food and spirits arena.

Ann Summers has a wonderful review of former *FSM* writer **Summer Miller's** recently published cookbook, **New Prairie Kitchen**. The book contains over 50 recipes and 25 profiles of chefs, farmers and producers from Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota. It's a treat. If you haven't gotten your hands on a copy yet, I think you'll want to after reading the review.

Speaking of the prairie, **The Supper Club** took a road trip to Waverly for their review of **Prairie Plate** and **Jess Clem** takes us on a tour of **Imperial Wagyu Beef of Blair**. Imperial produces some of the best beef around and it is right in our own backyard.

"You'll also find a super informative article by **Kent Cisar**... After reading this article, you'll be qualified to eat your way around the nation while sitting in the comfort of your own home."

You'll also find a super informative article by **Kent Cisar** that gives you some top-notch suggestions for ordering some of the regional delicacies that can be found around the country. Kent tells you where to find it and what local specialty pairs best with it. After reading this article, you'll be qualified to eat your way around the nation while sitting in the comfort of your own home.

The Market House is Omaha's latest and greatest restaurant to open its doors and it more than meets expectations. Owner **Nick Bartholomew** and chef **Matt Moser** have created a great space for Omaha and their menu hits all the right notes. Check out their feature to find out all about it.

"The Market House is Omaha's latest and greatest restaurant to open its doors and it more than meets expectations."

The 7th **Annual Omaha's Largest Pizza Review** was recently held at **The Waiting Room Lounge** in **Benson**. While being serenaded by award-winning musicians **Kait Berreckman** and **Brad Hoshaw**, over 250 attendees sampled pizza from 14 different pizza places. Inside, you'll find the results of the people's choice and the judge's vote. There were some surprises this year.

Finally, we want to thank you, our readers and advertisers, for the unqualified support we've received from all of you. Everyday life is rarely simple and putting together *FSM* can be a bit of a challenge, even for the awesome team we have. But, with your support, it's all worth it. Thank you.

Welcome to the 21st issue of *Food & Spirits Magazine*. We're proud of the magazine before you and we sincerely hope you enjoy it.

Erik Totten – Publisher
Food & Spirits Magazine



The Birth of a Classic

The Market House and Great Expectations

story and photos by Erik Totten



It's getting harder and harder to start a restaurant in Omaha. With the incredible growth of the quantity, and quality, of the many, many restaurants opening their doors, it's no longer enough to offer a steak, a side of canned green beans and a bowl of mostaccioli. That's to say, expectations have been raised considerably over the last decade, and that's a good thing.

The Market House, in the former Vivace space in the Old Market, is one of Omaha's new restaurants that not only meets those upward-evolving expectations, but pushes them in direction that will only help Omaha's burgeoning restaurant scene. From the redesign of the interior to the innovative menu, each component was hand selected to provide just the right experience.

"Coming in to this neighborhood, you're at the epicenter of Omaha... That's why we decided to introduce a new concept that could meet those expectations."

The concept for The Market House didn't happen without first examining Vivace and what it meant to the community. Owner Nick Bartholomew took over the space two months before New Year's Eve, which was the scheduled date of Vivace closing, and continued to see loyal Vivace customers patronizing the space up until that point. That's when the questions began.

"Do you start from scratch? Do you stop doing something that was working?" Nick explained. "Or do you go for the gusto? That was the big question to answer."

In the end, Nick and head chef Matt Moser looked to the past, present and future of the community to answer that question. They saw that the Omaha restaurant scene in general, and the Old Market in particular, was moving in a direction that was different than the past.

"We're moving past the old school steakhouse. I still go to Farmer Brown's in Waterloo; it's iconic, but the Omaha food scene is moving away from what it was in the past because that's what the public wants," Nick said. "Farm-to-table used to just be called food and, after an era of frozen and canned food, that's what we're moving back to."

Which brings us back to the original question: do you go for the gusto? Do you imagine the future of Omaha food and try to create a concept that not only fits into the present, but helps push us into the future?

"Our answer was that it's the people in the community that make this area what it is and they expect certain things," Nick said. "We want to give Omaha what they deserve."

Which brings us to another question The Market House team needed to answer: what does Omaha expect out of a new restaurant these days? Nick, who also owns Over Easy, recognized that what works in one neighborhood, might not work in another.

"I have Over Easy but that's not a concept you can just force somewhere. Over Easy has been a success because of its ability to serve the on-the-go eater and those that come in on the weekends," Nick said. "With The Market House, we wanted something that really worked for the Old Market; it's neighborhood-centric."

When thinking about the Old Market, which is often the face of Omaha during one of the many events that are held at the TD Ameritrade Park and the Century Link Center, wanted and needed in a new restaurant, the answer was evident.

"The community wants to be proud of what we have to offer in Omaha and wants a restaurant to be a forward-facing front of their city, especially in the Old Market," Nick related. "Coming in to this neighborhood, you're at the epicenter of Omaha. There's a big blue









pin right outside our front door. That's why we decided to introduce a new concept that could meet those expectations."

To meet those expectations, Nick and Matt wanted to create an atmosphere and experience in every way possible; an experience that flowed through fantastic design and was punctuated with excellent food.

"What we've tried to do down here is to create an ambience and, in going over every detail, create an experience that coincides with the food," Nick explained.

For the food, Nick and Matt pulled together a team of like-minded chefs that could not only help create the vision they had, but could also help evolve that vision into something that was greater than the individual parts. The team they put together brought with them a wealth of experience. Matt graduated from Le Cordon Blue in Portland, Oregon and was at **Flagship Restaurant Group** for the last five years. Chef de cuisine **Benjamin Maides** joined the team after a stint at **Avoli**, while sous chef Chase Thomsen was most recently at **Taxi's** and **Plank**.

"Snacks, spreads, sides, small plates, large plates and of course, desserts, all find their own section on The Market House menu."

According to Matt, Chase and Benjamin both bring a critical set of skills to the table while also bringing a great deal of leadership experience.

"Benjamin developed great relationships with the farmers. We're lucky to have him. With Chase, he's the workhorse in the kitchen, he's nonstop" Matt said. "They're both chefs in their own right and have run their own kitchens. We've got a great culinary team and we brought everybody together under the same roof with the expectations to grow, learn and move forward."



The menu, which I sampled during their soft opening, offers a wide variety, in both size and type of dishes. Snacks, spreads, sides, small plates, large plates and of course, desserts, all find their own section on The Market House menu. It allows the diner to sample a large variety of items or settle for a larger entrée. Sunday brunch also comes with its own variety of selections.

"The menu coincides with the different experiences we offer in the restaurant; you can have a quick lunch, or you can explore multiple courses, or you can combine a snack, a spread or a small plate," Matt said.

Currently, the restaurant is taking advantage of some of the last summer vegetables to be had, but they will soon be rolling out their fall menu as the seasons change. The rotating menu is meant to take advantage of the different food offerings available throughout the year so that everything is as fresh as can be.

"In Matt's kitchen, you can go from beets that were in the ground Tuesday to on your plate Wednesday as beet fries," Nick said.

Although the menu and food shine at The Market House, the design isn't an afterthought. In fact, the design is meant to compliment the menu. To wit, the predominate piece of art, on the back wall, ties into the changing menu. The piece was created by local artist **Dave Koenig** and depicts a tree painted on 15 different panels that rotate. As the weather changes, so will the art as it rotates to reflect the new seasons; the menu will also change to match.

"It's our bat signal to the city," Nick said. "If you're walking by the front window, you'll know what the kitchen is doing. It's a way to push things forward a little."

The rest of the interior showcases Nick and Matt's love of community and their willingness to embrace it in all aspects. Along with the local artwork, local steel workers were used and according to Nick, a local Omaha business was used for nearly everything else.

"I think there are a couple of light bulbs from Cincinnati, but almost everything is an Omaha product and that's important to me," Nick said.

When I asked Nick what the experience has been like opening The Market House, his appreciation for the past, present and future of Omaha dining was again apparent.

"This whole experience has been so enriching. It's been amazing what we were able to bring to the Old Market," Nick gushed. "I really love that we kept some of the original feel (of the Old Market) but enhanced that to where it's going."

Nick and Matt's mission when they started The Market House was to create a uniquely original Omaha experience that could be a part of the growth of the community. The Market House's motto is, "Modern American Cuisine that Invites a New Way to Dine," and it shows. On both counts, they can count this as an unqualified success.

As owner Nick Bartholomew says, "It's the new Old Market."

THE MARKET HOUSE

1108 Howard Street | 402.342.2050

www.markethouseomaha.com

Hours

Monday: 4pm - 10pm

Tuesday - Thursday: 11am - 2pm and 4pm - 10pm

Friday - Saturday: 11am - 2pm and 4pm - 10:30pm

Sunday: 10am - 2pm

Bar: Open All Day

Happy Hour: Monday - Friday 4pm - 6pm

MAKING THE GRADE

A Day with Nebraska's Imperial Wagyu Beef

by Jessica Clem

It was a Japanese military leader who predicted that Wagyu beef would power soldiers through war, and give them vital energy to fight for hours. An animal that once was utilized to tend rice fields and serve as an agricultural asset slowly became the key in sustaining farmers and soldiers alike with their healthy and delicious meat.

But the Japanese are not uninformed consumers. They recognized that quality of care and tedious feeding programs would be crucial to the quality of the final product: deep red cuts of beef, with luscious fat ribboning throughout. It was here that a specialized care program was developed and the Wagyu name (which literally means "Japanese cattle") became associated with high-quality and luxurious cuts of beef.

What makes Imperial truly unique is the focus on one mission, to provide the best Wagyu beef, from American cattle on local soil, while respecting the ancient, prized feeding tradition of Japanese Wagyu programs.

It was a farmer named **Greg Muller** who showed us these animals, right here in the Midwest. The dust of Iowa and that big sky confirmed that these Wagyu cows weren't in Japan anymore. American farmers noticed the demand for quality beef and began to implement breeding programs for these cattle here in the States. One company in particular is known throughout the nation for the promotion of high-quality Wagyu cattle and sound animal care, an ever sought after business practice in an economy saturated with factory farms and one dollar burgers.

Welcome to **Imperial Wagyu Beef**.



In 2004, seven cattle producers came together with a similar vision in mind. “Imperial was started by a group of gentleman with years of experience in the cattle industry,” said Tami Tibben, Vice President of Imperial. “One of them, who owned a feed yard, had been feeding Wagyu calves and recently acquired some of his own. The group got to talking and decided, ‘let’s create a beef company and produce the finest beef available.’ So the mission began.”

“Through hard work and dedication to top quality beef, Imperial Wagyu Beef will be a force in the Wagyu scene for years to come.”

These men wanted to create a company that demanded the very best in beef. And we aren’t talking about any ordinary ribeye. These producers wanted to open the eyes of the American consumer to the absolute pleasure of quality beef, along with all the health benefits—Omega-3s and monounsaturated fatty acids—that are provided. Before they could operate, they had to nail down the process of selecting the genetics for the best Wagyu cattle possible. Each animal had to be selected from authentic Japanese bloodlines, under the careful eye of the Wagyu breed registry, which tracks each animal’s lines for authenticity and performance. This stringent monitoring, and an equally strict feeding program, has given these producers the ability to consistently produce a marbled, tender, leave-your-wife-for-it cut of beef.

“Being very passionate about this plan, their vision included a holistic approach to offer the beef to the finest chefs, consumers & beef connoisseurs around the world,” said Tibben. “They wanted others to enjoy THE ULTIMATE DINING EXPERIENCE for

special times, whether at a restaurant or at home with family and friends.” Lawrence Adams and Joe Hoyer were elected as the original managing partners, molding the concept of Imperial with the help of their first employee, Tami Tibben. In 2005, their hard work paid off and Imperial planted its name in the rich soil of Nebraska. Five of the original partners remain, with Tibben added as a partner in 2013.

What makes Imperial truly unique is the focus of one mission, to provide the best Wagyu beef, from American cattle on local soil, while respecting the ancient, prized feeding tradition of Japanese Wagyu programs. “Imperial owns Full Blood Sires, which are sold or leased to producers across the nation,” said Tibben. “This ensures the genetics are of the quality that we expect.” All the beef is raised here in the States on family farms, giving consumers a chance to enjoy local beef bred with the finest bloodlines from across the Pacific.



10 years later, I was walking through **Muller Farms** in Clarinda, Iowa, watching the relaxed cattle graze and laze about, invited as a guest on the 2015 Behind the Scenes Event. This three-day event is an opportunity for Imperial to showcase the conditions of the cattle to producers and customers, and show the process and details that go behind feeding and care. A variety of professionals were present, including chefs and writers, from all over the country. Producers, customers, associates and ranchers from Minnesota to Florida joined to see the condition of their animals and enjoy the fruits of their investment: happy cattle and delicious beef.

Muller Farms has been feeding and tending to cattle for nearly 150 years, and the general ease of the environment showcases their knowledge. They began feeding Imperial’s Wagyu cattle in 2007, with breeding programs to follow in 2008.

“These animals are meant to be outside in the fresh air,” said Greg Muller, watching as the cattle walked to and from the water containers. “They are built to withstand the heat and cold, and they really enjoy being outside throughout all seasons.” These cattle enjoy the sun and sky daily; a veritable paradise. Imperial has built its business on the importance of ethically raising and treating their cattle. “We chose to humanely raise the cattle outdoors on



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Imperial Wagyu Beef delivers a delightfully savory, delicate, and velvety melt-in-your-mouth experience. Through the careful selection of genetics, using traditional Japanese feeding methods, and taking a holistic natural approach in production, we deliver the ultimate dining experience.



Blair, NE 1 2
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"All the beef is raised here in the States on family farms, giving consumers a chance to enjoy local beef bred with the finest bloodlines from across the Pacific."



sustainable farms with no growth promotants or hormones because we feel that's the right way to do it," said Tibben.

400 days. That is how long it takes for Wagyu cattle to eat it their way through the mandatory feeding program. There are 13 lots on the Muller Farms, housing animals on a variety of feeding schedules. Calves, who are primarily crossbred with Angus mothers and Wagyu fathers, are raised on their mother's milk, walking about on the grass till they are weaned and enter the Imperial feeding program. Each animal consumes nearly 31 pounds of feed per day. Over 100 bales of hay are consumed yearly, which are locally sourced and baled. If the bales aren't from the Muller Farms, they are from close neighbors.

We could smell lunch cooking from the minute we stepped off the bus. Smoked Wagyu tri tip perfectly tender with thick rivers of fat melting through each bite. The taste of Wagyu is something bordering on ethereal. The succulent fat cuts the chew of the beef, creating a variety of textures and tastes. To accompany, baked beans, chips, a variety of sodas, and ice-cold Michelob Ultras. "The best way to convert a non-Wagyu consumer is a taste test," said **Michael Beattie**, Executive Director of the American Wagyu Association. "You don't need salt or pepper. The taste is to die for."

After lunch we continued our tour around the farm. One can sense the ease of these cattle's daily lives throughout each paddock. Complete with water sprayers and wind blocks, these cattle enjoy an open-air existence. And this is just as important in the quality of the meat. "We take pride in the conditions of our lots," said Greg, showing us the variety of tools they use to keep the paddocks clean. "We use a box blade that scrapes the entire pen of manure, and we then use that to spray on our corn and bean fields."



It was a beautiful day on the way to and from Clarinda, the bus rolled through rivets of cornfields, their stalks bowing and swaying in the wind. Our day began with breakfast and an incredible lunch, the very finest in barbeque available. But we were in for an exceptional treat: The 2015 Behind the Scenes Event Dinner at the **Magnolia**.

The vision of Imperial is to be the most trusted source of Wagyu beef available, and to provide the upmost dining experience for all consumers. This vision was evident all day, but particularly clear throughout each course that evening. Appetizers included Wagyu meatballs, dipped in a savory sauce and velvety in texture. Skewers of beef were complimented by fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, zucchini and red onion. Slivers of rare Wagyu lounged seductively on pieces of crunchy bread, dotted with garlic and tomato. I could have died happy at that point, but the real heart of the meal was yet to come.

Each table in the dining room was decorated beautifully, with bottles of red and white wine on each. The spring salad and seafood risotto were lovely, but I was ready for more of the good stuff.

I was a steak Carpaccio virgin until that night, and what a way to lose it. Thin strips of raw Wagyu glistened under a veil of olive oil, naked in all their glory. The marbling spanned throughout each paper-thin slice. The taste? Exceptionally mellow, rich and tender, and gave me a primal sense of urgency when eating it, lest a predator come along and snag it from me.

When the Reserve Wagyu Beef Tenderloin hit the table, it was almost delicate in presentation. As red as the flesh of a plum, the beef nearly melted upon contact with my mouth. Served on a bed of greens, this dish was, in my opinion, the understated star of the show. And should be, as the Reserve grade of Wagyu beef is a scoring of over 10 on the marbling scale.

Finally, the Signature Wagyu NY Strip Steak glided onto the table.

Enhanced with a puff pastry dotted with sautéed mushrooms, this steak was a perfect finale to a Wagyu dinner. The richness of the steak was cut with the sudden, savory taste of fat, blending together to create amnesia of the palate that made me forget all the other steaks I had ever known.

Though the meal was one of the highlights of the day, there was a sense of community and care that was present throughout all the events. Imperial's deep focus on quality and care of the animals was seen through the way that Muller Farms prize lot conditions, all the way to the excitement in the voices of customers from around the country. Their products are sold to fine dining restaurants, upscale butcher shops and various other commercial establishments. "Our business model was designed to wholesale the product to protein distributors," said Tibben. "Specialty distributors in several major cities are our biggest buyers. Specialty distributors focus on selling niche premium products, such as ours, to high-end restaurants, caterers, hotels, butchers, etc."

Their products are also available to be purchased online by general consumers. Through hard work and dedication to top quality beef, Imperial Wagyu Beef will be a force in the Wagyu scene for years to come.

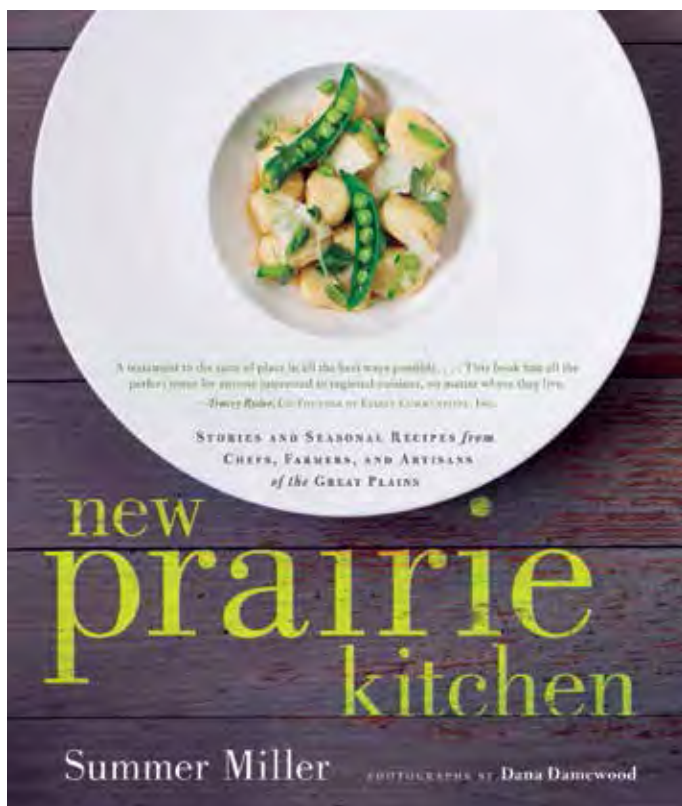
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Prairie Food Grows From Deep Roots

by Ann Summers



A review of 'New Prairie Kitchen: Stories and Seasonal Recipes from Chefs, Farmers, and Artisans of the Great Plains' by Summer Miller

If your great-great-grandmother appeared in your kitchen, she might tell you to put that protein shake down and eat some real food. She might tell you a lot of other things, but when she talked to you about food, it would resonate. It would have a sense of history, of narrative and a gentle authority that came from understanding food and its origins and from her experience feeding people.

Now, if your GGM stood there, (let's say you didn't pass out on the floor from shock) and told you how to prepare and enjoy food with month-old techniques and thousand year-old ones, you'd probably listen, because her advice wouldn't be a replay of some whole-food paleo-diet anti-gluten mantra that's been passed along and diluted like the telephone game. If your GGM (or GGF) told you about real food, good food, it would be a similar experience to reading Summer Miller's new book, "New Prairie Kitchen," published this year by Midway Press. It offers a stroll through the kitchens and farms of the Midwest.

I read the recipes like someone reading a note from a friend and I drank in the sumptuous photographs that draw one into that Midwestern rural farm setting. But as I wound my way through the seasons and the stories of farms and families, I felt myself tugged forward, reminded of the past, but focused clearly on the present and future of food. These glimpses of meals made me yearn for

gardens and markets and family stalls. They made me want to cook something fresh and delicious. Most of all, they made me want to eat some of the truly spectacular food found in this book.

Even if a spring country pork pâté seems beyond you, I think you may change your mind when you read the one shared by chef **Bryce Coulton** from **The French Bulldog** in Omaha. He is known for his charcuterie, the French art of preserving and curing meats. Like all of the recipes in this book, it comes from a chef who is doing wonderful things with local foods. This pâté looks magnificent and if you go to the simple worthy step of making his quick, homemade piccalilli to go with it, you'd better have a nice cold glass of Pinot Blanc or Riesling ready, because you are going to want to sit in the sun and be transported to the breezy slopes of Alsace.

But there is something, truly, for every palate in *The New Prairie Kitchen*. From **Maggie Pleskac**, of **Maggie's Vegetarian Café**

"Tricks and tips from chef-owner-cooks abound and come from deep roots of understanding taste profiles, balance and deft handling of ingredients."



in Lincoln, we get a savory roasted rhubarb and asparagus pasta salad. And **Jason Simon** from **Alba** in Des Moines, Iowa gives us a vibrant, caramelized pattypan squash salad with summer peaches.

There is great variety and depth to these recipes. I enjoyed reading them almost as much as I enjoyed the tour of Midwestern chefs and their stories that introduce the segments and the food. The diversity here, in my opinion, makes the recipe collection a valuable one. The vegetarian dishes are just as complex and enjoyable as the savory carnivorous ones; something not typically seen in cookbooks or even collections of recipes. In my experience, most local food collections of recipes, *Old World* or *New World*, is usually cursory in its sampling; the main point being to showcase ingredients.

The way this collection is put together breaks through that pattern, and the veggies and fresh cheese are taken way beyond just squirt the lemon, sprinkle the olive oil and slap it on the plate. In other words, these recipes make the food sing.

There are several knock-out gnocchi recipes here, all from accomplished local chefs, who make it plain that gnocchi can elevate a potato dumpling to delicate, yet hearty poetry. If making homemade pasta is not your thing, each chef's restaurant and profile is laid out here for you, so you can go out for a memorable meal and sample anything you don't feel like making yourself. Here we have a guidebook to local restaurants that are doing creative, new things with food grown and processed right here on the prairie.

Tricks and tips from chef-owner-cooks abound and come from deep roots of understanding taste profiles, balance and deft handling of ingredients. **Paul Kulik**, from Omaha's **The Boiler Room**, schools us about the right heirloom tomatoes and how to coax them into a lovely consommé. **Nick Strawhecker** of **Dante Ristorante Pizzeria** in Omaha shares the best way to brine and then braise a chicken for a concentration of flavors that far outstrips most people's vision of chicken soup. **Clayton Chapman** of Omaha's **The Grey Plume** explains why radishes and ramps with signature **George Paul Vinegar** are really the right thing to pair in a roast of South Dakota grass-fed lamb. **Bryce Coulton** teaches us how to poach eggs properly in the shell (forget simmering in water with vinegar where you lose more egg and get sad that your egg tastes watery and acidic) and then snug the eggs up onto toasted cornbread, roasted tomatoes and tesa (a cured pork belly that is not your grandmother's bacon.)

Not really your grandmother's food, this book, and yet it is. Somehow, it is your grandmother's and your immigrant or Native American great-grandmother's and your distant Huguenot relative's and your Polish family's food. It nods respectfully to Italy and France, the cradles of treating food as artisan craft, art and culture, and then it gathers up those roots into a basket of goodies being grown, produced and treated with love right here in the Midwest.

This history makes the list of references for sourcing local food in each recipe the truly unique part of this book. You can find where



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Everything you see in the clear, honest photography of **Dana Damewood** shows the bounty of what is here in the Midwest and is available to us all. They show us the deep connection with food that has re-seeded and grown large here in “flyover country”. We feel much more a part of a food heritage that goes back centuries and reaches forward into pastures and back yards all over Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota. The stories draw you in while the photos make you hungry and grateful. I can’t recall any other time that pictures of goats actually made me salivate.

“Laid out in these pages are the stories of people in love with their food and the land that makes it... For these farms, good food is a calling and a passion.”

Seasonality, which we hear a lot about these days, is sort of a mystery for many of us.

To really appreciate why growers and chefs champion this concept, you must understand that food comes from somewhere in limited quantities and at limited times. Most of us understand how nice our own garden’s spring peas and summer tomatoes taste in comparison to supermarket produce, but unless we raise livestock or fish and hunt, we don’t actually experience harvesting proteins. Many products are simply available all year; I’m not at all sure that tofu (at least in the U.S.) has a season. But in “Prairie Food”, the mystery unwinds for us. Laid out in these pages are the stories of people in love with their food and the land which makes it.

We read about Iowan farmers like **Terra and Matthew Hall** of **Rhizosphere Farm**, **Renee and Jim Small** of **Small’s Fruit Farm** and **Larry Cleverley** of **Cleverley Farms**, about how they don’t just grow the food, eat it and sell it – they are connected to it. The truly beautiful thing about these modern farmers is that unlike families in the past who had little to no choice of how to make a living, they have chosen to do this. For these family farms, good food is a calling and a passion.

If you’ve watched “slow food” documentaries featuring people who don’t want food and drink to be simply commodities, you might be tempted to think all those people live in California or Maine or Cheshire, England. This book proves the contrary. Many of them are right here; farmers, growers, brewers, bakers and artisans, growing and cooking and crafting food on the prairie lands of the Midwest. To experience food produced in these time-tested and loving ways can be a mind-blower. If you’ve never eaten bison, I suggest you get up right now and fix that error.

You see, a soul-satisfying thing happens when you eat within a culture, a season, a place. Like French cuisine – it’s really important – to French people. We need to find and cultivate our own culinary roots. As **Dave Hutchison** of **Hutchison Organic Ranch** in Rose, Nebraska says of keeping a healthy bison herd, “You want to keep the great-great grandmothers and the great-great grandfathers around because they teach the calves how to be buffalo”. He’s one of the people in “Prairie Food” that is managing a whole ecosystem, and sharing it with anyone who cares to eat well and connect to family through food.

And that is exactly what your great grandmother would tell you to do.



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Observing and Documenting a Wild Superstar

story by Eddie Morin

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” – Bill Shakespeare

Congratulations! You have happened upon an article that will change your life. If you are anything like me, and I know you are, you are probably just bumbling through your day, trying to stay awake until your pre-bedtime nap. This is certainly what I was doing when I had greatness thrust upon me. My life has never been the same since. Certainly you are wracked with anticipation by now, so I'll spill the beans... Hollywood Superstar, **Shia LaBeouf** came to my restaurant. This is a story that I hope will prepare you for an event like this if it ever does happen in your life.

“Shia LaBeouf came to my restaurant...
my life hasn't been quite the same since.”

I woke up on a Sunday morning, and headed up to **B & G Tasty Foods** to open for the day. I got my stuff done and greeted each employee as they arrived. Everything went smoothly and as soon as things died down, I headed home. I'm the owner and when I see an opportunity to go home and take a nap, I take it. The minute my butt hit the couch, my phone beeped. I thought, surely something is wrong. The ice cream machine is probably acting up again. I'll have to head back into work. Instead of seeing a message about a problem, I see a message (in some SnapChat format I'm not entirely familiar with): **Shia LaBeouf** is actually here at B & G's.

My first reaction is, whoa, that dude actually does look like **Shia LaBeouf**. Megan sent me the message and she has a pretty good sense of humor, so I write her back saying something along the lines of, “Hey funny, haha. That guy does look like him.” Megan promptly responds, “No dummy, it is actually him.” Now I'm thinking, Megan sure has a good head on her shoulders but, this can't be possible. So I head on over to Google and search for something real inclusive, like “**Shia Omaha**”. I am greeted with a picture and a brief story about how **Shia LaBeouf** was in Kansas City and headed to Omaha.

Well, now I'm sure it actually is **Shia**. I mean look, he's practically wearing the exact same thing! Before this I didn't think of myself as much of a celebrity worshipper, but that was all about to change. I forwarded the message to a few of my buddies and before I knew it, I was getting calls left and right about **Shia**. I would be lying if I said I didn't feel some sense of importance or at least that I was now part of something bigger than myself.

Over the next couple of days, the **Shia** sighting was all anyone wanted to talk to me about. I learned through extensive research (reading the aforementioned internet story), that **Shia** is filming a movie called “**American Honey**” and he is bouncing around the



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Midwest to shoot on location. Everybody wanted to know what was going on and what Shia ate. I became a really popular person around B & G. I wasn't even there to see him.

Speaking of being there, I did have one 17-year old girl named Caitlan working at the time. By this point, she has about lost her mind she's so gaga over the fact that she took Shia's order. The only words I can get out of her are, "I had a Shia sticker on my backpack in middle school". Until she gets herself together, she's of no use to me. Megan is a little more composed and tells me that Shia ordered a side salad with balsamic vinaigrette in a bigger than normal bowl with two chicken breasts on top of it.

"There are plenty of places around here to eat. What are we doing that keeps bringing him back?"

Now, it looks like Shia's role in this American Honey movie is of some dumpy drifter, and seeing how he came into B & G's in his costume, I have to assume he is doing some kind of method acting or is at least somewhat trying to stay in character. I wouldn't say his food order accomplished that. I guess you can take Shia out of Hollywood, but you can't take the Hollywood out of Shia. He also asked for a coffee to take with him when he left. Caitlin was still apparently dumbstruck, so she asked him if he wanted a straw to drink his coffee with. Shia politely declined.



Over the next few days, Shia LaBeouf came into B & G's two more times. I have two super sneaky pictures of the second visit, but sadly no sneaky pictures of the third. You'll just have to take my word for it.

After the first visit, I thought it was cool that he popped in. I thought that was going to be it. Having Shia come in two more times really was a treat. It got me thinking: Why was Shia coming here so often? There are plenty of places around here to eat. What are we doing that keeps bringing him back?

Through these three visits, I felt myself growing very close to Shia. We were becoming like old friends. Of course, I never talked to him, but you can tell when a strong bond is growing between two like-minded people. Shia understood me, and I understood Shia. He wanted to be left alone, so we didn't bother him. We let him eat in peace. When he would leave, he would slowly look over his shoulder and give me a little wink as if to say, "Hey, we both know I was just in here and it was great for you. Thanks for keeping it low-key." He didn't actually look at me or wink, but you could tell that was what he was thinking.

As I mentioned earlier, my life hasn't been quite the same since. Everything I do feels like I have to try just a bit harder now. I have interacted with Shia and now have a great responsibility to honor his presence. Should I get little plaques to commemorate his visit? Certainly customers would like to know they are sitting in the very same seat Hollywood Superstar Shia LaBeouf sat in. How often should I recount the details of his visit to retain an accurate memory? I would hate for my mind to dull this experience over time and thus deaden the story for my children or grandchildren. I didn't ask for this, but I will do my best to accurately convey my time with Shia. Oh, here is a picture of his salad bowl after he left.

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Long Ago and Not So Far Away

story by Charles Schlussel, photos by Jacob Herrman



About a decade and a half ago and 30 miles northwest of Omaha, you would have found me overseeing the line at Nick's 505 Mainstreet Grill in Fremont. Alas, it is long gone but the beautiful memories linger on. Wednesday evening was "Italian Night" and the special was Pasta All' Amatriciana. As I made the dish for this article, the savory intoxicating aromas wafting through the air took us back and forth between the long ago and the here and now.

This recipe comes together quickly and easily and is a simple but deeply satisfying dish. My version isn't completely authentic; the bacon would be an unsmoked pancetta or guanciale (an Italian cured pork jowl) in a more traditional version. Speaking of bacon, I was very excited to try some bacon from Harvest Valley Foods for this recipe. They are a local family that raises their animals naturally and humanely, and I must say, the results are delicious.

Also, be sure to try and find the bucatini pasta if you can. There is a reason Italians are sticklers for pairing certain pasta shapes with particular sauces and this is a case in point. The hollow tubes of spaghetti-like pasta marry perfectly with this sauce. Though I've tried it with other shapes, this is by far my favorite combination.

Whatever you do, don't overcook the pasta. Cook it a minute or two less than the package says as it will cook more as you finish it in the pan with the sauce. You want it to still be al dente (have a slight bit of firmness when served). You'll give the pasta an extra depth of flavor by finishing the cooking in the sauce and infusing the flavor into the pasta itself.

Bucatini All' Amatriciana (Hollow Pasta with Amatrice-style Tomato Sauce)

4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp. butter
12 oz. bacon sliced into strips 1/2" wide and 1" long
2 cups yellow onion diced fine
3 1/2 cups small diced canned tomatoes with juice
1/2 tsp. hot red pepper flakes
3 garlic cloves finely chopped
1/3 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
1/2 cup grated Romano cheese
1/4 cup rough chopped Italian flat leaf parsley
1 pound bucatini pasta (may substitute penne, rigatoni or conchiglie pasta)

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil and butter in a large skillet over medium heat, add bacon and sauté until lightly browned and crispy. Remove bacon and drain on paper towel lined plate. Pour off all but 4-5 Tbsp. of the bacon drippings, then sauté onions in the same pan with the remaining drippings until they are softened but not browned.

Add red pepper flakes and garlic and stir for 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes and simmer for about 5-10 minutes or until sauce starts to lightly thicken (the pasta will absorb some liquid, so leave the sauce a little thin or the finished dish may be too dry). Season with the kosher salt and black pepper to taste.

Cook the pasta while the sauce simmers. Cook a minute or two less than suggested to keep it al dente (still slightly firm). Drain pasta, reserving a cup or so of the pasta water. Add pasta to the simmering sauce and toss over low heat to combine for about a minute or two. If it gets too dry, add a little of the reserved pasta water. Take off the heat and put in a serving bowl, add the bacon, cheeses and parsley, toss again and serve.

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The Supper Club

A farm-to-table experience at Prairie Plate

story and photos by Angela Nichols

Publisher's Note: Omega Omega Omega (Tri Omega), the culinary fraternity at the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College, strives to provide students with opportunities to apply and develop their skills through unique experiences. One of these experiences is the Supper Club. The Supper Club selects a restaurant once a quarter and works with the chef of the restaurant to provide a unique dining experience to challenge the palate and minds of the students with the unique ingredients and techniques found in that chef's kitchen. The article and photography for this article are also done by students.

Summer quarter found Tri Omega enjoying a true farm-to-table dining experience at **Prairie Plate** in Waverly, Nebraska. As we drove up to the property, we found ourselves looking right into a seven-acre pond surrounded by wheat grasses and geese. The sun reflecting off of the water was warm and welcoming. Once inside, the view from our table was mesmerizing and lulled us into a thought-provoking peacefulness. Their mission of bringing the experience of the small European country farm restaurant to Nebraska was evident and fulfilled.

We started out with a tour of the gardens and grounds where we found out that up to 80% of all the produce served is directly from their farm and certified organic. What they don't produce they get from other nearby farms, such as **Branched Oak Farms** cheese products. Their menu is product driven, based on what they have in season and most of the food is picked the day before service.

"Their menu is product driven, based on what they have in season and most of the food is picked the day before service."

After the tour, Chef Renee created a special menu for us that highlighted their beautiful, homegrown produce. The meal started with a **Lake House** farm salad and flatbread. The salad was a fresh mix of cucumbers, a creamy feta cheese from Branched Oak Farm, drizzled with olive oil. **Chef Brian O'Malley** commented that it took him right back to his days in Greece. The flatbread had a crisp crust, fresh San Marzano tomato sauce with smoked mozzarella from Branched Oak Farm and freshly picked basil.

The starter was a spring pea caramelle (stuffed pasta), sautéed in a light brown butter sauce. The fresh peas from their garden were sublime and the brown butter sauce was nutty and rich, but not too heavy for the delicate pasta. As Miseon Lee exclaimed, "I could eat a hundred of these!"

The main courses were kofte (mix of beef and lamb) with dill yoghurt, brown rice and scallion pilaf, and a grilled chicken spiedini (kabob) with kamut berry sweet corn pilaf with baby patty pan squash. The grains were nutty and fresh, and brought a heartiness to the dishes while the baby patty pan squash was cooked perfectly and tasted of pure summer.

"Up to 80% of all the produce served is directly from their farm and certified organic."

Our meal concluded with a light as a cloud angel food cake with fresh squeezed lemon gelato and a berry sauce made from hand-picked berries straight from their garden. Audrey Stockwell said, "it was a nice balance of flavors and not super sweet dessert."

As the meal ended, we made our way outside and sat by the pond while some of us went on a golf cart ride around the property. We were all hesitant to leave the peaceful surroundings, the passionate people that make up Prairie Plate, and the beautiful homegrown produce. After a group picture by the water, we slowly made our way to our cars to head back home to "the city". I know for many of us, we will see them all again soon.





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FINDING THE FOOD

Good Eats Abound In Des Moines by Marq Manner

Recently some friends and I decided to head up to Des Moines for their first-ever Hinterland Music Festival. We were looking forward to music from Future Islands, TV On The Radio, Edward Sharpe and more, but I was really looking forward to seeing if the old staple, Fong's Pizza, still held up years after first going there. After, of course, I planned on checking out the infamous Zombie Burger for the first time.

"I was really looking forward to seeing if the old staple, Fong's Pizza, still held up... After, of course, I planned on checking out the infamous Zombie Burger for the first time."

The Hinterlands Music Festival and its setup were surprisingly well organized. One of the more impressive aspects of it was the food court and its eclectic and local choices. The two offerings I tried were Gusto's Pizza and The Outside Scoop. Gusto's features made-from-scratch pizza and, even off of a food truck, you could tell that few shortcuts were taken. My slice of simple pepperoni was tasty, well-constructed and full of quality ingredients. Truly a



The Walking Ched at Zombie Burger

few notches above your typical festival slice. The next stop was The Outside Scoop for some of the maple bacon ice cream. This sweet and salty treat served up in a waffle cone tasted a lot like breakfast minus the eggs and was consumed quickly out of both enjoyment and the intense heat of the day.

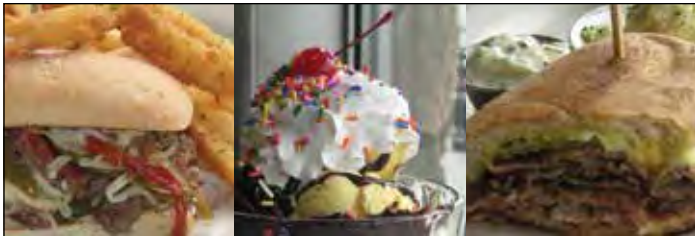
Early the next morning we headed to Fong's Pizza in downtown Des Moines. Fong's Pizza & Tiki Bar looks like it has been there since well into the past century, but the business has only been there since 2009. I have only eaten here late at night when there are wait times, drunks and sometimes pure chaos. That is part of the appeal of the place. The other appeal is the food, which ranges from traditional pizza joint fare to Asian hybrids.

The pizza rolls and cheese sticks are rolled in egg roll wrappers and are a drunk's dream. Their traditional slices are big, greasy and taste amazing at 2 a.m. after a night of drinking. If you leave Fong's without having the crab Rangoon pizza, you really did not visit Fong's. It's a crab Rangoon base, surimi, green onion, asiago and mozzarella, topped with crispy wontons and sweet chili sauce; worth the trip to Des Moines all by itself.

On Saturday morning we woke up early to be at Zombie Burger right when it opened at 11 a.m. There was already a line and the two of us were seated at the bar as all the tables, both inside and on the expansive patio area, had filled up. We ordered some hair of the dog and a basket of poutine to split.

For the burgers, I went with a basic bacon cheeseburger as I like to try the actual burger in a place for the first time. Among the insane amount of equally insane burger concoctions, my friend found The Walking Ched. This was a cheeseburger topped with mac and cheese in between two "buns" made out of fried mac and cheese. My friend was a lot younger than me and could afford taking those years off of his life.

My burger was made with good, quality meat, a nice soft bun, kind of squished and not real pretty (which I like) with standard bacon. It was cooked well and was pretty tasty, but certainly nothing mind-blowing. The poutine was good, with fries that were not over-seasoned and the curds cooked perfectly. The gravy on the poutine was good, but I have had better here in Omaha. My friend's Walking Ched looked amazing and he really enjoyed it. The atmosphere of Zombie Burger is fun and creative and the busy staff are just the right amount of friendly and too cool. It's worth the visit and next time, I will be trying something more creative.



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Sodas Which You May Not Be Entirely Aware Of

Goody Green & Goody Blue Pop by Eddie Morin

For this installment of this column (which has become a huge part of many of our readers' lives), I will be reviewing two sodas. You must understand that this is twice the amount of effort for me and my fine palette. Boy, are you lucky. The two sodas I have chosen are not worlds apart however, and are indeed quite familiar with each other. One may even say they are siblings. Behold! Goody Green Pop and Goody Blue Pop. Before I get any further, I would like to congratulate the naming department at Goody Soda for their extreme creativity in the naming of these two sodas. I will begin by taking a look at the Green Pop, and once I have sufficiently reviewed it, I will move onto the Blue Pop.

Before we delve into the actual soda flavors, I'd like to pause to discuss the bottles themselves. Both flavors are wrapped in the same label design. In fact, there are two additional varieties not covered here, which are Goody Yellow Pop and Goody Red Pop. As expected, they also sport similar labels.

"Calling it anything but 'green' would be an affront to any honorable flavor."

Centered on the label is a young man licking his lips. His hair is parted down the middle in the front, which shows class and respectability. However, towards the rear, his hair becomes wild and unkempt, which may suggest that he left in the morning fully groomed but throughout the day's adventures, he has neglected its upkeep. I like this. I think I would get along with this guy. The boy's head is placed on a checker boarded background in the respective soda's color which is probably an attempt at some type of nostalgia, but in this modern world, I cannot help being reminded of ska music (i.e. The Mighty Mighty Bosstones). I wish I could say this is a plus, but my ska days are long gone and I don't appreciate the resurgence of these memories. The only other appreciable markings on the bottles is the phrase, "Thirst Come, Thirst Served" and "Since 1923". Eh, I don't care.

Finally, on to the flavors! The Green Pop tastes like green apples and is gross. If you love green apples, you probably still won't like this. After drinking this flavor, I immediately

realized why Goody declined to use a flavor such as "Green Apple" or "Applereous" to name this soda. Calling it anything but "green" would be an affront to any honorable flavor. I guess if you just like the color green or those sticky hands you get in capsules out of vending machines, you may like this. If that is the case, you probably have some growing up to do before we hang out. The final verdict on the Goody Green Soda: Terrible and off-putting.

Next up is the Blue Pop. I was expecting either cream soda

"I enjoyed this one... Highly recommended if you enjoy standard cream sodas."

or blue raspberry. Cream soda is what I got. I'll be the first to admit my bias towards cream sodas. I feel they are an under-appreciated flavor as a whole and under-represented as well. You will undoubtedly be relieved to hear that I enjoyed this one. It is a fairly standard cream soda taste, but that is just fine with me. All too often I have been disappointed by cream sodas that attempt to kick it up a notch with sweetness or frothiness, destroying the whole shebang in the process. Interestingly, on their website Goody claims that there are hints of raspberry included, but I tasted none. My conclusion for Goody Blue Pop: Highly recommended if you enjoy standard cream sodas.

After looking at exactly half of the Goody lineup, I simply cannot draw a conclusion as to how I feel the other two flavors (Yellow and Red) might taste. Perhaps I will just have to expend the effort again and review both of them as well. Maybe on the one-year anniversary of this review? We can only wait and see.





Villagio's sweet chili chicken pizza

Omaha's Largest Pizza Review #7

Food & Spirits Magazine recently hosted the 7th Annual Omaha Pizza Review at The Waiting Room Lounge.

A sold-out house greeted award-winning musicians Kait Berreckman and Brad Hoshaw, but the star of the show was the pizza from 14 different Omaha restaurants. Culinary students from the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metro Community College were on hand to serve the pizza. Those attending voted for their top three pizzas and judging was also conducted by Food & Spirits Magazine's panel of judges.

There were some shakeups at the top this year, with Villagio's sweet chili and chicken pizza taking the people's choice for the top pizza. The judges were served the same pizza (pepperoni) from each restaurant and their pick for the top pie was Red Savoy's.

You'll find the rest of the top pizzas, along with individual category winners, listed below. You'll also find a list of all the pizzas that were brought for the people's choice as well.

"A sold-out house greeted award-winning musicians... the star of the show was the pizza from 14 different Omaha restaurants."

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

- 1 - Villagio Pizzeria
- 2 - Baxter's
- 3 - La Casa Pizza
- 4 - Dudley's Pizza & Tavern
- 5 - Salt 88
- 6 - Varsity Sports Café & Roman Coin Pizza

JUDGE'S PICK

- 1 - Red's Savoy Pizza & Sports Pub
- 2 - Dudley's
- 3 - (tie) Villagio, Baxter's & Orsi's Italian Bakery
- 4 - Salt

PUBLISHER'S PICK

The Pizza Pie Guys

MISC. CATEGORY WINNERS

- Best Non-traditional Pizza - Foodies
- Best Fine Dining Pizza - Prairie Fire Pizza
- Best Ball Game Pizza - Varsity
- Best 'Bohunk' Pizza - Red's Savoy
- Best Old School Pizza - Orsi's
- Best Pizza with Pickles - The Pizza Shoppe Collective

PEOPLE'S CHOICE MENU

Red's Savoy

Eastsider Pizza - House sausage, sauerkraut, pepperoni, onions, mushrooms, green peppers and green or black olives

Foodies

Thai Pizza - Thai sauce, fresh cilantro, roasted chicken, mozzarella, sweet chili sauce and carrots.

Villagio

Sweet Chili Chicken Pizza - Chili base, grilled chicken, cream cheese, red onion, red pepper, pineapple, our house blend cheese and topped off with chopped fresh scallions.

Pizza Shoppe

The Cabana - Alfredo and mustard base with pepperoni, Canadian bacon, dill pickle, pepper jack and mozzarella cheeses.

La Casa

Basil Spinach Pesto Pizza - Fresh blend of spinach, basil, olive oil, garlic and Romano, topped with diced Roma tomatoes and mozzarella. Also served with garlic chicken.

Varsity

Over-Under Romano w/Pepperoni - cream cheese base with our signature pizza sauce and topped with pepperoni, mozzarella, more pepperoni and fresh Romano.

Salt

Savory Pear and Goat Cheese Pizza - Fresh, made from scratch porter dough, featuring Crow's Peak Pile of Dirt Porter and signature salt and pepper crust. Romano, provolone and mozzarella cheese, topped with two kinds of pears, Bosch and Anjou, sautéed with unsalted butter and flambéed with Dumante Pistachio Liqueur. Then, caramelized yellow onions, goat cheese and finally a light drizzle of honey.

Baxter's

Jalapeño, Pepperoni and Cream Cheese Pizza

Mushroom Pizza - Garlic cream sauce, goat cheese, mushrooms and caramelized onions.

Prairie Fire Pizza

Chicken Blanco - Garlic white sauce, roasted chicken, mushrooms, spinach, balsamic caramelized onions.

Uncle Maddio's

Jamaican Jerk Chicken Pizza - tomato and basil sauce, mozzarella, grilled jerk chicken, red onions, green peppers, pineapple and cilantro.

The Pizza Pie Guys

Dan's Special - All natural Italian sausage, green chilies, onions and Jalapeños on a spicy red sauce.

Green Chile Enchilada - Salsa Verde, all natural rotisserie chicken and cilantro.

Dudley's Pizza

Combomaha - Pepperoni, hamburger, Italian sausage, sautéed mushrooms, red onions and banana peppers on classic red sauce
American Steak Classic - Marinated skirt steak, hickory smoked bacon, red onions, Italian cheese blend on creamy garlic steak sauce.

Orsi's

Combo - Hamburger, pepperoni, sausage, green pepper, mushroom, onion and black olives.

Vegetarian Combo - Green pepper, mushroom, onion, black olives and tomato.

Godfather's

Classic crust sausage pizza.



A pepperoni pizza from Red's Savoy

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**People's Choice Winner of Food & Spirits
Magazine's 7th Annual Omaha Pizza Review!**

Korean Food Bonding

by Michael Pickell

Korean food was designed for bringing together friends and family. I lived in Korea for two years as an English teacher and what I have noticed is that Koreans like to do things in groups. I once told my co-workers that I went on a trip by myself and some of my fellow Korean teachers almost fainted by how strange that sounded to them.

If you are planning to have a get together, consider having a Korean barbecue and watch your guests bond over delicious Asian-style cuisine. The best part of cooking Korean food is that it's easy to put together and easy to get the ingredients. You can go to your local Asian market to get the more difficult items and to your local grocery store for the rest. I like to go to the Asian Market on 76th and Cass to get ingredients to complete the Korean dishes.

To start with appetizers, I suggest kimbap. Bap is the Korean word for rice. This is a popular street food as well. Kimbap is like a sushi roll. This is more or less a rice roll with meat and vegetables. To prepare this, you will use the sushi rice along with the rice vinegar. Then you will need nori (toasted seaweed). In the middle of this roll, you will have spam, fried eggs, cucumbers and sesame seeds. After that roll the kimbap just like you would for a sushi roll.

"The best part of cooking Korean food is that it's easy to put together and easy to get the ingredients."

When I hung out with Korean doctors, my friends would slice up various fruits and have sweet rice cakes. Some of the Korean fruits can be found at Asian markets and some of the more popular fruits can be found at regular grocery stores. Korean pears, compared to regular pears, are round and are extra crunchy. Yellow melons taste like honeydew, but look like small watermelons.

Another common appetizer is dried cuttlefish and mayonnaise. Dried cuttlefish can be found at the Asian markets. My friends would simply heat this up on a frying pan and then cut the cuttlefish with scissors. Then for a dip, they would use mayonnaise.

The most popular of Korean dishes for a Friday night get together is samgyeopsar and galbi. A rough translation for samgyeopsar is three-layer bacon. Galbi is similar in concept, but is a beef barbecue equivalent.

To set yourself up for the samgyeopsar dinner, you will need slab bacon, sesame seed oil, sea salt, garlic, mint leaves, kimchi, bean sprouts and rice. These are the basic components for this kind of meal. When Koreans go to a restaurant for this, the tables are equipped with mini charcoal grills. The server will bring little dishes of rice, a mixture of sesame seed oil, sea salt and a dish with the mint leaves. Then they bring the three layer bacon and sliced garlic. They lay the strips of bacon on the grill and if you want, you can put the garlic on the grill as well. I like roasted garlic, so I put all the garlic on the side of the grill.

The servers come and flip the bacon over. Once the samgyeopsar has cooked sufficiently, traditionally, the head of the family or the company manager will cut the strips. Once that is done, everyone dishes up. In this setup, there are other elements that can be used according to tastes.

To eat this meal, simply get a mint leaf and put some rice on it. Take your piece of bacon, dip it in the oil and put it on the rice. Then put what you want on top of the pork. I usually top it with



roasted garlic slices and some kimchi. With multiple toppings, you can mix and match.

Galbi is cooked with the same concept and adds more variety to the meal. To prepare galbi, you will need to marinate beef in a Korean-style barbecue paste. The ingredients you will need are soy sauce, water, honey, raw sugar, sesame oil, garlic cloves, red pepper flakes, green onions and toasted sesame seeds. You can simply go to Wikihow and search for kalbi marinade for instructions on how to prepare the beef needed.

For these meals, Koreans like to drink beer and soju, their national drink. It is often suggested that soju was made for samgyeopsar. In this culture, it is often rude for someone to not pour a drink for their friends. Usually, the head of the table pours soju in shot glasses for their guests. Then the person next to the head will pour a shot for the leader. It's said in Korea that the person who pours himself a drink has bad friends.

Now, you may not have a charcoal grill embedded in your dining table. You can simply cook the bacon and beef in a large frying pan, cut up the meat and put it on a serving dish. Or if you want to be technical, grill the meat on your gas grill. Koreans love to have their food extra hot and fresh off the grill. Hence, in the restaurants, the grills are installed in the tables.

If your guests are willing to go on the spicy side, ddeokbokki is an excellent choice. Composed of sliced rice cakes that look like penne, boiled eggs, some type of meat and seasoning, this dish is a spicy-sweet introduction to Korean street food. Street vendors sell this in cups with chopsticks. At restaurants this is served in large dishes meant for groups.

To prepare this, you will need to marinate the meat in spicy sauce. I like to use chicken for this dish because I think the sauce compliments the chicken. In order to make the marinade, you will need garlic, ginger, soy sauce, corn syrup, gochujang (spicy red paste) and green onions. Let the meat marinate in the sauce for an hour. While the meat is marinating, you can prepare the ddeok (sliced rice cake). To do that, you just put the ddeok into a bowl of cold water until they break apart.

Ddeokbokki is like a stir fry. So once your materials are ready to be cooked, you just put everything in your saucepan or large wok starting with ddeok. Then you throw in the meat and whatever else you want in the dish. Because this is a stir fry, the dish is flexible as to what you want to put in. Some vendors throw in some ramen. Other like to use spam and cut up hotdogs.

For a smaller gathering, you cannot go wrong with bibimbap. This is rice with vegetables. One of my Korean teachers told me this was a more difficult dish to prepare due to all the slicing, but if you have average slicing skills, this should be no problem.

Traditionally, this is made with stoneware rice bowls where the last part of the rice is cooked in the oven in a stone rice bowl. If you don't have stone rice bowls, don't worry – you can just make the rice in bulk and then put the vegetables over the rice.

While the rice is cooking, all you need to do is cook the marinated beef and slice up the vegetables. You will need thinly sliced beef. You can use the same marinade that you used for galbi and cook it in your wok or frying pan. Then, add the vegetables in this dish which are bean sprouts, sliced cucumbers, carrots, shiitake mushrooms, bamboo shoots and spinach. Put the cooked beef and the sliced vegetables over rice and add some kimchi. Then it is topped with an egg sunny side up or a fried egg over easy, depending on your comfort level with eggs. This dish is served with gochujang (spicy red paste) which can be added by your guests according to their tastes and spice levels. With this dish, the guests can mix the rice with vegetables as they like. Koreans like to mix everything together.

If you do cook the rice in a stoneware bowl, there will be rice stuck to the bottom of the bowl. Once you have finished eating the main course, you can enjoy what is called burnt rice soup. To do this, you just mix hot water in with the rice that has been stuck to the bowl. Add any leftover vegetables and beef to complete. The hot water will loosen up the rice. This has been referred to as a Korean dessert.

Korean food offers many easy to make dishes that can impress your guests. They offer a way for you to introduce Asian cuisine and spicy food without venturing too far from the Western comfort zone. These dishes are easy to make and will instantly become a hit at your next get together. They offer a quick way to bond with your friends over food and drink.




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Taste the Nation

A country-wide guide to bringing the flavors of the mountains, prairies and coasts to your kitchen

by Kent Cisar

Traveling and Christmas shopping are two of my most enjoyable disposable income streams. I travel several times a year for fishing trips, concerts, a weekend getaway, or a reunion with good friends. Part of the joy of traveling is not only experiencing local fare, but also finding ways to bring that food to me. I've also never enjoyed giving gift certificates or the latest tech gadget, so several years ago I challenged myself to find foods all over the country to give to friends and family at Christmas. Below is a coast-to-coast guide of some of the foods I've explored online and in person, as well as a suggestion for a local product pairing.

"Part of the joy of traveling is not only experiencing local fare, but also finding ways to bring that food to me."

FAR WEST

Washington

Pike Place Fish Market has been slingin' salmon since 1965. Their site offers an array of salmon and seafood that can be sent overnight for maximum freshness. If you wish to avoid heavy shipping costs, head over to one of **Absolutely Fresh Seafood's** local locations in Omaha, pick up a fish and then coat it with any one of Pike Place's excellent spice rubs.

<https://www.pikeplacefish.com/>
www.absolutelyfresh.com

Oregon

I sampled the Packer Family's jams at the Portland, Oregon farmers market last May and bought three jars on the spot. Their pear-sweetened flavors provide natural fruit sweetness without any added sugar. I'd pair it with a slice of your favorite bread from **Great Harvest Bread Company** for a breakfast treat.

<http://www.packerorchardsandbakery.com/>
<http://www.greatharvestbreadomaha.com/>

California

My first trip to San Francisco in May was filled with seafood and sourdough. The Boudin Bread Company delivers with a firm crust and strong, yet not overpowering sour taste to excite your taste buds. Omahans are in luck as it's sold in retail at Costco. Top it with salami or other creations from the **Grey Plume Provisions** store for a savory sandwich or snack.

<https://www.boudinbakery.com/>
<http://thegreyplume.com/>

Alaska

A taste of the Alaskan wilderness is closer than you think. A box of Wild Berry jelly-center chocolates from Alaska Wild Berry Products gives you the fruity diversity of the Alaskan terrain. A 25-piece package has 10 flavors to enjoy. A quick visit for German roasted almonds from the **Nut Hutte** at the **Omaha Farmers Market** and a chocolate, fruity, nutty snack is all set.

www.alaskawildberryproducts.com

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Montana

Montana has some of the most beautiful terrain in the country and also some of the healthiest red meat available to us. Rancho Picante raises and sells grass-fed bison products. If it's short ribs or sausages, burgers or brats, or even a half or full bison, you can bring home the taste of the Montana range. Swing by **Soaring Wings Vineyard** in Springfield for a local wine to match your bison creation.

<http://www.ranchopicante.com/#!about/c1pek>
<http://www.soaringwingswine.com/>

Wyoming

Monkey Snacks hails from Laramie, Wyoming. They visit farmers markets in Southeast Wyoming, Northern Colorado and even Western Nebraska. If you're not near their stands, you can order a wide variety of snacks and sizes of their granola. It's convenient for a quick snack on the go or to snack on with yogurt or cereal. For a healthy, high energy compliment, find a **Juice Stop** location for a smoothie.

<http://www.monkey-snacks.com/>
www.juicestopsmoothies.com





Texas

You can order a Texas-sized feast from the Lone Star State from the comfort of your own home by checking out Snow's BBQ in Lexington, Texas. Snow's will ship vacuum sealed smoked brisket, pork, chicken, sausage and even turkey. If you need a sauce, they have a few. A trip to **Wenninghoff's** market will have an array of fruits and vegetables to supplement your barbecue endeavor.

www.snowsbbq.com

www.wenninghoff.com

SOUTHEAST

Louisiana

I refuse to confess how many beignets I ate from Café Du Monde when I went to New Orleans. Lucky for us, we can fly up boxes of their mix at anytime. Add water, roll them, cut them, and toss them into a batch of hot oil and be ready for an easy treat from the Crescent City. Douse liberally with powdered sugar and grab a cup of coffee from your favorite local coffee shop and you've got a breakfast or dessert sure to satisfy.

<http://www.cafedumonde.com/>

Tennessee

Hopefully you are better than I am at making biscuits from scratch. but if not, then the Loveless Café in Nashville has you covered. Their mix is easy to put together and is a buttermilk biscuit at its best. Pick up a jar of honey from **It's All About Bees** at the Omaha Farmers market and you've got your day started off right!

<http://www.lovelesscafe.com/>

<http://www.itsallaboutbees.com/>

Colorado

Big E's High Country Kitchen's Carolina BBQ Sauce makes cooking easy. I found it at a metro Denver farmers market two years back. Big E's sauce is tangy, full of spices, and coats meat to perfection. A rack of baby back ribs from **Harvest Valley Foods** near Highway 75 and Platteview Road would make a flavor-packed, meaty main course.

<http://www.bigesbbqsauce.com/>

www.harvestvalleyfoods.com

SOUTHWEST

New Mexico

At the time of publication we may still be able to acquire some hatch chile peppers from The Hatch Chile Store. The hatch chile is the perfect mix of heat, smokiness and has a rich flavor not found in other peppers. Keep this one simple and grab some fresh flour chips from **Erick's Enchilada's** at the farmers market, melt a lot of cheese and top it liberally with diced hatch chiles.

<https://www.hatch-green-chile.com/>

Oklahoma

The Woody Candy Company in Oklahoma City started in 1927. They're best known for their brittles, and if you're a peanut, cashew, or pecan person, you can order a sweet treat that will not disappoint. When my brittle tin arrives this winter, I'll head down to **Fox Hollow Coffee** near 112th and Blondo Streets for a hot cocoa and retire in front of a fire and Christmas tree for a holiday treat that takes me back in time.

<https://woodycandy.com/product-category/brittles/>

<http://foxhollowomaha.com/>



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Mississippi

The Simmonds Family Catfish farm In Yazoo City, Mississippi started to sell farm-raised, sustainable catfish in 1982. You can order fillets, whole fish, even hushpuppies. Few things go better with southern fried catfish than hot sauce, and you can find several satisfying flavors made locally by **Crazy Gringa Hot Sauce**.

www.simmondscatfish.com

www.crazygringahotsauce.com

West Virginia

West Virginia's Appalachian Mountains are home to Greg and Veronica Stover's Appalachian specialty food store. They make a variety of salad dressings, sauces, glazes, even a Bloody Mary mix. A bottle of their orange-berry basil salad dressing on a batch of fresh greens from **Green Leaf Farms** at our farmers market can combine fresh, local flavors with a touch of an Appalachian sunrise.

<http://www.zestsauce.com/>

<http://greenleaffarms.biz/>

North Carolina

Scott's Carolina BBQ sauce has been around for almost a century. If a spicy, vinegar based sauce is how you define barbecue, then Scott's sauce is for you. Add it to a couple pounds of shredded barbecue pork from **Harvest Valley Foods** for an easy barbecue sandwich – be ready for the heat.

<http://www.scottsbarbucuesauce.com/>

Florida

I was introduced to the Honeybell orange at a Florida farmers market this winter and bought six immediately. I returned home, shared my juicy treasure, then went online and bought another case from Dundee Groves. These oranges are amazing by themselves but, if you want a touch more flavor, then head to **Savory Spice Shop** in Rockbrook and sprinkle some chocolate, cinnamon or salt of your choice to top it off.

www.dundeegroves.com

www.savoryspiceshop.com



Georgia

If you're looking to experience the Georgia Peach in an excellent variety of ways, then check out Dickey Farms. You can choose from the peaches themselves (if in season) or their jellies, sauces, and cobbler mixes. Add their peach jelly to a bagel from the **Bagel Bin** for a grab and go breakfast.

<http://www.gapeaches.com/peachesgifts.htm>

www.bagelbin.com

PLAINS

Minnesota

My family's been going to Minnesota for the last several years for an annual weekend getaway. We always purchase several bottles of Minnestalgia's strawberry syrup. It's a thick syrup with big chunks of strawberries in it. If it's possible to order **Amato's** triple berry ricotta pancakes to go, then a bottle of Minnestalgia syrup would make a breakfast picnic at Stinson Park.

<http://minnestalgia.com/>

Missouri

Most people think of Kansas City barbecue when they think Missouri fare, but I think of Fitz's Root Beer in St. Louis. It's rich, full of flavor and has a clean, lasting aftertaste. Pair it with some ice cream from **Ted & Wally's** in the **Old Market** and you've got a perfect late summer treat!

<https://fitzrootbeer.com/>

<http://tedandwallys.com/>

GREAT LAKES

Illinois

A lengthy airline delay last summer introduced me to the snacking sensation of Garrett's Popcorn. Their caramel corn is the best I've ever had. One behemoth bag later, I kept myself company at Midway and made several friends and family members happy upon my return. I'd take a big bag with me to a Monday Movie at **Midtown Crossing** and make some friends!

<http://www.garrett popcorn.com/>

Wisconsin

The cheese choices in Wisconsin are vast, and my favorite is Henning's Cheese factory between Milwaukee and Green Bay. If you like spreads, strings, slices, dips or curds, Henning's has you covered. When your order arrives, head over to a **Stoysich House of Sausage** and create a custom meat and cheese plate for a top notch patio snack.

<http://cheesestore.henningscheese.com/>

www.stoysich.com

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Michigan

The McClure Family put their great-grandmother's pickle recipe into production almost ten years ago. They use as much local Michigan produce as possible for their pickle spears, slices and relish. These pickles are not short on flavor, so be ready for a mix of spicy, sweet and crunchy goodness. A crafty Cuban sandwich could be made with pork from **Just Good Meats**, mustard from the **Denison Mustard Company**, bread from **Le Quartier** and a jar of McClure Pickles.

<http://www.mcclurepickles.com/>

www.justgoodmeatoma.com

<http://lequartierbakingco.com/>

Ohio

Skyline Chili has been a Cincinnati staple since 1949. You can order the chili by the can so their family recipe is just a hot bowl away from being ready for a rainy weekday or a Saturday tailgate special. Once it's hot, top it with **Jisa's Farmstead Cheese** from Brainerd, NE and your comfort classic is all set.

<http://www.skylinechili.com/locations.php>

<http://jisacheese.com/>



MIDWEST

Washington D.C.

Half smokes are a popular half pork/half beef sausage from the Washington D.C. area. We can order them by going to Ben's Chili Bowl, a D.C. chili institution since the late 1950's. A small dab of Denison Mustard Company mustard on a grilled half smoke gives you a sausage of Capitol quality.

www.benschilibowl.com

Delaware

Scrapple isn't a board game, it's a wildly popular meat product in Delaware that's now available in several variations. The folks at Rapa Scrapple have been making it since the 1920's. It can be served as part of a breakfast, lunch, or dinner, so I'd grab a pack of fresh pita bread from the **Parthenon** at the Omaha farmers market and create an early or late day Delaware delight.

<http://rapa-scrapple.myshopify.com/>

New York

Would you like the New York deli experience without having to travel to the city that never sleeps? You can taste it by ordering pastrami and the complimentary mustard from the Carnegie Deli in New York City. A two-pound batch of Carnegie pastrami and a six-pack of ciabatta bread from Le Quartier bakery is deli done right!

<https://store.carnegiedeli.com/deli-meats-c3.aspx>

NORTHEAST

Rhode Island

Johnny Cakes are a pancake-style treat made with stoneground white corn meal. Kenyon's grist mill has been in operation since

1696. Today you can order a variety of corn meals and mixes to make your own Johnny Cakes. Pair it with Fuller's Maple Syrup from New Hampshire.

<http://www.kenyongristmill.com/home.html>

New Hampshire

Fuller's Sugar House in Lancaster, New Hampshire produces over 4,000 gallons of maple syrup each year. They have jugs and jars of all shapes, sizes and grades. They also carry maple sugars and creams for your baking needs. It's the perfect complement to a Johnny Cake from Kenyon's Grist Mill.

www.fullerssugarhouse.com

Massachusetts

We're coming up on cranberry harvest season and bogs in Massachusetts will be busy. If you'd like them in salads, muffins or a side unto themselves, check out Cape Cod Select cranberries for a three-pound wooden crate delivered to your door. Track down some chicken or even a turkey from **Plum Creek Farms** in Burchard, Nebraska to compliment your cranberry crate.

www.capecodselect.com

www.plumcreekfarmsinc.com

Maine

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Good Training is Hard to Find

by Jill Cockson



Social media outlets and pop culture trends are creating a new breed of consumer that is more product-educated and less responsive to marketing gimmicks. They are challenging our industry to up its game as they demand an elevated food and beverage experience. In order to successfully meet those demands, the required skill set of everyone, from owners to professional servers, is expanding. As venues scramble to secure the best employees in every market, the shortage of good help is becoming a more common complaint. Unfortunately, the old saying that “good help is hard to find” is a myth; It is the scapegoat of lazy and/or inexperienced owners and managers.

The new F&B manager needs to understand a brand vision, create hiring and training procedures that are consistent with that brand, and execute a hospitality experience through his/her staff that results in brand loyalty. You could say that ‘managers’ are quickly becoming extinct. ‘Brand builders’ are the new managers. Brand builders understand the critical nature of arming employees with the ability to do a job well and in accordance with a brand

vision. The price tag on effective training programs can be daunting. What is even more daunting (and arguably incalculable) is the price tag on not providing employees with the tools they need to succeed in their respective positions.

When you build a business, you are essentially building a revenue-producing machine, which makes the brand manager a machinist of sorts. While brand vision functions as the motor, the power source is useless without gears that move to do the work. Employees are, in effect, the gears. Proper training ensures that the gears are able to operate efficiently (i.e. profitably). Successful training occurs in three steps: 1) Clear, documented communication of brand vision. 2) Provision of detailed job descriptions, with information about how each description is critically tied to brand success. 3) Education of employees on all products/menus/services that functions to minimize labor costs and maximize profitability through competence and efficiency.

“As venues scramble to secure the best employees in every market, the shortage of good help is becoming a more common complaint.”

Staff training is inherently tied to every aspect of profitability. A competent team creates regular clientele (\$), minimizes steps taken through efficient and ergonomic set-up (i.e. lowers the necessary number of employees to deliver the same guest experience), reduces turnover significantly as a result of increased tips (\$), lowers the amount of product waste resulting from mistakes and/or over-pouring (\$), and reduces the probability of accidents (i.e. liability) resulting from rushed employees trying to make up for inefficient service (\$).

As customers continue to push the requisite service skill-set, it will become increasingly necessary to invest in a brand manager who can create and maintain the necessary training program to meet their demands. The days of waiting for good help to walk through the door to apply are over. It is the responsibility of management to develop and oversee the workplace culture of their brand. If employees are not provided with a vision, and/or not provided with the tools to bring that vision to fruition, failure is imminent. The cause of that failure, dear managers, will not be the lack of good help.

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Portrait of a Bartender: Benton Alexander

by Binoy Fernandez

One of the things I've learned over the past several years, ever since I started my journey in bartending, to be honest, is that bartenders come in all shapes and sizes. They all have different areas of focus, knowledge, attitudes, passions and interests.

"When he isn't bartending, Benton is a musician. He has years of training while growing up..."

Some of them are about the party, while others are career driven, and yet others, still, see it as something temporary that pays bills while they prepare themselves for something different in life. In previous issues I've focused on writing articles focused on different drinks or aspects of bartending, but now I think it's time to turn that focus to something else, to the bartenders themselves. This is

the first in what I hope to be a series of articles which introduces you to some of the best bartenders Omaha and Lincoln have to offer.

Benton Alexander and I sit at the bar at **MoMo's Pizzeria** in Lincoln. I've got this fantastic pork loin in front of me while he prepares to dig into duck and risotto. Both armed with a glass of pinot noir, we start chatting. I've conveniently forgotten to turn the recorder on my phone on, and taking notes seems like a lot of work...

"...with his chefs he is able to explore nuances and flavors that many bartenders... don't get to experience"

Benton is the head bartender at **Issara** in Lincoln, Nebraska. We first met through the US Bartender's Guild (USBG), and I first really became aware of him when he competed in a margarita competition earlier this year. I was one of the judges, and he made this margarita with this amazing Thai Bitters he makes at Issara. Over the months since then I've had the chance to get to know him better, and while we don't always see eye to eye when it comes to cocktail recipes, I've yet to try something from him that I haven't enjoyed.

"I've heard people describe cocktails as works of art - the balance of flavors, the appearance and presentation, but I rarely hear bartenders talk about what they do as art."

When he isn't bartending, Benton is a musician. He has years of training while growing up, and focuses on drum and bass, a style characterized by its high energy beats. If you get a chance to hear anything by Bassthoven, it might be worth checking out. Bartending, for him, is not something he does when he isn't making music, but is something he does as well as make music. Both, music and cocktails, are aspects of art, and he identifies as an artist before he thinks of himself as either a bartender or a musician.

For me, this is an interesting take on bartending. I've heard people describe cocktails as works of art - the balance of flavors, the appearance and presentation, but I rarely hear bartenders talk about what they do as art. For me, when I bartended, I saw myself as a technician with the drinks. My goal was to find that specific flavor that, for me, elevated the drink to something almost sublime. It was through this process of trial and error, of constantly tasting spirits and taking notes, that I was able to achieve what I wanted - but I never viewed what I did as art. Benton does, and this gives him a flexibility and a creativeness with what he does that allows him to venture into flavors and combinations that would never cross my mind. It's that kind of thing that led him to win the USBG Iron Bartender competition in July over at **Joystix** in Lincoln.

"His wheelhouse with flavor can be summed up in a couple of words: bright and fresh."

His wheelhouse with flavor can be summed up in a couple of words: bright and fresh. While we spoke, we talked about how he heads the bar at a restaurant, and how that has influenced his perception on drinks. Working at Blue Orchid first, and now Issara, his palate has been influenced by the bright, fresh and bold flavors of Thai cuisine, and it's this kind of attitude he puts into his cocktails. He's at his most comfortable working with citrus, but not just the ones we are familiar with. Kaffir lime and mango are common ingredients for him, and with collaboration with his chefs he is able to explore nuances and flavors that many bartenders who don't have a kitchen to work alongside with don't get to experience. He feels that he wouldn't have been able to accomplish what he has without the help and experience of his coworkers in the kitchen.

Working a bar in a restaurant is a challenge. While you can have a forte, it is tough to specialize. Customers tend to look for wine or beer to pair with their food. Fortunately, for Benton, the beer pairing is easy as the best beer to have with Thai food is, of course,



Benton Alexander

Singha (a Thai lager), but wine can be a challenge to pair. Benton is in sommelier training, something I usually compare to pursuing a masters degree in wine. This knowledge not only allows him to pair a good wine with your food, but gives deeper insights into concepts such as terroir which can play a significant role in cocktail making.

"Always quick with a smile, behind the stick Benton Alexander personifies his cocktails: bright and fresh."

I've always maintained there's a kind of trinity to being a good bartender. You need to have knowledge, the ability to apply that knowledge, and, finally, you need to have what I can only describe as affability. A good bartender knows when to talk to the customer and to draw the necessary information to know what drink to make, or the bartender needs to know when a conversation is flagging and be able to make the right comment to spark it back up, and sometimes, the bartender needs to read a situation and know when to not say anything. With his easy-going manner and his optimism, once you get him talking he might not know when to stop. Always quick with a smile, behind the stick Benton Alexander personifies his cocktails: bright and fresh.



Kansas City Beers

by Jason McLaughlin

Kansas City has long been known as an epicenter for some of the most delicious smoked meats that the world has to offer, but a quick three-hour drive South down I-29 will truly prove rewarding to the craft beer enthusiast. With the Lincoln and Omaha markets combining as the largest consumers of Boulevard Brewing Company's beer outside of Kansas City, Nebraskans have long been familiar with the excellent craftsmanship coming out of KC.

Since Boulevard's first batch of beer brewed back in 1989, Kansas City started its long journey to become one of the nation's great beer destinations. Now, with well over a dozen breweries and several more in planning, Kansas City is keeping a steady pace with the rest of America's love affair with craft beer. Liver permitting, it would be easy to spend a week dedicated to brewery tours within a ten-mile radius.

While I wouldn't suggest leaving the city without touring the Boulevard brewery (which takes some foreplanning due to the popularity), there is also a burgeoning beer bar scene that has continued to gain steam since the turn of the century. In today's world it's not tough to find a decent selection of craft beer on the menu wherever you may find yourself, but here are a few tried and true Kansas City gems:

"Liver permitting, it would be easy to spend a week dedicated to brewery tours within a ten-mile radius."

Flying Saucer

Easily the most well-known craft beer joint in Kansas City, this Dallas, Texas based restaurant and tap house is located in the heart of the downtown Power and Light District. 75 taps line the wall, pouring some of the finest American and European draught options available in the Missouri market – including plenty of top notch local options. Add over 100 bottles available on a neatly laid-out menu and there is surely something for everyone. While the feel may be a bit corporate for some people's liking, the friendly staff and selection will make you feel right at home. If you come hungry they offer some tasty burgers and pizza, as well as a few German options. Get there early if you want a good seat.



Salad and a beer at Flying Saucer

Grinders

It can be quite confusing to out-of-towners as to why there are two addresses listed for Grinders, but be assured they are right next door to each other in the Crossroads Arts District. The original location, which is simply referred to as “Grinders”, has the feel of a hip dive bar. Grinders West is located right next door and has more of a polished-trendy feel. I usually find myself sliding into a booth at the original Grinders and taking in all of the fantastic draft options listed on one of the handwritten chalkboards. There is always a fantastic mix of local options and some well-chosen out of state brews.

The food is a serious strong point here. Big and juicy ½ pound burgers, New York-style slices, Philly with Whiz and their famous wings are all legit. A fair warning about the wings: they come in the level system of hotness, culminating in their world famous Death Sauce. The servers will simply tell you not to order it, that nobody can eat them, and that it will be a waste of your money. Don't try to be a hero; They aren't calling you a chicken.

Bier Station

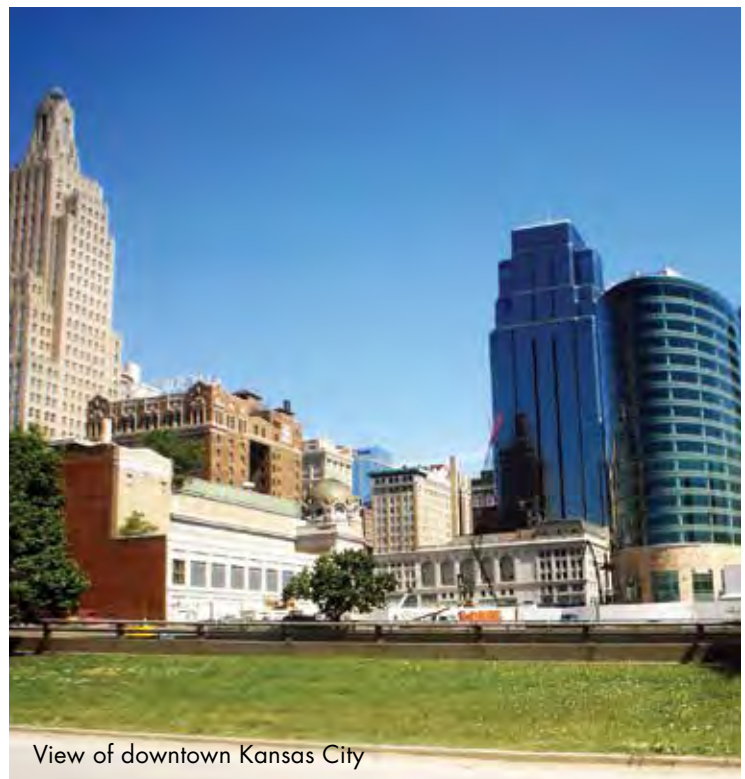
Located in the Waldo area, Bier Station hit the scene in 2012 with a genius combination of a well curated taproom and world-class bottle shop. The rotating draft list is filled with local specialty and seasonal offerings and an eclectic selection of hard-to-find craft beers from America and abroad. The bottle selection takes the experience at this laid-back bar from amazing to epic, with enough firepower to put even the geekiest of the beer geeks' jaws on the floor. If you come with an appetite, they offer farm-to-table meat and cheese options that include whimsical grilled sandwiches, charcuterie plates, and to-die-for handmade bratwurst. If a snack is all you need to soak up your classy beverage, their Bavarian pretzels are a must. It's easy to see why Draft Magazine rated Bier Station as one of the top beer bars in the country.



The original Grinders in Kansas City

Beer Kitchen

Westport has become somewhat of a mecca for craft beer bars and brewpubs. McCoy's Public House, Foundry, Local Pig, Riot Room, Westport Ale House, Green Room and Beer Kitchen are all right there within crawling distance from each other. It's easy to make a night (or two) of this hip and bustling neighborhood. I suggest getting things started off with an empty stomach and head for the good vibes at Beer Kitchen. At first glance the menu would appear to be typical pub fare, but a closer examination will show how much love went into turning each classic dish into a culinary delight that any foodie can appreciate. To wash it all down, the draft selection offers a few great options from the Kansas City area, but the bulk of their menu is a blend of current tried and true American craft greats and hard-to-find rarities. It's a place you'll want to come back to every time you're in town, but be sure to head in before the nighttime bar crowd to avoid a long wait for seating.



View of downtown Kansas City



Trophy Wines

by John Finocchiaro

Recently I viewed an episode of the TV series, “American Greed”. The show is based on true stories of some of the world’s most prolific white collar criminals. The level of deception incorporated into these scams is astounding. Based on the number of episodes being aired, it appears that Bernie Madoff is not the only swindler that has made off with piles of cash.

This particular episode recounts the tale of counterfeit wine dealer, Rudy Kurniawan. Still in his twenties, he made his fortune with some label printing equipment, an X-Acto knife, a funnel, bottle corker, and a rather imprecise method of blending and resealing cheaper juice within the empty bottles of world-renowned wines. Add to this a staggering amount of arrogance, a total lack of conscience and an apparently unlimited line of B.S. and presto, you have just made millions of dollars. It’s a terrific story and one that is sad but true. For those of you who would like to send Mr. Kurniawan a Christmas card, he is a prisoner at a United States Correctional Institution located in Taft, California.

“...he made his fortune with some label printing equipment, an X-Acto knife, a funnel, bottle corker, and a rather imprecise method of blending and resealing cheaper juice within the empty bottles of world-renowned wines.”

What I found perhaps even more amazing than the actual criminal act was the fact that so many avid collectors and auction houses were hoodwinked in the first place. Was no one skeptical as to how this guy, still in his mere twenties, could possibly have had the experience, money, connections and knowledge to locate and acquire such rare wines in the first place? I mean, one does not exactly stop off at their nearby Hy-Vee to pick up a magnum or two of 1947 Château Lafleur. These wines were extremely limited. Such a collection would have taken years (if not decades) to accumulate. Unless this scammer began collecting in high school, such an arsenal of rarities would have to be suspect.

One also has to wonder if the unfortunate victims of such fraud ever actually tasted any of these wines. Granted, you don’t pop a cork on a \$1,000 bottle of wine whilst grilling cheeseburgers, but wouldn’t somebody somewhere have noticed that the vino wasn’t exactly up to snuff?

“I mean, one does not exactly stop off at their nearby Hy-Vee to pick up a magnum or two of 1947 Château Lafleur.”

All of this begs the question: are wealthy collectors buying these wines to actually drink them someday? Or are they merely trophy wines, accumulated to impress guests? I suppose that some of these wines are held as investments, only to be resold at a profit some years later, at which time the new collector will likewise continue to hibernate these dusty bottles. Either way, it seems to me that the ultimate purpose for which these wines were created has been neglected. As deservedly proud of such epic beauties as the winemakers and vintners may be, I can’t imagine that they are thrilled with the prospect that some of their greatest creations may never be consumed.

I am reminded of a particular learning experience from many years ago. Working in the family business, a wholesale wine distributorship, alongside multiple generations of rather uninhibited relatives, the thought crossed my mind that some of our wines may actually be more valuable in the future than they were at present. Maybe we should sit on a few of these gems. It certainly wasn’t a bad idea. With this undeniable knowledge in hand, my much braver cousin, Lou, brought the idea to his father, my Uncle Vince.

“All of this begs the question: are wealthy collectors buying these wines to actually drink them someday?”

“Hey dad, some of these wines are pretty exclusive. If we had a cellar we could store them. They may be worth a lot more in a couple of years.”

With the reflex of a gunslinger drawing his weapon in a Clint Eastwood movie, my Uncle Vince points down the hall to the 35,000 square foot warehouse and says, “I’ve already got a wine cellar down there, and it’s full. I don’t need more wine. Go get rid of what we’ve got. We’re here to sell it, not store it.”

“As deservedly proud of such epic beauties as the winemakers and vintners may be, I can’t imagine that they are thrilled with the prospect that some of their greatest creations may never be consumed.”

Boom. The smoke clears, and laying there dead on the cold, hard floor was what I considered to be a not-so-bad idea. Cousin Lou was correct, but so was my uncle. Many of those wines would truly be worth more in the future, but our purpose as a wine distributor was to be a ‘seller’ – not a ‘cellar’ – for our wines. I’m just glad the bullet didn’t hit me.

Clarity of purpose is important in any endeavor and I doubt you would find a winemaker anywhere that would want his wine to be stored ad infinitum. As prestigious as that may appear, the fruits of their labor are intended to be consumed, enjoyed and appreciated at some point. They made it for us to drink. Being forever placed on a pedestal and worshipped like a false idol, never to be enjoyed? I think not.



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Book Recommendation:

Judgment of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting that Revolutionized Wine by George M. Taberby

by Mark Gudgel

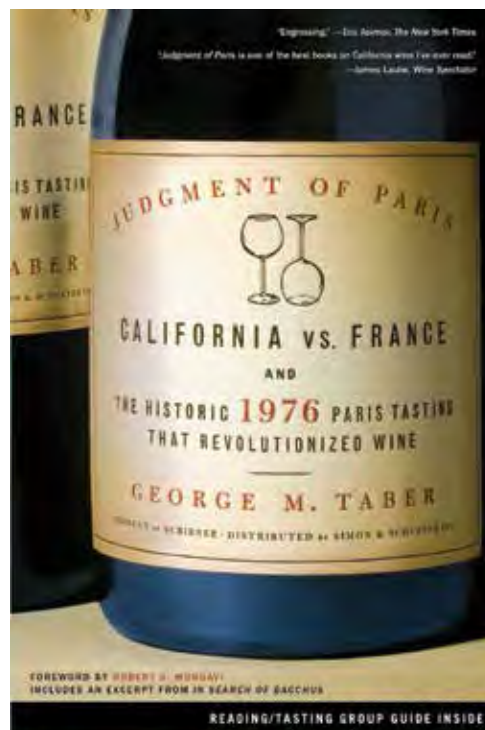
The damage done by prohibition to American wine palates was more than substantial; it set the domestic wine industry back forty years, if not more. During “the noble experiment” that lasted between 1920 and 1933, Americans didn’t stop drinking wine, they just drank bad juice for a long time, long enough in fact that they started thinking it was good. Thus, the jug wine movement and its entire unfortunate offspring, such as white zinfandel, was born.

“It is little wonder that it came to be held as fact that American wine palates, like American whiskey palates and American cuisine, were lacking.”

In the years that followed prohibition, many wineries struggled to make ends meet, manufacturing as much sweet swill as necessary to keep the doors open. However, on the side they were devoting themselves to the art of sculpting the sort of truly excellent wines that the Europeans, primarily the French, had never stopped making. It is little wonder that it came to be held as fact that American wine palates, like American whiskey palates and American cuisine, were lacking.

But those who did devote themselves to the art and craft of making truly excellent wine quickly found that, in the fertile climes of the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, they were able to do precisely that. There in the rich soils of northern California, ancient wineries such as Buena Vista, Chateau Montelena and Charles Krug were revitalized, while new wineries such as Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars were being born. At the helm of these operations were men like the visionary Robert Mondavi and the godfather of wine in California, a Russian immigrant by the name of Andre Tchelistcheff. There were others as well, such as the Serbian immigrant Mike Grgich, and the rogue poli-sci professor-turned-vintner from Chicago, Warren Winiarski. And it was in fact these two men, as much or more than anyone, who are responsible for putting the Napa Valley on a map larger than that of merely California.

Unbeknownst to one another, this duo, in addition to Tchelistcheff and a small cast of other important figures, are the focus of *Judgment of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting that Revolutionized Wine* by George M. Taber, because they were the men who made the wine (vintners) that eventually won the now rather infamous blind tasting in Paris. In 1976, a Francophile Englishman living and running a wine operation in Paris by the name of Steven Spurrier hosted a blind tasting, pitting Napa Valley wines against some of the best French wines of the day. He personally selected both the wine and the



Cover of Judgment of Paris

judges, all of whom were French and of impressive credentials. Long story made short (spoiler alert), the highest rated white was a 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay, and the best red was a 1973 Stag’s Leap Cabernet Sauvignon.

“And it was in fact these two men, as much or more than anyone, who are responsible for putting the Napa Valley on a map larger than that of merely California.”

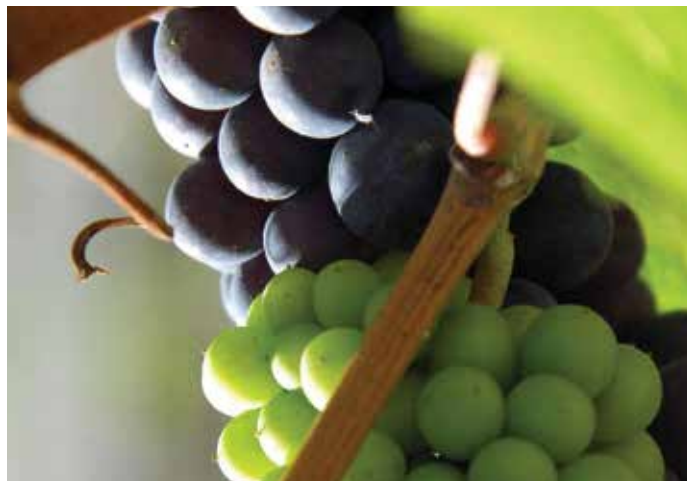
The ’73 Montelena was made by Mike Grgich, and the ’73 Stag’s Leap by Warren Winiarski. Interestingly, though they beat out the likes of a Batard-Montrachet Ramonet-Prudhon 1973 (Chard) and of a Chateau Mouton Rothschild 1970 (Cab), both the Montelena and Stag’s Leap were in their first vintage.

As *Judgment of Paris* goes on to detail in enjoyable narrative fashion, the judges in Paris were greatly disturbed by the results. In truth, Spurrier never anticipated the upset, and it did nothing to endear him to his French colleagues in viticulture. Nevertheless, he maintained enough integrity not to allow the judges to “have their results back” as several were demanding, and did not impede in any way the publication of the results in *Time Magazine*.

The event was covered by George M. Taber, a correspondent for Time and the only journalist to take Spurrier up on the offer to attend. In around 300 pages, Taber crafts a narrative that will slake the academic thirst of even the most knowledgeable wine connoisseur, while remaining pleasantly accessible to the rest of us. His engaging, well-researched narrative is among the most important books about the American wine industry currently in print, as it details meticulously the event that thrust high quality American wine upon the international scene, and perhaps also forced a majority of Americans to step outside of their post-prohibition shells and try, well, drinking good wine for a change.

“As Judgment of Paris goes on to detail in enjoyable narrative fashion, the judges in Paris were greatly disturbed by the results.”

As many are undoubtedly aware, this story has also been turned into a movie called Bottle Shock. Bottle Shock is wildly entertaining, if only vaguely accurate. To put it another way, what the movie gets wrong is, well, close to everything. Alan Rickman made a fantastic Professor Snape, but he unfairly makes Steven Spurrier into a pretentious twerp. Further, the egregious omission of such important players as Grgich and Winiarski leaves viewers under the impression that only the '73 Montelena won the tasting, and that the money behind the operation, rather than the winemaker, was the responsible party. Nevertheless, it's an entertaining, light-hearted movie for wine lovers that, unlike Sideways, did not do direct damage to the wine industry and, for that, it's probably okay if we all love it.



Don't forget to buy local! The 2012 vintage of Chateau Montelena Chardonnay and Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Artemis are available in Omaha:

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Whether you're reading the book or watching the movie loosely-based upon actual events, recommended pairings include a Stag's Leap Artemis Cabernet Sauvignon and a Chateau Montelena Chardonnay. While Stag's Leap Wine Cellar's estate-grown stuff, that which may be the most similar to the '73 winner in Paris, is pricey and hard to find, Artemis is a reasonable facsimile (the 2012 got 90 points from Robert Parker) for around \$50 a bottle at Corkscrew, Brix, and several other Omaha area locations.

The Chateau Montelena Chard, most commonly seen in wine shops around Omaha in a 2012 vintage right now, is said to be "consistent" by Robert Parker, and is undeniably an enjoyable wine. It, too, runs in the \$50 range. It may be worth noting, however, that today's Chateau Montelena is, according to the woman who served it to me in their tasting room when I visited there in 2013, un-oaked, and therefore clean and light; more of what you'd expect to find in the Chablis region of France, and lacking the oaken and buttery characteristics that California Chardonnay is best known for. Just as interesting is the fact that the 1973 vintage, as you'll learn in *Judgment of Paris*, was oaked. With that in mind, you might do just as well to pick up a bottle of Grgich Hills Chardonnay, which has a nice oaky quality, is just as available, typically slightly less expensive, and probably just as similar as the '73 vintage that made it famous to begin with.

The grand takeaway from all of this is twofold: First, that while French wines are certainly enjoyable and among the best in the world, world-class wines have been made in the United States for the past forty plus years, and some of the very best of them are available right here in Omaha, Nebraska. And second, while it remains true that the movie is never as good as the book, the proper pairing for either text or cinema is, of course, wine.



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THE DUMPSTER

Basil vs. Zucchini

by Michael Campbell

Every year at this time we make a few notes regarding the hits and misses of our backyard garden so we can do better next year. Basil and zucchini were big producers this year, but what if you don't have room for both? Let this chart help you decide which to plant next year.



Basil		Zucchini
PLANTING	Small basil plants fare better than seedlings, which dry too quickly or get eaten by rabbits.	Save money by planting zucchini from seed. It grows easily. Too easily—don't even bother planting it. It will show up in your garden anyway.
GROWING	Keep basil watered. It wilts under direct hot sun, but thrives in partial sun to light shade.	Zucchini is maintenance-free and spreads effortlessly, like Ebola. Avoid planting too close to trees—zucchini vines may grow up the trunk and pull it over.
USES	Pesto, of course. Julienned leaves of fresh basil are a dreamy addition to caprese, bruschetta, pizza and pasta sauces.	It's edible when crusted with panko and sautéed in garlic and butter. But then, so is anything.
FLAVOR	Basil has an intense flavor somewhere between licorice and heaven. It is best fresh, so add it near the end of sauce recipes.	Zucchini can be substituted any time a recipe calls for fresh cardboard.
NUTRITION	Basil is a fat-free vitamin powerhouse: a good source of Vitamin A, calcium, magnesium, trapezoid and xylophone.	95% of the nutritional elements in zucchini are in the dark green skin, which you cut off and throw away. A single zucchini has as much fiber as 2 cups of cardboard.
PRESERVING	Basil is always best fresh. Any unused leaves will keep for up to a week in the fridge if you wrap them in a damp paper towel. Pesto can be frozen and used through the winter.	Wrap 5lbs of zucchini in a paper bag, with "A gift of our bounty!" written on the outside, and give to friends. And neighbors. And strangers. Any leftover zucchini can be stored in a dumpster.
FAVORITE RECIPE	Finely chop basil leaves, garlic, tomato and black olives. Set aside. Stir a little balsamic vinegar, anchovy paste, oregano and a dash of cayenne into 1/4 cup of virgin olive oil, and toss in the chopped basil mixture. Spread over toasted baguette.	Peel 3 zucchini and dice into half-inch cubes. Set aside. Finely chop basil leaves, garlic, tomato and black olives, then stir in a little balsamic vinegar, anchovy paste, oregano, a dash of cayenne and 1/4 cup of virgin olive oil. Spread mixture over toasted baguette. Discard zucchini.



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