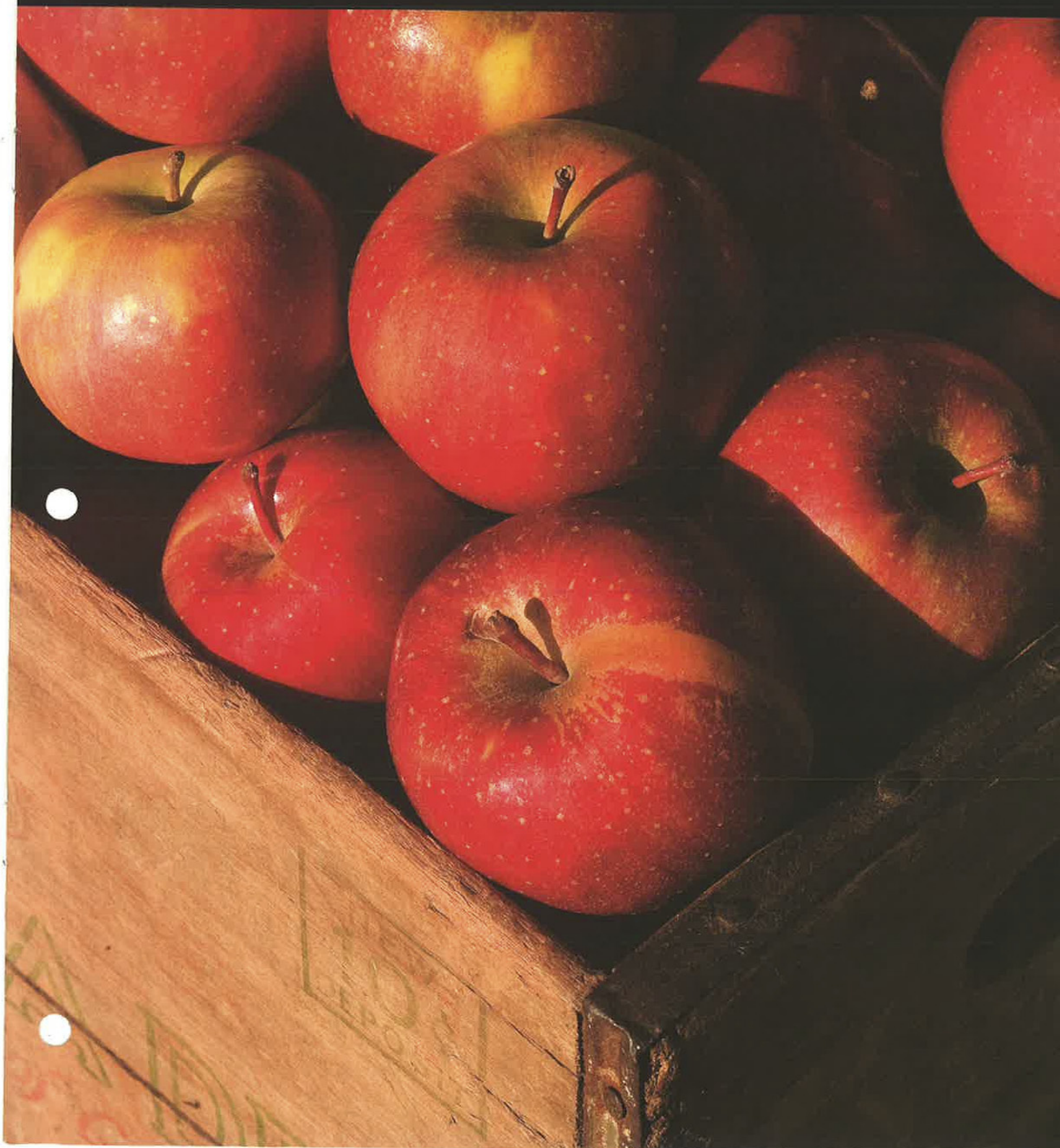


ISSUE N°5 ♦ FALL 2007

GRAFTING ♦ TURKEYS ♦ HELSINKI ♦ BEAUJOLAIS ♦ SABATIER ♦ GUY JONES ♦ RABBITS

# DINER JOURNAL





# DINER JOURNAL FALL 2007



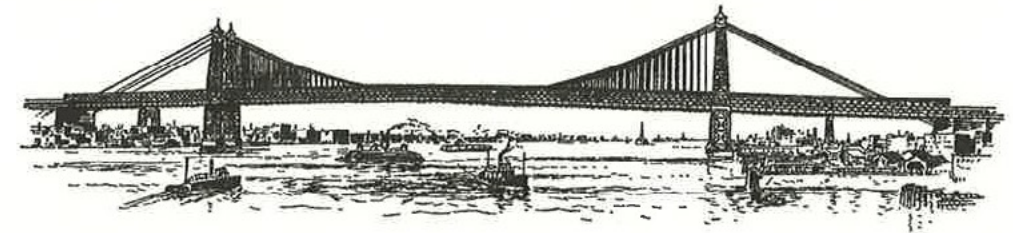
Branching Out- To make an apple tree an apple grower ties two unequal and exposed parts of different trees to each other and leaves them to grow together. This might be a fitting metaphor for where we are as we head into our second year of producing the Diner Journal. We are extending our focus outside of our experiences at the restaurant. We have our first guest writer, Tom Roberge, writing about his father's return to farming. Anna interviews her friend and artist Ted Mineo. And we have our first travel piece. We are thinking about food's political and cultural ramifications as they translate through art and writing. We are also interested and invested in single subjects and how they play in the food chain. Grafting for example was a particular interest of Andrew's. The grafting of New World rootstocks to Old World vines that saved the French wine industry a century ago is a well-known story. Less talked about is that every apple we eat is a product of an orchardist tying two trees together. The journey food travels from the soil to harvest to table now appears inexorably tied to and moving in tandem with culture, art, ideas, and narrative. Everything we consume has a sometimes crazy and always fascinating evolution and story surrounding it. Nothing is as simple as it appears when we grab it and put it in our mouths. -CF & AD

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<i>As we move forward we want to try to include the larger community in our efforts, working with artists and other writers to further expand the view and scope of the Journal. Please email us with submissions and ideas.</i>
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for their work in creating and testing recipes



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT





## INTRODUCTION - Summer 1992

I was working as a day laborer on the Olympic hotel in Barcelona. It was pretty standard building site fare. Clock in at seven, work until noon, two-hour liquid-lunch-siesta on the beach punctuated by frisbee and body surfing. Back to work at two, then clock out at seven, absorb a little local culture, sleep four hours then back to work. Seven days a week from January to July when the games began. We made a grand a week and rent was minimal so you would expect that by July I would have had a small bankroll to tide me over until we restarted. Did I mention I was twenty-four?

Come August I was broke. I was eating pasta with tomato sauce and drinking the local beer, Vol Damme, which at 9 percent was a hobo favorite. In September it was pasta, garlic, peperoncini and oil and Rioja that left a stain on your teeth for a week. By October I was running on my charm and good... well charm anyway and even that, along with my waistline, was wearing thin.

My friends from Lyon suggested that I head up to France and take part in the Vendange, the annual Grape Harvest. I borrowed 50 dollars and a tent, jumped a train. Perpignan, not my intended destination, is where we got tossed ticket-less from the train. After getting caught shoplifting a packet of ham from the supermarket we made friends busking on the street and eventually were directed to Tournisan, a one street town in the heart of wine country.

The farmer took a shine to us and before we knew it we were put up in Grandpapa's house with a 10-litre vat of wine and a tab at the local grocery. This is where the romance stops.

The next day the farmer's eighty-two year old mother woke us at 6:30 am with a bell the size of an ox's head. We rode in an open wagon to the biggest field of grapes I had ever seen. Armed with shears and buckets we attacked the rows with a verve only the destitute possess.

At noon we were given each a litre of wine along with a baguette, gnarly looking cheese and grapes. It was one of the best lunches I have ever eaten. At three we drunkenly continued until seven. When she finally rang the bell I had more cuts on my hands and face than someone who fell off a motorcycle into a rose bush.

By day three we had slowed the pace a touch. The farmer's mother began patrolling the lines with her bell and blurting loud maniacal "clack, clacks," mimicking vocally the sound of the clippers releasing the fruit from the grasping vines.

At every other bush a spider, the size of a small bird, would pop out snarling and I would scream. And yes I was the slowest. And at my shriek the five foot whirling dervish of an octogenarian would extend her scateurs, chop the spider in half and laugh at me.

By the end of week three I could tell our days were numbered. The Polish crew at the next farm had already finished and the rumblings were that we were being replaced. Sure enough Sunday night we were paid off and, wearing long-dead grandpere's sunglasses and leather jacket, I was on a train heading to Florence. I'd heard you could get work there selling leather handbags in the markets, but thanks to those pesky ticket collectors I only made it as far as Monte Carlo... nice place... -M.F.

NC-05 INTRO

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# Farmer and Son

by TOM ROBERGE

The name of the farm, Hard Rain, that my father, also named Tom Roberge, operates in Burlington, Connecticut has nothing to do with local weather phenomena. Need a hint? Think Bob Dylan.

His house and farm sit on five sloping acres. He has a barn full of rabbits and small machinery, chicken coops, beehives, vegetable plots and fruit trees filling in between spaces. There are empty five-gallon buckets and picking crates in piles everywhere you look. This is all very familiar to me, and I imagine that the people who pull up the driveway to buy eggs or tomatoes consider it familiar in that it matches their preconceived notions of what a local farm should and must look like.

I like to believe that they trust the cobbled-together nature of his farm more than they would a large-scale, highly-mechanized farm in the Midwest. Long before he bought this property my father worked on one such farm in Ohio, near the small college he had just graduated from. I've never quite understood how or why he sought that job on that kind of farm.

"What led you to the farming job you had in Ohio?"

"My grandfather had a farm." My great-grandfather, a French Canadian immigrant named Odelin, operated a dairy farm when my father was growing up.

"I thought it was a dairy farm?" I like to argue to with my father. It is perhaps the defining characteristic of our relationship.

"Right, but he had a big garden too. And I was always interested in it. I was the only one. None of my brothers or sisters cared too much. Farming was just something I wanted to do, so I did it."

"So what was Ohio like?"

"Nothing like this. That's not farming, what they do. You just have to learn how to operate a bunch of equipment. Everything is done with machines."

After three years of this sort of "farming," my father returned to Connecticut, where he was raised and his entire family still lives. He learned to weld and became the foreman of a boiler repair company. A career in small-scale farming seemed impossible and risky, considering he now had two young children. But he always had gardens, huge gardens that took up most, if not all, of the backyard. And he always grew enough to provide for his own family and still have plenty to give away to friends, neighbors, and family members. Somewhere along the line, he decided that he was sick of buying meat, and started raising rabbits. Now he has about 200 at any given time, all living in a few neat rows of steel cages he welded together himself.

"Why rabbits?"

"We wanted something that was quick. With a cow it takes a few years, it's not as easy to slaughter and then you have all of this meat to freeze."

"And how many did you start out with?"

"Two."

Right. Of course: two. I smile. He adds, "I buy breeding stock every once in a while at the auctions."

"And when did you start selling them?"

"Didn't take too long." My father has a way of answering questions that makes me feel foolish for asking them, as though everyone who's ever sold anything never had any trouble moving his goods.

"But how did you find these customers?"

"Word of mouth, mostly. I really don't remember where the first few came from."

"And the restaurants?" Though they do buy the occasional group of rabbits, most of the restaurants buy vegetables.

"I just walk in the back door and ask for the chef." Again he says this like I'm a fool for not anticipating this explanation.

"Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. I went into one place with some extra string beans and the chef told me he didn't want them because they'd create more work for him."

Every Sunday afternoon my father loads his pickup truck with vegetables and drives a few miles to a small farmer's market in Collinsville. He's been doing this for only a year or so, and has only been selling from his own property for a few years. It was always the goal, not solely for financial reasons. He wants some sort of confirmation that he is a good farmer, and he wants people to have access to better food. Besides the basic vegetables—tomatoes, cucumbers, string beans, carrots—he sells potted herbs, honey, and young fig trees that he's grown through a process that involves bending branches from larger trees into pots of soil and waiting for roots to sprout.

Before we leave he takes a quick shower, saying that the Connecticut Growers Association recommends that he do so. He's also wearing a short sleeve button-up shirt, something I can't remember seeing him do. Usually it's filthy jeans and WWUH

T-shirts with permanent stains and more than a few holes. He doesn't own a computer, watches very little television and listens to nothing but college or public radio. I doubt very

much that he's familiar with the marketing terms and ideas that have crept into the popular vernacular. But he definitely understands the subtleties of selling vegetables.

"You're selling yourself just as much as you're selling the vegetables," he says. To that end, he goes through the trouble of bringing one of his roosters, named Joe Cocker, to the market every week, luring children, and thus their parents, to his stand from across the parking lot.

There are only a handful of farmers present, but the largest spread belongs to an organic farm with a huge banner stressing this selling point. They also have wicker baskets tipped over on their sides with squash and cucumbers tumbling out of them, something out of a Happy Thanksgiving commercial.

"How do you feel about this organic craze?"

"Well," he's far more diplomatic than I expect, "they have some good practices. A lot of what they do is very good. What I don't like is that they keep changing the rules, allowing certain things, just to suit their needs. They have a list, a whole list, of organic approved pesticides."

"Do you think it's just an easy way for people to shop?" I ask, clearly tipping my hand. "Instead of finding out where their food comes from and what goes into the whole process they see that little label and assume their doing the right thing?"

"Right. Of course. And really there's nothing wrong with that. What I don't like is when people buy food from California or somewhere else that's shipped all the way out here. How much gas is that? How is that any good for them in the long run?"

"Do you lose customers because you aren't organic?"

"People will walk away, yeah, but I don't worry about it. I always sell almost everything I bring."

I notice more than a few customers of his who are shocked that his tomatoes aren't available yet, never mind when it's the appropriate time for them to be available.

"So you intend to do this full-time, right?"

"I will, eventually. I need to figure out the fruit trees a little better. There's a lot of money to be made there." As he says this a car pulls up and a woman I haven't seen in a decade, my father's Aunt Marilyn, gets out with the aid of a cane. She says hello and then she's come for her monthly share. My father will never stop giving vegetables away.

## BRAISED RABBIT w/ MUSTARD AND WHITE WINE

For 6-8 people

2, 2½# rabbits  
1 packet thick cut bacon, cut into ¼" lardons  
1 large spanish onion, small dice  
1 cup carrots, small dice  
1 cup celery, small dice  
6 cloves garlic, sliced  
white wine  
chicken stock  
2 bay leaves  
8 sprigs thyme  
French whole grain mustard

First you need to break down the rabbit by removing the front and back legs. This is quite easy to do. The front legs have no ball joint so you can just trim them right off. For the rear legs, make an incision through the inside (the groin side) of the leg and when you hit the joint pop it out by pulling it backward and then cut around it to release the leg. With the remaining torso cut in half through the middle right where the loin and the ribs meet.

Season the rabbit well with salt and pepper. Heat a large saute pan and brown the rabbit pieces on all sides. Move browned rabbit to a roasting pan. When all the rabbit pieces are brown deglaze the pan with white wine. Pour the deglazed juices into the pan with the rabbit. Heat a large pan again and add the bacon to it. Brown the bacon and add it to the roasting pan. Keep the bacon fat and saute the onion, carrots, celery and garlic in the same pan. Remember to season the vegetables with salt and pepper. When vegetables are starting to soften toss in the thyme and bay leaf and then add enough white wine to just come to the same level as the vegetables. Simmer for a minute or two and then add everything to the rabbit pan. Heat chicken stock and add just enough to the pan so that everything is covered about ¾ of the way. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and cook in a 350° oven until tender. When the rabbit is ready remove from the oven and let cool. Pull the rabbit pieces out of the braising liquid. Leave the legs intact but pull the meat off of the torso. Strain and skim the fat off the braising liquid but hold on to the vegetables. Slowly heat the rabbit and the vegetables back up together. Stir mustard into the sauce until proper flavor is attained. Serve.



# Grafting

by ANNA DUNN

The apple of knowledge was most likely inedible. Nor was it an apple. By all accounts grafting is old. But not that old. Where it began is the stuff of controversy. Some say china in 1560 B.C. while others credit the Italians. The only mention of the moment of its conception is, I kid you not, two trees leaning on each other in a wind blown thicket. This natural occurrence is known as inosculation. Grafting is the deliberate act of joining two plants. This involves tying a dormant scion, or twig bearing the desired fruit, to a rootstock, or live base plant, until they grow together and fuse. What will grow from joint will be a tree bearing the desired fruit. Almost all apple seeds planted will grow sour crab apple trees. It is only through time and the endless process of varietal elimination that we have ended up with orchards full off the tart Granny Smith or Fuji, which is a cross between the Red Delicious and the Virginia Ralls Genet. So if you want to plant a tree you'll need a knife, a twig, a tree and some twine. Leave the seed behind.

## Types of grafts:

**a.** Cleft grafting is the simplest and oldest method of grafting apple and pear trees. It is used for top working on the trunk or side branches. Clefts should be made within three feet of the main branches and within several feet of the ground. This is to ensure the fruit will not grow too high.

**b.** Stub grafts maintain the original shape of the tree. The scion is wedged into a cut about one centimeter above the branch in the crook between branch and base. The branch is then cut as close to the scion as possible. The Scion should be at a 35 degree angle. You are basically replacing the trees limbs.

**c.** Awl grafts are the simplest. Take an awl or screwdriver and make an incision in the bark on the base of the tree. Stick the beveled scion into the cut and cover with compound.

**d.** Veneer grafts are for top-working a tree and the scions should be about the size of a pencil. It works on the same principals as the cleft graft but is quicker and the bark has to be loose.

**e.** Splice grafts join equal size scion and rootstock.



## Grafts

- a. cleft
- b. stub
- c. awl
- d. veneer
- e. splice

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# DINNER *with* GUY JONES

by CAROLINE FIDANZA

Guy serves a big farmhouse dinner on the last Saturday of the month and invites a guest chef to come and cook. I had cancelled on him for the last dinner of the season last year and when he told me that he was going to have to go with his second choice, Mario Batali, I thought for sure he was joking. He wasn't. When he resumed the tradition this spring I was at the top of the list.

But I couldn't do it. I had two cooks on vacation, which should have never happened in the first place. So I couldn't bring any of the cooks from either restaurant. There were none to spare. My Mark-and-Andrew support team was away at a wedding. The number was estimated at around 60 for a dinner that I would single-handedly have to produce.

And yet I couldn't possibly say no again. Poor Tom. He always gets the crappy jobs. Fortunately for me he didn't know what was in store and when I asked him if he wanted to help he leapt at the opportunity. Tom had been to Guy Jones farm before and knew that a day of hanging out on the farm with Guy was sure to bring good stories, words of wisdom and a nice day in the country with plenty of beer to drink. There would be a little cooking to do. There was even the bonus of Annaliese and Anna to help out. Certainly we could get it all done. Little did anyone know as, we sat down to our farm-cooked breakfast composing our to-do list that we were headed to shitsville and back before the guests would arrive at five.

Things start out okay. The list is manageable and we have plenty of time. I've done this sort of thing before and know to plan ahead and have as much of it done beforehand as possible. I've already had to make a back up dessert plan that morning at 8 am when I realize that I had wasted my time trying to make pavlova the night before and am going to have to get Laura and the pastry team to whip me up a quick genoise for trifle.

And then the moment arrives that always arrives when you realize that you don't have enough time and the cream just got whipped into butter and that's all the cream we have and the frittatas start sticking to the pans, the snap peas are taking forever to get cleaned, someone needs to wash the lettuce but there's no where to wash it and you start eliminating things. Thankfully, Tom does not give up. He does not accept that things will be taken off the menu and once we tune the satellite radio from easy listening to camaro rock the night is in his hands. Frittata's fly out of the pan and flat breads magically appear from the inferno that is the pizza oven. The lesson here: keep Tom fueled with warm beer and the night is golden. I am orchestrating the courses, stretching the soup with water and a half pound of nettle butter to get 10 more orders out of it, counting plates, keeping everyone clean, but Tom is the hero of the evening. Anna and Annaliese get a crash course in catering and learn quickly to anticipate what comes next. As always, somehow, everything gets done, and guests are happy.

But we have forgotten about Guy. He has been our host and guide for the day. Checking in to make sure we have what we need. Getting his staff to buy more cream and wash lettuce. The crowd that assembles is here for him, not for us. He's their star. They are all his loyal devotees and they belong to his particular suburban cult. Guy gives them a brief talk about how garlic turns papery on the equinox and how you have to plant new basil every 12-14 days and that he's always a season ahead.

His farm is picturesque. It rolls along beautifully, framed by wildflowers and a small stream. There are stars and fireflies and a bonfire and a lot of happy people. Finally at around 10pm we get what we came here for, the opportunity to sit down with Guy, a couple of his buddies and hear the story of how it all came to be, along with some musings on whether it is wise to ever be anywhere without a good supply of beer. Finally, we are relaxed, satisfied with the job we did. More importantly Guy is happy.

*There's a little summer lingering in our fall issue. Perhaps this issue is more like "what I did on my summer vacation" than what's for dinner in the fall. This is what we served at the dinner. I have adapted some of the recipes for the fall and some are left as they were. Save those recipes for next summer.*

## HORS D'OEUVRES

### MINI FRITTATA'S w/ MIXED GREENS

*Guy has a mix of greens called 'mess o' greens' which is a perfect saute mix. You can use a mix of mustard greens, swiss chard, spinach, escarole, chicory, etc.*

**8 cups mixed greens**  
**2 large cloves garlic, sliced**  
**parmesan, grated**  
**12 eggs, beaten and mixed with a little milk or cream**

*Heat a large saute pan. Add a couple of tablespoons of olive oil and the garlic. Let the garlic sizzle and then add the greens and cook quickly on high heat. Drain the cooked greens in a collander. Heat a large (12") non-stick pan or whatever pan you use to cook eggs. Add more olive oil and then add the cooked greens to the pan. Pour egg mixture over the greens and with a rubber spatula pull the egg away from the sides of the pan. When egg is mostly set on the bottom add the parmesan and then either finish in the oven or flip the frittata (this is what did Tom in) onto a plate and then back into the pan to finish cooking on the other side. When cool cut into 1" squares.*

### LUCQUES OLIVES WITH LAVENDER

**4 cups olives**  
**8 sprigs lavender**  
**1 lemon zested with a vegetable peeler into broad strips**  
**¼ cup olive oil**

*It is worth trying to find these olives for this recipe. If you can't find them you could use black nicoise or green picholine.*

*Rinse olives of their brine and place in a bowl. Pull the lavender leaves and flowers off the stem. Add lavender and lemon strips to the olives and toss with extra virgin oil. Let marinate for a day.*



### TOAST w/NETTLE BUTTER AND RADISHES

**1# butter**  
**4-6 cups picked nettle leaves**  
**lemon juice**  
**radishes, thinly sliced**  
**sea salt**

*Let butter soften at room temperature. Submerge the nettle in water, this will get rid of the stinginess and then pick the leaves off of the nettle. Blanch the nettle in boiling salted water. Squeeze out any excess water and then puree the nettle in a blender. Mix the pureed nettle into the softened butter with a rubber spatula. Season with salt and lemon juice. Serve on toasted bread with sliced radishes and sea salt.*







## BAGUETTE w/ MAYONNAISE AND SPRING ONIONS

- 1 egg yolk
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon white wine vinegar
- lemon
- baguette
- 1 bunch spring onions, thinly sliced

For the mayonnaise:

Place the egg yolk, vinegar and a large pinch of salt into the bowl of a food processor. Slowly add the olive oil. If it becomes too thick too soon thin with a little water. Season with salt and lemon juice.

Slice baguette into 1/4" rounds. Spread a generous amount of mayonnaise on the bread and then a generous layer of spring onions (you can substitute scallions.) Sprinkle a little sea salt on top.

## ZUCCHINI SOUP w/CARROTS, ZUCCHINI AND MINT

- 8 medium zucchini, sliced
- 4 large shallots, sliced
- 8 cloves garlic, sliced
- 3 Tablespoons butter
- 3 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Heat a large pot with a combination of butter and olive oil. When the butter starts to sizzle add the shallots and garlic. Season with salt and allow them to sweat and become translucent. Add the zucchini, season again with salt and cook on high heat sweating the zucchini, it's nice to get a little color here as well.

You want to mostly cook the zucchini through this way before adding any water. When the zucchini is soft add enough water to just cover the zucchini and bring it up to a boil. Once it reaches the boil turn off immediately. Puree soup, season with salt and pepper and serve with carrot, zucchini and mint garnish.

## CARROTS, ZUCCHINI AND MINT

- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into small dice
- 2 zucchini, cut into small dice
- 6 sprigs mint, picked

Heat a pan with a combination of butter and olive oil, when sizzling add the carrots. Season with salt. Saute on high heat until cooked through. Transfer carrots to a bowl. Cook the zucchini in the same manner, add to the bowl with the carrots. Toss carrots and zucchini with mint and season with a little lemon juice. Serve on top of the soup. By the way this makes a nice vegetable side dish as well.

## BUTTER LETTUCE w/ DIJON VINAIGRETTE AND SNAP PEAS

For the vinaigrette:

- 1 Tablespoon dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced

In a large bowl whisk dijon, red wine vinegar and a large pinch of salt. Add garlic. Slowly add olive oil. Season.

I usually don't like an unmixed salad but for some reason this one works. All the flavors blend together nicely and the presentation is lovely. Pull off leaves from the head of butter lettuce but leave them whole, wash and dry them. On individual plates or bowls layer the leaves of lettuce, larger ones on the bottom smaller ones on top. Scatter whatever vegetables you are adding to the salad; snap peas, english peas, string beans, radishes, beets over lettuce. Drizzle vinaigrette over the whole salad and serve.

## MAIN COURSE

TO SERVE: Place grilled flatbread on a plate. Smear with chick pea puree. Place salad of arugula, radishes and mint on top of chick peas. Place sliced pickled beets alongside flatbread and drizzle a little tzatziki both on the beets and the salad. Serve while bread is still warm.

## ROSEMARY FLATBREAD

- 4 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 1/4 cup warm water
- 3/4 teaspoon yeast
- 2 Tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 sprigs rosemary, picked
- 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

Place warm water in a large bowl. Sprinkle yeast over the water and then the sugar. Let sit for 10 minutes allowing the yeast to activate. Meanwhile, heat a small pan with 1/4 cup of olive oil, add the garlic and allow it to turn golden. Add the rosemary to the garlic and let it sizzle on low for a minute. Remove from heat. Whisk the flour and salt together and when the yeast is ready add the flour and salt to the bowl. Before mixing add the rosemary and garlic to the bowl as well. Begin mixing everything together and then turn out the dough onto a floured work surface and begin to knead it. Knead the dough for about 10 minutes and then place it into a well oiled bowl, flipping it over to coat both sides in oil. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until it triples or at least doubles in size. Roll dough out of the bowl onto a floured surface and shape it into a long log. Cut the dough into segments that will shape into balls approximately 4 inches in diameter. Roll the dough into balls and then place them on a sheet tray covered in parchment paper, cover with plastic wrap and let them rest and rise again. When you are ready to cook the dough either roll or just press out the balls into flattened shapes about twice the size of the original ball of dough. Oil and throw on a grill or into a hot oven. If grilling flip over and cook on the other side. If cooking in the oven the bread will puff up and look baked through like a pita when it's done.

## RADISH SALAD

- 1 bunch radishes, cleaned and quartered
- 1 bunch arugula
- 2 Tablespoons mint

Toss radishes with mint, olive oil and lemon juice. Add arugula, season and toss again.

## CHICK PEAS

- 1 bag chick peas (1#), soaked overnight
- 1 head garlic, cut in half
- 1/4 cup fennel seed

Place chick peas in a large pot and cover with fresh water. Bring to a boil and skim off any white foam that appears. Reduce heat to a simmer and add the garlic and fennel. When chick peas seem done add salt. It will take a good amount of salt to season a batch of chick peas. Continue cooking until chick peas are very soft. Take off of the heat and allow to cool. Squeeze out garlic and then discard the skin. Strain chick peas and puree in batches in a cuisinart or blender adding back cooking liquid as needed to get them to the right consistency. When all of the chick peas are pureed season them with salt, lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil.

## PICKLED BEETS

- 1 bunch beets
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon each corriander seed, black peppercorn, mustard seed
- 1 star anise, broken up

Roast and peel beets and slice them into 1/4" rounds. Bring a pot with sugar, salt, vinegar, water and spices to a boil. When sugar and salt are fully dissolved pour the liquid over the beets. Cool at room temperature and then refrigerate overnight. Beets will be ready to eat the next day.

## TZATZIKI

- 1 container greek yogurt (approximately a pound)
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced on the bias
- 1 cucumber, peeled seeded and diced

Whisk yogurt in a bowl to loosen and smooth out. Add scallions and cucumber and mix with a spatula. Season with salt, pepper, olive oil and a little red wine vinegar.



# HELSINKI JULY 2007

by CAROLINE FIDANZA

Strange that our first travel essay is about Helsinki. Not exactly a culinary destination. But Finland has its surprises. The biggest observation I can make about food and eating in Finland is that it is quite seasonal and local. Pointing out again that perhaps we are the only country that has really lost these essential connections to our food, and as a result need to write about it.

I arrived at the beginning of strawberry season. Everyone was extremely nervous because all of northern Europe was experiencing severe rain and flooding and the strawberries could be washed out in an instant. For a country that spends 9 months of the year in near unending darkness the thought of losing the joy of the beloved berries was unbearable (not having the promise of summer sunlight maybe an equal tragedy.) It rained for a few days but we returned to the market on the next sunny day to find that the berries held on, strawberries now being joined by wild blueberries and the occasional cloudberry, a bizarre orange fruit that is exceedingly tart and unappealing unless sweetened up and served on top of a toasted cheese pancake.

Also in season were chanterelles, sweet peas and new potatoes. As far as I could tell people just shuck and eat the peas as a snack. We never cooked them but we usually took a bag of them with us on our day trips to the islands along the Baltic where we went to work on our tans with little success.

Mushrooms are big in Finland. A lot of people forage for them at their summer cottages up north where it's all pine trees and lakes. People have books at home identifying edible mushrooms and pantries full of dried and pickled mushrooms from last year. They even eat a couple of varieties of poisonous mushrooms which I was assured are fine as long as you boil them twice. I don't know how they figured that out but fortunately none were served to me. Potatoes are eaten at every dinner.

At most meals we ate some combination of the following: pickled or fried herring, salmon either smoked, cured or fresh, salad (they had wonderful lettuce), black bread, cucumbers and strawberries. Other delicacies we tasted were salted raw fish, usually pike, with dill; pickled mushroom salad with onions and creme fraiche; hard boiled egg butter on black bread or traditionally on a pastry of baked rye dough filled with cooked rice; an amazing cake made of cocoa and oats layered with red currant cream and strawberries, like a Finnish trifle, as well as barley flour crepes cooked on a cast iron griddle on an open fire with berries and whipped cream. We drank canned Estonian beer called Saku Kuld, which I think is the best beer I've ever had, and Koskenkorva, Finnish vodka that has a slightly higher sugar content, which makes it undeniably smooth, none of that alcohol burn, and dangerously drinkable. We stayed up late and sat outside until it got dark at midnight.



! KUKU AT THE MARKET !



## DINNER AT THE SEA HORSE

The sea horse serves traditional Finnish food in an environment that has probably and wonderfully not been changed since it opened. It has a beautiful art deco style mural of a sea horse covering an entire wall and is otherwise mostly undecorated yet clean and precise with the feel of an old oceanliner. We were delighted to discover that snaps (Koskonkorva) was listed as an appetizer, a wise assurance that you're pickled herring is properly accompanied.

Although there are a couple of recipes here for herring, herring is only available to us in NY for about three weeks out of the year, late June and early July. Pickled herring is readily available in the delis and supermarkets of NYC. For the most part every fish in these recipes smoked, cured or pickled are available and perfectly prepared at Russ and Daughters on Houston street.

However, pickling your own herring or any other fish is easy. We use Boston mackerel which is a good substitute in terms of taste, texture and size. But you can pickle other fish, generally those with a higher fat content work out better.

First remove any scales or viscera if the fish hasn't been scaled and gutted. To filet the fish, place it on a cutting board and with a paring knife cut into the fish through the belly to the backbone and with one long stroke remove the filet. Flip the fish and repeat. Cut the fish into 1 1/2" pieces and then lay the filets out on a sheet tray and season well with salt and pepper. Refrigerate and let cure while you make the pickle.

SERVE PICKLED HERRING WITH PICKLED BEETS, HARD BOILED EGGS AND CAPER BERRIES

### HERRING PICKLE

4 cups white wine  
4 cups white wine vinegar  
2 large onions, sliced  
2 tablespoons juniper, crushed  
2 tablespoons coriander seed  
6 bay leaves  
1 cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup salt

Place all ingredients in a pot and bring to a boil. When salt and sugar are dissolved turn off heat and cool. Relocate fish to a pan or bowl deep enough to hold it and the liquid but wide enough so that fish remains more or less in a single layer. A layer or two is okay but you don't want them piled on top of each other or else they will not pickle evenly. When the pickle is completely cool pour it over the fish. Refrigerate. It will take about 12 hours for the fish to be pickled through, depending on thickness.

### CRÈME FRAÎCHE SAUCE

1 cup creme fraîche  
1-2 dill pickles, finely diced  
3 scallions, thinly sliced

**CRÈME FRAÎCHE:** Place 1 cup cream, 1 tablespoon buttermilk and 1 teaspoon lemon juice in a glass or metal container. Leave at room temperature until it thickens. In the summer it takes a day, in the winter 2-3 if you put it in a warm place.

To make sauce, mix all ingredients together. Season with salt and pepper and a touch of vinegar.

**BEETS:** Roast and peel beets. Slice into 1/4" rounds. Toss with olive oil, red wine vinegar and salt.

**EGGS:** Place eggs in a pot in a single layer. Cover with cold water and add a pinch of salt to the pot. Bring to a boil and then turn off and time for 7 minutes. After 7 minutes test an egg to make sure it's done, yolks should be set but remain bright yellow. Strain and place the eggs in an ice bath. Peel sooner rather than later.

**CAPERS:** If you can find them buy the big caper berries with the stems. If you can't find them I would use pickles instead.

## DINNER AT ORVAKKI'S

Orvakki is Kuku's mom. She lives in the house behind Kuku's and invited us over for a proper Finnish meal.

### FRIED HERRING

Again, herring is not always easy to find. In this case sardines make a wonderful substitute. Filet the fish as in the previous recipe. Place 2 filets of fish down and season with salt and pepper and a squeeze of lemon. Place a few fronds of dill on top and a small dollop of creme fraiche. Season 2 more filets and place on top of the first two making a sort of sandwich. Proceed to do this with all of the fish filets allowing 3 sandwiches per person. Place some flour in a wide pan, season it with salt and pepper and then flour the sandwiches shaking off any excess. Heat a large skillet with a combination of olive oil and butter. Don't skimp here, you're going to need a lot of fat to cook the fish in. When butter begins to brown and sizzle add the fish. Cook them in batches browning them on both sides carefully flipping them with a spatula and then remove them to drain on paper towels. It's okay if they're not piping hot as you need time to cook them all. Serve with mashed or boiled potatoes and pickled cucumber salad.

### CHERRY GOAT CHEESE TART

Orvakki served us a cherry cheese tart that reminded me exactly of a goat cheese tart that we always make in the restaurant. This is our recipe not Orvakki's but I'm sure she'd enjoy it.

For the pastry:  
2 1/2 cups flour  
1 cup confectioners sugar  
2 eggs  
6 oz. cold butter

Either by hand or in a food processor combine the flour and sugar. Add the butter and either knead or pulse to form a coarse meal. Add the egg to form a dough. Form the dough into a 4" disk and refrigerate for half an hour. Roll out the dough and then place into a 12" tart pan. Weigh the dough down with aluminum foil and pie weights or beans. Partially bake the tart shell in a 350° oven.

For the filling:  
12oz. goat cheese  
1 cup granulated sugar  
2 egg yolks  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
2 cups cherries, pitted

In the bowl of an electric mixer (or by hand), whisk the goat cheese and sugar. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix until very smooth. Spread the cherries evenly on the bottom of the tart shell. Spread the goat cheese mixture over the cherries and bake the tart until the filling is golden and set, about 1/2 hour.

If you don't have cherries you could substitute another fruit or use a layer of jam under the goat cheese.







## DINNER AT KUKU'S

*Kuku and Tero are our beloved friends and hosts in Helsinki. Much of our time was spent preparing nice meals and sitting around the table.*

### POACHED SALMON

*This is not really how Kuku or anyone else does it in Helsinki. This is how we do it at Marlow and Sons thanks to the genius of Sean and Dave.*

**1 full side sockeye salmon, 2-3 pounds mixed herbs; thyme, dill, summer savory salt and pepper**

*Lay salmon out on a cutting board and season well on both sides with salt and pepper. Pull off a long sheet of plastic wrap. Drizzle a little olive oil onto the plastic wrap and place the fish on top of it skin side down. Place the herbs on top of the flesh of the fish. Tightly wrap the fish in plastic wrap, it has to be waterproof so wrap it a couple of times. Place the fish in a roasting pan deep enough to hold the filet and enough water to poach it. Pour cold water into the roasting pan until it covers the fish and then weigh the fish down with a plate so that it stays submerged. Place fish into a pre-heated 300° oven and poach for about half an hour. The filet should feel firm when it's done, make sure to test what it feels like before it goes in the oven. When fish is done remove it from the water and let it cool a little then remove the plastic wrap. Remember that it is continuing to cook in the plastic so if you want it to stop cooking you have to take the plastic off. Serve room temperature or chilled.*



# Short Bus to TURKEYTOWN

Amy Kenyon has no time for turkeys. After pasture-raising heritage breed turkeys for the last few years she's taking a break. "I needed some Amy-time," she told me over the phone.

While most New Yorkers tend to think of farming as some sort of pastoral utopia where farmers get up with the sun and putter around all day yanking weeds, goosing butterflies and slopping pigs, farming is actually hard work especially when you work a regular job and farm on your off-time like Amy. Something had to go and it was turkeys. "It's weird, but I actually really miss them," she said.

There is no more ubiquitous American symbol for fall, harvest and Thanksgiving than the turkey. Most people know that it was lauded by Benjamin Franklin and was the second runner-up to the bald eagle for national bird title. Most people don't know that turkeys are generally regarded, by the people who raise them, as stone dumb. "Turkeys are very curious. They're attracted to shiny things," said Amy. This trait can prove useful at times - she has to put a large marble or some sort of other shiny object in the birds feed bowls to make sure they can find their food.

"It's not that they would never find it... it would just take a while."

According to Amy, "Most people raise turkeys in barns. Growing them on grass is pretty challenging." Those challenges range from the shiny objects trick to trying to keep them from drowning in water dishes. While wild turkeys roost in trees in order to escape danger after dark, domesticated turkeys have a hard time figuring out the right place to sleep. "I've built roosts of every kind and shape but they never want to use

them." Instead, Amy's turkeys have roosted on top of her barn in driving rain or simply just stayed on the ground despite the danger of predators. "Turkeys die pretty easily," Amy pointed out as she names all the various animals her turkeys have fallen victim to over the years. "I had, I think, a weasel one year that would just kill the birds and not even eat them. Then one year, they just started mysteriously disappearing without a sign." After losing too many birds Amy put out a sleeping bag and set watch until finally she saw the shape of a huge owl appear out of the darkness and pluck sleeping turkeys from the ground. "Don't ask me what kind of owl it was but it was big."

Aside from predation, turkeys have another dangerous enemy - themselves. "I've never seen it happen but I have heard of turkeys looking up when it was raining and drowning because they didn't shut their mouths," Amy notes. But she adds, "I have had them fly into a water container and drown and hit the barn every once in a while. I just don't get it." Despite all of the strange behavior and questionable judgement Kenyon remains positive about turkeys, "I really don't think that they're

actually that stupid. I think they act that way because they're bought as chicks and don't have a mother to show them what to do." Guess that's an endorsement for the importance of nurture by nature.

Still, the sheer lack of instinct in these birds continues to puzzle even the experienced turkey farmer. "If you find anyone that understands turkeys," Amy said, "tell them to call me."





# BEAUJOLAIS

## Beaujolais Cru: Ten Towns, Ten Wines

by N. ROSEN

As someone who has worked with wine for years, I am continually surprised by how many great values there are to be found when choosing a bottle of wine. Even with the strong Euro, the distance a wine must travel to a New York shelf and the rising price of gas, there are great values out there. And I'm not talking about a \$7-red with an animal on the label. There are whole clusters of great wines that the wine-buying masses somehow manage to ignore. Many of best come from the Cru wines of Beaujolais.

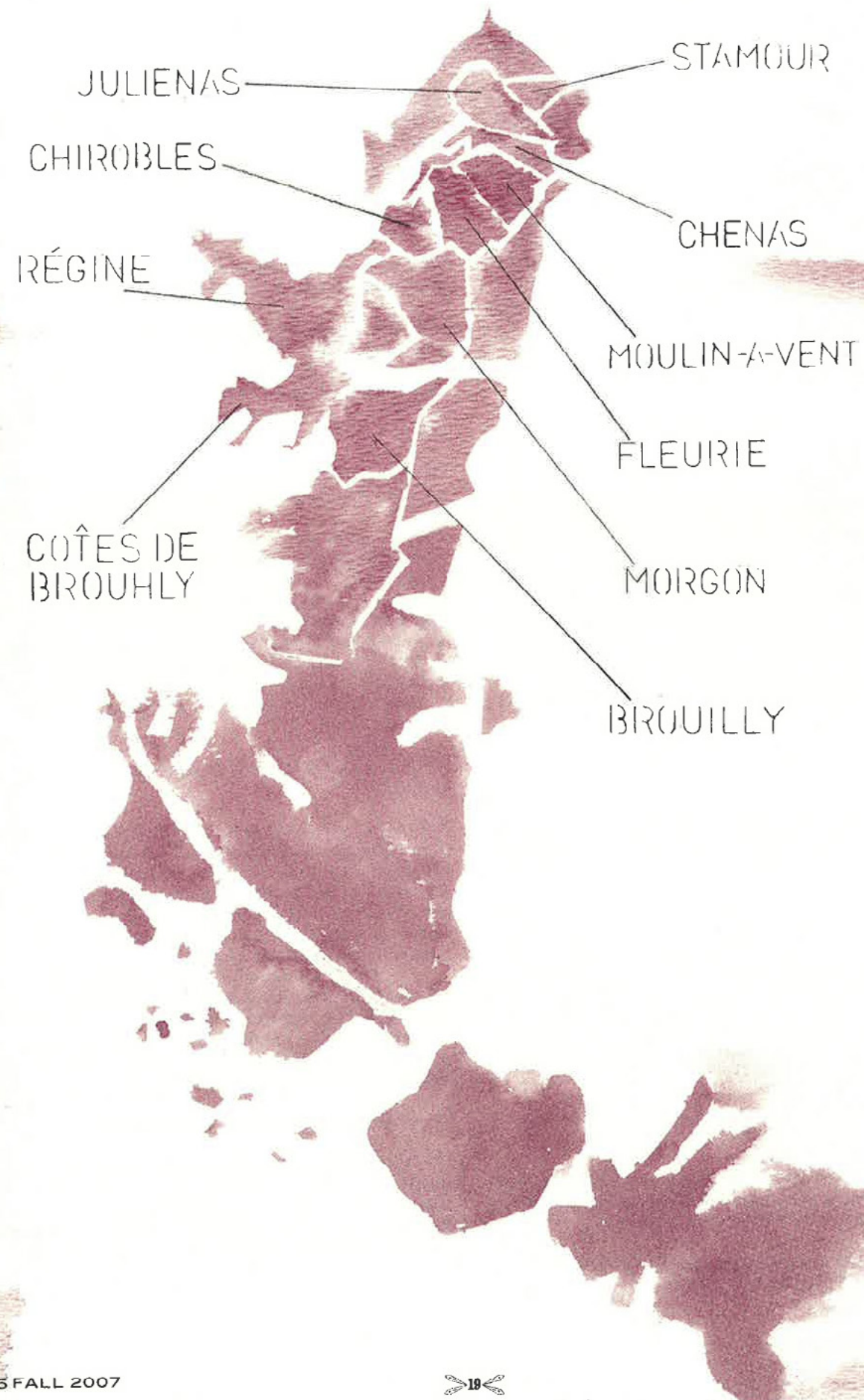
Beaujolais can be divided into four basic categories: Beaujolais Nouveau or Primcur, regular Beaujolais (a small amount of this is labeled as Beaujolais Superieur), Beaujolais Villages, and Cru Beaujolais. The first two groups account for the majority of wines from the region and are the simplest. Wines labeled as Beaujolais Villages are from the hilly, northern part of the region and can be of good quality. Cru Beaujolais are the best and must come from superior vineyards on steep hillsides in the North to be labeled as Cru. There are ten villages recognized as Crus: Brouilly, Cote de Brouilly, Regnie, Morgon, Chiroubles, Fleurie, Moulin a Vent, Chenas, Julienas, and Saint-Amour. It can be tricky to recognize these as Beaujolais as they are labeled by their village names - in fact many Cru wines do not mention Beaujolais on their label at all.

Beaujolais, be it Nouveau, Villages or Cru, is always made with the Gamay grape. There is also a small amount of Beaujolais Blanc produced, which is always made with Chardonnay. A lighter red grape, Gamay tends to produce delicate wines showing fresh fruit flavors, low tannins and vibrant acidity. Ordinary Gamay can be very light and simple, but when cultivated in the steep granite-based soil of the North, it has the potential to yield impressively structured wine with a complex set of flavors. Beaujolais is positioned just south of Burgundy and its best wines are often compared to very good Burgundian Pinot Noirs. While Cru Beaujolais may not achieve the structural and palate-pleasing heights of the best Grand Cru Burgundy, they certainly stand up to, or even top, other wines in that price range.

A good Cru Beaujolais displays a personality all its own. There is no wine made anywhere else in the world's best wine regions that tastes quite like it. The southern Crus like Brouilly, Morgon, and Regnie tend to be suave and elegant. The northern Crus like St. Amour, Moulin A Vent, and Julienas often show a bit more structure, power and tannin. Conscientious producers don't try to make their Cru wines into something they're not and the best winemakers reveal their Cru's true personality.

A small group of us at Diner and Marlow were curious about the specific characteristics of different Cru Beaujolais. In July we conducted a tasting of all ten Crus. We chose producers at random from multiple vintages. Each wine showed interesting character, and flavors ranged dramatically from tropical fruit and light strawberry to blackberry and licorice. Some samples were soft and fruity, others elegant and structured, still others were more powerful and tannic. There was not a bad wine in the bunch. We couldn't even agree on the favorite (mine was a particularly delicious Fleurie.) The only consensus was that all the wines showed surprising depth and quality for their price: between \$15 and \$25 a bottle.

If the underappreciated wines of Beaujolais pique your interest, I recommend that you explore. Cru Beaujolais brought into the States are generally of good quality—look for those made by smaller producers. Any good wine merchant should carry a Cru wine or two, though we could not find any in the city that had offerings from all ten. These wines are not very expensive and we encourage you to keep an open mind.





# Ted Mineo, Artist

Ted Mineo's apartment in Brooklyn is packed into tiny cardboard boxes. He sits perched in the center of the room and from time to time looks as though he is making a mental sweep of the area, silently inventorying his life, checking imaginary boxes in the sky. He leaves for Paris at the end of the week for a three-month residency. His computer and futon seem like the last men standing but then again there is the Pizza. The florescent pie glows on the small wooden kitchen table. Ted has been working on the life size sculpture of pizza since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005. The center of the pizza is absent. The absence forms the shape of a fleur-de-lis.

**Ted:** When I started the sculpture I was interested in using it as a way to address the idea of absence. What is missing comes from a pun on the New Orleans Saints. They're symbol along with New Orleans and the French monarchy is the fleur-de-lis and whenever the team would do really bad they would be called "the ain'ts." I became interested in the idea of "ain't." The idea of transparency, work that doesn't tell you a specific story but instead operates as sort of a touchstone or a lens you can use to look at the world with.

I heard Stanley Kunitz on NPR say, "I dream of an art so transparent that you can look through it and see the world." I thought that was a neat idea and an extreme and not really a reality of the world I live in. The kind of stuff I do always seems to collide with fact and plot and character. In the past my work has always been based in narrative and trying to tell stories. After a while I became more interested in the props rather than people or events.

**DJ:** But this still references specific events? You started this right after Katrina?

**Ted:** Yes it does and I'm ok with that being available as outside content for someone to read. And that's always important to me but that biographical information or the specific political New Orleans references are not essential. I guess in the big picture I'm trying to make something that will make the world better somehow which sounds pretentious I know. But in my day-to-day art making I became interested in things and that's how the interest in food came about. It started almost as a MacGuffin. The MacGuffin is an Alfred Hitchcock term for an object that doesn't mean anything but drives the plot; the spy film microfilm, or the briefcase in *Pulp Fiction*, the Arc of the Covenant in *Raiders of the Lost Arc*.

**DJ:** So instead of the sc-fi landscape of your earlier work food became your MacGuffin?

**Ted:** Yeah or instead of the body, pictures of the body. Food is something that is obviously very important to everyone and important to me and also refers to the body.

**DJ:** Food is like an essential prop and you come from a place that has very specific food references...

Interview by ANNA DUNN

**Ted:** And from piece to piece it changes. This pizza doesn't refer to Italians or any style of pizza. It's not really a pizza, more like a Martian landscape. The interesting thing about pizza and toppings is unlimited choice and choice is how our food is marketed to us, for example spaghetti sauce. It revolutionized food buying when you could buy chunky or garden variety.

**DJ:** You pick what kind of sauce and you feel like you've had a hand in creating it even though you haven't.

**Ted:** But back to the MacGuffin. The art that would let you see the world through it is the pie in the sky. The pizza is about New Orleans and Katrina but it's also a pizza and then it doesn't even really look like pizza. I take it deadly serious but also keep an awareness that it's a really goofy thing I'm making.

**DJ:** Well a lot of life is goofy... But don't you change the MacGuffin when you make it the focal point?

**Ted:** Yeah. The MacGuffin is always the starting point I guess. It goes from being generic thing to a specific thing. I mean I have themes that have grown through the years like sci-fi techno porn and faith and religion and food. I don't quite know how they all interact aside from me, who is connected to all of them by default. Maybe there is a lot of American-ness to all of this. I'm making commodity items. I kind of want to give art culture the art that it deserves. This is the canary in the coalmine. If I'm out here making this stuff look at what has happened to us...

**DJ:** It'd be similar to when Reagan used "Born In the USA" in his campaign.

**Ted:** Right, but sometimes I'm still ethically confused. Am I Springsteen or am I Reagan? I think in a lot of ways it's pop art and it goes along with mass communication and I'm into that and I'm into dealing with broad audiences and that's how I function with Deitch Projects. Big ideas and using the culture as part of the language that you speak and using its images as your artistic arsenal.

I want to make things that are beautiful and poetic but also there is a part that comes out of *Spencer's Gifts* or *Mad Magazine*. This weird, grotesque, part joke thing. My uncontrollable love for that crap is maybe where I move toward nostalgia in the work. And definitely as I move more toward sculpture I will find myself more *Spencer's Giftish*.

**DJ:** What is drawing you toward sculpture?

**Ted:** I wanted to move away from painting because it feels maybe too much like art. I want to feel more like I'm making things or even events. I was thinking about doing an eating contest where people would eat the blessed Eucharist and it would be called "Holier Than Thou"... but it didn't pan out.





**DJ:** The pizza looks like it has Easter candy on it and french fries and steak and moon rocks.

**Ted:** There's also these plushy things. I wanted more oyster things. That's part of how I make things, they tend to have that bodily detail or putrescence. As far as the cultural references in my work like the Muffaletta, pizza, hamburger and Kingcake they are similar things. They are all really prepared foods. There is nothing natural about them and they all tend to be dense with layers of preparation. They are all identifiably structured things. And that's how I approach art and my reading of it. I want it to be able to be parsed on a lot of different levels just like the hamburger, every element and how you build it is important.

**DJ:** Do you eat Muffalettas often?

**Ted:** I don't. My palate has changed since I moved here. I've become more finicky. The Muffaletta came from New Orleans. There was a Sicilian immigrant name Salvatore Lupo. He invented it at Central Grocery this place on Decatur Street in the French Quarter. He would serve it to a lot of the Sicilian immigrants during an influx around when my grandfather arrived. That's a food I can line up closely to whatever little I keep as my heritage. I don't really feel Sicilian or Italian. I feel far more Suburban American. That's my cultural ethnicity almost as much as being from New Orleans.

Another reason I've been interested in hamburger and pizzas is how they are involved in branding and the whole business of creating stories around food. Be it cartoons on boxes or Ronald McDonald.

**DJ:** Like how they have major corporations surrounding them, Dominos etc. or just like a string of characters associated with them?

**Ted:** Well, I guess it occurred to me that our generation grew up so saturated with that. Hamburgers were always attached to a character. Like I have a hard time thinking of cereal without a story around it, be it simply two scoops of raisins or as elaborate as Count Chocula or the Cookie

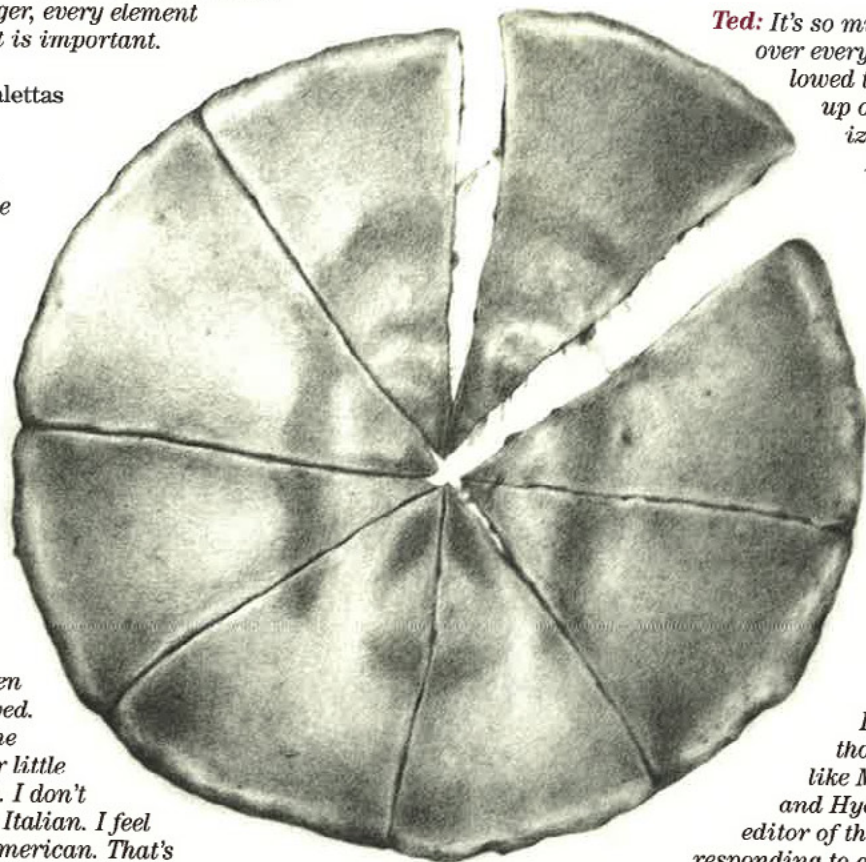
*Crisp guy. We forget it's the ingredients that make up the food and instead it becomes this experience. It strikes me as kind of dishonest but then maybe it makes it something more than it would have been otherwise. I don't think its good to get kids hooked on crap. I appreciate simple direct honest food... maybe I think also its analogous to art to me. The things that we make or the way create meaning. We have to tell stories around the things in our lives to help them make sense.*

**DJ:** It's interesting I don't often think of commercials or ad campaigns as stories...

**Ted:** It's so much more like a blanket over everything. I was never allowed the opportunity to look up over the blanket and realize the machine. Like the Arepa lady in Queens. You know I never heard of arepas but the writer's ability to wax poetical about her made me want to go live the dream. It's like your discovering something and being ethical and I think that's good. Once you realize the choice between good and bad then you know it seems like it's your responsibility to choose the good thing. Ha.

It also reminds me of those theme restaurants like Mars 21 12. Like Jekyll and Hyde... or like the dining editor of the New York Times was responding to a question about why Indian food is not considered particularly important. He says it has to do with the cheapness of the food and because the French invented what we think of as the dining experience, the beginning, middle and end, the look etc. The business of food presentation can be very similar to presenting art. The trappings of a blue chip gallery are the white walls and the dismissive girl at the front desk in the black dress and the very strange and super expensive stuff on the walls. They don't do cheap. Its exclusivity and scarcity is what makes it valuable.

Although it does seem more special when you have you get something from a farmer's market where you know the person it's coming from. So maybe the story is changing.



# TIME CAPSULE

by TOMMYLAN

There are many things a kitchen knife can be: a tool, worn and full of memories from meals past, a fetish item made of exotic steels by far away smithies, or it can be a total piece of crap that makes you forget about cooking. The first kitchen knife I used when I moved to New York was an old pot-metal butcher knife that my Puerto Rican neighbor lady gave me along with a three-foot tall plaster Jesus and Mary statue that didn't have hands.

The knife, while good for spreading mustard on a baloney sandwich or peanut butter and jelly on store-brand white bread, was close to useless when it came to chopping onions. It wasn't until I had pulled myself out of the poverty that consumed my first years in the city that I bought my first real chef knife: a futurist Japanese Global. It was thin, light, strong and sharp, everything that my cobbled-together set of thrift store knives was not.

To my astonishment, the proper knife techniques that I had tried and failed to master with my oversized butter knife came quickly and easily. Within a matter of months I had some decent skills and was utterly hooked on good kitchen blades. Then came Julia.

For Christmas that year I received a box set of "French Chef" episodes. For two nights in row I would come home after work and stay up until the small hours of the morning watching the episodes back to back. Nothing has burned as bright in my mind as those early black and white images of Julia Child wielding her enormous chef knife. Her casual regard for knife safety and her macabre musings about cutting one's hand, "clear down to the bone," with serious steel made me aware of the power and awe that a knife can inspire. That knife was the classic Sabatier-Nogent and in a moment of impulsive, totemic-fetishism I knew I had to have one.

Unfortunately for me, about the same time that Julia Child began schooling American housewives on the art of French cookery the last small forge producing her cherished, arm-length Nogent closed its doors forever. Newer production techniques and the post-war perfection of stainless steel had sounded the death knell for the knife that was the blossom of industrial revolution.

The Nogent is the prototypical chef's knife. It was born sometime in the late 1800's but even David Loft, the Export Manager for one of the last Sabatier houses,

Thiers-Issard, doesn't know exactly when. "It's pretty unclear because there were so many small forges operating at the time," he said over a warbling long-distance phone line. "At the height of the small forge era there were over 150 Sabatier houses making knives and not all of the documents from them are accounted for." What is known is that they were a quantum leap from the oddly shaped and clumsy knives that preceded them. Their lightweight, fine balance and superior steel meant that they handled like a much smaller knife in the hand, reduced fatigue and kept a hair-splitting edge that made the new, prep-intensive city food of turn-of-the-century France possible.

Although the last man to work a Nogent forge retired long ago, the Sabatier story doesn't end with him. In 1984, a Mr. Reynewaeter bought Thiers-Issard Sabatier and began to scour every barn and cellar in the village of Thiers for forgotten Nogent knife blanks, some 80 years old or more. These blanks, unrecognizable industrial lumps of steel smeared with cosmoline, became the first Nogent knives finished in over twenty years.

Obsession is a funny thing. What caused one man to embark on a data mining operation worthy of the Department of Defense compelled another man, thousands of miles away, to climb through the cobwebs and dust of former factories to find original forgings for a knife that has been obsolete longer than anyone I know has been alive. While we have never met, I did find Mr. Reynewaeter's knives at 3:45 in the morning while cross-referencing terms on the French-language-only version of Google. After sending them a garbled email I collapsed into bed and hoped for the best.

What happened after that early morning email is largely an uninteresting account of doing business with strange French people. There were international money orders and certified letters, sales pamphlets that looked like they were designed around the time of Freud and price lists that made me understand the Kafka I skimmed in high school. None of that matters now because there is an eleven-inch, hand-forged Nogent on my knife rack, just like Julia's.





# DESSERTS

by LAURA SAWICKI

## ROASTED PLUM TRIFLE

### GINGER CAKE

4 oz. fresh ginger, grated  
1 cup molasses  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup corn oil

2½ cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground cloves  
½ teaspoon black pepper

1 cup boiling water  
2 teaspoons baking soda

2 eggs

Grate ginger. Dissolve baking soda in boiling water. Add to wet ingredients. Sift dry ingredients. Combine with wet ingredients by hand. Add ginger to base. Fold in eggs, 1 at a time, whisking to combine. Bake at 350° until bounces back and pulls from sides of pan.

## ROASTED PLUMS FOR TRIFLE

4 cups italian prune plums, halved & pitted  
⅓ cup sugar  
½ cup brandy  
½ vanilla bean

Sprinkle sugar in a thin layer over 2 large sauté pans. Divide plums between 2 large sauté pans, over medium - high heat, placing cut side down. Roast until sugar begins to bubble and color. Gently slip each plum and continue to cook. Deglaze pans with about ¼ cup to ½ cup brandy and add the vanilla bean. Simmer until plums are tender. Carefully remove from pans. Strain sauce into a saucepan and continue to simmer until just slightly reduced. Adjust seasoning as necessary. Reserve brandy syrup for assembly.

## CRÈME FRAÎCHE TOPPING

2 cups crème fraîche, see recipe p.14  
½ cup heavy cream  
2 Tablespoons sugar

Whisk above together to soft peaks

TO ASSEMBLE: Cut cake into small cubes. Place a layer of plums, cake cubes and crème fraîche into clear serving piece or individual glasses. Drizzle each layer with brandy syrup. Chill and allow flavors to marry well before serving.

## APPLE DUMPLINGS

8 Apples, peel and core.  
Trim bottom so apple will stand on its end

for the Pâte Brisée:  
2½ cups all purpose flour  
2 Tablespoons sugar  
2 teaspoons salt  
8 oz. butter, cold & diced  
ice water

Mix flour, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Cut in butter, leaving pea-sized pieces. Stream in ice water gradually until dough is shaggy and barely holds together. Bring dough together and chill. Divide dough into 8 pieces. Roll each piece to about ¼-¼" thick. Place apple in center and fill with about 1 Tablespoon brown sugar & small pat of butter. Bring dough up over apple, pressing together to seal. Repeat with remaining. Chill well.

Brush dumplings with cream. Poke a steam hole in the top of the pastry and sprinkle generously with coarse sugar. Bake at 375° until rich golden brown. Serve with crème fraîche.

## CHEDDAR ROSEMARY GALETTE

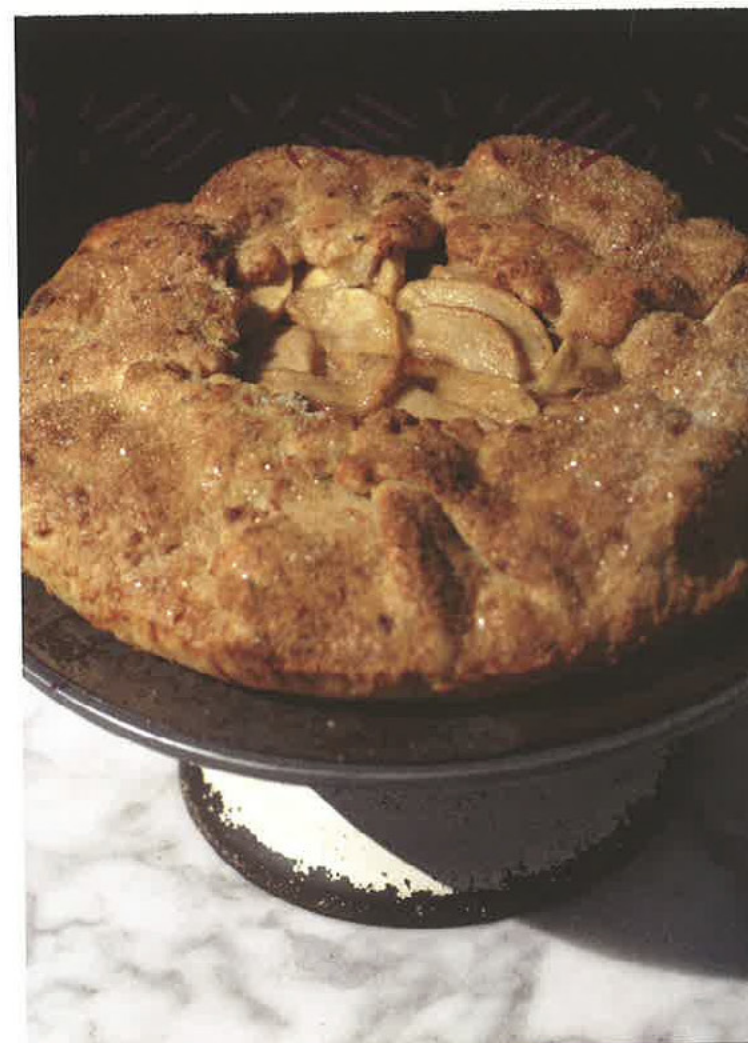
2½ cups all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
7oz unsalted butter, cold & diced  
4oz cheddar cheese  
½ cup ice water  
2 Tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary, (or to taste)

In the bowl of a food processor place flour, sugar and salt. Add butter and pulse until coarse and pea-sized pieces. Add cheddar cheese and rosemary. Stream in the cold water, pulsing until dough just comes together. Be careful not to over mix. Chill dough well.

6 apples - peeled, cored and sliced  
¼ cup light brown sugar  
2 Tablespoons sugar  
zest and juice of 1 lemon  
¼ cup cornstarch  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon salt  
fresh nutmeg  
rosemary, chopped - to taste

Combine all ingredients for the filling. Allow to macerate while rolling out the dough. Be sure to taste the seasoning and sweetness of the filling. Amounts will vary depending on the tartness and juiciness of the apples. Adjust as necessary. Roll the dough ¼-¼" thick. Transfer to a parchment lined baking sheet. Mound apples in center, dot with butter, and crimp dough over fruit, leaving a 4" circle in the center exposed. Refrigerate galette well.

Prior to baking, brush brisee with heavy cream and sprinkle generously with coarse sugar. Bake at 375° until well browned and filling is bubbling. Allow to cool slightly. Serve with ice cream, crème anglaise, or a dollop of creme fraîche.







*the* INFERNO

