

BETTER for you FOOD

When gourmet can be good.

The American food landscape, like a massive amoeba, seems to be constantly subdividing into new and different (and sometimes old and familiar) forms. Fad diets, foreign influences, the shifting tides of FDA guidelines and the continual pressure of human curiosity, creativity, and gluttony all conspire to continuously shape and reshape what and how we eat.

But if there is a consistent food theme in the human experience it seems to be the incremental movement toward food forms that both taste better and are better for you.

That movement has brought us the Mediterranean diet, with its emphasis on fresh fish and produce, herbs, nuts, whole grains, lesser amounts of lean meats and lots of olive oil. With all that comes the ever-increasing importance of all things organic, if not gluten-free and vegan. The Slow Food movement arrived on the same train, along with other offshoots, all of which gradually infiltrated the U.S. snack food space, traditionally occupied by not-so-good-for-you mainstays like potato chips, pretzels, sugary confections, doughnuts, and laboratory creations like Cheetos Flamin' Hot.

What has emerged in recent years is being formally recognized as the "Better for You" food movement, not necessarily to be confused with Good for You, but definitely an improvement over our worst dietary excesses. Better for You is a common catchphrase in the snack food world, but also in restaurants and supermarkets.

And restaurants themselves are transforming, reflecting new food tastes and the consumption habits of a new generation not so ready to eat out. Brick-and-mortar establishments are beginning to give way to popup dinners, food trucks, movable feasts that can come to your home, office, or corporate team-building weekend.

Which leads us to Ed Metcalfe, a veteran brick-and-mortar restaurateur who has forsaken that tradition for a more flexible, less capital-intensive business model, while still feeding the Sonoma Valley appetite for creative sushi and other Asian cuisine.

Beyond sushi, in the pages that follow, you'll find Ovello, the extraordinary salumeria newly opened in Sonoma, an introduction to Ayurvedic eating (which could transform your life), some outstanding artisanal wine blessed by shamrocks and, hopefully, some insights and inspiration to eat and drink *better*.

SUSHI outside the box

Ed Metcalfe keeps the spirit of Shiso alive without the brick and mortar.



ED METCALFE mixes fresh miso soup at left. His 14-inch yanagiba sashimi knife is at left and above, with piles of raw fish ready for further carving.



T

hanks to Ronald Reagan, Ed Metcalfe can teach you how to construct a perfect spicy tuna roll, whip together a pot of miso soup, slice sashimi like a pro, or layer succulent layers of maguro, sake, and Hamachi over a tube of rice for a multicolored rainbow roll.

The 40th president probably didn't know sashimi from shinola—Reagan's tastes ran more toward meatloaf, mac and cheese and, of course, jelly beans—and he never met Ed. But on August 3, 1981, 13,000 air traffic controllers went on strike for better pay and shorter hours, and two days later Reagan fired the 11,000 who didn't immediately return to work, then banned them forever from government employ.

That included Ed's father, and thus began a culinary odyssey that culminated with world-class sushi in Sonoma.

"My dad was a little devastated when he lost his job. We had just moved into a brand-new home. I was getting ready to start my freshman year of high school.

He was also a flight instructor, had been in aviation pretty much from his early 20s, he had every rating you could get, but he couldn't make enough money being a flight instructor. So out of the blue he decided he was going to buy a restaurant, and he looked in the paper and found one (in the Sacramento area) recently up for sale. The concept was breakfast and lunch, everything made from scratch in the morning, fresh biscuits, homemade gravy, big slabs of ham off the bone."

Two weeks later the Metcalfes were in business. "My mom was the front of the house, my dad was the cook, and there was one dishwasher. It was a seven-days-a-week operation, and my freshman year I started washing dishes every Saturday and Sunday."

The restaurant, called simply "Ham and Eggs," was a raging success, "There was a line of contractors that would line up at 6 a.m. to get inside. I was washing dishes by hand, silverware, glasses, just getting my ass kicked every weekend.

"I was washing dishes by hand, silverware, glasses, just getting my ass kicked every weekend."

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LAYERING STICKY SUSHI RICE on nori (toasted seaweed) sheet is an acquired skill.



So I quickly figured out I didn't want to do that. Let me try and cook."

Ed started cooking in his sophomore year. At 16, he was arriving at 5 a.m., opening the restaurant, and cooking breakfast. "It taught me a lot of work ethic at a very young age. I had an opportunity to help grow the business, so we ended up in four locations in a matter of five years. All breakfast and lunch, all the same concept, all the same name."

Ham and Eggs did well enough that Ed stayed for 16 years, "until I realized I didn't want to be flipping flapjacks and making gravy anymore. So at 29, I left the family business and went to culinary school in San Francisco at CCA."

The California Culinary Academy, which closed in 2015, was part of the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu franchise and taught Metcalfe a variety of cooking techniques and styles, along with a bigger vision that quickly transcended ham and eggs. He went on to work in a variety of restaurants in diverse places, like Hawaii, Lake Tahoe, and Denmark, and along the way discovered an affinity for Asian food.

"It involved ingredients I hadn't seen

before, it was exotic, and after tasting them and experimenting with them, I was just intrigued and attracted to the flavor profiles. Asia's obviously a large area, so I had to decide, what type of Asian food do I want to do? And throughout my experiences, I was always exposed to Japanese cuisine, no matter where I went it was there."

Ultimately, it was a job in Copenhagen that set Ed on his path.

"I spent a year there. It was my first exposure to sushi and really where I developed as a chef, working in a very popular, Michelin-starred restaurant, called "Sushitarian," in downtown Copenhagen. I would watch the Japanese chef work behind the bar and was just astounded by what was happening, especially after being in a hot kitchen for so many years."

Metcalfe landed in Sonoma—a place he had never seen despite Sacramento-area roots—after a friend prodded him to come.

"So I came up, I literally walked the Plaza, read every menu, and they were all the same, all Wine Country cuisine, Mediterranean Italian."

It seemed like a good place to plant some sushi, so Metcalfe negotiated a lease for an empty space just below the Sonoma Plaza on Broadway, and opened Shiso Sonoma.

"My market study was walking the Plaza and reading menus. I think I was just turning 39 at that point, and when I came here, driving through the vineyards, I was in heaven."

Shiso lasted four years on Broadway, built a solid fan base, but Metcalfe ultimately concluded, "I didn't need to pay

premium rent because, of course, you weren't going to attract people down Broadway (from the tourism-centric Plaza), at least not back then. Even today it would be difficult."

So, eventually, he opened a new Shiso in the Maxwell Village shopping center, right next to the miniature golf course, with acres of parking and a gar-

"The Japanese ... eat based on seasons and it's all about the portions ..."



A BOWL OF PERFECTLY-SEASONED EDAMAMI is part of the sushi class menu.

den in back. He stayed there eight years and built a dedicated following.

If you've eaten his food you know Ed Metcalfe is a purist and an artist, very much at home in the kitchen. There's a focus on detail, a precision of movement as he shapes pieces of nigiri and sashimi, wielding a 14-inch yanagiba, drawing the blade through a filet of salmon, carving out precise pieces with a steady rhythm. His commitment to the discipline of the craft as he learned it is almost reverent, a meditation of sorts. And it is instructive when he explains how the traditions of preparing and eating sushi are far different in Japan than here.

"There are so many misconceptions about what sushi really can be and what it is," says Metcalfe. "And it's two really different things between Japan and America. We're so used to this kind of Americanized sushi that when people have a real sushi experience in Japan, it's nothing like what we see here. I had an opportunity to learn sushi from a Japanese chef, and I honor that out of respect."

The differences, he suggests, are both gustatory and cultural. "When you go

to a real Omakase experience in Japan, you're not going to get ginger and wasabi. You're going to order from the chef, and the chef is going to make one piece of nigiri at a time and put it in front of you, and there's no dipping. The chefs literally put their own special touch to each piece in the nigiri, whether it's with some smoked salt or a fresh herb, or just a glaze that they've created, and it's very light. It's never going to be like mayonnaise or something that we're used to having. It's really about the focus of that one piece in front of you, and to experience it in your mouth and really take it in."

Unlike Americans, says Metcalfe, "the Japanese are very seasonally driven. They eat based on seasons and it's all about the portions, like in the bento box, which is one of the healthiest food creations because it's portion control, all very small portions and also usually very seasonal, with a piece of protein, some rice, your carbs from fresh fruits. It was one of the things I learned when I started studying sushi; it's actually brilliant. The Japanese eat very healthy and they eat very portion control. They

have a saying in Japan that they only eat until they're 80 percent full."

Much as he loved his kitchen time, Metcalfe found himself beginning to confront a couple of cold, brick-and-mortar realities. "If you're going to be in this business, obviously you have to be passionate about restaurants. But the flip side of that for any owner/operator—especially if you want to be in the kitchen most of the time—is that you have your strengths and you have your weaknesses. And my weaknesses were always management. And I knew that. So, in a time when it is extremely difficult to find employees, and then to manage and build a team, and keep a team, it's even more difficult."

And, adds Metcalf, the net profit margin on most restaurants is 3 to 6 percent, which doesn't put that much in an owner's pocket. "When I sold Shiso," he says, "my employees were making more money than I was."

Mori—who seamlessly took over the space, and named it Shige Sushi and Isakaya (which means "bar").

Meanwhile, Metcalfe minus brick-and-mortar built on his existing catering service to add sushi educational classes, team-building events, Airbnb sushi experiences, farm-to-table dinners, winery events, pickup parties, and in-home private dinners for 6 to 100 people.



"... the sushi classes may be the stars of the show."

And then there's the issue of age. Metcalfe is only 53, but he's been in the kitchen since he was 15.

"I just can't imagine having to go back and do it all over again when there are so many other opportunities out there today in this industry, and they're not related to brick and mortar, they're opposite of brick and mortar."

And, of course, the food industry in general was changing before Ed's eyes. "The last two years I really started to see the writing on the wall with all the food delivery companies—Grubhub, DoorDash, the convenience of online groceries, boxed meals coming to your door—I saw the trend of how dining was changing. We all know that going out to dinner or lunch is not cheap. And it continues to go up."

So at the end of 2018, Ed sold Shiso Modern Asian Kitchen to the perfect buyers—Tokyo-born Shige and Toki

He calls the business "Sushimoto," after one of his earlier restaurants (he's owned four), and a visit to his Facebook page or website makes your mouth water. Food selections aren't limited to sushi, and available menu items include Kobe beef medallions with shitake mushroom sauce, garlic and ginger-marinated tri-tip and Korean short ribs.

But the sushi classes may be the stars of the show. Ed can set them up anywhere, but he has a go-to site at the Seamus Winery tasting room in Kenwood, where classes of four to 10 people learn sushi A to Z, while tasting flights of Seamus wines paired for each course.

Metcalf's lessons cover making miso soup from scratch with dashi stock (vastly superior to most restaurant offerings), preparing sushi rice, where and how to obtain top-quality fish (He has a list, and don't be fooled by designations like "sushi grade," he warns. They're bogus.), and how to shape and cut nigiri rolls or slice sashimi into perfect strips. It's all hands-on and into the mouth. "We will make more food than you can eat," he warns. And he's right.

Metcalf will also tell you which fish are sustainably sourced and healthiest to eat, which are farmed, and why that is increasingly necessary. "That's one of the things about being a sushi chef. You are always conscious about what you're purchasing and is it right for the environment. So yellowfin and albacore are the most sustainable. Albacore is one of my favorite tunas. It's lean, but if you get into the albacore belly, it's actually very fatty and amazing."

Ed says he still gets in his kitchen time while catering, but now there's much less overhead burden, and just as much fun. "There's a lot of joy when you're teaching something that you've been passionate about for years—that's definitely a part of the fun in my job." ☾

Ed Metcalf and Sushimoto can be found at sushimotos.com, or at 650.862.6633.

SEAMUS & SUSHI



Laid-back tasting lounge features gold-medal wines and a touch of the Dead.

When Jim Foley Jr. was growing up on the Jersey Shore his grandmother called him Seamus, which is the Irish equivalent of James, and he carried the name forward when he started a wine label and opened a tasting lounge in Kenwood with his father, Jim Foley Sr.

Along the way, he also owned and operated a variety of restaurants and became a certified Dead Head. "Certified," because on the wall of his tasting lounge, above the bar, there is a 10-foot-long, panoramic photo of a 1982 Grateful Dead concert, the first of 14 gigs the band played at Stanford University's Frost Auditorium.

"I've always loved music," says Foley, whose father was and is a huge Willie Nelson fan. That love is evident in the upright piano occupying prime space in the tasting room, and in the laid-back atmosphere of comfortable furniture, casual outdoor access, and the open invitation for visitors to come and browse, buy a glass or a bottle, sit around and chat, go online, play a game of cornhole, or jam with other musicians.

Foley also hosts Ed Metcalfe's sushi-making classes, held in the lounge on a

long custom-made table constructed of oak barrel staves, during which Seamus wines are available in flights paired with the sushi.

Another outside-the-box tasting experience occurs on Thursday nights when Seamus hosts "Paint Night," during which patrons get painting lessons from a professional artist, complete with canvas, brush, paints and, of course, wine. The paint nights often double as date nights or family nights, sometimes with upward of 20 participants.

In the future, he says, he's hoping to host tie-dye nights, and any other kind of activity he thinks his guests might enjoy.

The wine itself is a strong attraction, including a prize-winning mix of cabernet, pinot, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, rosé and a red blend cuvée. At the 2018 Sonoma County Harvest Fair, Foley's 2015 Olde Sonoma cabernet won double gold and best of class, and in the 2019 competition the Seamus 2017 Buena Terra Chardonnay won double gold. ☾

Seamus Tasting Lounge is located at 8910 Sonoma Highway, in Kenwood. Go to seamustastinglounge.com, or call 707.573.7277 for tastings and more information.

SALUMERIA OVELLO

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CHEF ANDREA, with one of his very large, handmade salamis

If you've never been to Italy but have always wanted to go, you can save yourself some time, money, and, perhaps, some coronavirus exposure, by taking a shortcut to Ovello.

Ovello is *of* Italy, but not *in* Italy, which means it's a lot closer to you and whatever appetite you have for authentic Italian salumi. It's actually two blocks from the Sonoma Plaza on West Napa Street and, as Andrea Marino likes to say, "When you cross the door, you are in Italy."

Marino is the chef and (with his wife, Noreen) co-owner of Ovello, which opened last September after a three-year birthing period and the meticulous renovation of the property that had housed two previous bakeries. He is the real deal, and when he says you're in Italy when you're inside Ovello, he means it.

For 15 years he had a Michelin-starred restaurant in the Piemonte region of northern Italy, and before that he worked in 20 other restaurants around Europe, interspersed with teaching culinary classes in Japan and Holland.

"He is the real deal, and when he says you're in Italy when you're inside Ovello, he means it."

“... you’re instantly in the embrace of scores of hanging torpedoes of meat, the scent of garlic and spices and fragrant seasonings crowding your senses.”

hand-powered, flywheel driven, red-line Berkel meat slicer in front, a precision instrument still beloved by artisans and aficionados willing to spend between 10 and 20 times the price of an electric slicer. The classic Berkel is also a retro piece of art that adds excitement and

nia. And you might want to try his pork tenderloin terrine, wrapped in a coat of porcini mushrooms.

There are specials every day, charcuterie boards, handmade, organic focaccia, salads, whole cuts of coppa, lonzino, and even duck breast prosciutto. Meals are

CHEF ANDREA and wife Noreen with some of his best work.



THE GRAFFITI on Chef Andrea's arm runs all over his body, he says, while hoisting salami from the aging room.

His father owned a successful bakery, his grandfather raised and butchered pigs in the family yard, and Marino learned family recipes and cooking techniques from his grandmother, before going to culinary school.

All of which means that he knows his way around butchering, baking, and salumi making, which is not an art that comes easily. Making artisanal salumi, which include a variety of mostly-pork-based dried meats, involves a multigenerational learning curve and the knowledge of how to balance various cuts of meat and fat, combined with herbs and other seasonings, as well as wine and sometimes beer. And when you get all of that right, you still have to know how long to age it at what temperature.

The results of Marino's knowledge and experience hang in an aging room visible through a large window behind the front counter. Step into that room and you're instantly in the embrace of scores of hanging torpedoes of meat, the scent of garlic and spices and fragrant seasonings crowding your senses.

Proudly, Marino unties a salami the size of a football and carries it to the

drama to the shop as he stands before it, turning the flywheel that drives the machinery that slices the salami into paper-thin wafers of meat.

In addition to salamis, flavored a variety of ways to reflect the origins of their meat, Marino ties and roasts at least one porchetta every day. That, in case you're new to Italian delicacies, is roll of pork loin and pork belly, wrapped in skin and flavored typically with salt, pepper, rosemary, thyme, fennel, sage, and lots of garlic. The whole thing is spit-roasted and then served hot with crisp skin and dripping fat. Watching this drama unfold inside Ovello with running commentary from Marino, and then sitting at one of his small dining tables to taste it, is a special treat.

Ask Marino what the secret is to making really good salumi and he simply smiles and says, "It's in my DNA."

He sources the best meats he can find from a broker, all of it vegetarian-fed, antibiotic-free, heritage pork, plus wild boar and a little lamb.

He also makes a stunning chicken liver paté that may erase any residual longing for foie gras, at least in Califor-

nia. And you might want to try his pork tenderloin terrine, wrapped in a coat of porcini mushrooms.

Marino made it to Sonoma because he met an American woman in a Piemonte café and quickly fell in love. That was Doreen, an internal medicine doctor with a home in Petaluma. When he followed her to California, he built a test kitchen in their Petaluma garage to refine his recipes, some of which are specific to Sonoma.

When you visit, you may notice a lengthy tattoo of what look like Italian words running up the inside of his right arm and disappearing into his shirt. Ask him about it and he'll tell you it runs the length of his body, he got it when he turned 40, and he would have to be drunk before he would tell you what it means.

The name of the salumeria—Ovello—comes from a very small wine-growing region (or DOC), where his family has a winery making Barbaresco from Nebbiolo grapes. Marino hopes to be able to sell some Barbaresco wine once he has an ABC license.

There is a missionary zeal to Andrea Marino in any conversation about Ital-

ian food. "We are using some things special, we are teaching people to change what they eat," he says. "We are trying to educate people in Sonoma to original recipes,"

It's an enticing place to learn, especially since, once you step through that door, you're in Italy. ☾

Salumeria Ovello is open from 11 to 6, Thursday through Monday. Find it at 248 West Napa Street, Sonoma, Call 707.721.1478 for more information and to order in advance, or go to ovellosonoma.com.

“Ask Marino what the secret is to making really good salumi and he simply smiles and says, ‘It’s in my DNA.’”

DANNY FAY & THE HILL OF TARA

New winery honors a rich Irish past.



DANNY FAY holds hand-drawn family tree proving historic family provenance over the iconic Irish site. The wine's label features a rendering of Mound of the Hostages.



HILL OF TARA team is Katie Fay, brother-in-law Matt Simpson (center), and Danny Fay. Corks are inked with lucky shamrocks on one end. You never know what end it's on until you pull off the foil.

Twenty-seven miles northwest of Dublin, a few shouts east of Kilmessan, and not too far from Skryne, sits a raised platform of earth with a peak altitude of 509 feet above sea level, a commanding view over the distant lands of County Meath, and a mythic standing in the history of Ireland. It is called the Hill of Tara, and there may be no place else in that Emerald Isle as hallowed, history-rich and virtually sacred as Tara.

Spread across its crown are storied monuments, prehistoric ruins, and legends deep as time. Among the visible remnants of its long history—documented at least to 3,500 B.C.—are the Mound of the Hostages, the Stone of Destiny, and Mound of the Cow. The words themselves seem draped in brogue, and the legends they represent address the full sweep of Ireland's storied past.

The Stone of Destiny (Lia Fail) is said to be the coronation stone for Irish kings, one of whom, Nial of the Nine Hostages, is said to have held protective hostages there, from Britain and all the provinces of Ireland.

So significant is Tara that its reach extends across the Atlantic. Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone With The Wind*, was related to an Irish immigrant named Phillip Fitzgerald and the name she gave the fictional plantation in her epic novel was Tara. But it doesn't stop there.

There is now a wine label in the Sonoma Valley called Hill of Tara on which there is an artist's rendering of that very Mound of Hostages. And lest you of Irish descent (aren't most of us, at least emotionally) take umbrage at the misappropriation of so hallowed a name, you need to know that the label was founded by British-born, Sonoma-

raised winemaker Danny Fay whose not-so-distant family once held title to the actual Hill of Tara.

And the name is now attached to a very stout, deeply-punted Bordeaux bottle filled with, among other things, two successive vintages (2015 and 2016) of truly exceptional cabernet sauvignon from the prestigious MoonRidge Vineyard, 2,300 feet up Moon Mountain.

Production is still miniscule—only two French oak barrels of the 2015 cab were made, three barrels for 2016, which pencils out to about 70 cases.

Besides Moon Mountain, Fay is husbanding a quantity of cabernet franc from the Cabak vineyard, up the mountainside from Glen Ellen.

All Hill of Tara wines are organic with a good dose of biodynamic practices as well. And all the production is done by Fay and his two partners—his wife, Katie, and his brother in law, Matt Simpson, who married Danny's sister Colette. All three have day jobs with other wineries, so the vineyards they farm—and they do all the farm work—get attention early or late in the day, resulting in double shifts to get it all done.

Fay got his wine chops, following a viticulture degree from Cal Poly, working for biodynamic guru Mike Benziger in Glen Ellen, and subsequently did the

global winery tour while attending the Ecole de Management's Wine MBA program in Bordeaux.

He launched Envolve Winery with two childhood friends, sold it in 2015 when he and Katie decided to start the Hill of Tara.

Simpson is a Sonoma Valley native, has a business degree and priceless on-the-job training at Enterprise Vineyards, owned by the prince of organic growers, Phil Coturri.

Katie Fay grew up in Ojai, earned a B.S. in Wine Business Strategies at Sonoma State University, and has a day job at Lambert Ridge, after marketing stints at Kosta Browne, Chateau Montelena and Three Sticks. She and Danny have a trip planned to Ireland this year, prominently including Hill of Tara.

The historic landmark helped inspire Danny to continue his family's farming tradition and reconnect with the Tara mystique. He says the Hill of Tara relationship is a precious one, although one distant relative with Hill of Tara connections of her own challenged his claim to onetime family ownership. "She called me a fraud," he says with a laugh. "So I did the genealogical research and sketched a family tree that showed she was a more distant cousin

than I was. We're friendly now and she wants my wine in her pub."

The Hill of Tara team has a long-term vision involving slow and steady steps. Each wine is barrel-aged for at least 20 months, and then bottle-aged for at least 20 more months before release. "We believe," says Fay, "our patience will be rewarded."

The growth plan is intentionally flat, increasing production by just one barrel a year, always putting quality over quantity. "We're not trying to replicate the same good wine year-to-year, regardless of differences in climate and other variables. We want to allow the wine to reflect the vintage, the terroir, the unique characteristics of each year."

The next release of their Moon Mountain cab will be on March 17, which just happens to be St. Patrick's Day. That is not a coincidence.

You can taste Hill of Tara two ways: Have dinner at the Glen Ellen Star and order a bottle; or sign up online for an allocation. It may take you a year to get some, but as Danny Fay says, "Your patience will be rewarded." ☾

Hill of Tara wines can be reached at hilloftarawines.com.

COOKING & EATING

WITH ANCIENT WISDOM
FOR A MODERN LIFESTYLE

SEASON-ing Sonoma offers
ayurveda-inspired cooking classes



SEASON-ING TEAM Kara Adanalian (left) and Teri Adolfo outside Adanalian's home kitchen; sample Winter Soups menu; 6-tastes "spice lab" tray.



ANCIENT AYURVEDIC TEXTS
inscribed on palm leaf, c AD 800

Consider two things: First, that it's possible for 5,000-year-old knowledge, accumulated without the benefit of microchips, digital data and terabytes of information storage, to have relevance, credibility and useful application in the full-blown digital age.

And second, that much of what we've learned about food and nutrition in the last 5,000 years—the ever-changing FDA nutrition pyramid, what foods to combine with other foods—could be just flat wrong. If you dip your toe in the ayurvedic pool, you're going to learn a lot about how much you don't know.

Ayurvedic teachers often shake their heads in wonder at the fact that, even after wave upon wave of Western food fads, many of them healthy ones, the American medical establishment spends little (and sometimes no) time on the subject of nutrition. Ask any medical school graduate how many hours they studied nutrition and the answer is usually slim to none.

Even more shocking to ayurvedic practitioners is the fact that Western medicine says almost nothing about digestion, about how the food you eat—whatever it may be—is broken down and assimilated.

In ayurvedic medicine, health starts with digestion, it's the base of the pyramid. And everyone's digestive universe is, to some extent, unique. Every season presents different choices for optimal eating, and every body has a different combination of the three constituent "doshas," or bio-elements, known in Sanskrit as Vata, Pitta and Kapha. One of those elements usually dominates, and it is useful to know which one. From there, the challenge is to balance that dosha with the other two in order to have greater physical and mental harmony.

Ayurveda is derived from the four Indian Vedas, perhaps the oldest religious texts on earth, composed in Vedic Sanskrit and communicating what are purported to be the words of Brahma, the Hindu god of creation.

Balancing those three characteristics takes us deep into the more esoteric depths of ayurvedic eating, and we're not going to go there now.

But Teri Adolfo and Kara Adanalian may give you a glimpse as they take you through the ayurvedic foothills in their kitchen classes, called "SEASON-ing." Adolfo is a certified ayurveda practitioner, and an East Asian nutrition and cooking instructor. She is also an acupuncture and massage practitioner. Adanalian, a graphic designer, is also a prize-winning contest

We're this fast food society." Which is not what ayurveda is about.

The complexity and density of Vedic texts is not light reading, and if you've ever tried to plow through an English translation of the Rig Veda you'll understand why it's not a casual pursuit.

On the other hand, the Vedas—and the Upanishads which inhabit them—have been studied intensely for centuries, and some who do so report astonishing parallels between Vedic knowledge and the modern science of theoretical physics.

SPICES AND HERBS flavor all of the foods in SEASON-ing classes, and are an important part of ayurvedic cooking.

BETTER
FOR YOU
FOOD



cook, winner of countless regional and national cooking contests, and holds the title "America's Best Home Cook" from *Fine Cooking* magazine and *Sur La Table*. She's also a cancer survivor who has found healing and peace in the deep silence of meditation.

Together they lead classes through the ayurvedic maze, turning the complicated concepts into simple healthy steps.

Most people who see the word "ayurveda" for the first time can neither pronounce it nor explain it. It's a four syllable mystery. So Teri has simplified the message.

"Usually I will start a class by telling them it means, 'the science or knowledge of life.' And everyone goes, 'Oh,' because that's so simple. Then I explain, there's a lot of Sanskrit words, but what I want you to get out of it are the basic concepts of living through the seasons and the rhythms of the seasons in your physical and mental state. When you can do that, you will have better health, period. But we don't pay attention.

But that's not a subject Teri and Kara find appropriate in a casual class focused on cleanses and seasonal cooking, and is built on the mantra, "Temperature, Taste, Texture."

They do, however, introduce class members to the doshas because they're basic to eating and living an ayurvedic life.

"I might throw out the dosha terms by saying, 'This season we're in, you're in vata, or in you're in pitta, or you're in kapha.' I do a little discussion within that season, then we talk about what foods are best, regardless of your personal dosha, body constitution—whatever you want to call it—you can still eat with the seasons. You exercise, breathe, drink with the seasons. We talk about how it doesn't make sense to eat cold foods in winter, and why. How it doesn't make sense to have hot foods in summer, and why. Then we talk about the best times of day to eat."

But there's a bass layer to this song that is foundational. "Throughout all of this discussion is digestion. We just keep

"Together they lead classes through the ayurvedic maze, turning complicated concepts into simple, healthy steps."



coming back to digestion, what herbs, what spices, how you cook something can help you have the best digestion. Your health will be better because you're absorbing all the nutrients in food."

Kara adds that not all participants are deeply interested in ayurveda. "Sometimes they just want something a bit lighter so we did a class on Winter Soups. Everyone relates to the seasons,

and from there you get an understanding of the tastes, textures and temperature. You don't even need to know anything about ayurveda."

So, when people leave a SEASON-ING class, what do they walk away with?

"They understand," says Teri, "that their digestion is the most important thing to their overall health, that they can have their own impact by knowing that. They also walk away with skill sets on how to season based on health aspects, not only flavors. I'll discuss health components, and then

"Everyone relates to the seasons ... you don't even need to know anything about Ayurveda."

Yogurt-Barley Soup (Tanabour) | nourishing and soothing

- 1 Tbsp. ghee
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped fine or minced
- 4 cups broth (your choice)
- 1/2 cup barley (or brown rice)
- 1-1/2 cups whole milk yogurt
- 1 egg, optional
- 2 Tbsp. fresh mint, finely chopped
- 3 Tbsp. fresh flat leaf parsley, finely chopped
- Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
- Garnishes: more fresh parsley, toasted pine nuts, crispy fried onions

Melt ghee in a soup pot. Sauté onions until soft and translucent. Just as they start to brown and caramelize, remove from the pan and set aside. Add water/stock to same pot along with barley. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer, cover and cook until barley is tender (30-40 minutes). While barley is cooking, beat one egg well (if using) and mix with yogurt. When barley is cooked and tender add a tablespoon or two of stock/barley to yogurt mixture to temper. Slowly incorporate together. Stir in fresh herbs and serve warm or room temperature.

HEALTH TIPS | an ancient medicinal

A tradition Armenian remedy, usually given to quicken the recovery process from ailments. Yogurt provides a healthy amount of "good" bacteria in the digestive tract, a dose of animal protein plus calcium, vitamin B-2, B-12 and potassium. Helps the immune system fight infections as well as promote bone formation.

Barley contains the highest amounts of Beta-Glucan and Tocotrienol (a special quasi form of Vitamin E) that claims to cure many infectious diseases.

PANTRY TIPS 'n TECHNIQUES

- Substitute brown rice if gluten intolerant.
- Egg is optional, adds flavor and protein but when omitted is much lighter in taste.
- This soup is a great starter, refreshing in warm weather, soothing when its cold. Can be served hot, cold or room temp.
- Experiment with the balance of taste and texture. Most likely it's a new flavor, so it can even be used as a side dish to a hearty meat or topping to a vegetable dish.



SEASON-ING RECIPE CARDS with a sampling of commonly-used seasonings.

Kara will offer a pantry tip, for example, an easy way to do something that you can store in a freezer."

People seem to really love that. In fact, they love it so much that a few clients have asked for custom classes. So Teri and Kara came up with a theme of Mediterranean small plates ... again, ayurveda-inspired but creative takes on classic recipes.

There's also a calming health element to every class. "When we cleanse," explains Teri, "we tell them to be in a quiet place, to really be mindful, put your food away, have a flower, don't turn on the news, really breathe, and give thanks."

Teri recommends that clients eat out of a dedicated bowl during their one-week cleanse. "It could be something you get at Goodwill, it could be your grandma's old bowl, something that has some meaning to you. And you're going to eat every meal out of that vessel and you're going to be very mindful. And if emotions come up, think of digestion. Digest those feelings, eliminate them and move on, be in the moment. The past doesn't matter. Be right here, right now."

For more information or to sign up for Seasoning's cooking classes, go to seasoning-sonoma.com.

making snack foods



There is a frightening amount of truth in the shopworn adage, "You are what you eat."

Frightening because the American obesity rate in 2019 topped 35 percent (in McAllen, Texas—allegedly the fattest city in the country—it was close to 45 percent), and as of 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 30 million Americans had diabetes and another 84 million were pre-diabetic.

Coupled with all this is the fact that more and more Americans eat essentially one real meal a day, while snacking from wake-up to bedtime and beyond.

One report shows 27 percent of children's daily calories come from snacks—mostly salty, sugary "food" and sweetened beverages. For adults, the *Journal of Nutrition* reports, snacks comprised 24 percent of daily energy intake. In the last 30 years, says the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average number of snacks consumed per day has doubled, and the percentage of adults snacking on any given day hit 90 percent.

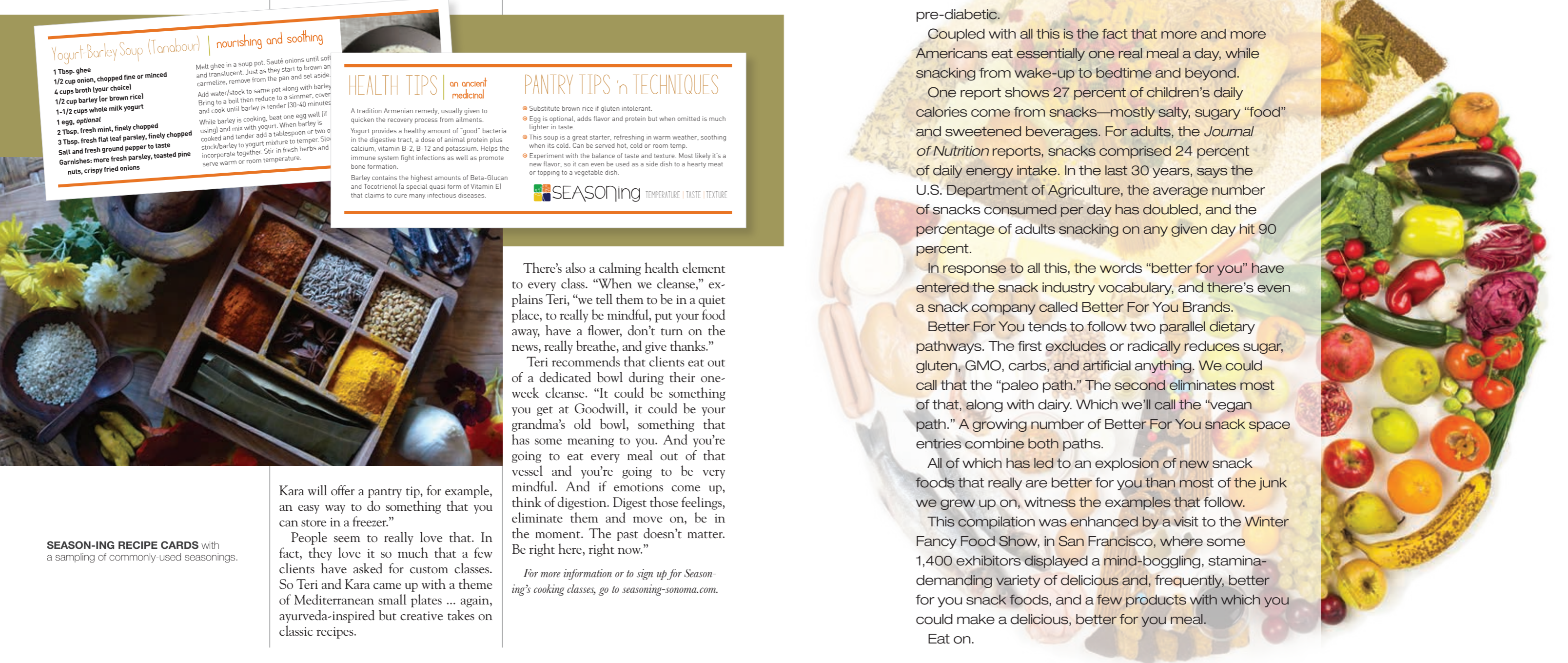
In response to all this, the words "better for you" have entered the snack industry vocabulary, and there's even a snack company called Better For You Brands.

Better For You tends to follow two parallel dietary pathways. The first excludes or radically reduces sugar, gluten, GMO, carbs, and artificial anything. We could call that the "paleo path." The second eliminates most of that, along with dairy. Which we'll call the "vegan path." A growing number of Better For You snack space entries combine both paths.

All of which has led to an explosion of new snack foods that really are better for you than most of the junk we grew up on, witness the examples that follow.

This compilation was enhanced by a visit to the Winter Fancy Food Show, in San Francisco, where some 1,400 exhibitors displayed a mind-boggling, stamina-demanding variety of delicious and, frequently, better for you snack foods, and a few products with which you could make a delicious, better for you meal.

Eat on.



Grazing
Certified Piedmontese Beef

Some people will argue that the words “beef” and “better for you” don’t belong in the same sentence, but those are usually people who don’t know anything about grass-fed, certified Piedmontese beef, perhaps the most sustainable, healthful, and (parenthetically) delicious beef on earth.

Piedmontese beef are native to the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy, and they represent a genetic anomaly in cattle that evolved naturally without what is called the “myostatin gene,” which inhibits overall muscle mass in cattle while allowing the aggregation of fat. Without that gene, Piedmontese beef become heavily muscled, with very little fat but extremely tender flesh because of shorter muscle fibers. The result is very little marbling—usually associated with and officially defining tender beef—and therefore low fat, unlike the prized meat of Japanese Wagyu beef, which is so heavily marbled its color is a pale pink. Piedmontese beef is unusually protein-dense, with low cholesterol and high omega-3 fatty acids.

Certified Piedmontese cattle have been imported into North America in very small numbers since the 1970s and now include herds in the northern Sacramento Valley. All certified Piedmontese beef cattle are grass-fed, raised on open range, free of antibiotics and growth hormones and with low levels of saturated fat. The result is a meat food source that is environmentally sustainable, better for you and arguably just as tasty as the far more expensive Wagyu beef.

The steak pictured here is a tenderloin filet from Sonoma Market, which carries various cuts of Piedmontese beef.



Snacking

A Handful of Raw Almonds

A one-ounce serving—about 24 almonds—has about 6 grams of protein, four grams of fiber, 14 grams of fat (mostly monounsaturated), lots of calcium, vitamin E, magnesium, riboflavin, calcium, potassium, and niacin, and 20 antioxidant flavonoids. And they’re tasty. What’s not to like?



Hydrating

HFactor Hydrogen Infused Water

Water used to be just water. Not any more. Not since we buy water from Fiji, France, Italy, and the Napa Valley. And not now when we can get hydrogen-infused water, which will, we are told, increase athletic performance, reduce inflammation, deliver powerful antioxidants, all because H₂O is now H+2O.

Does it really work? There’s not enough science to be sure, though some small studies are promising. If you want to test the claims, you can get six 11-ounce disposable plastic flasks (ouch!) of HFactor on Amazon for \$14.99 (or 23 cents per fluid ounce).



Snacking

Jelly Belly Fiery Five

There’s nothing remotely healthy about jelly beans, unless we’re talking about emotional health and the power of fun. Jelly Belly owns the gourmet jelly bean space, and they’ve got a great sense of humor with an endless and inventive variety of flavors, including the brilliantly produced Harry Potter Bertie Bott’s Every Flavor Beans.

Now the Jelly Belly Bean Wizards are out with a new flavor profile, the Fiery Five, the most pyrotechnic beans yet (including the “Carolina Reaper”), perfect for playing Bean Boozled.

Available wherever Jelly Belly beans are sold and from jellybelly.com.



Snacking

Eat Makhana

Americans eat about 17 billion quarts of popcorn every year. That’s a per capita consumption of 51 quarts for every man, woman, and child. That wouldn’t be a concern if most of that popcorn wasn’t slathered with butter, fake butter, salt, sugar, “cheese” flavoring, and other non-nutritious additives.

Which bring us to Makhana, a traditional snack food in India for centuries, with no added sugar, more essential amino acids than rice, wheat, soybeans or fish, and widely used in ayurvedic medicine because of its alkaline, anti-inflammatory qualities, high in potassium and antioxidants. It’s also non-GMO, vegan, gluten, sugar, nut- and grain-free, with 50 percent more protein and 20 percent fewer calories than popcorn.

Makhana comes from the seeds of the water lily plant, grown across Asia and prominently in the Indian state of Bihar.

The black seeds are harvested and roasted, then pop open releasing white puffs that are eaten plain or flavored with a wide variety of seasonings. This is the popcorn of India, but infinitely more nutritious and, it turns out, even more delicious.

Eat Makhana is a Bay Area company selling four different flavors of the puffs, not yet sold in Sonoma Valley but available online at eatmakhana.com.



Spooning

Edible Spoons

Single-use plastic is the bane of the industrial age and a threat to the very life of the world’s oceans. U.S. consumers dispose of 100 million single-use plastic pieces every day, and 91 percent of biodegradable plastic ends up in landfills instead of being re-used or recycled. What’s the solution? Eat your spoons, says Dinesh Tadepalli, whose company Planeteer launched Incredible Spoons after two years of testing consumer-friendly shapes and tastes, made from a combination of vegan ingredients, including wheat, oats, soy, corn, and chickpeas, in flavors that include vanilla, chocolate, caraway seed, and black pepper. The company is pumping out 50,000 spoons a day and plans to expand with forks, straws, and coffee stirrers. To offset carbon emissions, Planeteers plants 250 trees for every 100,000 spoons created. Spoons come in boxes of 100. To order, go to incrediblespoon.com.

Crunching

The Common Apple

You’re looking at about 50 calories, 14 grams of carbs, 2.4 grams of fiber, 170 mg of heart-healthy potassium, vitamin C, no cholesterol or sodium, no fat or trans fat, one a day keeps the doctor away, and they cost about \$2.49 per pound. Available pretty much everywhere there’s a market or an apple tree.



Sipping

Shaka Tea



A better-for-you taste of Hawaii at home, Shaka tea is derived from the leaves of the endemic mānaki shrub, harvested by hand, caffeine-free, sweetened only with monk fruit extract, and flavored with either mango-hibiscus, guava-ginger blossom, pineapple-mint, or lemon-lokelani rose.

A traditional medicinal in the islands, it's available in bottles, or in color-changing, dried-leaf tea bags, combined with lemongrass and butterfly pea blossoms.

Find it at Whole Foods or buy online at shakatea.com.



Smokin'

Angelo's Jerky

Angelo Ibleto is a Sonoma County institution, and his Arnold Drive deli with the fiberglass bull on the roof is practically a historical landmark. But what makes Angelo famous is the moist, flavor-packed pleasure of his jerky. He makes about 500 pounds of it a week in his Petaluma smokehouse, all of it grass-fed beef or turkey, in 11 flavors. It is arguably the best classic beef jerky you can buy and was one of the inspirations for Jon Sebastiani's wildly successful Krave jerky start-up.

All the jerky is priced the same—\$35 a pound—you can buy smaller bags at the deli (23400 Arnold Drive) or at the smokehouse (2700 Old Adobe Road), or you can place an online order (angelossmokehouse.com) that will be filled the following day.

Snacking

Peckish

What's the big deal, you ask. It's an egg. Ah, very perceptive (Well, two eggs, actually, and some seasoning. In a box.) And yet. It's much more than an egg. Peckish, one of the Sonoma Brands new snacks, demonstrates the brilliant complexity of simplicity. Because those two eggs are organic, free-range, perfectly boiled and perfectly peeled, which you know, if you eat eggs, is more than half the battle. Boil and peel a couple of eggs, you're talking 10 minutes, the egg is cratered where the shell came off with the egg white and there's a mess all over the kitchen. These eggs are conveniently packaged along with a tasty little tub of seasoning to dip into. Voilà: Breakfast. Find them at Oliver's Market in Santa Rosa or order online at perfectlypeckish.com.



Simplifying

Simplified Superfoods



Jamie Snyder's website says she wants you to, "Eat like you give a sh*t." That may be because Jamie gives a sh*t about her health, and yours. Recognizing the morning hurdle to assemble, measure, combine, and blend all the components of a heart-healthy, protein-packed, fiber and healthy-fat-filled breakfast smoothie, she simplified the process by prepackaging some of the essential components, like chia seeds, hulled hearts, flax seeds, and grass-fed collagen.

All you have to do is toss some fruit and greens into the blender, NutriBullet or powered-pulverizer of your choice, pour in a nutrient super pack with water or juice of choice and, BAM! You're out the door with a meal in your hand. She estimates all that will take you 90 seconds, which means that—since time is money—at \$5 for an individual packet (bulk blends are cheaper) you're coming out ahead. There are a variety of ingredient choices—some vegan—her website has a collection of yummy recipes and, for added enticement, her company, Simplified Superfoods, also launched the Merchant Giving Project, a payment processing service that helps female-founded businesses donate to charities that benefit women and children.

Right now, the business is strictly online, with a delightfully irreverent website and a growing community of Instagram fans. Check it out at simplifiedsuperfoods.com. And tell Jamie you give a sh*t about what you eat.

Indulging

Hu Chocolate Bars

Conceived during the birth of a Manhattan restaurant with a paleo/primal, gluten-free food focus, Hu (rhymes with Hue, as in human) founders couldn't find a chocolate that met their criteria, so they created their own paleo/vegan product and made it darkly delicious. The chocolate took off, expanded into multiple flavors

(cashew butter with pure vanilla bean; salty dark chocolate; hazelnut butter; almond butter; crunchy mint, and more), all of it organic and with the promise, "No weird ingredients ever."

Hu chocolates are available online from hukitchen.com.



Antioxidizing

RayZyn Dried Grape Snacks

So, you've been telling your spouse you need that second glass of cab, zin, syrah, or sangiovese every night to get your daily intake of resveratrol, the antioxidant-rich by-product of red wine grape skins.

Bad news. You can get more antioxidant by going straight to the grape and eating it, seeds, skin, and all. If that sounds sketchy, you haven't discovered RayZyns, the superfood snack made from premium wine grapes and dried in a proprietary process that toasts the seeds inside the skins creating a crunchy, sweet, vegan, alcohol- and gluten-free food. The product was developed by cardiologist Chris Cates and his Napa Valley vintner son, Andrew. Varietals include ChardonayZyn, CabernayZyn, MerlayZyn and a dark chocolate CabernayZyn truffle. Available all over Wine Country and from rayzyn.com.



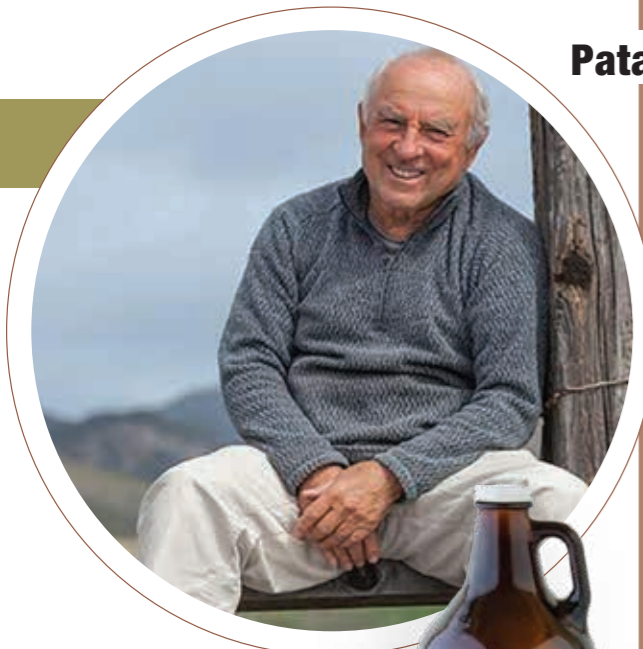
Energizing

KIZE Raw Energy Bar

This Oklahoma-based, spiritually propelled snack bar company proposes that "Every business offering should help you and someone else at the same time." Offering 12 different bars, with both vegan and keto options, flavors range from keto peanut butter cookie to almond butter chocolate sea salt to pumpkin butter crunch with pumpkin seeds. The bars are gluten- and dairy-free with about 6 grams of protein. A portion of profits supports a community of 1,000 orphaned children in Haiti.

Available in most CVS stores or online at kizeconcepts.com.





Regenerating
Patagonia Provisions

As you read this, you or someone you know owns at least one piece of Patagonia clothing or adventure gear. Founded in 1973 by (former) California dirtbag climber, surfer, self-taught blacksmith, and devoted environmentalist Yvon Chouinard, the company, wholly owned by its founder, has been valued by *Forbes* magazine at \$1 billion. Having devoted his life to resisting and reforming conventional corporate behavior, that valuation probably causes Chouinard profound embarrassment. So be it. But his wealth has also freed him to invest dramatically in reforming food.

“The food business is, as much as the apparel or energy industries, environmentally broken,” writes Chouinard. “It takes more from the planet than it gives back. We aim to find ways to get what we want to eat by working with nature rather than against it.”

To that end, Chouinard created Patagonia Provisions, a food and snack company (that also makes some pretty tasty beer) offering organic fruit and almond bars; organic savory seeds; grass-fed and free-range buffalo jerky; organic, precooked, and dehydrated bean and lentil soups; sustainably sourced smoked salmon; cooked and canned mackerel; smoked mussels, and the list is steadily growing. And don’t forget the beer, under the Long Root label.

All these products are premised on organic, regenerative agriculture, a set of practices some believe can reverse climate change through carbon storage, even the beer, which is made from a perennial, sustainable grain called “Kernza” with really deep, 10-foot roots that prevent erosion and protect soil.

The food provisions are available online (patagoniaprovisions.com) or at Sonoma Market, Glen Ellen Village Market, the Healdsburg Running Company, Hudson Goods & Greens in Napa, Oliver’s Market in Santa Rosa, REI stores, Whole Foods stores and, of course, every Patagonia retail store.

Patagonia Provisions aren’t cheap, but then neither is that Patagonia Nano Puff jacket you wear all the time.



Brining
Sonoma Brinery – GMO-free pickles

You’re craving an authentic, fresh, kosher dill, but there’s not a New York deli in sight. What to do? Sonoma Brinery, headquartered in Healdsburg, has the delectable answer—GMO-free, probiotic, barrel-fermented, salt-cured, garlic-flavored, Manhattan-style, artisan-made kosher pickles (along with tasty sauerkraut and pickled jalapeño escabeche). Zabar’s would be proud.

Available in most markets, including Safeway, Whole Foods, and Sonoma Market.



A BENEFIT FOR PETS LIFELINE

TAILWAGS & HANDBAGS

Friday, May 1, 2020, 11:30am - 2:00pm

WHAT

A springtime luncheon and silent auction featuring designer, vintage and one-of-a-kind handbags

WHERE

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST PREMIUM WINERY
1887
Buena Vista Winery
18000 Old Winery Rd, Sonoma, CA

HOW

For tickets, call or go online
707.996.4577 x111
www.petslifeline.org



Benefitting
Sonoma Valley Olive Oil

A limited-edition olive oil sourced from the Sonoma Valley and surreptitiously (it seems) sold by local cheese merchant Gary Edwards for the sole purpose of benefitting art programs in Sonoma Valley schools. Explains Edwards in an obscure confession, “We bottle only olive oil from Sonoma Valley and donate all profit to Art Education in Sonoma Valley. We love olive oil and use it every day. When we had the opportunity to grow our own trees and work with friends that grow olives, we decided to help our community schools and art programs, including music and the fine arts. We only sell oil that is produced in the Valley. Our production is limited and usually sold out right after bottling. We will continue to grow this venture with all profits producing future artists. Available at Sonoma Market. \$17 per bottle.

Savoring
Niloofer Mix

Americans are largely ignorant about Iran, its origins in the Persian Empire that covered most of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East, its vast influence on science, art, and culture, not to mention food. Now Niloofer Marin, a Chicago entrepreneur who grew up with an Iranian father, is here to educate us via a snack food portal into Iranian food with a unique trail mix blend (called “ajil”) and Persian-style roasted almonds.

The Niloofer-branded trail mix is vegan with dried white mulberries, figs, golden berries, cashews, almonds, walnuts, raisins, and no added sugar, chocolate kisses, or mini-Reece’s cups. The almonds are savory mixes with saffron, sumac, and shallots.

Yummy, healthy, and unique, Niloofer is available from Amazon Prime, from niloofarmix.com, or at Hudson Greens & Goods in Napa.



Celebrating
Milk Bar Pie

Christina Tosi reinvented the birthday cake and the American pie (hers is called “Crack Pie,” it’s that addictive), became famous and launched a burgeoning pastry empire from her first little Milk Bar in Manhattan’s East Village. Milk Bars are now opening coast-to-coast (not yet in the Bay Area), but you don’t have to visit one to taste the magic.

Some people claim there isn’t a better birthday cake anywhere. It comes naked, with no frosting on the side, its layers and architecture exposed, because the real artistry isn’t the frosting, it’s the actual cake. The shipping charge to Sonoma is a reasonable \$12, and it comes chilled and in perfect condition. There are endless options on the



website, none of which are particularly wholesome but, again, if most of the time you’re eating right, this is one of the best ways to eat wrong. Just go to milkbarstore.com.

Baking
Green Girl Bakeshop

It’s a given that ice cream preferences are a matter of taste. Duh! But the more important question these days might be is it possible that vegan/paleo ice cream can actually taste good? Without the real cream part of the ice cream? And what about a dairy-free, gluten-free, grain-free, soy-free, refined-sugar-free ice cream sandwich? What would that taste like? Sawdust?

Not if what we’re talking about is made by the Green Girl Bakeshop in Benicia. Green Girl is Lisa Stoy, a victim of food allergies who decided to create her own, non-allergenic dessert treats. What she created is truly delicious, checks all the Better for You boxes, and comes in a variety of flavors, including cardamom, vanilla bean, fresh mint chip, and reishi chocolate, all sweetened with maple syrup.

Available at Sebastopol Community Market, Penngrove Market, and other Bay Area outlets, and via the website at greengirlbakeshop.com.



Hydrating
Tap Water

Remarkably free of sugar, gluten, dairy, saturated (or unsaturated) fat, nitrites, nitrates, salt, artificial flavors, colors, calories or cost, tap water is a snacking bargain. Depending on where you live, whether you’re on municipal water or a well, and how close you live to the nearest dry cleaning plant, chrome-plating facility or TCE plume, you might want to have a glass tested for foreign compounds like arsenic, trichloroethylene, or PCBs, before you drink it.

