

AMERICAN FARE

HOSPITALITY, FOOD, AND CULTURE WITH CHEF CHARLIE PALMER

HARVEST TABLE
OPENS AT HARVEST INN

CULTURED
ARTISAN SPOTLIGHTS

RECIPES & COCKTAILS
CREATED WITH CRAFT AND CARE

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOCATION

Whitehall Lane Winery's famed "Leonardini Vineyard" is located behind The Harvest Inn and The Harvest Table by Charlie Palmer in St. Helena

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Although I started out as a chef and then a restaurateur, I always had it in my mind to be an hotelier. Hospitality might start at the table but it sure doesn't end there, and I knew I wanted to create a welcoming environment that went beyond the dining room. Now with two spectacular properties connected by the synergistic culture of Northern California, I knew it was my chance to spread out into other rooms and create the sort of engaging settings I enjoy myself when I travel: great food, great drink, great people, and deep-down comfort.

This magazine is my chance to introduce you to Harvest Inn and Mystic Hotel, and the talented teams that have taken up my chef-driven food and drink philosophy and built upon my deep love for hospitality. You'll get a look at Napa Valley's newest restaurant, our own Harvest Table; discover how we make our vermouth in-house at Burritt Room; and learn about the Sculpture Garden at Harvest Inn.

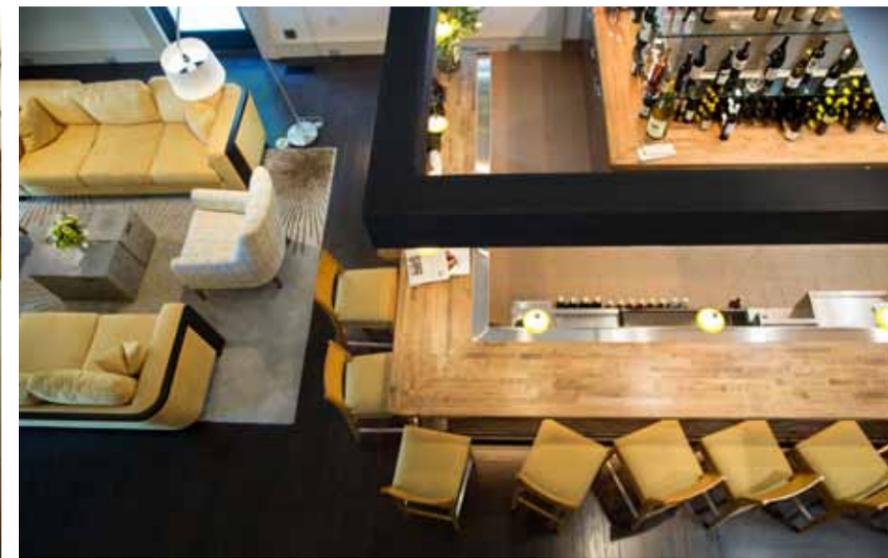
American Fare lets us do some storytelling so you can make a greater connection to the community around you during your stay and enjoy the local flavor—not just the one that makes it to the table.

Cheers,
Charlie Palmer

grounded

EXECUTIVE CHEF LEVI MEZICK ON KEEPING IT LOCAL AT HARVEST TABLE

His 20-year resume reads like a road map to dining destinations across the country and beyond, dotted with Michelin stars: Restaurant Daniel, Café Boulud, Oceana, Per Se, and the famed Enoteca Pinchiorri in Florence, Italy, to name a few. **Chef Levi Mezick** started at age 17 in the kitchen of Relais & Chateaux's Clifton Inn in Charlottesville, Virginia, drawn to cooking because he liked working with his hands. Today, those same hands dust the earth from salad greens pulled straight out of the culinary gardens at Harvest Inn, where Chef Mezick prepares clean, seasonal dishes for diners at the recently opened Harvest Table.



Both of my parents were fantastic cooks. Growing up, we had this rustic log cabin, no central heat, all wood-fired. My dad made us some great meals over a camp stove. It was that same sort of attraction to the ground that led me here, as well as the ability to work with such a talented and experienced chef as Charlie Palmer.

There's no denying that this property is pretty incredible—just walking around and discovering oranges here, kumquats there, edible plants everywhere you turn. I've never worked anywhere before with so much variety right at my fingertips. It's refreshing for a chef who spends a lot of time indoors to actually have the ability to walk outside and choose a fresh garnish for a dinner plate, just like that.

I started talking with Laura McNiff, our lead horticulturist, before I even got here. She sent me a list of the items she was growing on the property, and I couldn't wait to get started. The list is so long, all I could tell her was that I would do my best to try to use it all and keep up. Our conversations are very much a shared vision, and we learn a lot from each other. Laura knows best what grows well here and which plants we can or cannot trim. So when I shared my experience from France, where I worked with farmers and seed growers who cultivated varieties that had not been produced for a long time, we started to think about what new things we could grow on the property.

Beyond the fertile grounds of Harvest Inn, Napa Valley in general is a food mecca, and St. Helena in particular is home to so many micro farms. I recently visited a farm that grows 40 or 50 varieties of tomatoes. The bounty is overwhelming, and the farmer's passion for the land is truly inspirational.

IN THE KITCHEN

I've worked in a lot of kitchens, both large and small, but I have to say, we have a fairly perfect setup here. The cooking line is concise and efficient with a nice marble countertop. It's designed to be a show kitchen of sorts—we bring in guests for breakfast and cook some of the dishes right in front of them. There is a large window that overlooks one of the patios and lets in daylight. It also allows the guest to peek in and see what we are doing. I love the huge medieval fireplace in the dining room, and my dream is to someday integrate it into the dining experience, perhaps adding a spit so that one of the courses can be cooked over it.

COOKING STYLE

My style is American with a lot of French technique and influences; not so much about the butters and creams you find in the northern region, but a lighter, more olive oil-based style of cooking synonymous with southern European cuisine. Our goal in the kitchen is to break out of the rigidness of certain dishes and let the seasons guide us as much as possible. An entire dish may not change, but components of it will: when morels are done, we replace them with something else; when the asparagus is no longer growing in the Delta, we find a different vegetable that will work. As a chef, it is easy to find yourself babying a new dish on a menu, but we are learning to let that go and instead constantly change, reinvent, and play with different ingredients. Following seasons to the extreme makes the menu—and the flavors—much more fluid.

I'm delighted to be a part of the Harvest Table team. It's fun to take something from the ground, put it on a plate, and share that with our guests. The abundance of ingredients here really takes the use of local food to new heights and challenges me daily in new and exciting ways.



IN THE *garden*

GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY WITH HORTICULTURIST LAURA MCNIFF

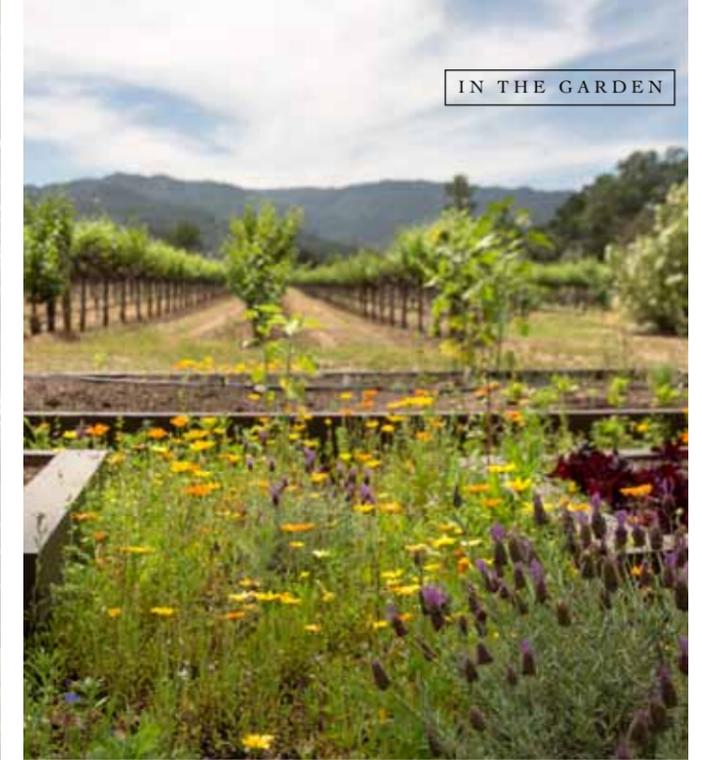


Planning, planting, grooming, maintaining, selecting, identifying, and now supporting Harvest Inn’s culinary program are just a few of lead horticulturist **Laura McNiff**’s duties, overseeing the eight-acre property that is a year-round cornucopia of blooms, botanicals, edibles, and color. Laura’s degree in environmental studies and planning with a minor in biology comes in handy, to say the least. It also helps that she is versed in Greek- and Latin-rooted plant terminology (“I can really geek out on plants,” she says), and extremely knowledgeable about native species conservation and restoration specific to Napa and Sonoma counties, where she has spent the past 13 years.

“The bottom line is that Charlie Palmer wanted guests to be able to appreciate the natural beauty of Napa Valley.”

It was love at first sight when Laura came to Harvest Inn. “The property itself is so unique, and it already had these incredible bones, with established trees and plants. I immediately started to think about how we can highlight and improve upon grounds as we go; to create landscapes without imposing on the natural order of things. “The bottom line is that Charlie Palmer wanted guests to be able to appreciate the natural beauty of Napa Valley.”

When she started almost a year ago, Laura’s emphasis was on enhancing the grounds of the hotel property. Now, with the restaurant opening, her focus has shifted to the garden. “I had never worked with a chef before and so it was a challenge, but also a lot of fun,” she admits. “I love learning about new things, and so incorporating these produce gardens and edible landscapes throughout the property has been very rewarding. My job is to find a complete balance that allows me to keep the grounds looking spectacular for our guests’ enjoyment while providing a wealth of produce for the restaurant.”



IN THE GARDEN

Napa Valley is, admittedly, best known for its wine, each appellation boasting myriad soil compositions befit for one grape varietal or another. “St. Helena is in its own microclimate,” explains McNiff. “We are in the lower valley, so we get incredibly hot summers and very mild winters, and fog influence as well. All of these elements create a long and perfect growing season.” She points out that they can start picking produce as early as February, continuing straight through to the end of November. But vast as the gardens may seem, McNiff must find the room to grow the produce organically and meet the kitchen’s needs. “There is only so much space, plus the redwood trees on the

property create a lot of shade. We have to introduce greens, tomatoes, and peppers that can thrive on only five hours of sunlight.”

Laura often collaborates with Chef Mezick, sharing ideas and mutual enthusiasm. “I might be talking to him about a specific variety of stevia, and I can see him start to get excited about how he’s going to cook with it. We both like to experiment, and so I am growing some interesting produce right now, like finger limes and Thai chiles, so that he can incorporate them into dishes. It is such a natural and fruitful collaboration that we both enjoy.”

GREENS IN THE REDWOOD GROVE GARDEN



ADAGIO ARUGULA

This is a spicy green, great for a shade garden because it requires only a few hours of sun.



CORVAIR SPINACH

A great green for salads and more intricate dishes alike; easy to grow anywhere and in any kind of soil. Incredible flavor.



BROCCOLI RABE

This beautiful green’s flavor can change with its growing conditions and soil type. Excellent in any salad.



RHUBARB

A colorful edible perennial—plant once and enjoy year after year. Great for the kitchen and the landscape.



RAINBOW CHARD

This brightly colored green is fun to see growing and tasty in salads, while the larger leaves can be used as wraps.



SHISO

Crisp and unique flavor, requires little sun, and a great addition to any kitchen garden. Different texture of leaves compared to most greens, so it is a great way to change things up in any dish.

Plated:

A Walk through the Forest



Last September, Mystic Hotel's Burritt Room + Tavern launched a new chef's table called BR+Table, a vehicle for showcasing an elevated version of Chef Luke Knox's progressive American cuisine. It has also become an avenue for supporting local artists. **Jennifer Issaverdens** of Issa Pottery collaborated with Chef Knox to design a line of pottery, drinking glasses, and centerpieces for the table.



Jennifer Issaverdens has traveled frequently her whole life, and along the way she pursued her passion for pottery wherever she went.

"I had always taken art and pottery classes, but when I moved to Boston, I really found my voice and excelled." Jennifer bought a kiln, started taking classes with master potters, and founded her own business, Issa Pottery. Then she moved to San Francisco, where she and her husband own a restaurant called Bouche, about a block away from Mystic Hotel.

When Bouche opened four years ago, Jennifer created all the place settings. "Guests would inquire about the plates, and slowly, by word of mouth, I started connecting with local chefs." Today, Jennifer works with over 20 restaurants, crafting unique pieces to grace their tables and complement their cuisine. "Chef Knox explained the inspiration behind his food for this experience as 'a walk through the forest.' I am from the Sierras and love to hike and camp, and so the ideas started to flood in. He wanted natural earth tones: golden greens,

stuccoed moss, yellows, and metallics, drawing from textures such as rock, slate, granites, and limestone. As I got to know him a little better, we started to mess around with different shapes and colors. He wanted a leaf design, and so I used an actual leaf I had dried that I found on vacation awhile back, pressing the veins into the clay."

Jennifer made about 150 pieces for the BR+Table in series of 18 to 20 for each piece. Each dining course is marked by a different plate. "Some are matte—musty and earthy; others glossy—bright, wet, and crisp. They are in a variety of shades and colors, inspired from my own walks, when I would take in all the colors, lighting, and even the smells, observing moss and ferns, mushrooms, and tree bark, or the way the shadows fell across a body of water."

In addition to pottery, Jennifer found herself working with another medium: glass. "We enjoy drinking wine, and so I started putting the empty bottles in the kiln to flatten them into cheese trays or mold them into bowls." She cut them in half, resulting in water glasses, and cut off the bottoms, placing candles on top as centerpieces. Both can be found on the BR+Table.

Experiencing a meal on her plates brings the process full circle. "I love to see the food on the plate—my 'canvas' comes alive, in a sense."

"I love to see the food on the plate—my 'canvas' comes alive, in a sense."



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STEAK

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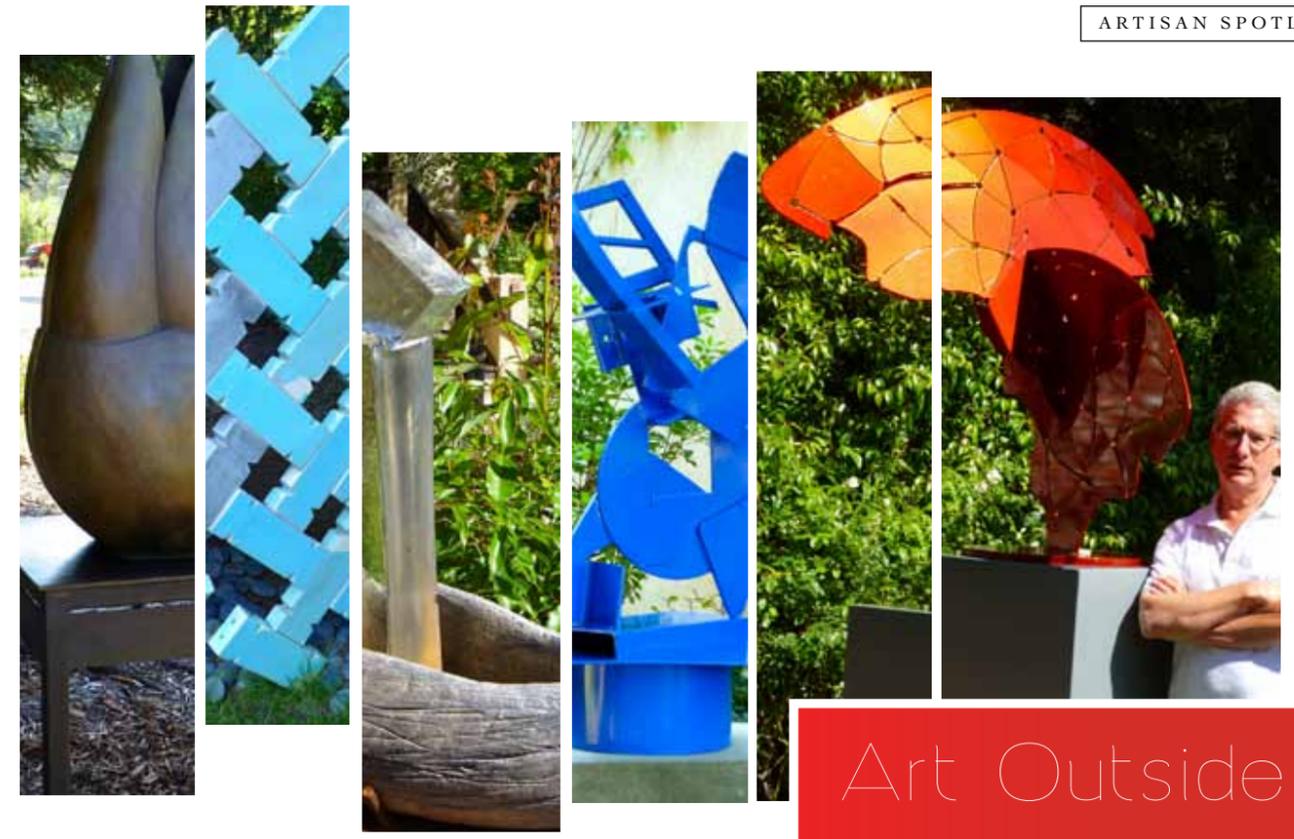
WASHINGTON

RENO

LAS VEGAS

NAPA

(LATE 2016)



Art Outside

Bay Area artist Amanda Klimek curated the collection of 26 sculptures that inhabit the grounds at Harvest Inn. Sculptor **Peter Dreyfuss** created four of the works of art. “I was attracted to his work for its lyrical and industrial qualities,” explains Klimek. “I really love the highly specific shapes and the sense of movement and light and space they evoke. In those terms, it fits right into the Napa Valley landscape.”

IN CONVERSATION WITH
Peter Dreyfuss

You work with several art media. Which artist sensibility developed first? I was a photographer at 14, painter from 15 to 30, and sculptor starting 15 years ago.

Define yourself in five words. Flypaperbrain with a distiller’s touch.

What role do you play in the scheme of things? Eventual compost will equalize all.

How do you work? I get two or three pieces going in different styles, working best off-hours in a quiet shop. Some pieces are quick and achieve integrity; some take a couple of months to change, ripen, and solidify.

Tool you can’t live without? A plasma torch involves the fourth state of matter. Vaporizing steel at 44,000 degrees is a distinct privilege.

Which artists do you most identify with? Those rooted in the 20th century, with influences that include Cubists, Constructivists, and abstract expressionists, such as Braque, De Staël, Noguchi, Leonard Baskin, David Smith, Anthony Caro, Frank Zappa, and the shimmering stillness of Mark Rothko.

What inspired the piece *Sphinx*? I read that space was curved. What does that mean in an infinite void? I started connecting the dots, whether they be stars or synapses. The result is the juxtaposition of soft concepts with hard steel, painted with automotive brightness, candy flake red sparkling in the sun. The piece is an intersection of two night skies, bent planes colliding in space.

Do you often create versions of your pieces in more than one color? No, but I often make two versions at a time—for contrast, sketching, and twinning the concept.

What are some of your favorite pieces in the sculpture garden? Wayne Shaffer’s gorgeous vessel bronzes; the glass in the boat by Nina Lyons is heavy and floating simultaneously; and Shawn HibmaCronan’s high chair overlooking the vineyards is evocative of the distant valley and Harvest Inn.

What is your favorite spot in Napa Valley? The Oxbow School on the river between downtown Napa and the Silverado Trail is a wonder, as is the Oxbow Market.

What is your dream project? An art/manufacturing village on four to five acres with art, fabrication, housing, gardens, developing a co-working and co-housing community.

If you weren’t an artist... I would be an oyster farmer/run an art gallery/learn high-energy physics.

Vermouth

A CLASS ON A GLASS OF SOPHISTICATION



The appeal of a cocktail with a witty name, a clever twist on an old standby, or a sexy garnish found only in some remote part of the world weighs heavily as one ponders a drink menu in half-light. Burrirt Room Bar Manager **Josh Trabulsi** raises an eyebrow in defiance. Sure, he enjoys the creative energy poured into a new drink, but he much prefers to perfect equations of the original classics.

To make the ultimate cocktail—Fred Astaire smooth, James Bond sophistication—you need to start with the best ingredients. When Trabulsi noticed that he was going through a lot of vermouth, he decided it was time to make his own.

Trabulsi had attended in-house vermouth seminars before, years ago even. It wasn't a new phenomenon but still required skill and attention to detail. "I had very specific flavor profiles in mind for the spring and summer cocktails," he explained. There is sweet vermouth and dry vermouth and varying degrees in between. "I have noticed a new push for rosé vermouth out there, but I find the ones on the commercial market are too sweet. We came up with a strawberry, thyme, and sage version that is just right." On the other hand, he also wanted an herbaceous bianco vermouth that had a little more sugar than a dry vermouth but not as much as a typical bianco. And so the Burrirt Room's second custom flavor is a bianco with a cucumber finish.



"I have noticed a new push for rosé vermouth out there, but I find the ones on the commercial market are too sweet."

Distillation is required in commercial vermouth. But in the quiet nooks of the Burrirt Room kitchen, Trabulsi and his team needed only to macerate and filtrate their concoctions. "It's pretty low tech and involves tea and coffee strainers to extract solids," he laughs, "but it tastes great."

For the bianco, a light sauvignon blanc serves as the base wine, to which a batch of botanicals—including wormwood, cassia bark, citrus peels, and lavender—are thrown in and left to macerate for a week. Harder spices such as clove and cinnamon are then added for an additional three to four days, after which the mixture is blended with an over-proof vodka and simple syrup. Using a

sous-vide machine, cucumber is extracted through rapid infusion. "This adds a fresh, bright, crisp flavor from the cucumbers that you wouldn't normally achieve if you just macerated them overnight."

For the rosé vermouth, strawberries are macerated in heated grappa, while dried oregano, thyme, and rosemary steep in a heated blend of chardonnay and rosé wine, with some vanilla bean for good measure. The process takes only a couple of hours before the mixtures are combined, this time with vanilla bean turbinado simple syrup.

Trabulsi recommends vermouth in a very special way with the Burrirt Room's vermouth service. "This order comes with a fortified wine copita—or small wine glass—a sidecar of seltzer and tonic, and coin-sized citrus peels so you can build your very own." Taking custom vermouth to a whole new level!

Eat + Imbibe

Roasted Carrots Buttermilk, Vadouvan, Granola

Courtesy of Harvest Table Executive Chef Levi Mezick

Serves 4

BABY CARROTS

Ingredients

16 baby carrots of mixed color
1 cup canola oil
8 cloves garlic, crushed but still whole
4 sprigs thyme
1 sprig rosemary
2 tbs butter
Vadouvan or curry spice to taste
Salt to taste

Method

Remove the top and tail of the carrots.
Clean with water, but do not peel.

Preheat oven to 250°F. Place canola oil in a large pan, add carrots, garlic, thyme, rosemary, and butter, and place in oven. Roast for 2 hours, basting and rotating every 15 minutes.

Drain off oil, put on stove, and baste carrots until evenly browned. Season with the curry spice and salt.



BLACK WALNUT GRANOLA

Ingredients

¼ cup honey
1 cup maple syrup
¼ cup light brown sugar
½ cup canola oil
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbs salt
2 tbs ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1 tsp ground cloves
3 cups walnuts
¾ cups rolled oats

Method

Heat honey, maple syrup, brown sugar, and oil to dissolve the sugar completely. Add vanilla extract, salt, and spices. Pour this mixture over walnuts and oats, mixing well to evenly distribute.

Divide on four parchment-lined sheet trays and bake at 250°F with a low fan, stirring every 20 minutes until oats are dry and crispy.

Let cool completely and store in an airtight container.

BUTTERMILK VINAIGRETTE

Ingredients

¼ cup buttermilk
2 tbs white wine vinegar
½ tsp coarse salt
¼ tsp black pepper
2 tbs extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup chopped fresh chives, tarragon, or dill
½ tsp chopped thyme and oregano

Method

Whisk together buttermilk, vinegar, salt, and pepper in a bowl to combine. Slowly whisk in oil and herbs.

Assembly

Place the buttermilk in the center of the plate with the carrots on top. Sprinkle the granola around.



Burritt Room + Tavern Sourdough Pancakes

Courtesy of Burritt Room + Tavern
Executive Chef Luke Knox

Yields twelve 6-inch pancakes

Ingredients

2½ tbs dry active yeast	1 tsp baking soda
¼ cup hot water	½ cup sugar
5 egg whites	½ cup egg yolks
4 cups pastry flour	8 cups buttermilk
½ tbs salt	1 cup melted butter
2 tbs baking powder	Nonstick pan spray

Method

Add the dry active yeast to the hot water to activate. Cover for about 10 minutes.

Whisk egg whites until small peaks begin to form. Reserve.

Mix all other dry ingredients in a bowl and whisk in the egg yolks, buttermilk, and melted butter. Add the yeast and lightly fold in the reserved egg whites.

To make the pancakes, spray a nonstick pan with the pan spray. Over medium heat, add the batter to the pan to your desired size.

Serve the pancakes with garnish of your choosing. Pictured here, the pancakes are served with fried Brussels sprouts, speck ham, and a creamy Dijon dressing.



Berlinetta

From the Burritt Room
Courtesy of Bar Manager Josh Trabulsi

Ingredients

1¼ oz Four Roses "Yellow Label" Bourbon
1½ oz Carpano Antica Formula Vermouth
⅛ oz Cynar Amaro
3 dashes in-house blood orange bitters
(or Fee Brothers West Indian Orange Bitters)

Method

Stir all ingredients together well and strain into rocks glass over large ice cube. Garnish with orange peel.

In Italian, *berlinetta* means little saloon. Our signature Berlinetta is a smooth aperitivo-style drink with Italian amaro and vermouth, bourbon, and house-made blood orange bitters. It is meant to be enjoyed in a comfortable saloon.

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CHECKIN' IN AT
MYSTIC HOTEL

Jack Mitchell is chairman of the Mitchells Family of Stores, a three-generation family business that operates men's and women's specialty stores in Connecticut, New York, and California. He has been recognized as one of the top retail visionaries of his time. In 2003, he wrote *Wall Street Journal* best-seller *Hug Your Customers: The Proven Way to Personalize Sales and Achieve Astounding Results*.

Why did you come to San Francisco? For business. It's very close to our Wilkes Bashford store in Union Square.

When did you discover the Mystic? When it was being renovated by Chef Palmer in 2012.

Do you have a favorite room at the Mystic? Room 814. It's on the eighth floor all the way down on the left-hand side.

Why do you keep coming back to the Mystic? I am treated well and they know who I am. Customer service is extremely important in my business, so I appreciate and recognize it elsewhere.

What's one special detail you like most? I really enjoy the quick continental-style breakfast. I like to call it a "special hug"!

Are you familiar with San Francisco? I studied at the University of California, Berkeley over 50 years ago! When we bought the Wilkes Bashford store in 2009, it was like coming home.

Do you have any favorite spots in the city? I enjoy heading down to the Wharf—it's a very special place in our great country.

CHECKIN' OUT AT
HARVEST INN

Clay and Carrie Mauritsen are the owners of Healdsburg's Mauritsen Wines, where six generations have been growing grapes since 1868. Clay is the winemaker, and Carrie is director of direct sales.

What brought you to Harvest Inn? Our 10th wedding anniversary last August. My husband surprised me with a weekend away.

Why did he choose it? He heard Charlie Palmer had recently purchased the property, and since we are big fans, Clay thought it would be fun to check it out.

Have you stayed at his other establishments? We have been to Mystic Hotel several times and live down the street from Hotel Healdsburg.

What struck you about Harvest Inn? That it was a building with a lot of character and beautiful gardens.

Did you have a favorite spot on the hotel grounds? Sitting on the patio in the back of our room overlooking the vineyards. It was so serene and peaceful.

Were there any special touches you enjoyed most? The staff was so friendly, and the manager sent us a bottle of Champagne with a note to help us celebrate our special weekend. It was a nice touch.

Harvest Table was not open when you were there. Are you excited to go back and try the food? Absolutely! We have eaten at many of Chef Palmer's restaurants: Aureole in New York and Las Vegas, his steakhouses in D.C. and Las Vegas, the Burritt Room + Tavern in San Francisco—and, of course, Dry Creek Kitchen many, many times. We can't wait to dine at Harvest Table!



Happenings

1. On Saturday, February 7th, Silver Oak Cellars held its annual Release Day on their grounds to celebrate the latest Cabernet Sauvignon vintage. Chef Palmer and his family were on hand to serve a very special pairing with the wines: Black Angus Filet Mignon with Truffle Sauce and Hanson Mills Cheese Grits. "Wine is meant to be enjoyed with food," says David Duncan, Silver Oak President and CEO. "So because of that, food is a critical element at Release Day."

2. The Burritt Room + Tavern held their latest Flights + Bites event on Sunday, March 29th. Quite a crowd gathered at this American Whiskey Edition to test out Mark Twain's adage that "too much of anything is bad, but too much good whiskey is barely enough." Guests tasted 10 brands and sampled cocktails made with each whiskey. Chef Luke Knox created dishes to pair with each cocktail.

3. The Art Hop-Up at Harvest Inn and Hall Wines happened on Sunday, April 19th. With both properties showcasing art installations of rabbits, this community event allowed guests to visit each place for art tours, artist panels, and a reception. Sculpture Garden Art Curator Amanda Klimek was thrilled with the turnout: "I've been doing gallery talks for years, and so it was nice to see such a large gathering assemble for this event."

4. The grand opening of the Harvest Table was celebrated in style on Thursday, May 14th. Guests mingled inside the space and on the patio for passed hors d'oeuvres and menu tastes of Beef Sliders, Shrimp & Grits, and Strawberry Shortcake, paired with Napa Valley wines. There were sunset tours of the culinary gardens and a three-piece jazz band on the patio. Guests included many Napa Valley winery luminaries.

Publisher
MICHAEL GOLDMAN

Editor-in-Chief
PAMELA JOUAN

Design Director
SETON ROSSINI

Managing Editor
CHRISTIAN KAPPNER

Assistant Editor
STEPHANE HENRION

Senior Copy Editor
KELLY SUZAN WAGGONER

Contributing Writer
PAMELA JOUAN

Photography
TYLER CHARTIER
PAIGE GREEN
DAMION HAMILTON
SHAWN HIBMACRONAN
ALISON REGAN
WES ROWE
RICHARD WOOD

Advertising Inquiries
718.288.8688

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321 Dean Street
Suite 1
Brooklyn, NY 11217

www.hautelife.com
info@hautelife.com

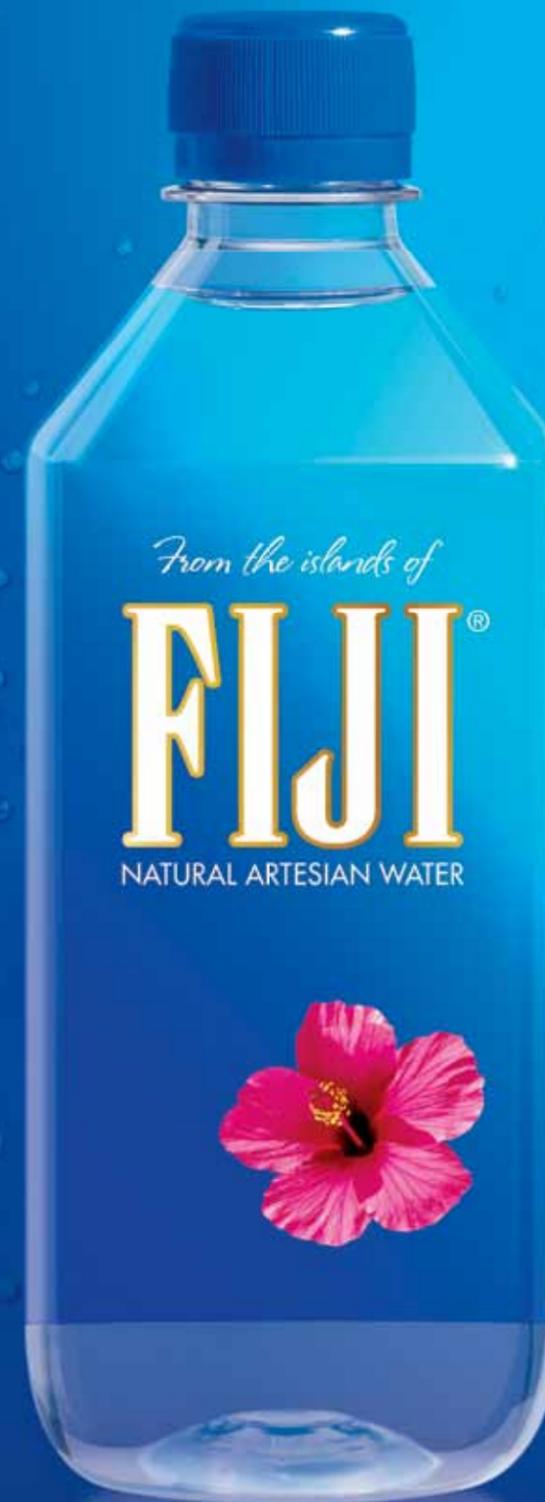
Subscription Inquiries
718.288.8688
subscriptions@hautelife.com
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MYSTIC HOTEL 415.400.0500
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