

Graze Anatomy:
Raising the Steaks on
Regenerative Beef
Pgs. 8 & 9

The Filth Element: Meet
the Wigglers Who Turn
Leftovers Into Life
Pgs. 10 & 11

THE *vine*



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The Vine Team

Director of Marketing

Rebecca Torpie

Editor

Andrea Budde

Art Director

Holly Pesta

Contributing Photographers and Designers

Jamie Ferré, Katrina Frey,
Patti Glenn, Seanan Maher

Content Contributors

Andrea Budde, Katharine Cole,
Chris Maher, Lindsey Pratt,
Sasha Scott

BRIARPATCH FOOD CO-OP

290 Sierra College Drive
Grass Valley, CA 95945
530-272-COOP

Rock Creek Plaza

2505 Bell Road
Auburn, CA 95603
530-65-FRESH

For store information, visit
briarpatch.coop



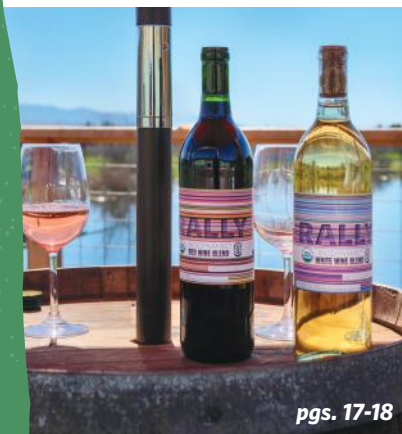
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On Our Cover:

Collage of past *The Vine* issues by
Seanan Maher

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Editor's Feature

By Andrea Budde, Vine Editor



We talk a lot about values at the Co-op. Recently, I've had the opportunity to step out from behind the retail aisles and onto the soil of a few of the farms and food businesses we work with. It was a chance to see BriarPatch's values not as statements on paper, but as something tangible and alive. Spoiler alert: it involves a lot of hard work, muddy boots and unwavering dedication to the land, the product and each other.

As consumers, we're often asked to take things on faith. We trust labels that tell us ingredients are organic or non-GMO. We believe claims about sustainability, animal welfare and environmental stewardship, often without ever seeing the process for ourselves. Spending time with our local producers offered something increasingly rare: the chance to see how the proverbial sausage is made.

My first stop was Tsar Nicoulai Caviar, located just outside of Sacramento, where massive white sturgeon glide through enormous tanks in a scene that feels equal parts prehistoric and futuristic. Watching dozens of caudal fins break the water's surface was both humbling and a little intimidating. More importantly, it was an opportunity to witness firsthand the care, innovation and long-term thinking required to produce food responsibly and sustainably. We'll be sharing more of Tsar's remarkable story and their

unique approach to aquaculture in our Winter issue, so be sure to look for it.

Next came Sweet Earth Worm Farm in Grass Valley, where food scraps from our Grass Valley store are transformed into nutrient-rich compost with the help of an army of industrious red wiggler worms. Standing among the towering piles of compost, it was hard not to feel proud knowing that materials once destined for the waste stream are instead being returned to the soil to support future life.

It's not glamorous work. In fact, at times it's a decidedly smelly business. But seeing those systems in action left me with an immense sense of pride to be part of an organization committed to closing loops rather than creating them.

“ Spending time with our local producers offered something increasingly rare: the chance to see how the proverbial sausage is made. ”

Taken together, these visits reminded me that our values aren't abstract aspirations. They exist in the vibrant and sustainable organic and natural foods we stock, in the inclusive and resilient regional food system we're helping build and in the equitable and expanding cooperative economy we

continue to support. Those are big ideas.

But sometimes they look surprisingly simple: a fish breaking the surface of the water, a handful of compost teeming with life or a farmer putting in another long day because they believe this work matters.

Seeing that up close has made those values feel less like statements and more like the promises we're working to keep.



BriarPatch staff watching the sturgeon swim at Tsar Nicoulai Caviar.



Oh, The Places Co-ops Can Take You

By Chris Maher, CEO

The first co-op in which I ever stepped foot was the Berkshire Natural Foods Co-op in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. When I was in high school in New York, I had a friend whose family had a small camping trailer parked in upstate NY, close to the three-way border between

within walking distance and the one that was regarded as decidedly cooler than the corporate Smith's grocery store (though as a 17-year-old, I was not entirely sure why). However, after a few visits, I began to understand what made the store different from any other I had shopped or from the regional chain store

had gone through its own expansion. Our groceries came in a paper bag that was branded with the regional co-op association logo. The association was a federation of area food co-ops, working together to expand the impact of their individual missions, and the member co-ops were listed on the side of the bag. After a quick glance at the map, we retooled our travel plans slightly to try to visit as many of the stores as we could and began our "co-op honeymoon."

Back in New Mexico the following year, I continued my work with La Montañita, helping to develop their food service departments and support the expansion to two more stores in Santa Fe and Gallup, and a distribution hub that sought to distribute local and organic products throughout the Rio Grande Valley. In 2007, I learned about BriarPatch's expansion to a full-service store and joined the team as the food service manager. In that time, the small regional association in New England had joined together with others like it across the country, including the Pacific Co-op Grocers Association of which BriarPatch was a founding member, and formed the National Co-op Grocers or NCG. I served thirteen years on the Board of Directors for NCG and spent the last three as chairperson. I am grateful for the ever-expanding community that co-ops have offered to me and am proud to continue to work toward including as many people as possible in experiencing its benefits.

"There was a focus on food, farms and community as an interconnected community that I had never even considered as a city kid."

Connecticut and Massachusetts, along the side of one of the many small lakes that dot the rounded mountains in that area. As soon as one of our group of friends had a driver's license, we would go up there and camp nearly every weekend from late Spring through early Autumn. The store was small and funky, tucked on the corner of an alley at the end of a dead-end street off Great Barrington's main thoroughfare. It was hard to find and had no parking, in other words, utterly typical of a food co-op in the 1980s.

After graduating, I moved to New Mexico to attend UNM in Albuquerque and lived on campus, which is situated along old Route 66, the former main drag of that city. For dorm residents, La Montañita Food Co-op was (and still is) one of two grocery options

in New York I had worked in during high school. There was a focus on food, farms and community as an interconnected community that I had never even considered as a city kid.

Within a few years, I would find myself working at the co-op, which had expanded to a second location in the North Valley of the city. The co-op had helped me deepen my understanding of food and community and I was proud to become both a member and a worker supporting it.

When I got married, my wife Dré and I found ourselves back in the East for a brief time. We had delayed our honeymoon and decided to take it as a camping trip throughout New England. Our first stop was in the mountains of Western Massachusetts and we paid a visit to the Berkshire Natural Foods Co-op. By this time, the small funky store





Choosing Differently

By Lindsey Pratt, BriarPatch Board President

One of the things I appreciate most about BriarPatch is that it's a place where thoughtful choices have a chance to stand out. Sometimes those choices happen in the boardroom. Sometimes they're made by our buyers. Sometimes they're made by the producers and partners who ultimately end up on our shelves.

Take, for example, Rally Wines and Forward Farms, two of the stories you'll find in this issue. At first glance, they don't seem to have much in common, and neither story begins with the product, but instead begin with people deciding there might be another way to approach something.

A partnership between Frey Vineyards, BriarPatch Food Co-op, and Ukiah Natural Food Co-op, Rally is a new line of wines built around a shared set of values, including cooperation among cooperatives, and a belief that these types of collaborations create things that might not exist otherwise. With a focus on regenerative beef, Forward Farms is asking different questions about what ranching can look like, working with independent producers and regenerative grazing practices in a way that tries to support both healthy landscapes and healthy businesses.

Stories like these, and seemingly disparate products like these, are one of the many things I've come to

appreciate about BriarPatch—the ability to weave together different ideas, goals and products into a thoughtfully curated grocery store that reflects the values we care about. The sum being more than the parts, the parts being more than the sum.

As a Board, we spend a fair amount of time talking about our Ends Policies,

Maybe that's why these two stories have stayed with me.

There is no single recipe for building something that lasts. Every farmer and food business finds their own way. Some focus on vegetables, others on wine or livestock. Some are preserving traditions that have been passed

What are "Ends"? Ends are statements that describe the purpose of our organization and why we exist. Ends define the results of our work, who benefits from it and what the value is for them.

which is admittedly not the most exciting phrase in the English language. But what those conversations really come down to is asking ourselves what kind of cooperative we're trying to be, and what kind of impact we hope BriarPatch has in the communities we serve.

That doesn't mean every product on our shelves needs to carry the weight of the world. Sometimes you're just stopping in for pasta, yogurt, or coffee. But over time, the choices that a cooperative makes begin to tell a story. Which producers do we build relationships with? Which ideas do we make room for? What kinds of businesses and products do we want Owners to discover?

down for generations, while others are experimenting with ideas that are entirely new. Most, in one way or another, are doing a little of both.

BriarPatch is the kind of place where all of those approaches have an opportunity to coexist.

As you read through this issue of *The Vine*, I hope you enjoy learning more about these producers. Their stories are certainly about beef and wine, but I also think they're about something a little bigger: the value of people who are willing to ask thoughtful questions, build good partnerships, and occasionally try a different way of doing things.



OWNERS' Info



Why Be a Co-op Owner?

Owner Appreciation Months

Each year, Owners can take 10% off one shopping trip in February, April, July, September and December. This schedule is subject to change.

5% off all BriarPatch brand supplements. Be well and save!

Save on Wellness

Save up to \$10 automatically at the register on select wellness products. Look for the green tag!

Senior Discount

Owners 68 and wiser may apply to receive 2% off every day and 5% on Wednesday.

Be a PatchWorks Volunteer

Receive 15% off on up to two shopping trips each month when you volunteer at select nonprofits.

Special Orders

Owners can get special savings for case discounts.

Check out more Owner benefits at briarpatch.coop/join-the-co-op

Board Members and Meetings

Board of Directors

Check our website for our Board roster.

To contact all the Directors, email: directors@board.briarpatch.coop. For individual Directors: first name and last initial (i.e. rachelb@board.briarpatch.coop). Letters may be left at Customer Service.

Upcoming Board Meetings

The upcoming meeting agenda is available at least one week prior to the meeting. Owners are welcome to attend Board Meetings. Please contact Mary Hunter for more information: maryh@briarpatch.coop.

No public Board meetings this quarter. Regular meetings will resume in December.

Board Committees

To find out more about the Board's standing committees, please add the following Committee names to the subject line when you email us at directors@board.briarpatch.coop.

Board Development Committee
Finance Committee
Executive Committee
Governance Committee

Ends Policies

BriarPatch Food Co-op exists so that members of the communities in which we live, work and serve will benefit in ever-increasing ways from:

- Vibrant and sustainable organic and natural foods grocery stores;
- An inclusive and resilient regional food system;
- An equitable and expanding cooperative economy.

Give Back & Save!

Save 15% on your shopping trip at BriarPatch when you volunteer 6 hours with a local nonprofit.

Join the team!

briarpatch.coop/patchworks

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VOLUNTEER TEAM



The Anti-PSL Drink Guide

Some of us just don't like pumpkin spice. It doesn't mean you're a downer on the joy of jumping into a pile of leaves in your L.L.Bean flannel or admiring gourd tablescapes. You love fall. You're a fallist. You just can't get behind a flavor that's become an overkill amalgamate of its former self. Here are a few options that will still give you the fall fuzzies without the corporate creep.



Hot Apple Cider - Who needs PS when you have the ultimate fall classic in your back pocket? Simply heat cider and enjoy. Want to get freaky? Simmer with a cinnamon stick, orange slices and a few cloves.

Fool me once, fool me twice...
it's still pumpkin spice.
OR Ditch the pumpkin spice.
Fall will suffice.



Hot Cocoa Tea - Swap the plain water for tea! Try Earl Grey or English Breakfast for a nice little twist not too far off the usual path. You can still top off with your favorite milk for a bit of extra heft. Almost a latte, but better.



(NA) Hot Toddy - Whether or not you choose to imbibe, a toddy is simply a lovely thing to warm the bones after a long day of lollygagging at Apple Hill. Use NA or diesel whiskey, honey or maple syrup, squeeze of lemon, your favorite tea, and if you wish to add some spice, well then, get spicy.



Bovril - If you've ever been to a Scottish football game, you know. This is your personal dupe of the brand name, of course, but that gives you creative license. Beef bone broth, a splash of Worcestershire or coconut aminos and maybe a shake of Nooch.

GRAZE ANATOMY

Raising the Steaks on Regenerative Beef



Get your Muck boots on, 'cuz we're headed into the pasture for this one, folks.

Whether or not one should eat beef is about as debated these days as whether 49 should get another roundabout. But one thing most people can agree on is that not all beef is created equally. Case in point is Forward Farms, one of the ranching groups BriarPatch has partnered with to bring shoppers beef that comes with a side of soil science.

Based in Bozeman, Montana, Forward Farms traces its roots back to a family

livestock operation dating to 1901, though the consumer-facing brand officially launched in 2019 in response

“*The goal is less about scaling and more about replicating successful systems in new places.*”

to growing demand for transparency and environmentally conscious farming practices. Today, the company remains family and employee owned and works with 53 partnered farms and ranches across the West.

The ranches practice regenerative grazing, an approach designed to improve soil health, increase biodiversity and sequester carbon. It's a far more impressive thing to do with your land than keeping a single tomato plant alive though August.

The company's grazing system is modeled after the movement patterns of bison, the original lawnmowers of the American West. Historically, bison grazed intensely for short periods before moving on and allowing grasslands time to recover. Forward Farms mimics that process by rotating cattle through smaller pasture sections in carefully managed intervals. According to the company, the result is healthier pasture systems, stronger root



Forward Farms owners Derek and Jeff Kampfe carry on the family legacy of raising livestock.

structures and improved soil resilience over time.

As Jeff Kampfe, Co-owner and Sales Director of Forward Farms explained, the goal is less about scaling and more about replicating successful systems in

new places. This honestly feels refreshing in a world where “growth” usually means adding an app nobody asked for.

Of course, regenerative agriculture has become one of those food terms that can sometimes feel a little slippery. Forward Farms attempts to put measurable data behind the claim by focusing heavily on carbon and soil metrics. Forward Farm’s beef operation is carbon neutral, meaning the amount of carbon being sequestered through land management offsets the emissions generated during cattle production.

The company also points to research conducted with Utah State University comparing its grass-finished beef to

grain-fed beef included in the study. According to the findings, the grass-finished beef contained 26% more iron, 1,500% more beta carotene and 30% less total fat. That’s right. Your steak might actually have a résumé now.

Forward Farms also sees itself as part of a broader effort to support independent ranchers at a time when much of the American meat industry is controlled by just a handful of massive companies. Rather than expecting ranchers to become marketers and distributors on top of caring for the animals and land, the company operates as a collective system that helps smaller producers reach retailers more effectively.

Because sometimes “grass-fed” isn’t just about what’s on the label. Sometimes it’s about rebuilding soil, supporting regional agriculture and making sure the pasture has a future too.

No-Bull Ribeye

Serves 4

Crispy edges, sizzling garlic and enough herbs to make your cutting board smell like a steakhouse garden party. This ribeye recipe keeps things simple, letting rich, grass-finished beef do most of the heavy lifting.

- 4 ribeye steaks (we suggest Forward Farms ribeye); 8-12 oz per person
- 8 Tbsp granulated garlic
- 8 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 8 Tbsp coarse salt
- 4 Tbsp pepper (to taste)
- 4 Tbsp beef tallow
- 4 sprigs rosemary
- 4 Tbsp thyme

Kosher salt & fresh cracked black pepper

Remove steaks from refrigerator 30-45 minutes before cooking to get to room temperature. This is also a good time to start grill, if using charcoal or gas to allow the grill to get to a high

temperature on one side and set the other side of the grill to medium low.

Pat steak dry with paper towels.

For each steak, season one side with 2 Tbsp granulated garlic, 2 Tbsp coarse salt and 1 Tbsp crushed black pepper (or to taste).

In a saucepan, gently soften the tallow with rosemary, thyme and thinly sliced garlic.

Brush the tallow mixture over both sides of the steak.

When grill is hot, add steak and sear 2-3 minutes on each side to form a nice crust.

Place the steak on the warm side of the grill and rest for 10 minutes and to get to desired internal temperature. 120-130° is rare, 130-135° medium rare, 135-145° medium, 145-155° medium well and 160° + well done.

Slice steak against the grain and serve.



The Filth Element: MEET THE WIGGLERS WHO TURN LEFTOVERS INTO LIFE

A small but mighty front-end loader digs into a steaming pile of compost, carving out a hollow in the center. Sweet Earth Worm Farm owner Corinne Thomsen backs her Subaru, towing a trailer full of bright yellow garbage cans, toward the opening. Gloves and muck boots on, she begins dumping food scraps from BriarPatch Food Co-op into the pile.

It's a typical Monday at Sweet Earth Worm Farm in Grass Valley. For Thomsen, this thriving ecosystem grew from a shared passion for education and a classic backyard challenge: rebuilding tired soil.

Three years ago, Thomsen and Uta Reimnitz, both teachers at Yuba River Charter School, were running the school's gardening program together. At the same time, it just so happened that Thomsen and her family were establishing their own home garden. Confronted with nutrient-depleted dirt at home, Thomsen began researching how to naturally regenerate the earth and build true soil health.

"It really was me and Uta together," Thomsen said of the gardening class, "but I was the one who became obsessed with worms. It was really just because I wanted to learn about soil health and how to grow our plants and veggies better."

What began with a single pound of worms quickly doubled, then quadrupled, transforming their backyard into biologically active, thriving soil.

"We built that soil up into biologically living soil, and now we have an awesome garden growing," Thomsen explained, due largely to the worms and their nutrient-dense castings.

Recognizing the incredible power of those quiet underground workers, Thomsen and Reimnitz built a business that grew directly out of the classroom, using worms to teach first through fifth graders about the hidden world beneath

their feet. While Reimnitz has since stepped back from the commercial side of Sweet Earth to continue teaching, education remains at the heart of the farm's mission.

"Most people don't understand how important soil health is and how important living soil is," Thomsen stated. "It helps mitigate global warming, lets you sequester carbon, and helps plants and foods grow without chemicals and pesticides. Getting that info to youth and adults is important."

Today, that passion has grown into a thriving local business, powered in part by BriarPatch's organic food scraps.

Every week, Thomsen collects between 1,000 and 1,500 pounds of produce trimmings and kitchen scraps from BriarPatch. The mix changes with the seasons.

"It's very seasonal," she said. "Like, you get pumpkins in October, and right now we're getting lots of corn."

By diverting those scraps, Sweet Earth helps close an important local environmental loop. Sasha Scott, Sustainability Coordinator at BriarPatch Food Co-op, says keeping food waste out of landfills has a measurable impact.

"When food waste is tossed into a traditional trash bin and sent to a landfill, it gets trapped without oxygen," Scott described. "Instead of breaking down naturally, it decomposes anaerobically, creating methane gas, a greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide. By diverting these scraps to local farms, we are completely changing the environmental outcome."

On Thomsen's farm, those scraps become part of a fascinating process known as "worm herding." Long



A worm's job is no small potatoes.



Thomsen unloads food scraps from BriarPatch.

windrows of compost are built outdoors, then fresh BriarPatch scraps are placed along one side. Drawn by the fresh food, the worms naturally migrate toward the feast, leaving behind a rich trail of castings.

The remaining material is carefully shoveled into a mechanical shifter. A double-layered screen gently catches delicate cocoons and eggs so they can return to the piles, while a finer screen separates the finished castings.

The result is black gold. Unlike traditional compost, which still contains recognizable

pieces of organic matter, worm castings are densely packed with beneficial microbes and nutrients. Thomsen also produces a compost-and-casting blend, along with live worms for gardeners interested in starting their own backyard bins. For home gardeners, her advice is simple. Place a handful of pure castings directly at the base of a plant or into the planting hole before watering. The compost blend can be mixed into the top couple of inches of soil as a nutrient-rich top dressing.

"Both will give it just a jolt of life," Thomsen said. She has run side-by-side greenhouse experiments with and without her castings, and the results are unmistakable. "It's huge. It's totally obvious which got it."

While the business continues to expand with additional windrows, Thomsen is intentionally keeping her focus close to home.

"We're getting all kinds of people coming back, repeat customers. It's great," she humbly boasted. "I'm intentionally not



Around one million red wiggler worms live in the windrows at Sweet Earth Worm Farm.



Food scraps are added to the middle of the compost pile, then reburied.

shipping anything anywhere or selling outside of our community because I want to start with just local sales and local understanding how important this is to soil and gardens."

The next time you enjoy a piece of local produce from BriarPatch, consider the invisible circle behind it. From nearby farms to co-op shelves, from the prep kitchen to Sweet Earth's compost rows, our local food system isn't simply a series of transactions. It's a living cycle that transforms yesterday's scraps into tomorrow's harvest.



Eat the Rainbow: Fall Edition



Aim for three colors on every plate. If it looks like fall, it tastes like fall.



EMBER TONES — ORANGE & RED

Start with fire.

Roasted delicata squash, crimson beets, garnet sweet potato — these are the colors of a dying flame and the flavors to match. Earthy, sweet, deeply caramelized when you let the oven do its work. A drizzle of good olive oil and high heat is all they need to become the centerpiece of your plate.

Produce: Delicata squash · roasted beets · sweet potato · persimmon

Flavor: Earthy, sweet, caramelized

Pairs with: Duck, lentils, wild rice



HARVEST GOLD — AMBER & YELLOW

Mellow and rich.

Butternut squash, golden beets, the last of the season's corn — gold on a plate feels like warmth you can eat. These are the quiet, nutty flavors that hold the whole dish together, rounding out sharper notes and filling the plate with substance. Don't skip the Honeycrisp apple; a little sweetness makes everything else pop.

Produce: Butternut squash · golden beets · corn · Honeycrisp apple

Flavor: Nutty, mellow, lightly sweet

Pairs with: Pork, farro, aged cheddar

The farmer's market doesn't lie: when autumn arrives, it arrives in color. From the deep ember of roasted beets to the quiet cream of a caramelized parsnip, fall produce is as beautiful on the plate as it is on the table. Here's how to build a dinner worth looking at—organized by the colors nature handed you.



FOREST GREENS — DEEP & DARK

The plate needs this.

Lacinato kale, blistered Brussels sprouts, fractal-beautiful romanesco — fall greens are nothing like their summer cousins. They're tougher, more bitter, and wildly better for it. A little char, a handful of hazelnuts and a squeeze of lemon and they become the thing everyone asks about. Don't fear the bitter. Lean into it.

Produce: Lacinato kale · Brussels sprouts · romanesco · shishito peppers

Flavor: Bitter, bright, vegetal

Pairs with: Salmon, white beans, hazelnuts



JEWEL TONES — PURPLE & BURGUNDY

The unexpected guest.

Purple cabbage braised with vinegar. Eggplant gone silky in the oven. Concord grapes reduced to a sauce. The jewel-toned produce of fall is the most dramatic and the most underused — bold, slightly tangy and stunning against the oranges and golds beside it. One purple element on the plate and suddenly everything looks intentional.

Produce: Purple cabbage · eggplant · Concord grapes · purple carrots

Flavor: Tangy, bold, slightly astringent

Pairs with: Lamb, chickpeas, pomegranate molasses



QUIET NEUTRALS — WHITE & CREAM

The unsung hero.

Parsnips roasted until their edges crisp. Sunchokes with their nutty, artichoke-like sweetness. Fennel gone tender and mild. Cream-colored produce asks for nothing and gives everything — it's the resting note on the plate that makes the other colors sing. Brown butter is the only rule. Everything else is up to you.

Produce: Parsnips · sunchokes · fennel · cauliflower

Flavor: Subtle, starchy, anise-tinged

Pairs with: Chicken, gruyère, brown butter

Hue Are What You Eat: A Palette for the Palate



Seared Duck Breast with Beet Purée & Persimmon

Serves 2

Dramatic, elegant and built for fall. The beet purée can be made a day ahead — dinner comes together fast.

- 2 duck breasts
- 3 medium red beets, scrubbed
- 1 persimmon, very thinly sliced (we like Fuyus)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry red wine
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chicken stock
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs
- Kosher salt & fresh cracked black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Wrap beets individually in foil with a drizzle of olive oil. Roast until completely tender, about 55-65 minutes. Cool slightly, peel and blend with butter and a pinch of salt and pepper until smooth. Set aside. (This can be done a day ahead and gently rewarmed before serving.)

Pat duck breasts dry. Score skins in a crosshatch pattern, cutting through the fat but not into the meat. Season generously on both sides with salt and pepper.

Place duck skin-side down in a cold, dry skillet. Turn heat to medium and cook undisturbed for 12-15 minutes until skin is deep golden and most of the fat has rendered out.

Flip duck breasts and add thyme sprigs. Cook 4-5 minutes for medium (130°F internal). Transfer to a cutting board and rest for 5 minutes.

Pour off most of the duck fat from the pan (Pro tip: Save this liquid gold for roasting vegetables!). Add red wine and chicken stock, scraping up any browned bits. Simmer over medium-high until reduced by half, about 4 minutes.

Spoon warm beet purée onto each plate. Slice duck and fan over the purée. Lay persimmon slices alongside and drizzle with the red wine reduction. Serve immediately.

Fuyu persimmons (the squat, firm variety) work best here. If unavailable, thinly sliced Honeycrisp apple is a beautiful substitute.



Slow-Roasted Pork Shoulder with Butternut Squash and Kale

Serves 4

Low effort, high reward. The oven does everything. Start it Saturday afternoon and dinner is ready when you are.

- 3 lbs bone-in pork shoulder
- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 2 Honeycrisp apples, cored and quartered
- 1 large yellow onion, sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 cup dry hard cider or white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 fresh rosemary sprigs
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 4-5 cups Lacinto kale, stems stripped and leaves roughly torn

$\frac{1}{4}$ fresh pomegranate seeds

Kosher salt and fresh cracked black pepper

Prepared polenta or soft polenta, for serving

Preheat oven to 325°F. Pat pork shoulder dry and season generously all over with salt and pepper.

Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Sear pork on all sides until deeply browned, about 4 minutes per side. Remove and set aside.

Add onion and garlic to the pot. Cook 3 minutes until softened, scraping up any browned bits. Pour in cider or wine and let it bubble for a minute. Add chicken stock, thyme and rosemary.

Return pork to pot. Cover tightly and braise in the oven for 2½–3 hours, until meat is completely tender and

falling from the bone and the internal temperature is 195–205°F.

In the last 45 minutes of cooking, add butternut squash and apple to the pot around the pork. Cover and continue braising until the squash is fork-tender.

In the last 15 minutes, stir in the kale directly into the braising liquid. Cover and let it wilt into the pot, soaking up the pork and apple juices.

Remove pork and let rest 10 minutes, then shred or slice. Serve over soft polenta with the squash, apple, kale and braising liquid spooned generously over everything. Finish with a scatter of pomegranate seeds just before serving.



Brown Butter Onion & Fennel Galette with Gruyère

Serves 6

A rustic tart that looks like you spent all day on it. You didn't. The quiet neutrals section, baked into something stunning.

- 1 store-bought pie crust, homemade pastry or pizza dough (about 12")
- 3 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 1 medium fennel bulb, very thinly sliced
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter
- ¾ cup Gruyère, grated
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 Tbsp crème fraîche or sour cream
- 1 egg, beaten
- Kosher salt & fresh cracked black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat, swirling often, until it turns golden and smells nutty, about 4-5 minutes. Remove from heat and immediately stir in garlic and thyme.

Toss onions and fennel with brown butter mixture, a generous pinch of salt and fresh pepper until evenly coated.

Roll out pastry to ¼" on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Spread crème fraîche over center, leaving a 2-inch border. Scatter half of the cheese over the cream.

Layer the parsnip and fennel mixture on top. Scatter remaining Gruyère over the



top. Fold the pastry edges up and over the filling, pleating as you go.

Brush pastry edges with beaten egg. Bake 35-40 minutes until crust is deep golden and vegetables are tender with caramelized edges.

Cool for 10 minutes before slicing. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Roasted Eggplant with Chickpeas & Pomegranate Molasses

Serves 4

Bold, jewel-toned and on the table in under 40 minutes.

- 2 medium eggplants, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained & rinsed

- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp pomegranate molasses, plus more for drizzling
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika

- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ cup fresh pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- 2 Tbsp tahini, thinned with a little water
- Kosher salt and fresh cracked black pepper
- Parsley, chopped
- Warm pita or cooked farro, for serving

Preheat oven to 425°F. Spread eggplant and chickpeas on a large sheet pan in a single layer — don't crowd them or they'll steam instead of roast. Drizzle generously with olive oil and season with spices, salt and pepper. Toss to coat.

Roast for 25-30 minutes, tossing once halfway through, until the eggplant is deeply golden and tender and the chickpeas are beginning to crisp.

Remove from oven and immediately drizzle with pomegranate molasses, tossing to coat while everything is still hot. Scatter red onion over the top and let it sit for 5 minutes — the residual heat softens it just enough.

Transfer to a serving platter. Drizzle with thinned tahini and an extra thread of pomegranate molasses. Finish with pomegranate seeds and fresh parsley.



The name “Frey” is synonymous with locally grown organic wines. Once you have lived in Mendocino County for any length of time, you hear it mentioned whenever there is a discussion about the origins of the local organic culture from food to farms to “firsts”—Frey being the first organic winery in the United States. I was blessed to have a moment to speak with founder of Frey Vineyards, Katrina Frey, while basking in the chilly winter sun at the new Frey tasting room in Redwood Valley. Surrounded by the constant activity humming around us, from gardeners to deliveries, Katrina’s warm and welcoming blue-eyed gaze never wavered as she told her origin story.

A Vine of the Times

Interview by Katharine Cole, Freelance Writer

Well, really, it was three people who founded Frey Vineyards: it was my husband, Jonathan Frey, his brother, Matthew Frey, and me. We started the winery in 1980, which made us the first organic winery in the country. But the story really starts in the early ‘70s. Reagan was the Governor of California, and he initiated a statewide water scheme called the “Peripheral Canal,” which involved numerous potential reservoirs across the state. My father-in-law, Paul Frey, a doctor who worked at the hospital where Ten Thousand Buddhas is now, got a copy of this and noted that there was a plan to build a dam on Tomki Road, so he anticipated he would be forced to sell his property under eminent domain. Being a savvy businessman, he started looking for ways to increase the value of his property.

He used to be drinking buddies with John Parducci, who was really the most knowledgeable guy about the wine industry at that time. They would meet up at Nic’s to have a drink, so one evening he asked John, “So John, I want to plant some grapes, what do you think I should plant?” And Parducci replied, “Oh, you should plant this new-fangled variety they’re planting down in Napa called Cabernet Sauvignon.”

Remember, up here in Mendocino County back then, the grapes were only the varieties brought in by the Italian farmers, who really were the first people to plant grapes here: Zinfandel, Chenin Blanc, etc. So my father-in-law, Paul, got a hold of some Cabernet vines, gathered his workforce, consisting of twelve Frey kids, and set to work planting. My husband Jon was the oldest



at 14, and he remembered standing out in the fields, wondering how to make the rows straight...of course, he figured it out [sly chuckle]. So with his brothers and sisters, his mother, and his friends from high school, they planted this vineyard over the course of four years. Back then, we'd laugh and say, "it was organic by neglect," so obviously we didn't put any chemicals on them. In the

end, the Tomki Dam never happened, but the family now had these beautiful eight acres of cabernet grapes.

Later on, Jonathan went to UC Santa Cruz, and his college friends happened to be wine people who worked in wine shops or wineries in the Santa Cruz hills, so he sold the grapes to the Santa Cruz winery named "Sunset" (which doesn't exist anymore). The next year,

they submitted their wine to the Orange County Fair, and it won a gold medal, which coincided with Jon thinking maybe we should start our own winery, as he apparently had gold medal grapes! Around this time, Jonathan and I met, as we had both chosen to go to Covelo to study with Alan Chadwick. We fell in love there and learned about organic food and flower raising. We were part of the group that started the first farmers' market in Ukiah. It was so different then: no Whole Foods, no organic labels, and the Co-op was just starting then, too. Jonathan and I thought we would be vegetable farmers, so I used to bring squash back to the farmers' market in Ukiah. One morning, I had my

little baby on my back in my backpack and set off to the farmers' market with my cabbages. At the end of the day, I returned with only \$28 for a week's wages. We both agreed, "We need to figure out something else to do!" Grapes, of course. We had our first official harvest of Frey wine in 1980, resulting in 2,000 cases.

We did it all by hand: we had a little grinder, a stainless steel tank that was maybe 6'x6', and I was so excited. "You want me to stand in there and crush the grapes!" a la I love Lucy, and within an hour, I was just covered with wine juice, and the yellow jackets and the honey bees were circling around me. I figured out quickly it wasn't anywhere near as fun as I thought it was going to be.

Reprinted from Ukiah's newsletter, *The Co-op Beet*.



Katrina and Jonathan Frey, along with Jonathan's brother, Matthew, founded America's first organic winery.

Sustainability GOALS

AND UPDATES

By Sasha Scott,
Sustainability Coordinator



Breaking Down Cool Weather Composting

A compost pile does not need to be fancy to work well. At its simplest, it's a contained space where food scraps, garden material and other natural materials slowly become a nutrient-rich addition for the garden. Fall and winter are great times to keep that cycle going, even when the pile slows down.

Cooler weather brings a slower pace to composting. Bacteria, fungi, insects and other decomposers are less active when temperatures drop, so materials may take longer to break down. That does not mean the pile has stopped working. Even if it freezes during a cold spell, it will pick back up as temperatures warm.

The goal is not perfection. A healthy compost pile needs a mix of "greens," such as food scraps, fresh garden trimmings, and "browns," such as straw, dried plant material and paper. The pile should feel damp, like a wrung-out sponge, rather than soggy or dusty. In summer, rinsing your kitchen-scrap bucket into the pile is an easy way to return a little moisture. In winter, rain may do some of that work for you, so pay closer attention to whether the pile is becoming overly wet.

Add food scraps to the center of the pile and cover them with straw. Fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, eggshells, garden trimmings, meat, bones, plain cardboard, paper bags and untreated paper towels can all be added. Tearing bags or larger items into smaller pieces will help them break down more easily. Meat and bones should be buried toward the center and covered generously with straw or other dry material. Items labeled "home compostable" can also go in the pile. Avoid plastic bags, coated paper, packaging and anything with synthetic fibers.

Each time you add more scraps, pull back the top layer of straw, add the material and cover it again. Think of

the straw as a winter blanket: it helps hold moisture and warmth, reduces odors, keeps scraps out of sight and makes the pile less appealing to animals. Dried garden material, wood chips and shredded cardboard can work in the same way.

Before the wettest part of winter arrives, set aside extra dry materials nearby. If the pile smells unpleasant or looks too wet, add more straw, cardboard or dry garden material and gently loosen the pile to restore airflow. A tarp or simple cover can also help keep excessive rain out without sealing the pile tightly.

Winter composting is less about speed and more about building a strong foundation, one layer at a time.

BROWNS

Dry leaves



Wood chips



Kitchen & toilet roll tubes



Shredded paper



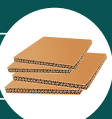
Straw & hay



Sawdust & wood shavings



Cardboard



GREENS

Food scraps



Tea bags



Coffee grounds & filters



Feathers



Egg shells



Grass & plant clippings



Weeds

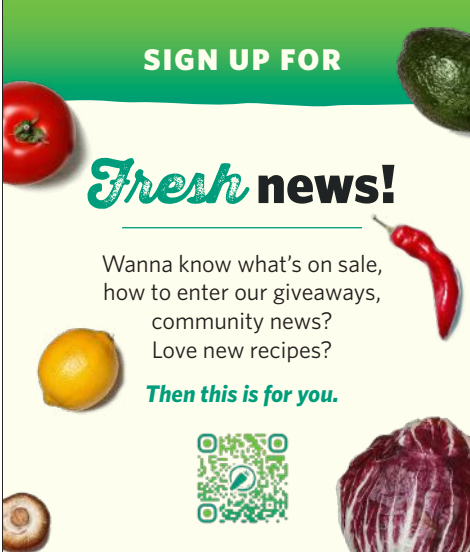


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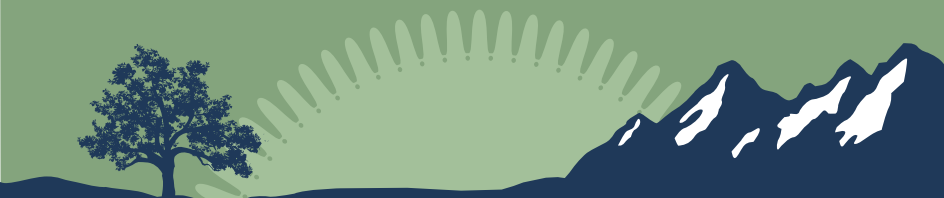
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NEVADA CITY RANCHERIA NISENAN TRIBE



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HUŚWEJ (pronounced HOOSH-way), meaning "wish" in the Nisenan language, is the new forward-facing identity of California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP), the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribally-guided nonprofit organization.

HUŚWEJ



Learn more at huswej.org

PAMBLO

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'UBA SEO: NISENAN ARTS & CULTURE
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