

OUR GUIDE TO AN EASY, STRESS-FREE CHRISTMAS PARTY P.68

bon appétit

MAGICAL HOLIDAY COOKIES

TO GIVE (AND TO DEVOUR)

+
GREAT GIFTS FOR HOME COOKS

P.46



Candy-Striped Peppermint Meringues

P.88

MASTERFUL ROASTS

P.96

AND GOLDEN POTATOES

P.90

8 STELLAR COOKBOOKS

3 COOL HANUKKAH RECIPES

4 DELICIOUS D.I.Y. GIFTS

1 BRILLIANT SPARKLING PUNCH

DECEMBER 2011

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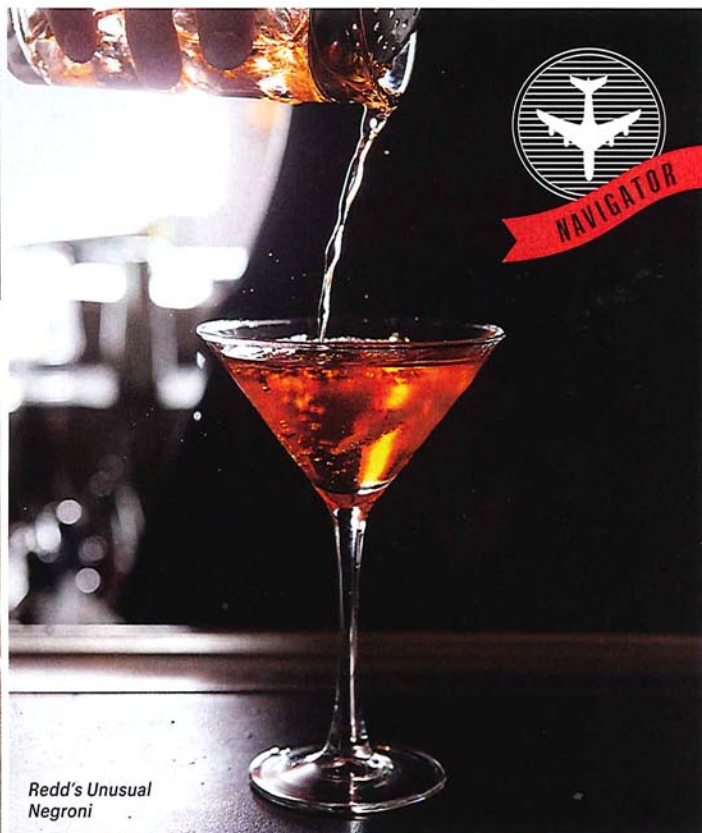
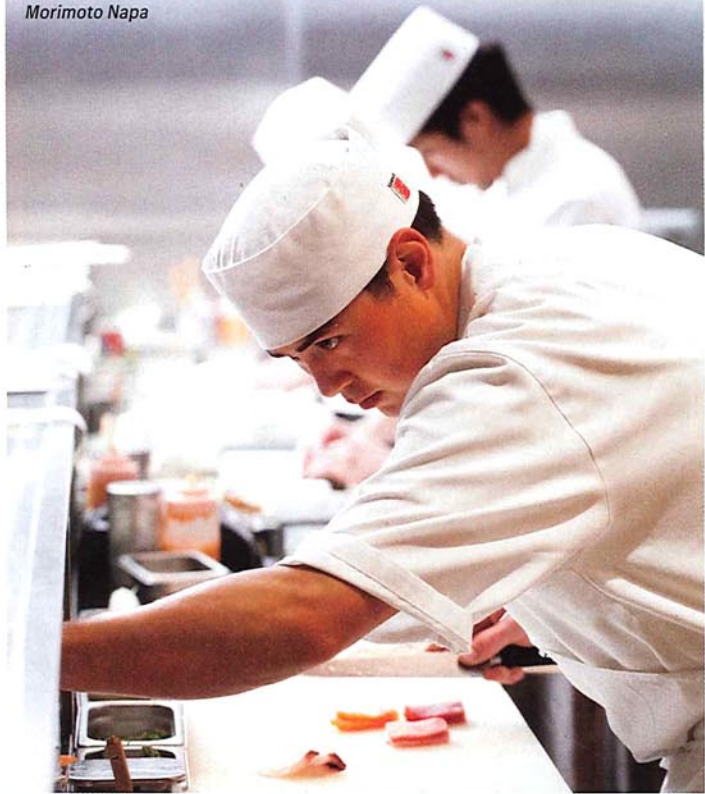
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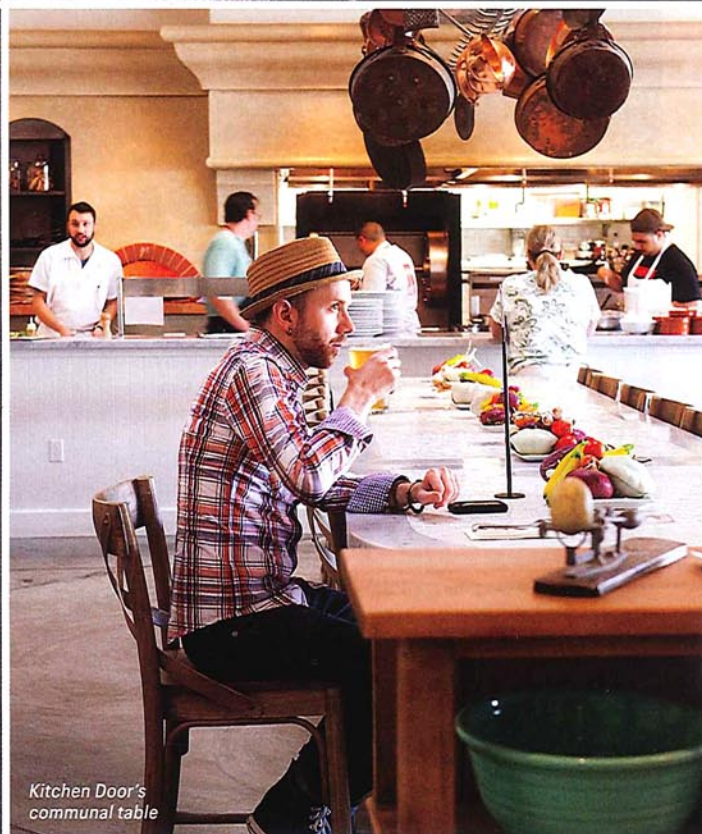
PLUS... THE SECRET INGREDIENTS IN JACQUES PÉPIN'S FRIDGE P.120

Sushi chefs at Morimoto Napa



Redd's Unusual Negroni

A salad of heirloom tomatoes, mozzarella, and basil at Solbar



Kitchen Door's communal table



NEO-NAPA

Here's a novel approach to getting the most out of Napa Valley: Soak up the wine tastings with meals at the region's best restaurants, food trucks, and alfresco spots

BY HUGH GARVEY



THE TERM WINE COUNTRY doesn't do the Napa Valley justice. For every faux chateau and gift shop selling grape refrigerator magnets, there's a chef making *salumi* from local heirloom pigs or pickling purslane from a biodynamic farm down the road. For every cult Cabernet, there's a meticulously calibrated cocktail. And now's the time to go: The crowds have thinned, the rolling hills are green again, and a handful of innovators have pushed the Valley's restaurants beyond some Mediterranean fantasy into a varied—and very California—scene. Here are some stops on the do-not-miss list.

ADDENDUM Finally, Thomas Keller for the people. During lunch hours Thursday through Saturday, this shack in the kitchen garden behind Ad Hoc in Yountville serves the best boxed lunch in the Valley. Pick from two entrées: buttermilk fried chicken (brined to succulence; skin crisped just so) or the meat they've smoked and then prepared *sous vide*—baby back ribs one day, brisket another. And cross your fingers and hope that they're serving Keller's divine take on deli potato salad. All for about 17 bucks. adhocrestaurant.com/addendum

GOTT'S ROADSIDE Joel and Duncan Gott have changed the name of their burger-and-shake shack in St. Helena from Taylor's Automatic Refresher. The rare ahi tuna burger on a toasted egg bun remains the must-order—though a grilled Let's Be Frank hot dog topped with cheese and house-made chili comes in a very close second. gotts.com

KITCHEN DOOR How do you improve Napa's Oxbow Public Market (the kind of modern food hall that every American town deserves)? Open an all-day restaurant with a breezy patio

and serve family-style food designed to satisfy: duck *banh mi*, Armenian flatbread, a classic chicken dinner, and root beer floats—all overseen by veteran Napa chef Todd Humphries. kitchendoornapa.com

MORIMOTO NAPA In Napa's sprawling Riverfront development, Masaharu Morimoto serves pristine sushi in a boldly designed setting you wouldn't be surprised to find in a Tokyo (or Vegas) skyscraper. For the full-on *Iron Chef* experience, order dishes like fig tempura »



ESCAPE THE GRAPE

Where (and what) to drink when you're not in the mood for wine.

Geek out over a "seasonal espresso" at **Ritual Coffee Roasters** in Napa's Oxbow Public Market. This San Francisco-based shop custom-blends just-roasted beans to reflect the season.

Stop into **Bar Terra**, chef Hiro Sone's casual offshoot of his St. Helena institution, and let the mixologist pour you a gin-based Boston, flavored with house-made grenadine.

When you can't handle another drop of Cabernet at **Bouchon** but still want to quaff something hearty, have the complex Belgian-style Blue Apron Ale, custom-brewed for Thomas Keller by Brooklyn Brewery.

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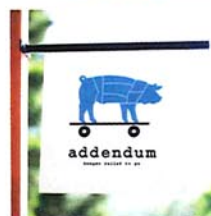
1 Morimoto Napa's dramatic bar setting. 2 Duck banh mi and sweet potato fries at Kitchen Door. 3 One of Rancho Gordo's unusual heirloom bean varieties. 4 Sushi mosaic at Morimoto Napa. 5 Thomas Keller's barbecue-to-go keeps the crowds at Addendum well fed. 6 The Samurai, a bright blend of green-tea vodka, yuzu, blackberry, and ginger beer, at Redd.



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with foie gras peanut butter sauce and pomegranate reduction. Afterward, pick up some house-polished sushi rice, Wagyu-style tenderloin, or fresh quail eggs at the take-out market in front.

➔ morimotonapa.com

OENOTRI Sourcing from a network of local farmers and its own kitchen garden, this Napa restaurant takes its cues from Southern Italian regions like Campania and Puglia. True to that ethos, it's curing charcuterie and baking pizzas (from nettle and sausage to classic Margherita) in a wood-burning oven shipped over from Naples.

➔ oenotri.com

1 Latte love at Ritual Coffee Roasters. 2, 3 House-made charcuterie and antipasti, plus wood-fired pizza, from Oenotri. 4 Solbar brings refined health food and rich, seasonal dishes under one roof. 5 The upscale drive-in food at Gott's Roadside pairs just as well with its thick milk shakes as it does with the region's wines. 6 The Tacos Garcia truck is a sure bet for authentic Mexican.

REDD Richard Reddington's Yountville restaurant is an uncommon modern retreat in the valley, mining Asia, the Mediterranean, and beyond in dishes like glazed pork belly with apple purée and soy caramel, and petrale sole with coconut rice, clams, and chorizo. Locals, who love the sleek bar for its cocktails and casual menu, are getting excited for Reddington's wood-fired pizza spot, Redd Wood, opening this winter.

➔ reddnapavalley.com

SOLBAR Chef Brandon Sharp, who cooked at the French Laundry and Restaurant August in New Orleans, successfully straddles soul food and spa food at the Solage Calistoga resort. The menu is split into two parts: one half with heartier dishes like Duroc pork with black pepper gravy, the other with lighter preparations like grilled peaches with house-made prosciutto and charred Vidalia onions.

➔ solagecalistoga.com/solbar

For addresses, see Sourcebook on page 119.

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MEX IT UP

Ask a Napa local for her insider food tip, and chances are she'll talk up the area's Mexican spots. Here's where to get your fix.

The Tacos Garcia truck in the parking lot behind Pancha's dive bar in Yountville sells authentic beef-cheek tacos for a buck fifty and gringo nachos that are favored by the French Laundry staff.

Hidden behind flats of cactus paddles and chiles at Vallarta Market in Calistoga is a tiny lunch counter serving killer burritos, quesadillas, and tacos *al pastor*.

Napa's food lovers' source for edible souvenirs, Steve Sando's Rancho Gordo shop specializes in exquisite heirloom beans used by the area's best restaurants. He recently added plantain vinegar and evaporated Mexican cane juice to his line.

←
UBUNTU'S NEXT ACT
The groundbreaking Michelin-starred vegetarian restaurant Ubuntu has become a must-visit for culinary pilgrims. The bad news for those planning a visit soon: It'll be closed through April for renovations—though you can catch pop-up dinners during that time. For updates, check ubuntunapa.com.



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