

GATHER

JOURNAL



M A G I C

Seasonal Recipes and Exceptional Ideas

fall/winter 2015



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In Peter Brooks' play, *The Valley of Astonishment*, protagonist Sammy tries to shed some light on the mysterious workings of her brain. "In order to understand the meaning of a word, I have to be able to see it. Take the word 'nothing.' What I see is a huge pale cloud of steam that's completely transparent... if I see nothing it means it is something." Sammy is describing a system of mnemonics typical of those with synesthesia, a rare condition whereby the senses are intertwined. So a word might have a taste, a color, a sound. The latter was true for synesthete Vladimir Nabokov who said: "The long 'a' of the English alphabet has for me the tint of weathered wood, but a French 'a' evokes polished ebony." Synesthesia is one, of many ways, that human beings are both miracle and enigma. And the notion at its heart—sensing something in nothing—is the very definition of magic.

Magic is belief. Belief in the wondrous unknown. Belief in the things that defy the teachings of science. Belief that the ordinary can be extraordinary. And it's everywhere. It was in the Ouija board I hunched over under a sleeping bag-fortress, beseeching the heart-shaped planchette to move. It was in the David Copperfield specials I'd crowd around the TV set to watch with my family—waiting eagerly for him to make monuments vanish or to fly through the air amid clouds of billowing smoke. And it was in books like *The Hobbit*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *A Wrinkle in Time*, each one beckoning with fantastical parallel worlds that I could disappear into without leaving my bedroom.

The fact that magic is steeped in mystery also affords it the capacity to frighten. It turns dark in the hands of Mario Bava or Dario Argento, directors of *Black Sunday* and *Suspiria*, respectively; or among the teenage coven in *The Craft*. But Woody Allen, whose filmography is rife with magical realism (see *Midnight in Paris*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *New York Stories*), has never seen it as something sinister. Nor does the ever-spellbinding Stevie Nicks, whose connection to magic and mysticism runs through her hypnotic songs and wonderfully witchy style, all twirling layers and angel-winged sleeves of black chiffon.

In the kitchen, magic happens often. Ingredients, able to dazzle and transform when summoned by the right hands. A meal, an opportunity to show off a different kind of trick, the inner workings of which can, as with any good magician, remain concealed from your audience. In this, the sixth edition of *Gather*, we explore magic's many facets, from food that instantly astonishes to dishes with a power that is more innate—or magick (writer Aleister Crowley revived the ancient "k" in the 1900s to refer to the use of energy from the environment and within yourself to incite change). There is a chapter dedicated to wild edible botanicals, those herbs in nature that are themselves marvels; and one that takes its cues from that most magical story genre of all: the fairy tale. We ponder the intersection of science and magic in the kitchen, and explore the age-old practice of potion-making. The dictionary defines magic as "a quality that makes something seem removed from everyday life, especially in a way that gives delight," and we hope this issue of *Gather* does just that. So, as Georges declares to his audience in *Hugo*: "I address you all as you truly are; wizards, mermaids, travelers, adventurers, magicians... come and dream with me." FV

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FRONT COVER: Photograph by Grant Cornett, Food Styling by Maggie Ruggiero, Prop Styling by Theo Vamvounakis
OPPOSITE PAGE: Photograph by Marcus Nilsson, Food Styling by Maggie Ruggiero, Prop Styling by Theo Vamvounakis

AMUSE-BOUCHE & COCKTAILS

Welcome to our cabinet of curiosities. First known as *wunderkammern* in 16th century Europe, these treasure troves packed with a cache of bewitching objects and macabre oddities are where science and the supernatural meet. Where jarred specimens and amber potion vials vie for shelf space with craggy minerals and maps of far-flung lands. Our meal instigators, each one a marvel, are at home here. A duo of cocktails with magic and mystery at their heart; a legendary aphrodisiac with exotic underpinnings; savory bites that assume the shape of a mythical creature; an aperitif that doubles as an amulet; and a gurgling crock of garlic-doused goat cheese. Curiouser and curiouser...

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Martyn Thompson FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

BUBBLING GOAT CHEESE WITH GARLIC AND ROSEMARY

Double, double, toil and trouble; fire burn and cauldron bubble. So cackled the three witches from a darkened cave in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*—and it is the spirit of many a witchy woman we summon with our warm log of goat cheese bathed in rosemary and garlic. After all, garlic is believed to guard against disease, evil, even foul weather. Thankfully there is enough here to feed your entire coven.

Serves: 4 to 6

- 1 (10 oz) log goat cheese
- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 10 cloves garlic, lightly smashed
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- ½ tsp whole black peppercorns
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes

Preheat oven to 350°F. Gently heat all the ingredients in an oven-proof skillet or shallow pot over medium heat until warm and aromatic. Transfer to the oven and bake, basting occasionally, until the cheese is soft and bubbly and the garlic is a light golden brown, about 30 minutes. If you'd like, briefly place under the broiler to lightly brown the cheese.

Serve immediately while still bubbling hot, straight from your "cauldron," with plenty of crusty bread ready for sopping up all the cheesy, oily, garlicky goodness.

NO CLOVE, NO LOVE

Of all the love-hate relationships that food inspires, with guilty pleasures from sugar to salt, perhaps none have been rhapsodized about as much as garlic. Shakespeare poetically cautioned, "Most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweat breath," while Thomas Nash put it bluntly: "Garlick maketh a man wynke, drynke, and stynke." For centuries, the odoriferous bulb has been applauded for its myriad culinary and medicinal powers, and availed upon to treat everything from the common cold to cancer. But garlic also wards off other (worldly) evils; in Sanskrit, the plant translates to "slayer of monsters." According to lore, the ancient Greeks made offerings of garlic to Hecate, goddess of the underworld, and Central European midwives hung braided cloves on nursery thresholds to banish spirits. Miners wreathed in garlic were said to be protected from subterranean demons, as were sailors from sea serpents. And in witchcraft, cryptic ingredients like Bat's Wings (holly), Cat's Foot (ivy), and Poor Man's Treacle (garlic) were boiled and bubbled into charms to repel evil. That, or the stynke. SAMANTHA GURRIE





COLONEL AURELIANO & MAJESTIC ENDING COCKTAILS

Two transporting cocktails, each one driven by a different brand of magic, that manage to conjure a sense of wonder with every sip.

COLONEL AURELIANO FACES THE FIRING SQUAD

With a name plucked from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, this whimsical blend by **Andrew Volk** of Maine's Portland Hunt & Alpine Club is magical realism in cocktail form.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- edible gold leaf flakes (optional)
- 2 oz Laird's Bonded applejack
- 1 oz Carpano Antica Formula sweet vermouth
- ½ oz Del Maguey Vida mezcal
- 1 tsp rich simple syrup*
- 1 dash Angostura bitters

Using a small damp paintbrush, paint the inside of a chilled rocks glass with gold leaf. Stir ingredients in a pint glass, fill with ice, and stir 30-50 more times. Strain into glass.

Rich simple syrup: Gently heat 2 parts **sugar** to 1 part **water** until sugar is dissolved. Chill.

LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

When I was 20, I stumbled into a job as a bartender at a subterranean speakeasy in the West Village. It seemed odd for me at the time. Growing up, my Manhattan had been an uptown fortress of glass spires and pre-war facades. I was serious and shy, my experience with alcohol confined to stomach-scorching vodka at high school parties or bathwater beer at my "Big Ten" university. But the honey-cream sweetness of a Bee's Kiss, the sophistication of a perfectly made martini—these were sensations from a new realm entirely: a world of gold-lit rooms swirling with music and laughter, hidden behind doorways on winding, shadowy streets. And their creation was pure alchemy—the way the clang of ice blocks against metal broke down to a tinkling swish of shards and chips; the way slimy raw egg whites emerged from the shaker transformed into a decadent froth. Here, in the downtown night, was the enchanted forest beyond the walls—a fantasy of adulthood, full of pleasures and promise. Ten years later, adulthood is a reality where I'd rather wake at dawn than stay up past it. But one sip from a coupe glass clouded with frost, and even now, who knows where the night might lead me? TANIA STRAUSS

MAJESTIC ENDING

It was Houdini's final performance at the local Majestic Theatre that inspired **Shane Bang** of The Oakland: Art Novelty Company in Detroit to create this gin sipper that morphs hypnotically with every single swirl.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- 1 ½ oz Plymouth gin
- ½ oz Bittermens Baska Snaps
- ½ oz honey syrup*
- ¼ oz Angostura bitters

Stir together all ingredients except Angostura. Pour over 1 extra large ice cube into a rocks glass. Float the Angostura on top of the cocktail by slowly pouring directly onto the center of the cube. Use a straw to spin the cube in the glass. The cocktail will blend and change from yellow to bright red.

Honey syrup: Stir together 2 parts **honey** to 1 part **water** until combined. Do not heat.

UNICORN HORNS

The unicorn can't help but mesmerize... like Peter Beagle's titular *Last Unicorn*, who moved like a shadow on the sea, roaming the world with the magician Schmendrick in search of others like her. Our savory butternut squash spires are an homage to this most magical (and sage) horned creature of them all.

Makes: 18

PASTRY DOUGH

- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 stick (4 oz) cold, unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 3 to 4 Tbsp ice cold water
- 1 egg yolk beaten with 1 Tbsp water

FILLING

- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 rounded cups chopped butternut squash (½" dice)
- 2 Tbsp heavy cream
- ¼ cup finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 tsp finely chopped sage

Pulse flour, salt, and butter in a food processor until it forms a coarse meal. Pulse in water just until dough starts to get clumpy. Divide dough into three equal pieces then form each into a disc and chill, wrapped in plastic, at least 1 hour or overnight.

Gently cook garlic in oil in a skillet over medium heat until fragrant. Add squash and ⅓ cup water and cook, covered, until squash is almost tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Uncover and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, letting water evaporate and sautéing squash until golden. Add the cream and mash until smooth. Stir in cheese and sage, season to taste, and then cool completely.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Working with one disc at a time on a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 9-inch round. Cut round in half, then cut each half into three triangles. Spoon about 1 Tbsp of filling onto the center of a triangle. Lightly brush eggwash along edges. Fold dough over filling and crimp well to seal. Cut a few small slashes in dough and place on a baking sheet. Assemble remaining horns and space them out between two baking sheets. Chill at least 30 minutes. Brush tops with remaining eggwash and then bake until golden, about 35 minutes.

NO MYTH

I'm not sure where I saw my first unicorn. Was it encircled in tapestry at The Cloisters, commemorating the marriage of Anne of Brittany and Louis the XII? Was it transcribed by ink and needle onto my own ankle, commemorating my 18th birthday? Was it Lisa Frank? Swift Wind? A Sweet Valley snob? The thing about mythical creatures is that they are never wrong, never inaccurate, never unrealistic. When I was a kid, I ran out of a Middle Eastern restaurant screaming, my father having tauntingly confirmed my fear that a lady's finger was exactly that. I wonder now if the unicorn horn would have elicited the same response—terror that a My Little Pony was harmed in the making of this dish. You'd think children would expect allegory more than anyone. After all, unicorn horns can be had in every shade of cartoon, constructed from plastic, plush, paint. Here, they're like mystical savory cannoli, gypsified with sage. Tell a young girl it's a rare delicacy from *Narnia*, and keep them all for yourself. HOLLY SIEGEL





SPICY BAKED OYSTERS

Casanova was so convinced of oyster's libidinous qualities that he consumed 50 for breakfast every day. And in the past decade, scientists, after researching their chemical components, discovered that the notorious seducer was right about these lusty bivalves. Turning up the heat with a glug of flush-inducing, endorphin-releasing Sriracha only serves to amplify the pulse-quickening effect.

Makes: 12

4 Tbsp (2 oz) unsalted butter,
softened

2 tsp Sriracha

1 tsp finely grated lemon zest

1 anchovy, minced

12 large oysters, shucked,
on the half shell

Preheat oven to 375°F. Stir together butter, Sriracha, zest, and anchovy. Place oysters on a rimmed baking sheet. If the oysters don't sit evenly you can nestle them in a bed of coarse salt. Divide butter mixture evenly among oysters.

Bake until oysters are plump and the butter is sizzling, 8 to 10 minutes.

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE

Oysters have a racy reputation. They appear on lists of amorous foods beside chocolate-covered strawberries and champagne. Gimmicky restaurants include them on prix fixe menus for Valentine's Day. And I like to see them as a test, a measure of how interesting or adventurous my eating companion is... which can be sexy in and of itself. Perhaps some of oyster's seductive appeal lies in the fact that they walk the line between life and death—something I learned on my first encounter with them on a Christmas Eve many years ago. My family celebrates with our own version of the Feast of the Seven Fishes, always beginning with a platter of oysters on the half shell. At first, I was skeptical, unsure of the appeal of these grey, shapeless, slimy creatures. And when my dad told me that oysters would wriggle under a squeeze of lemon if they were still fresh, I was immediately terrified. Were they dead or alive? It took moving to Paris and reading Hemingway (he, the ultimate adventurer and oyster lover) for me to discover the joy that comes from eating them. While a lemon garnish and crisp white wine are an oyster's best bedfellows, like any good lover, they can be full of surprises. Recently, in Savannah, Georgia, I found myself eating roasted oysters, out of the shell, doused in butter and local hot sauce. The taste was different, the pleasure unchanged. FRANCESCA GIACCO





Shot on location and with special thanks to Tom Berry and Joe Caputo. Select props from The Evolution Store.

BLACK PEPPER TARALLI & PASTIS TONIC

Legend has it that if you peer through a hag stone—those stones into which the sea’s continually crashing waves have whittled a hole—you will see a fairy world. Our taralli, a traditional Southern Italian permutation of the breadstick, are designed to mimic their shape and all-seeing ways, because hey, after a few glasses of this seasonal pastis concoction, who knows what you might glimpse?

Makes: about 40

- 3¾ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- a slightly rounded ¼ tsp active dry yeast
- ¾ cup dry white wine
- ⅔ cup water
- 6 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided

PASTIS TONIC

By **Masa Urushido** at Saxon + Parole, NYC

Serves: 2

- 3 oz Ricard pastis
- 9 oz ice cold water

Possible garnishes:

Seasonal herbs, spices and fruits, such as rosemary sprigs, sliced pear, sliced red apple, toasted star anise, and cinnamon sticks

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. In the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, salt, pepper, and yeast until mixed. In a separate bowl, stir together the wine, water, and 3 Tbsp oil. With the processor running, pour the liquids through the feed tube and process until a smooth dough forms.

Divide the dough into about 20 walnut-sized balls. (Keep them covered while working.) Roll a ball into a thin 12-inch log. Cut in half and form 2 rings pinching and pressing the ends to seal. Transfer to a baking sheet and form remaining rings. Let the rings rest, covered with plastic wrap for 2 hours. (They will not rise.)

When rings are well rested, preheat oven to 400°F, and bring a large pot of water to a simmer with the remaining 3 Tbsp oil. Simmer the taralli, in batches, until they pop up to the surface, then let them simmer until they puff slightly, about 1 minute longer. Using a slotted spoon, remove them to paper towels as cooked, blot dry, then transfer them back to the lined baking sheets.

Bake, rotating the sheets midway, until deep golden brown, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool completely on racks, and then keep them stored in an airtight container.

PASTIS TONIC: Fill a mixing glass with ice and add cold water. Stir well. Pour pastis into a glass carafe, and add the iced water very slowly. Add some ice to the carafe and the serving glasses. Garnish with desired herbs, fruits, and spices and serve immediately.

STARTERS

True artists see magic in the everyday. Like Lev Grossman, whose *Magician* trilogy draws readers into the labyrinthine land of Fillory, which his character Quentin enters via a Brooklyn garden. Or painter Sigmar Polke, whose enigmatic works shift the perception of quotidian things (a potato, a mushroom, a teapot). In this, the meal's second act, we celebrate the magic in the familiar. A beet salad with capers roots the vegetable in its romantic folklore; a matzo ball soup is capable of curing whatever ails you; a mound of mussels is imbued with voodoo spirit; and spectral spears of white asparagus cross paths with peas and walnuts in a plated tribute to a favorite street-corner trick.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis
FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero

VOODOO MUSSELS

The magic of mussels is intrinsic. Replete with iron, vitamin B12 for brain function, and selenium to balance mood, we like to think they make you smart and happy. We packed our pot with Cajun spice, plus peppery arugula for added swampiness. Pair with a crusty loaf; just be mindful of Cajun superstition—never eat bread ends before the middle or you'll have trouble making ends meet.

Serves: 4 as a starter, or 3 as a main

2 lbs mussels, scrubbed

3 Tbsp vegetable oil

½ cup finely chopped onion

½ cup finely chopped celery

½ cup finely chopped green pepper

1 tsp finely chopped garlic

½ tsp each black pepper, paprika, and chili powder

¼ tsp each salt and cayenne

½ Tbsp tomato paste

1 (15 oz) can crushed tomatoes

⅛ tsp dried thyme

2 large handfuls baby arugula

Scrub and rinse the mussels discarding any that have broken shells or don't close when tapped. Set aside.

Heat oil in a wide-bottomed pot over medium heat. Stir in half the onion and cook, stirring until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining onion, celery, green pepper, garlic, and spices, and cook until softened, 15 to 20 minutes. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, ¼ cup water, and thyme, and bring to a simmer. Simmer 5 minutes, covered.

Stir in the mussels and cook, covered, shaking the pot occasionally until all the mussels are wide open, 3 to 4 minutes. Discard any that have not opened. Stir in arugula and cook 1 minute, covered, until wilted. For the true believers, serve with hot sauce... though it will be pretty damn hot already.

SPIRITED AWAY

The first time I walked into F & F Botanical, a voodoo shop in New Orleans way, way off the tourist path, I felt a prickle of wrongness, as if I shouldn't be there, or at least shouldn't touch anything. The walls were lined with drawers full of hundreds of herbs. The aisles were stocked with cleaning products to banish evil from your home, supplies for making gris-gris bags, plus oils, ointments, and scores of candles. There were candles for every wish (Money, Love, Good Luck, No More Bad Luck) and every saint you've never heard of. I bought one for Good Luck, figuring that covered everything, though I was always a little nervous when I lit it, as if I was messing with things I didn't understand. A few years later, wandering around my local market in Boston, I came upon a voodoo aisle. I was stunned. There were the same cleaning supplies, oils, ointments, candles. The next time I visited the store, I could not find the aisle no matter how hard I searched. I was reminded of a favorite story from my teen years, found in a ragged paperback of my parents': "Shottlebop," by Theodore Sturgeon, in which a storefront mysteriously comes and goes, and the main character finds bottles full of magic potions inside. I wonder, if everything had an explanation, would our lives be less confusing, or would they only be less magical? HEATHER LONG





SLEIGHT OF HAND SALAD

Manual dexterity and magic can go hand in hand. While the shell game—the classic ruse uses three walnut shells and a pea—is more con than trick, it is confidence and a swift hand that will wow (and, often, swindle) onlookers. We summoned its essence with ghostly asparagus fingers splayed atop a schmear of peas and crunchy garlic walnuts.

Serves: 4

- 1 cup frozen peas
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp chopped walnuts
- 2 small cloves garlic
- ½ cup packed basil
- 2 Tbsp finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 5 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 bunch white asparagus or (1 16-oz jar for a cheat's sleight of hand)

1 Cook peas in boiling salted water 2 minutes then drain and chill in a bowl of ice cold water. Drain.

2 With the motor of a food processor running, drop ¼ cup walnuts and 1 garlic clove into the feed tube. Process until finely chopped. Transfer to a plate and set aside for topping. Again, with the motor running, process remaining 2 Tbsp walnuts and clove garlic until finely chopped. Add peas, basil, cheese, 3 Tbsp oil, ¼ tsp salt, and a few grinds black pepper. Process until light and spreadable. Add a little water if needed. Transfer to a bowl.

3 Bring a skillet of salted water to a boil along with butter and lemon juice. Trim ½ inch from bottoms of asparagus and carefully peel stems. (Asparagus are fragile so don't fret if they break.) Simmer until tender when pierced with a knife, about 10 to 15 minutes. (If using jarred asparagus, you won't need to cook them.) Drain asparagus, cool, then toss with a little extra oil and lemon juice.

4 Heat remaining 2 Tbsp oil in a small skillet over medium heat until golden. Toast reserved garlicky walnuts with a pinch of salt. Serve sprinkled on asparagus over pesto.

TRUE COLORS

Where I grew up in Western Kentucky, we ate many things most of my friends had never seen: Spongy crumpets topped with golden syrup. Fragrant curries yellow with turmeric that my mom procured in Nashville, a two-hour drive away. Perhaps most scandalous of all, my parents had an occasional glass of Merlot, in a county so dry churches used grape juice for communion. But nothing shocked my Baptist friend Autumn more than the peas my mom served. Everyone in Western Kentucky knows peas are brown and sold in cans, or, if you're a bit fancy, glass jars. Autumn's family was Kentucky through and through, and the dinners I ate at her house were a chastely uniform shade of beige: beige pork chops, beige canned corn, beige cornbread, and yes, beige peas. My mom is British-Canadian and my dad's from Michigan: The fresh peas we served from our garden were as green as the John Deere sign on Highway 641. I remember watching Autumn push one of these across her plate, then squish it with her fork, exposing and examining its electric-green insides before she looked up at me and asked, "What are these?" Just peas, I told her. But Autumn shook her head and spoke the gospel truth: "Peas aren't green." ELLEN CARPENTER





LOVERS BEET SALAD

Beets, with their deep garnet hue and flesh that leaves an inky trail, are, as vegetables go, pretty sexy. Appearances are not deceiving: they contain boron, a mineral that boosts sex hormones. No wonder then that ancient Romans thought their juice affected their juices, and that there is a folklore that eating from the same beetroot will cause two people to fall in love. A sense of longing you *will* feel for our beet salad with horseradish-tinged dressing and fried capers.

Serves: 4

- 1 ¼ lbs small beets, scrubbed
- ¾ cup plus 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- ⅓ cup lemon juice
- 1 ½ Tbsp jarred horseradish
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup drained capers
- 2 Tbsp sunflower seeds
- ½ cup crème fraîche
- 2 Tbsp chopped chives

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place beets on aluminum foil, drizzle with 1 tsp oil, then fold and seal to make a packet. Put on a baking sheet. Roast until tender, about 1 hour. Open packet and let beets cool slightly until cool enough to handle.

In a bowl, whisk together lemon juice, horseradish, Dijon, and ½ cup oil. Season with salt and pepper. Peel beets and cut into halves or quarters. Toss with vinaigrette.

Heat remaining ¼ cup oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Pat capers dry. When oil is hot, not smoking, add capers and fry until crispy, about 3 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon to a paper towel-lined plate. Fry sunflower seeds until golden. Drain alongside capers.

Serve beets with crème fraîche, extra dressing, capers, sunflower seeds, and chives.

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

“Dowsing takes the uncertainty out of life,” Karen Ashley, president of the West Coast chapter of the American Society of Dowsers, told me from her beach house surrounded by dowsing rods and pendulums. Dowsing, often referred to as witching, is an ancient practice that involves telepathic communication between a witcher and her dowsing tool of choice. Ashley and dowsers alike use the practice in their daily lives to answer questions about anything from what to eat to how to live. They can be found dangling pendulums over mountains of peaches, waiting for the weight to swing signaling which is ripest. Or standing in front of the fridge with mini-dowsing rods questioning whether or not dairy should be a part of their diet. In Ashley’s opinion it is a resource that can be channeled to remove the doubt that we too often feel. It is used for the purpose of answering questions via our subconscious and drawing from the energy that connects, surrounds, and shapes our lives. It is heavily rooted in the belief that when a pendulum swings it’s telling you something. That when the dowsing rods swivel you should listen. And that when someone asks you how you know that you’ve chosen the right beets for your horseradish and caper-strewn salad, you can pick up your pendulum and say, “I just know.” ALICA FORNERET



MAGIC MATZO BALL SOUP

Matzo ball soup may serve a specific purpose during the eight days of Passover, when devout Jews eat only unleavened bread to honor their exodus from Egypt, but we think the “Jewish penicillin,” so named because of its inherent (and widely embraced) healing abilities, should be in rotation year-round. For those who don’t already have a cherished recipe passed down through generations, we offer up one from the *Gather Journal* family—forget chicken soup for the soul, this is matzo soup for the body, mind, and soul.

Serves: 6

MATZO BALLS

- 3 large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup matzo meal
- 3 Tbsp chicken stock, broth, or water
- 3 Tbsp rendered chicken fat or vegetable oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt

BROTH

- 2 lb drumsticks
- 2 carrots, quartered
- 2 parsnips, quartered
- 2 stalks celery, quartered
- 1 onion, quartered
- handful parsley
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp black peppercorns
- chopped parsley or dill, for serving

Stir together matzo ball ingredients and chill, covered, at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours or overnight.

Place all the broth ingredients in a large pot with 12 cups of cold water and 1 Tbsp salt. Bring to a boil, skimming off any foam that rises to the surface. Simmer $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours and then strain. Season to taste with salt. (Add the meat back to the soup if desired or save for another meal).

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Wet hands and gently shape matzo mixture into 6 balls. Simmer with the pot tightly covered until balls are tender, about 30 to 40 minutes. Transfer to hot broth and simmer 5 minutes longer. Serve soup sprinkled with chopped parsley or dill.





MATZO, MATZO, MATZO

Four writers on one time-honored magical healing salve (with many different spellings).

My mom says the secret to her matzoh ball soup is the fresh dill. That's the way her mom, my Grammie, made it; parsnips are another ace up her sleeve. Together they add up to the amazement that is her signature brand of Jewish penicillin. One that, unlike the original variety, I'm not allergic to. It all develops over the course of a few days; chicken stock simmers one day, and the light as a cloud matzoh balls are shaped, rested, and boiled the next. By day three the lingering aromas are impossible to ignore, and you know you're one step closer to Jewish bliss in a bowl. You'll be distracted momentarily by the pockets of schmaltz creating artful swirls, or the wonderment of the floating matzoh balls, but soon enough you're eagerly slurping, steam rising as you go. You don't have to be under the weather to instantly feel a million times better. RICHARD CHUDY

Matzah, I'm not a fan, drywall not being one of my first picks for snack food. I don't care how much butter or jam you slather on, I'll wait the eight days until I can have bread again, thanks. I don't want matzah pb&j for lunch. And don't even think about slipping it into my lasagna or sneaking it in as the crust of my pizza. I'll never forgive you. There's one exception, though, and only one: my mom's matzah ball soup. If you can conjure the rich homemade chicken broth, redolent with carrots, onions, and parsnips (but don't leave those mushy vegetables in there!), drop just a sprig of dill in at the last moment and grind in a few peppercorns, it's a start. Then you must coax that horrid cardboard into soft, egggy, salty orbs that bob along gently in the bowl. Sounds simple, but most matzah balls are more suited to the bocce court than the dinner table. It takes a special set of hands to transform that box of Manishewitz sawdust (please don't try to get fancy with the ingredients here) into fluffy balls that float whimsically in that wonderful soup. But if you can do it, we'll be friends for life. LARA BELKIN

First the steam hits your clogged nostrils. Then a slurp of salty broth soothes your raspy throat. The chicken gives you a punch of protein. The carrots offer the promise of beta-carotene and other vitamins you're too hazy to recount. But when you are homesick or just plain old sick-sick, it's those matzoh balls that give you the extra healing oomph. As the fluffy edges fall away from the dense center to float impertinently on the soup's surface, echoes of family holidays spent debating the perfect texture of a matzoh ball swirl up from the bowl. And while chicken soup is undoubtedly the best cure for the common cold (you have to feed a cold, of course), it's the addition of those fist-size, doughy orbs that is the panacea for all that ails you, from the heart to the soul to the sinuses. Your beloved family may be thousands of miles away, and you may be alone in your small apartment wishing for the blisteringly cold winter to *just end already, damn it*, but a delivery man bearing a snowy plastic bag with a sloshing container of that fragrant soup is the silver bullet to any New York winter. MELISSA LIEBLING-GOLDBERG

My first association with chicken soup is, strangely enough, pop culture-related. At age seven, my favorite song to belt out—accompanying a seriously-overextended VHS tape—was “Chicken Soup with Rice.” It was crooned by Really Rosie, the titular character from an illustrated Maurice Sendak book turned into an animated musical (voiced by Carole King, no less). The zippy little number chronicled all the ways in which chicken soup could be appreciated, month-by-month, throughout the calendar year. And, in my family, appreciated throughout the calendar year it was. Chicken soup with matzah balls, Passover or not, was the prelude to every holiday meal, ladled generously into flat wide bowls with halved carrots and parsnips bobbing about. It was brought to the table with ceremoniously careful steps to avoid spillage, and a warning shout: CAREFUL! VERY HOT! Chicken soup is now my own winter ritual. I buy a whole roast chicken and steadfastly pull it apart; the remaining bones and fat simmer with vegetables and herbs for hours, to my great impatience as the smell intensifies. It's an illustrious remedy for a sore throat or an achy body, and it's just as warmly restorative when your apartment is goddamn freezing. But there's the invaluable emotional nourishment it provides too: invoking my grandma, my mom, and the intangible presence of other strong Jewish ladies past, whose dotting goodwill lingers in the kitchen with me. SARAH MOROZ

Illustration by Hilary Fitzgibbons

MAINS

Ladies and gentlemen, for the meal's main attractions we hearkened back to magic's simpler days, a time before grandiose coups of illusion, when top hatted magicians were summoned to the stage with drum rolls. Like *Sesame Street's* The Amazing Mumford, who would, with a wave of his wand and the utterance of his magic words ("à la peanut butter sandwich!"), make Grover levitate. For our own magnificent and mystifying feats we put rabbit in a different kind of hat; we sent a vegetable tagine on a wild carpet ride; we got bracirole in a bind worthy of Houdini; we turned a piece of cod shimmering gold; and we gave risotto an illusory-inspired spin. Presto!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Marcus Nilsson FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

VEGETABLE TAGINE

One of the most everlasting images from *One Thousand and One Nights* is that of Prince Hussain riding his magic carpet. The notion of an ordinary carpet capable of suddenly taking flight into the faraway is the stuff of dreams. Our tagine charts a similar course, with a batch of familiar vegetables teleported to new and exciting territory.

Serves: 6

- 1/3 cup, plus 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 medium eggplant (about 1 lb) cut into 2-inch pieces
 - 1 onion, chopped
 - 3 cloves garlic, chopped
 - 1 tsp each ground cinnamon, coriander, cumin, ginger, and turmeric
 - 1 (15 oz) can chopped tomatoes
 - 1 1/2 cups vegetable broth
 - 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
 - 3 carrots, halved lengthwise and cut into 2-inch pieces
 - 1/2 head cauliflower, cut into florets
 - 3/4 cup dried Turkish apricots, chopped
 - 1 (15 oz) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
 - 1 preserved lemon, rind only, finely chopped
 - 1/2 cup chopped roasted almonds
 - a handful of cilantro leaves
 - couscous for serving
- Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat 1/3 cup oil in a wide heavy pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and stir to coat. Cook until browned on several sides then transfer to a plate. Add remaining 2 Tbsp oil to pot. Cook onion and garlic, stirring frequently, until soft and translucent, about 7 minutes. Stir in spices and cook 1 minute. Add tomatoes, broth, and sweet potato and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer 10 minutes.
- Stir carrots, cauliflower, and apricots into the tagine and then cover and bake 25 minutes. Add chickpeas and reserved eggplant and continue baking, covered, until vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Season to taste with salt.
- Top with preserved lemon, almonds, and cilantro.
- Serve over couscous.



RABBIT-IN-A-HAT POT PIE

The expression, *to pull a rabbit out of a hat* has, because of its longstanding link to the art of magic, come to mean the act of producing something surprising. And our rabbit and rutabaga pot-pie with a buttery golden crust qualifies as such.

Serves: 4 to 6



- 1 (2 - 2½ lb) rabbit, cut into 6 pieces
- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 3 to 4 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 leek, white and green parts, washed well and chopped separately
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 3 sprigs thyme
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 cups chicken broth
- ½ lb rutabaga, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- ½ lb Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter blended with 1½ Tbsp flour
- 1 lb frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg yolk stirred with 1 Tbsp water

Season rabbit and lightly coat with 1 Tbsp flour. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in a large heavy skillet then brown rabbit, in batches, adding more oil if needed, until golden. Set aside. Add a little more oil to skillet and stir in green parts of leek, garlic, and thyme. Cook 3 minutes. Stir in wine and simmer until almost reduced. Return rabbit to skillet. Add stock and 1½ cups water. Bring to a simmer then cook, covered, 40 minutes. Remove meat and set aside.

Strain cooking liquid into a medium saucepan discarding the solids. Add rutabaga, potatoes, and leek whites to the cooking liquid and simmer until just tender and liquid is reduced by almost half, about 25 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, debone rabbit and keep covered in a 1½ to 2 qt baking dish. When vegetables are cooked, remove them with a slotted spoon and mix them into the rabbit. Whisk butter/flour paste into broth and simmer just until slightly thickened. Pour over rabbit and vegetables and cool.

Cut a round of pastry about 2 inches larger than the top of the baking dish and cut a few vents in it. Paint the edge of the dish with eggwash and lay the crust over, pressing gently to adhere. Brush pastry with yolk mixture. Chill at least 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Bake pie 15 minutes. Reduce oven to 325°F and bake until filling is hot and pastry is golden, about 35 minutes longer. (Check the temperature with a knife inserted deep into the filling through a vent. If it's hot at the tip, the pie is ready.)

A RABBIT HAIKU

First words on first day
Awake and said twice, said twice
Luck be a rabbit ♪



SAFFRON-BRAISED COD

Extracted from the vermilion stigmas of the crocus flower, saffron's precious, wispy threads have been used for ritual purposes since antiquity—some believed drinking an infusion would help you peer into the future. To us, they are the ultimate magic wand: one touch and, poof, they will thrillingly shift a dish's aroma and hue.

Serves: 6

generous pinch saffron threads
 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 1 onion, chopped
 2 oz dried, cured chorizo, finely chopped
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1 fennel bulb, cut into ¼-inch thick slices
 1 (14 oz) can whole tomatoes in juice, crushed by hand
 1 (14 oz) can cannellini or other white beans, rinsed and drained
 ¾ cup water
 ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
 1 ¼ lbs cod or hake fillet

Preheat oven to 350°F. Rub saffron threads into ½ tsp kosher salt until finely broken, and set aside.

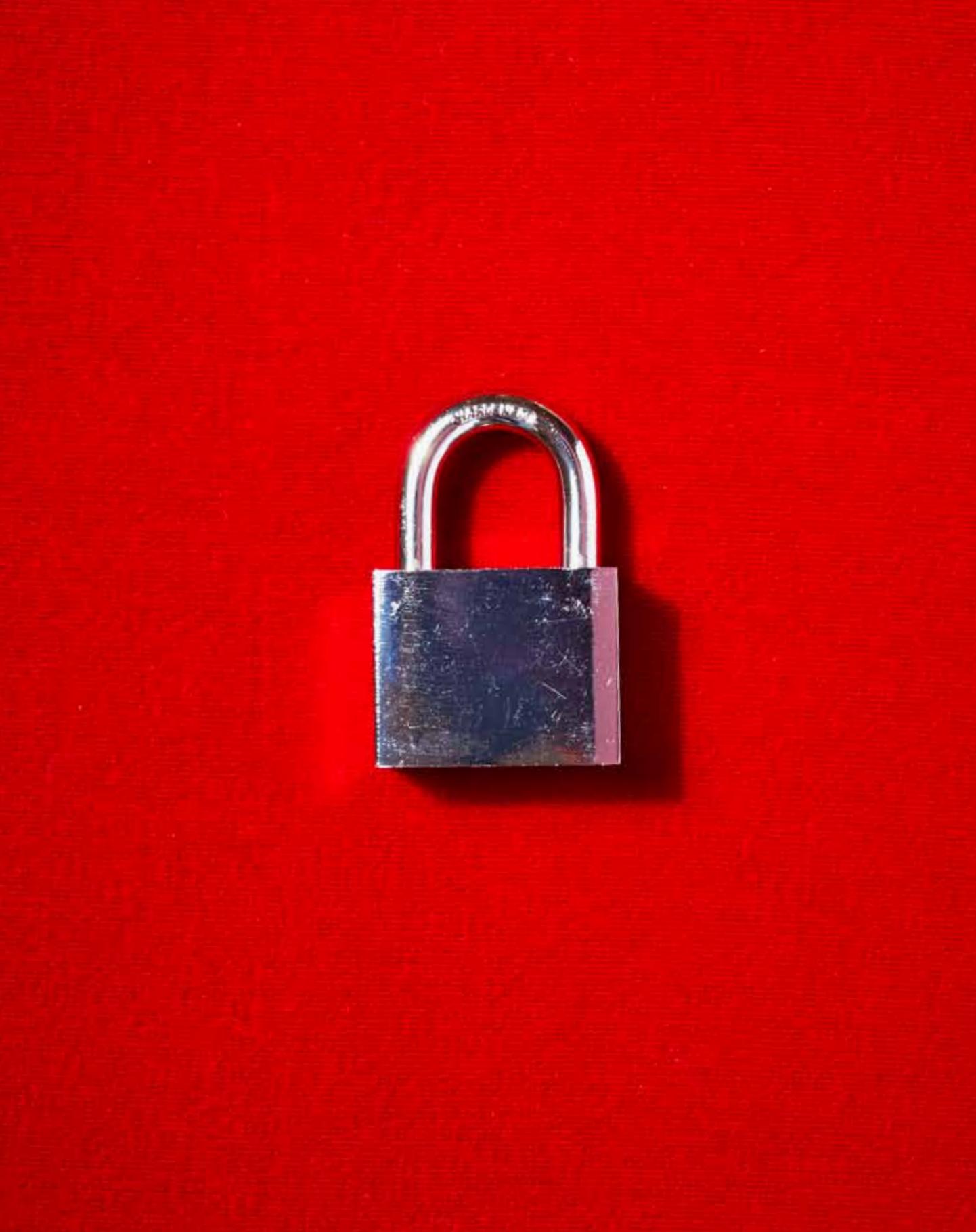
Heat the oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Cook onion until softened, about 7 minutes. Add chorizo and garlic and cook, stirring until oil is released from chorizo, about 3 minutes. Stir in fennel and cook 4 minutes. Add tomatoes along with their juices, beans, water, and pepper flakes and bring to a boil. Transfer to the oven and bake, covered, until fennel is almost tender, about 25 minutes.

Once vegetables go in the oven, gently rub top of fish with saffron salt and keep chilled, covered with plastic wrap, until ready to use.

When ready, give vegetables a stir, season fish with a little black pepper, then nestle into skillet and bake, covered, until fish is cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes.

UNCOMMON THREAD

There was a time in my life—post-college but pre-adulthood—when having someone over for dinner reliably entailed serving unseasoned white rice topped with canned black beans, melted cheddar, and some chopped-up tomato if I was feeling extra-fancy. I was dead broke, but I got it into my head to make what would most assuredly have been an appalling rendition of a classic paella. I'd come into some chicken, and cheap chorizo was plentiful in Brooklyn's pre-gentrified Crown Heights, but saffron... saffron was something new. I searched the bodega shelves in vain, almost giving up before spying the tiny vial of wispy threads they were selling for what might as well have been \$1,000 at the time. And yet—the saffron was essential. Or so the Internet had told me. I was dejected. The paella was abandoned. Now, many paellas—and poached pears, and delicate aiolis, and subtly savory desserts—later, I know the wondrously transformative power of those tiny, pungent filaments. And that I have in common with Cleopatra, or so I like to think: Egypt's last pharaoh famously darkened her bath with a quarter cup of saffron to get her lady juices flowing, an amount that would cost upwards of \$500 today. SARA CARDACE



WOUND AND BOUND BRACIOLE

Being a great magician is also about being a great showman, and Harry Houdini was the *ne plus ultra*. During his heyday at the turn of the twentieth century his dramatic escape acts from handcuffs, ropes, straitjackets, and even chains while submerged underwater, were astonishing. It was the great Houdini who we had in mind when binding our tender braciole and engulfing them in sauce.

Serves: 6

- ¾ cup finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- ½ cup finely grated provolone
- ⅓ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 3 cloves garlic, minced, divided
- 12 (¼-inch thick) slices beef top round, about 2 lbs
- 12 thin slices prosciutto (about 5 oz) butcher's twine
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 (28 oz) cans whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by hand
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes
- pasta for serving

1 Stir together cheeses, parsley, and 1 tsp of the minced garlic.

2 Using a meat pounder, pound slices of beef between sheets of plastic wrap to about ⅛-inch thick, then discard wrap. (Nice butchers will do this for you.) Top each piece of meat with a slice of prosciutto and a generous Tbsp of filling, and roll up tightly. Tie securely with string. Season rolls with ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper.

3 Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Working in batches, brown rolls on all sides then transfer to a plate. Reduce heat to medium and stir in onion and remaining garlic. Cook, stirring until softened, about 6 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and red pepper flakes and return meat to the pot along with any juices from the plate. Bring to a simmer then reduce heat to medium-low and cook, partially covered, gently stirring from time to time, until the meat is tender, about 2 to 2¼ hours.

4 Serve some of the sauce with pasta then the braciole as a main course drenched in even more sauce.

ESCAPE ACTS

Mothers routinely perform feats of magic, from concocting potions to curing stomachaches to getting children to eat green vegetables. One manner that's long been relied on to achieve the latter: disguise, or rather, hide them in something desirable. In my family this went beyond greens. My Babcia performed a disappearing act with liver. Even the word for this organ is slippery. It rolls down the tongue and pauses for a moment as the v quivers. It causes children to scrunch up their noses and desperately shake their heads "no." And that is exactly why she never asked her children if they fancied liver. Instead, she finely chopped calves liver and stirred it into homemade applesauce. "Applesauce?" is all she offered. Had my Dad known, he surely would have summoned a reverse magic spell to make the liver disappear from his plate (probably involving a canine assistant). My Babcia never revealed her secret until decades later when she proudly confessed to me. I laughed and admired her sneaky strategy. Then I thought about all of her applesauce that I had eaten growing up: It was chunky and full of spices. SASHA GORA

MAGICAL MUSHROOM RISOTTO

Mushrooms are rooted in magic. That there are also certain fungi strains that will quite literally take you on a trip only adds to their magnetism. Though our risotto—a dish whose methodical stovetop evolution is itself spellbinding—uses mushrooms of the non-psychoactive variety, its effects are nonetheless palate-bending.

Serves: 4

- ¾ oz dried porcini mushrooms
 - 4 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - ¾ lb mixed wild mushrooms such as maitake, chanterelle or shiitake, torn into small clusters if large
 - 2 tsp thyme, chopped
 - 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
 - 5 Tbsp unsalted butter
 - 2 shallots, finely chopped
 - 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - 1¼ cups Arborio rice
 - ¾ cup dry white wine
 - ¾ cup finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 Soak dried porcini in a bowl with 3 cups hot water. After 20 minutes, lift porcini from soaking liquid, squeezing out any excess water. Pour off and reserve 2 cups of soaking liquid leaving behind any settled grit from the mushrooms. Finely chop the mushrooms and set aside.
 - 2 Heat 2 Tbsp oil in a heavy-bottomed saute pan over medium-high heat. Cook fresh mushrooms, in batches if necessary, until golden and crisp. Add the thyme and cook 1 minute longer. Transfer to a plate and keep warm.
 - 3 Heat together the chicken broth and reserved mushroom liquid. Keep warm while making risotto.
 - 4 In a medium saucepan, heat 2 Tbsp butter and remaining 2 Tbsp oil over medium heat. Add shallots and garlic and cook, stirring, until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add porcini and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Stir in the rice and cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes. (You'll be stirring constantly until the risotto is done.) Add wine and simmer until absorbed. Pour in 1 cup hot broth and cook until almost absorbed. Continue adding broth, about ¾ cup at a time, cooking until broth is absorbed then adding more, until risotto is creamy and the rice is tender but still has a little bite. (You will have used about 5 cups of broth.) Stir in the cheese and remaining 3 Tbsp butter. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
 - 5 Serve risotto immediately with sautéed mushrooms piled on top.



MAGIC WORDS

On mushrooms, eggplant, and rabbit

TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL

Like all great feats of magic, mushrooms combine science and mystery to deliver a heart-stopping thrill. No matter how many times I stumble across a dark horde of black trumpets in the woods or catch sight of the brilliant orange ruffle of a chicken mushroom, I never fail to emit a delighted gasp. Even the smallest, most unobtrusive fungi emerge from their subterranean labyrinth cloaked in fascination. For without mushrooms and their massive mycelia, we are nothing. Their ability to decompose organic compounds—including petroleum products and pesticides—is just one of their many tricks. They nourish us, seducing us with their umami-laden flavor. Woe to the one who mistakes foe for friend! A select few make excellent traveling companions (nearly 150 species, actually) and will take you on the psychotropic journey of a lifetime—one that might leave you, according to recent studies, with a heightened aesthetic appreciation and a greater openness to the viewpoints and values of others. These truly magical mushrooms are best ingested on their own, whether fresh or dried, so as not to dilute their potency. But if their bitter taste is unpalatable to you, enjoy them as the Aztecs did, in small increments, accompanied by honey and chocolate. Then sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. LAURA SILVERMAN

PET PROJECT

Rabbit's association with luck is longstanding. Since 7th century BC, their foot has been toted around as a talisman by countless cultures—Africans wore it as an amulet thought to inspire creativity; in China, it was associated with prosperity; and in Celtic Europe, it offered protection against evil spirits. And everywhere the rabbit's foot is used for luck in matters of fertility—just consider the expression, "breeding like rabbits." But lucky my childhood pet bunnies were not. It would be a decade until I learned of Snowball, Fluffy, and Peter's true fate. Gullible creature that I was, I had bought the story that all three had met untimely ends on the same afternoon: one hit by a car, the other trapped under the porch, the final one scooped up by a neighbor's dog. But two Proseccos in during one holiday gathering as a teen, my mother let the truth slip: Our pets had become our dinner. The rabbits, as it turns out, had been purchased with that express purpose in mind; my parents had simply neglected to fill my brother and I in. Granted, it took some time before I could once again, well, stomach rabbit, I have come to realize another of their magical attributes: sustainability. For some it's difficult to dissociate a rabbit on their plate from cultural touchstones like Bugs and Thumper, but if you are a meat-eater consider this: It's leaner, less taxing on the environment, and more economical to raise. One piece of advice: Just don't name them. FV

DANGEROUS BEAUTY

Albert Einstein once said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results. If that is true then call me crazy because I am an eggplant addict. Returning to it again and again and again. What's the problem? I'm allergic. No baba ghanoush left behind. Moussaka is not safe. Eggplant has cast its spell and I am utterly enchanted. But alas, it is only ever a few bites into any eggplant delight before a subtle itch sneaks up my throat and onto the roof of my mouth. A discomfort mild enough to ignore, but irritating enough to distress. To stop eating it is the obvious remedy. But, here is the really cruel part: In a display of its power and magnetism, the mysterious nightshade toys with me—pushing me away only to ensnare me again. Because once in a blue moon, I come out on the other side of an eggplant feast completely unscathed. Eggplant allows me to escape the pain of my passion just long enough to let me think that next time will be better. But, alas, it so rarely is. And still, I remain enchanted. CARRIE KING

Photograph by Stephen Kent Johnson



DESSERTS

A magician is at the center of attention yet simultaneously at a remove, and when the stage is a table, similar rules apply. For our meal's grand finale, dishes are brandished with a crowd-pleasing flourish, but each one conceals its own magic within. A glimmering crystal ball is rendered in white cranberry and elderflower jello; caramel-soaked bananas become spectacle when they are set aflame with theatrical grandeur; cookies look to the dreamy night sky for inspiration; a chocolate roll is sawed in half to reveal oozing swirls of whipped cream and sliced malt balls; and a ricotta cheesecake is a study in the simplest of kitchen-born transformations.

Be ready for them to do a disappearing act.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Grant Cornett FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

MAGICIAN'S ASSISTANT ROLL

Originally performed by P.T. Selbit in 1921, the sawing illusion has been executed by many, from Horace Goldin to Harry Blackstone to Dorothy Dietrich, the first to turn the table and slice a *man* in half. Like the famous trick, our chocolate roll is more than meets the eye: sever to reveal decadent malted cream dotted with malt balls.

Serves: 8 to 10

CHOCOLATE SPONGE CAKE

- ½ cup cake flour
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 5 large eggs, at room temperature, yolks and whites separated
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted

MALTED CREAM

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 Tbsp malted milk powder
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- a handful malted milk balls

SWEET RELIEF

I spent the summer of '97 at a lake resort, nursing a broken heart. Not as a guest, but as a waitress. The wages were laughable; tips, verboten; but the job offered an easy escape from my ex. When I arrived at Silver Bay YMCA, my assigned roommate had already settled in. Heather was a free-spirited, trust-fund hippie, all flowing blonde dreadlocks, florid scarves, and belled ankle bracelets tinkling through the dining hall. She practiced Wicca, read tarot, and regularly consulted a menagerie of crystals in an effort to heal my wounded aura and manifest a new love for me. The smell of nag champa quickly seeped into my sheets. But I didn't mind. Her constant witchcraft felt comforting. She cared. Still, the best spell Heather ever cast was conjured not over incense but a bowl of sugar, flour, and butter, when she used the resort kitchen to bake her famous butterscotch cookies. As we sat eating them along the water, I gave in to the caramelized sweetness on my lips, the new friend beside me, and the arcadian beauty around us. And in that moment I was finally released from the past. JOANNA PRISCO

Sponge Cake: Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a 10-by-15-inch jelly roll pan with parchment paper, leaving a little overhang. Whisk together flour and cocoa and set aside.

Beat egg yolks with 6 Tbsp sugar using an electric mixer at high speed until pale and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes. Beat in cream and melted butter until combined. In a separate bowl, using clean beaters, beat the whites with a pinch of salt at medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in remaining 6 Tbsp sugar. Increase speed to high. Beat until whites are glossy and stiff peaks form.

Stir one third of the whites into the yolk mixture then gently fold in the remaining whites until combined. Gradually fold in cocoa/flour. Spread batter onto a baking sheet and bake until cake is springy and dry to the touch, about 10 minutes. Cool completely in pan set on a rack.

Malted Cream: Whip cream, milk powder, sugar, and vanilla with an electric mixer until thick and creamy.

Spread cake evenly with malted cream and dot with malt balls. Using the parchment paper to help, roll the cake lengthwise into a log. Place seam downward. Roll can be served at once or chilled up to 3 hours.





BANANAS FOSTER

The element of fire can be as dynamic as it is destructive. So clear has the distinction always been that the ancient Greeks even had two different words for it: *aidelon* for the catastrophic kind associated with Hades, and *aides* for the creative kind associated with Hephaestus. In the case of the classic New Orleans-born dessert Bananas Foster, fire is definitely used for good. Very, very good.

Serves: 4

- 6 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/2 vanilla bean, scraped
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 4 ripe, firm bananas, halved lengthwise and crosswise
- 1/4 cup light or gold rum

Melt the butter and sugar in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until smooth and bubbling. Stir in vanilla bean seeds and lemon juice. Add the bananas, cut side down, in a single layer. Increase the heat to medium-high and cook two minutes. Flip the bananas and cook for another minute.

Remove from heat and pour in the rum. Return to the burner and carefully ignite with a long wooden match or tip the pan slightly to catch the flame from a burner. Have a lid handy if the flames get too high or out of control. Cook until the flames die out. Serve immediately with plenty of sauce and a large scoop of vanilla ice cream.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

"And now for the fire..." The flaming sticks were presented to my father each night like firey popsicles after a meal. This was the climax of our family's show, the one I had been a part of since I was a toddler. The stage lights would be lowered, nearly shut off, to add drama, danger—the fire illuminating my parents already other-worldly beautiful faces. The audience predictably subdued into a kind of silent anticipation, watched as the torches passed gracefully from my mother's hands to my father's. From there, my father circled the sticks round and round, making sure they gave an audible whoosh before pausing, one stick poised just above his head. The low light from the fire transformed him from man to something almost ghostly: a head, a face, hands, shoulders and nothing else. There, he would pause ever so slightly, and then, bending, bring the stick closer and closer to his mouth. From the stage, you could feel the audience holding their breath, waiting for magic (and maybe for a disaster) to happen. Finally, my father would tip his head back, open his mouth as wide as it would go, and in one smooth arch, bring the flame into his mouth and close it, ingesting the fire. As the stage went dark, the audience would erupt into applause. And for us, this was the point of it all, the part of the night we all lived for. The reason we went on stage night after night, day after day. Because although my father was the one eating the fire, the audience members were the ones eating out of our hands, and in serving, we got the better end of the meal. AERIEL BROWN





RICOTTA CHEESECAKE

There is a frequent and familiar brand of magic that happens in nature and the kitchen—that it's practical doesn't make it any less remarkable. Just take the metamorphosis of milk into curds of ricotta; the idea is time-honored and the process is simple, but the resulting billowy mounds of cheese still always manage to astonish. And when that ricotta makes its way into a cheesecake with glazed figs and blood oranges in the wings, the effect feels worthy of a "tada."

Serves: 8

- 5 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 cups ricotta, preferably homemade*
- finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- finely grated zest of ½ an orange
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- glazed figs and blood oranges*

HOMEMADE RICOTTA

Makes: about 3 cups

- 8 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 5 Tbsp lemon juice
- cheesecloth

GLAZED FIGS AND BLOOD ORANGES

Makes: about 1 ½ cups

- 1 ⅓ cups dried Turkish figs, halved
- ⅔ cup dry red wine
- ½ cup blood orange juice
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 blood oranges

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter an 8" springform pan and place on a baking sheet.

Whisk together eggs and sugar until sugar dissolves. Whisk in ricotta, zests, ½ tsp salt, and vanilla extract until combined. Then whisk in flour just until incorporated. Pour into prepared pan and bake until puffed and chestnut brown, 60-70 minutes.

Cool 10 minutes. Run an offset spatula around the edge of the pan, then release sides and remove. Cool completely. Serve room temperature or chilled overnight.

HOMEMADE RICOTTA: Heat milk, cream, and ¾ tsp salt in a large pot over medium heat. Stirring occasionally, heat to a full boil. Turn off the heat and then stir in lemon juice and let stand undisturbed for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, set a colander triple-lined with cheesecloth over a large bowl. Gently pour or ladle mixture into colander. Drain undisturbed until ricotta has body and texture but remains soft and creamy, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Chill until ready for use.

GLAZED FIGS AND BLOOD ORANGES: Place figs, wine, juice, sugar, and cinnamon in a saucepan. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until syrupy, 20-25 minutes. Stir in segments cut from oranges and cook until heated through. Cool completely. Remove cinnamon stick before serving.

CRYSTAL BALL JELLO

"It's a crystal. Nothing more. But if you turn it this way and look into it, it will show you your dreams." So said David Bowie as the crystal ball-toting Goblin King in *Labyrinth*. Crystalline orbs have served as psychic stimuli since medieval times; the art of meditatively gazing into their reflective surface to predict the future called scrying. Once upon a time, practiced gazers would place their crystal balls beneath their pillows at night to enhance a connection or leave them to bathe beneath the light of a full moon to increase their potency. This shimmering ode to the magic orb cast in white cranberry and elderflower liqueur-doused gelatin is designed to be both contemplated and consumed.

Makes: 4 to 6

1 (¼ oz, about 2¼ tsp) packet plus ½ tsp unflavored gelatin

3 cups white cranberry juice cocktail

¼ cup St Germaine liqueur

Sprinkle gelatin over ½ cup juice in a small bowl until softened, about 3 minutes.

Stir softened gelatin into 1 cup of juice in a small saucepan and bring to a bare simmer, stirring to dissolve gelatin completely. Stir in liqueur and simmer 1 minute. Stir in remaining 1½ cups juice. Pour into desired mold or molds (a crystal ball-sized version is available in the Marketplace at gatherjournal.com) and chill until firm, about 6 hours or overnight.

MARKET VALUE

An hour into my first *limpia* I stood across from Mary as she lit a cigarette, flipped it around and placed the cherry inside of her mouth. Her lips fluttered behind a cloud of smoke as she blessed me in Spanish, and I knew it had to be for real. I'd paid Mary 100 pesos to read my palm, tell my fortune, and perform a spiritual cleansing. She is known as a *bruja*, "What you'd call a witch," and practices in the back of Mercado de Sonora, a location known as Mexico City's premier witchcraft market. The market reeks of shit, piss, and wet fur; chemicals, herbs, and rotting fruit. And between the stalls selling potions for *buena suerte* and kitchen utensils there is Mary, conjuring magic and sorcery from behind a makeshift doorway. For me, the beauty of Mexico City lies in how often the supernatural is juxtaposed with everyday necessities. Whisks and socks can be found in the same market where a woman will read your palm. A friend's mother will insist on teaching you how to season a new *casuela* while giving you a remedy for the common head cold. And there's a very good chance that any of the dessert salesmen meeting the high demand for jiggling mounds of jello on every subway car, street corner, and bus will also offer premonitions about your future in exchange for a few pesos. ALICA FORNERET



MOON PHASE COOKIES

The moon is magic and mystery. Full, it triggers werewolves and mania (it must be a full moon), and the lunar connection has long been intertwined with women's fertility. We represented the cosmic wonder in cakey cookie form, each phase outlined in chocolate. Our advice, eat according to the energy you want to create: new moon for new beginnings; waxing for creativity; full for abundance and sexuality; waning for release; and dark moon for peace.

Makes: about 30 cookies

COOKIES

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1¼ sticks (10 Tbsp) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract

ICINGS

- 2 cups confectioners sugar
- 2 Tbsp light corn syrup
about 8 tsp water,
plus more for thinning
- ¼ tsp peppermint extract
- 3 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder (Dutch process cocoa will make the blackest cookies)

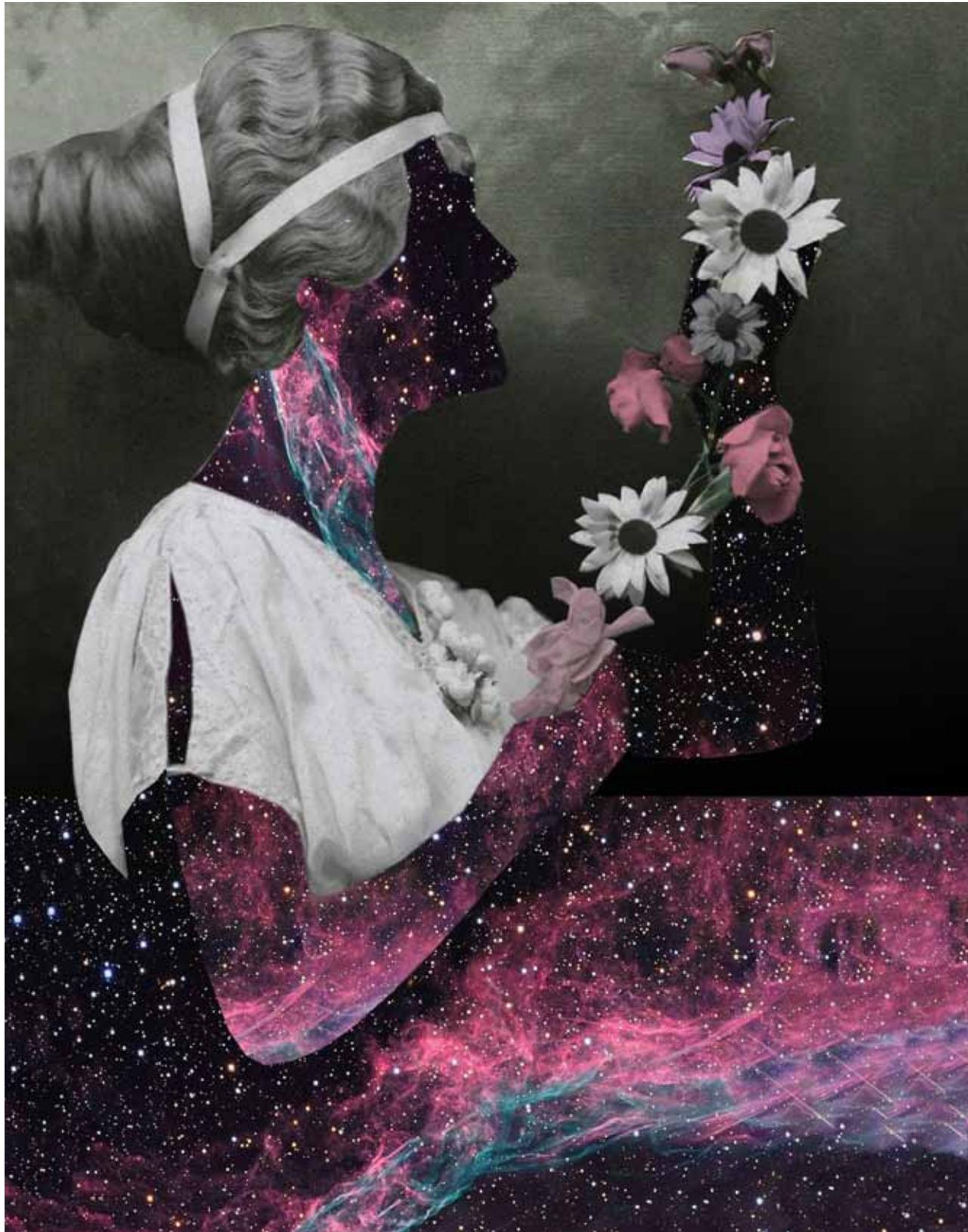
Cookies: Preheat oven to 350°F with racks in upper and lower third positions. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Whisk together flour, baking soda, and ¼ tsp salt and set aside. Beat butter with sugar with an electric mixer until pale and fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, scraping sides of bowl once or twice and then beat in vanilla. With mixer on low speed, beat in flour and buttermilk in batches, beginning and ending with flour, until combined.

Scoop rounded tablespoons of dough onto baking sheets about 1½ inches apart. Bake until cookie edges are just pale golden and springy to the touch, 11 to 14 minutes. Cool cookies completely on a rack.

Icings: When cookies are cool, whisk together confectioners sugar, corn syrup, water, and mint extract in a small bowl. Divide out ½ cup into another bowl and stir cocoa in, adding a little additional water a teaspoon at a time until thinned to the same consistency as the white icing. Each should be spreadable but not too runny.

Ice cookies following the moon phase chart on gatherjournal.com. Spread icings onto cookies, allowing one color to dry slightly before icing with the other color. Flipping the crescents and halves top to bottom will give you waxing and waning moons. Let icings dry completely before serving.



STRANGE MEDICINE

Two writers navigate the age-old art of potion-making. Drink it in.

ADULT CONTENT As a teenager in the 1980s, growing up in New York City and its suburbs, I longed to live in a kind of mythical, make-believe world inspired by the John Boorman film *Excalibur*, Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*, Yeats's poems about faeryland and, to no small extent, the Led Zeppelin song "The Battle of Evermore." That track was the musical accompaniment to which I studied tarot and tea-leaf reading, the soundtrack for my would-be witchcraft.

My best friend and I made regular trips to herb shops, occult stores, and botanicas. We took seriously the healing and otherwise magical properties of plants, and in our families' kitchens cooked up tinctures and teas and poultices and infusions. Based on what we'd read, both in old European herbals and more newfangled new-Age-y ones, we came to ascribe great powers to certain plants: We went very cautiously and delicately with blue cohosh, for example, and after some consideration, agreed not to mess at all with things like nightshade and henbane.

But other herbs, benign and beautiful ones, were constants, and we used them for anything that ailed us: heartache, worry, family difficulties, sore throats. Foremost among these were hyssop and chamomile. I understood both to have protective properties, and the ability to fend off any bad magic someone might send my way. I also loved the delicate fragrances of both plants, and their very different flowers: the soft and small and sweetly daisy-like chamomile, the spiky, purple spears of hyssop. They were easy for a young aspiring herbalist to work with. They felt good in the hand. They could, as far as I knew, do no harm. I drank them, I ate them, I sewed them into small sachets to tuck under my pillow to banish nightmares. I made wreaths of chamomile flowers for my hair, and dried hyssop hung from my bedroom mirror.

What I didn't use herbs for back then was cocktails. Of course, back in my teenage witch days, I wasn't old enough to drink cocktails, or even to care about them. But now I know that making cocktails is not so different from making potions. Strike that: Cocktails are potions; with every drink, there are effects I hope to produce, probably even emotions I want to invoke. As an adult, you'll seldom find me reading tarot anymore (only once in a while, when the spirits move me), or formulating herbs and roots into magical elixirs meant to protect, or to repel, or to attract. But you will often find me making and drinking cocktails. ROSIE SCHAAP

BATTLE OF EVERMORE COCKTAIL

A cocktail inspired by my younger self, and by Led Zeppelin.

Makes: 1 cocktail

Absinthe, enough to coat the inside of a coupe

1 ½ oz Calvados

1 oz smoky Scotch whisky

¼ oz hyssop and chamomile simple syrup*

¼ oz fresh clementine juice (substitute fresh orange juice if necessary)

Shake all ingredients except absinthe with ice. Strain into a coupe whose interior has been lightly rinsed with absinthe. Garnish with a substantial flourish of chamomile and hyssop flowers; they're edible—and this should look a little over the top.

Hyssop and chamomile simple syrup: In a small saucepan, heat 1 cup **honey** and 1 cup **water** over medium heat until honey has completely dissolved; do not boil. Let the syrup cool, then add 1 handful **hyssop and chamomile flowers**. Steep for one hour; strain.

LOVE IS THE DRUG

Love Potion Number Nine. The 1956 song would lay the groundwork for the 1992 film with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock. The premise was simple: two unlucky-in-love, nerdy biochemists procure a potion from a palm reader, which makes them ravishing to anyone who crosses their path. Donovan becomes a local lothario, and Bullock is courted by a prince, until they discover, naturally, that they're crazy about each other.

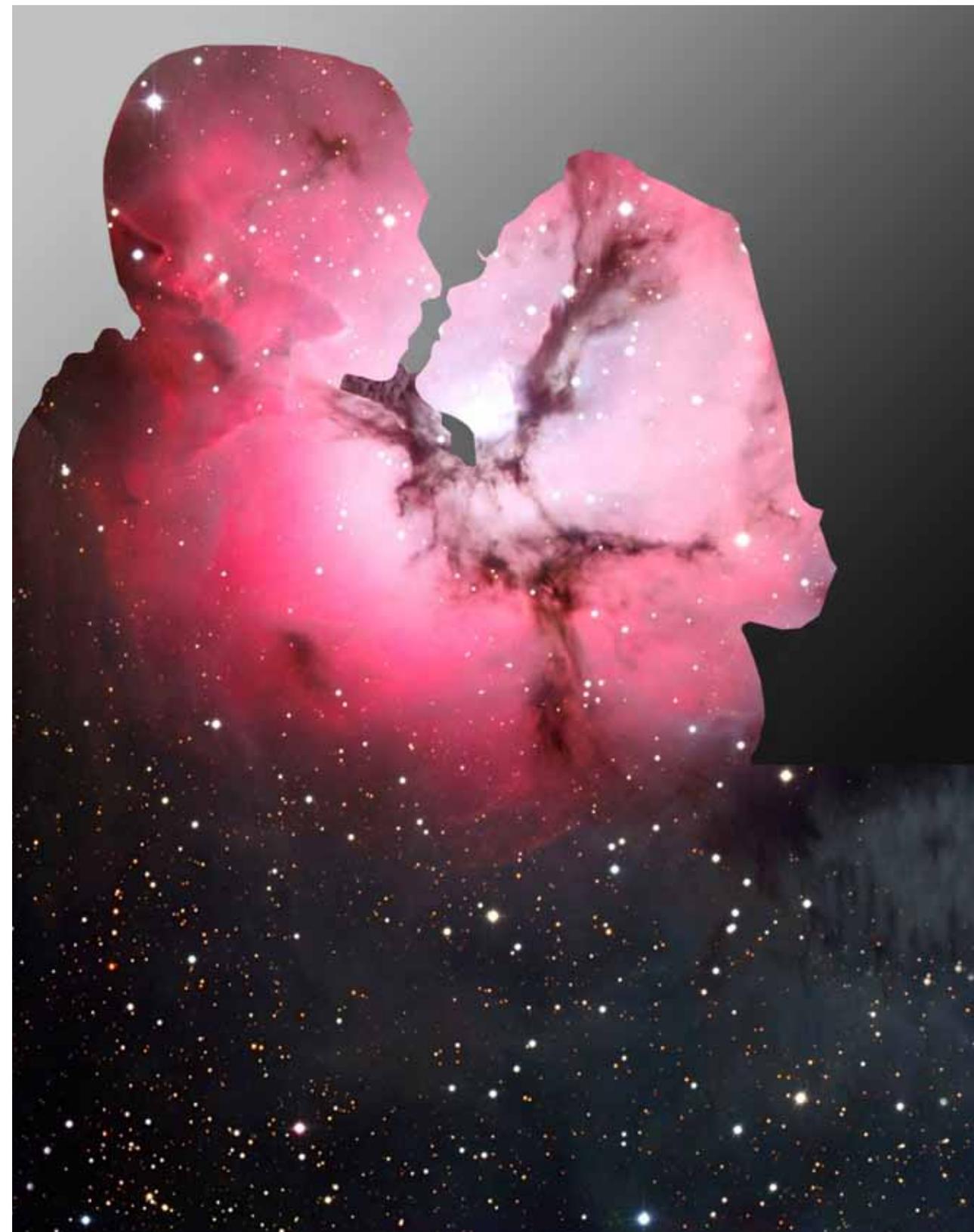
But love potions' origins stretch back farther than the early '90s; many millennia, in fact. Potion cookery is a form of physical and practical magic, using the earth's natural resources (herbs, stones, and the like) to concoct remedies. And love potions, once known as "philters" in ancient times, have taken many forms over the years: In the Middle Ages, roots from the shrieking plant, mandrake, were used; in the 16th century, a pastiche of leeks and earthworms or tinctures of marigold were prescribed; and in 17th century France, love was summoned in a fashion most vile, with Spanish flies and, gulp, menstrual blood.

The use of potions in this tireless quest for love is chronicled in every creative format. Greek goddess Aphrodite had son Eros shoot arrows laced with love potion into her victims; in Richard Wagner's opera it is a potion that causes Tristan and Isolde to embark on their doomed affair; and in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* a love juice that "on sleeping eye-lids laid will make or man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees" causes all sorts of trouble. There was the *Fraggle Rock* episode where Wembley spills potion in the well making all the Fraggles love-sick; or the potion-injected chocolates that made Ron Weasley fall for Romilda Vane in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*; and remember Tone Loc's "Funky Cold Medina"? The medina in question is a love potion—"put a little medina in your glass and the girls'll come real quick."

But most modern (and reputable) herbalists will say that potions should not be designed to cause love in an unwitting person. "I've definitely had people ask me for them, but in terms of *making* someone fall in love with you I don't participate because it's not good magic," says Massachusetts-based clinical herbalist Dori Midnight. Instead she formulates elixirs with classic ingredients—like rose for softening and opening the heart, damiana to relax and enhance connection to sexuality, and ruby essence to ground people in their bodies—that energetically ready someone for love. And Midnight insists that the intention with which she creates her modern potions is as important as the ingredients. "Obviously I believe in the power of plants and stones, but with my clients I'm also envisioning love and healing and magic for them, so it creates a space for someone to be able to step in and believe in it too."

That same brand of intention can elicit magic in the kitchen—simply cooking something with love for the person you desire can itself have a profound effect. Just recall that scene in *Like Water for Chocolate*, when Tita pours all the passion she feels for Pedro into a meal of quails in rose petal sauce and it's deeply felt by everyone in each morsel (the sexual synthesis in her sister's body was so intense that it set their bathroom on fire). And the love-evoking dish need not be elaborate: In the early 1980s, a recipe circulated the offices of *Glamour* magazine that would eventually, in 2003, be dubbed "engagement chicken" by editor-in-chief Cindi Leive because of the many marriage proposals that followed people making it for their beloved. Was there something special about the recipe? Not really, just the motive with which it was prepared. A meal offers anyone a forum to cast their own love spell, whether your intention is putting a ring on it or just getting lucky. As the old saying goes, the way to someone's heart is through their stomach. FV

Illustration by Erin Case



FAIRY TALES

Commonly known as fairy or folk tales, the German language best captures their essence in word form: *wundermarchen*, translation, “wonder tale.” Because that is what they truly are: stories that, because of their innate magic, elicit a sense of wonder. Wonder we did—for *Jack and the Beanstalk* we dreamt up a golden egg curry; for *Rumpelstiltskin*, a lemony pasta with the look of spun gold; a thick braided cinnamon bread for *Rapunzel*; sparkling baked apples for *Snow White*; for *Cinderella*, a lentil soup with pumpkin; and for *Pinocchio*, he of the growing nose, an aromatic cheese sandwich. These tales’ other common thread is a happy ending, which leaves you feeling much like a wonderful meal: content.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Keirnan Monaghan FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

GO ASK ALICE

References to the alleged powers of various foods are common: alfalfa sprouts for psychic awareness, pears for immortality, cashews to attract money. But what about the simple act of trying something unfamiliar? Is there not something magic in that, too? Soon after her arrival in Wonderland, Alice encounters a bottle labeled “DRINK ME!” At first, she hesitates. “If you drink from a bottle marked ‘poison,’ it is most certain to disagree with you sooner or later,” she says. Satisfied that it is potable, Alice takes a sip... and rather enjoys it. She also shrinks in size. Eager to grow tall again, she ingests—this time without any pause—a small cake with the words “EAT ME” spelled out in currants, and up she goes. And when she meets the hookah-smoking caterpillar, sitting on his mushroom perch, she pulls off two hunks—again, without hesitation—and nibbles with abandon to grow or shrink as needed. Alice’s casual willingness to try things new and mysterious always led to something remarkable happening. And for me, the same has long held true. I remember trying grasshoppers in Oaxaca and feeling beguiled by their at once sour, salty, and crunchy appeal. A bowl of spicy ant egg soup in Laos was, admittedly, slightly repellant, but I felt emboldened for having tried it. And on the same trip, a condiment made from dried water buffalo skin proved an absolute delight, adding to my sense of adventure. Even back in New York there is the potential thrill that comes with meals of chicken feet (gross in theory, but delicious in practice) and cockscombs (better in small doses) enjoyed in the far reaches of Queens, helping me feel a special, almost secret, connection to this place I call home. An open mind at the table and in life can be expansive, bringing abundance and, in a sense, courage to try even more. As Alice knew, there’s definitely magic in that. **STEPHEN TREFFINGER**

THE YEARS OF MAGICAL THINKING

I love to make wishes. Casting a fallen eyelash into the wind, closing my eyes as I turn my necklace clasp, or blowing out the candles on a birthday cake, I live my life with the ever-lingering fantasy that something magical could happen. I rarely remember what my wishes are, but that’s not really the point anyway: It’s about believing that the future may hold something wonderful and hoping that if I close my eyes, take a deep breath, and think of what I want that to be, then I can make it happen—like Mary Poppins transporting the Banks children to another world through a sidewalk chalk drawing. Of course this is all very romantic, and my inner realist is always ready with an eye-roll. But that side of me also knows that there is one place where magic does exist—the kitchen, where simple ingredients can create something powerful; a tiny sprinkle of salt able to do more wonders than pixie dust. Of course, I’ve had my failures. My first attempt at cooking a steak resulted in a piece of meat so overdone it couldn’t be chewed. Or there was the Christmas Eve when I set a potholder on fire while making risotto. But the scallops I served alongside that steak were perfectly seared and the risotto was so successful it impressed even my Italian sister-in-law. And this reminds me to believe. Because even if wishes don’t always come true, there are still moments when a little magic peers through. **SHANNON SHARPE**

NY, I LOVE YOU

I was born a bit of a Pollyanna: I tend to always see the good in things. How I’ve managed to survive living in New York City is, without question, fabled. I’m often tested by the frogs (corporate culture, inability to get ahead financially, trash night, anything involving the Lincoln Tunnel, rats), but it takes very little to remind me why I still put the city on a pedestal. Show me a map of the island and I can drop-pin the best things about it: Film Forum on Sunday afternoon, warm cocktails at Angel’s Share on a snowy evening, the huge Chagall paintings hanging in the Metropolitan Opera House, my favorite lentil soup from Kalustyan’s, walking down a quiet Fifth Avenue. Fairy tales offer a suspension of reality and, often, so does this place I call home. New York, both my frog and my prince. **KENDALL JANE MEADE**





PINOCCHIO TALEGGIO AND PEAR BAGUETTE

Gepetto was but a lonely carpenter spending his days whittling wood in his workshop until, on one fateful day, his carving came alive. And thus was born Pinocchio. Though Carlo Collodi's original text was far more dramatic; some would even say, sadistic than the chaste Disney version—in his imagination, Pinocchio was not a bratty boy but an irredeemable rascal whose behavior was so incorrigible that he should be tortured in many a wicked way and eventually hanged by his neck from a tree—some things remain the same: Pinocchio's need to immediately fulfill any passing desire or appetite, and his tendency towards lying, which makes his nose grow and grow and grow. To toast both notions we stacked a very, very long baguette with aromatic taleggio cheese and sliced pears: quick to make and easy to devour.

Serves: 2 to 4

- 1 baguette
- 1 to 2 pears, cored and sliced
- 4 to 6 oz taleggio, thinly sliced

Split a baguette lengthwise. Toast cut sides under a broiler.

Turn oven down to 375°F. Layer one half with sliced pears and taleggio. Sandwich halves together and bake on a baking sheet until cheese is melted.

Always tell the truth.

NEVERENDING STORY

One can't help but wonder how many early fairy tale authors wrote on an empty stomach—so frequently were their stories preoccupied with the edible. In three of the Brothers Grimm's most famous tales, food features as a central element: *Snow White's* poisoned apple, *Hansel and Gretel's* house of confections, and *Little Red Riding Hood's* basket of cake and wine. A new generation of authors has modernized the magical literary form since the Brothers retired—and many of them are hungry, too. In Amy Bender's 2011 novel *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*, a nine-year-old girl discovers that she can taste her mother's feelings in the cake that she's baked for her. In Trinie Dalton's novella *Sweet Tomb*, her cynical-witch protagonist Candy struggles to discern who in her life is genuine or simply hanging around for her never-ending supply of sugar. Shane Jones's latest novel, *Crystal Eaters*, features a young girl who ingests crystals in an attempt to improve her mother's health. But unlike the Brothers Grimm, writers like Bender, Dalton, and Jones haven't turned to magical fiction to create moral roadmaps for readers—but rather to use the inherent emotion in food as a way of communicating things that are far too large to serve on a platter. MALLORY RICE

AN OPEN BOOK

At the age of twenty, I spent an exchange year in Paris, a place where I'd long dreamed of living. I enrolled in a class on analyzing fairy tales, which suited both my cultural studies major and enduring affection for children's literature. As I read well-loved stories from Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, examining the meanings and motifs of each protagonist's journey, I also reveled in the everyday enchantment of my Parisian life. I had chosen to study fairy tales at the very moment when I was living my own personal fairy tale. The city was even more romantic and bewitching than I'd imagined, an idyll of art, architecture, fashion, and, of course, food. Discovering French cuisine made me feel like Hansel and Gretel finding a gingerbread cottage after days of wandering through the woods. Like Goldilocks with the three bears' porridges, I sampled all sorts of farm cheeses, baguettes, and macarons to pick out just the right ones. I experienced magic in the crafting of a perfectly flaky croissant or a decadent mousse au chocolat. It wasn't exactly happily ever after—eventually my studies would end and I would have to return home—but I would never forget these wonders encountered in a faraway land. MAI LYNN MILLER NGUYEN

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

JACK'S GOLDEN EGG CURRY

Mother doesn't always know best—after all, if Jack had listened to mom, he wouldn't have swapped their cow for five magic beans. And she, in a rage, wouldn't have tossed them out the window causing a beanstalk to sprout overnight. And Jack wouldn't have climbed it to swindle a fee-fi-fo-fum'ing ogre out of his cache of gold and a hen that lays golden eggs. And we wouldn't have been compelled to transform the tale into a Burmese-style quick curry with green beans and hard-boiled eggs turned gold by turmeric.

Serves: 2 to 4

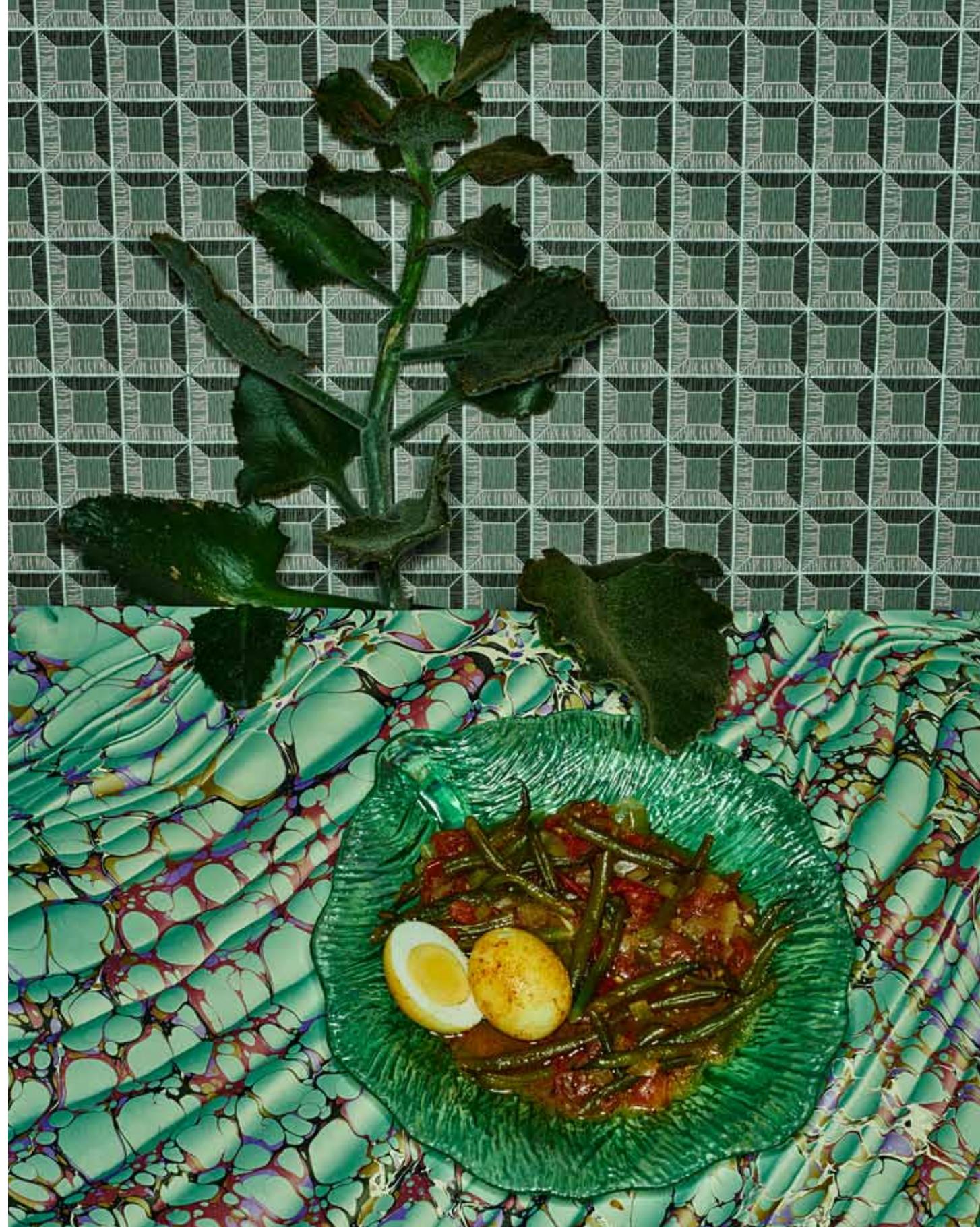
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ tsp turmeric
- 4 peeled, hard-boiled eggs
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1½ tsp finely chopped, seeded jalapeño
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 (¼-inch thick) ginger, smashed
- ¾ tsp garam masala
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ¼ tsp ground cumin
- ¾ cup water
- ½ lb green beans, halved
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped

Heat oil and turmeric in a heavy skillet. Test with a droplet of water; if water sizzles, add 2 eggs. Shallow-fry eggs, rolling them around in the oil until golden and blistered. Try tipping the skillet a little to deepen the oil so the points of the eggs get golden. Transfer to a plate and set aside. Fry remaining 2 eggs.

Discard all but 2 Tbsp oil. Add onion, jalapeño, garlic, and ginger and cook, stirring, until onion is translucent, about 6 minutes. Stir in spices and cook, stirring, 1 minute longer. Add water, beans, and ½ tsp salt then simmer, covered, until beans are tender, 6 to 8 minutes. If beans need a bit longer, add a bit more water. Stir in tomatoes and simmer, uncovered, until tomatoes are broken down and saucy, 10 to 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve with golden eggs.

THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE EGG

I am not big on magic acts, but there is one old magician that I adore: the egg. I have caught its act again and again, morning, noon, and night, and the show never gets old. Omnipresence is its greatest talent because I see egg everywhere and it never looks the same. I'm not just talking about being a master of disguise; but a complete transformation—a change in state. Sometimes, egg scrambles over a perilous open flame. And just like Houdini, egg has mastered the water escape. After ten minutes completely submerged, egg emerges not only unscathed, but harder and stronger than before. My favorite part though is the grand finale—when egg divides into two. One half whips itself into a frenzy, slowly rising in the air, levitating into a fluffy cloud of meringue. Once the whipping is done, the other half completely disappears into a well of flour, not to be heard from again. As if the disguises and flames and levitation weren't enough, as the curtain rises, the audience is fed. Pasta for everyone. *CARRIE KING*



RUMPELSTILTSKIN

SPUN-GOLD LEMON PASTA

It all began with a lie: a poor miller boastfully claiming to the king that his beautiful daughter could spin straw into gold. The greedy king locked her in a room and commanded her to start spinning or face death; desperate, she accepted the offer of help from a strange little man named Rumpelstiltskin, promising him her necklace, then her ring, then her first child, in exchange. Here, the straw is spaghetti, and the alchemical reaction of turning it into a coiled spindle of golden goodness comes not with the help of a bizarre character who sneaks into your room at night, but with the addition of lemon and sunny egg yolks.

Serves: 4

- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 large egg yolks
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano, plus more for serving
- finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 lb linguine

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook garlic in oil over low heat until softened. Remove from heat. In a medium bowl, lightly whisk the yolks and heavy cream. Stir in cheese, zest, and juice.

Cook the pasta until al-dente. Reserve ½ cup cooking liquid then drain. Immediately return the hot pasta to the pot. (Keep the pot on the warm burner but with the flame off.) Stir in the garlic oil then egg mixture tossing to coat creating a smooth and creamy sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serve immediately with extra cheese on the side.

STORIES WE TELL

Under warm blankets our first fairy tales were cooked up and whispered in the quiet of night, twisting our dreams of adulthood around forks in ferocious twirls. They were the miniature portrayals of our impending life problems, some more frightening than others, and we had not yet begun to think on them practically. A tale like Rumpelstiltskin, in which the daughter of a poor miller is expected to spin straw into gold, begged no questions, just the believing nod of a child's receipt. And so we wolfed down the myth to make room for more, to see ourselves in the crystal ball, and to stir the magic until it was done and true. That is, until rational thought—what a foul antagonist!—got the best of us, and we lost our magic to logic. Nowadays we relive it, not locked up in a room with a sinister dwarf, but in the care of our kitchen, keeping eyes on small cauldrons, spinning stick and straight into soft and slack, until we can dress a timeworn plate with slippery gold, all the while our own fairy tale realities humbly carry on cooking. SYLVIE MORGAN BROWN

CINDERELLA

SMOKY LENTIL SOUP WITH PUMPKIN

When her father remarried, Cinderella was doomed—her stepmother and stepsisters, “beautiful and fair of face but vile and black of heart,” relegated her to kitchen servitude. Poor Cinderella was left to pluck her lentils and peas from the hearth’s ashes. She would, of course, eventually find her prince with the help of some fancy footwear. Our soup references both her pitiful home-life—with lentils infused with a smokiness by chorizo—and her happy ending, with pumpkin, the gourd that was (at least in the movie version) her chariot to the ball.

Serves: 6 to 8

4 oz cured, dried chorizo,
cut into ½-inch pieces

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 onion, finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 carrots, finely chopped

2 stalks celery, finely chopped

2 cups French green lentils

2 qts chicken broth

1 lb kabocha squash, chopped
into ½" pieces, about 3 cups

1 Cook chorizo in oil in a heavy pot over medium heat until oil from chorizo is released then transfer with a slotted spoon to a bowl and set aside. Stir in onion and cook until soft and translucent, about 6 minutes.

2 Add garlic, carrots, and celery and cook, stirring frequently, until the celery begins to soften, about 5 minutes. Add lentils and broth and bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes.

3 Stir in squash and reserved chorizo and cook until the lentils and squash are tender but retain their shape, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

FAIRY TALE ENDING

A faux diamond, an oval of crystalline glass, sparkles on one of the fingers of the hand clenched into a taut fist. At the opposite end of the table her sister, her face contorted into the same dour mask, shreds the napkin that an hour ago wiped the dribble of soup from across crimson-shellacked lips. Bronze sparks fly from the fire the man quietly stokes in the corner. Another woman, her ash blonde tendrils escaping from a low ponytail, apron splattered with the pulpy innards of a disfigured pumpkin around her cinched waist, stands barefoot in the kitchen. Into the dishwasher she loads the stained bowls, the greasy spoons. It’s late, and she knows her sisters covet the thimbles of cognac that will finally make the night—and the oppressive reminders they will never have her life—vanish. She pours the tawny liquid, carefully loads the glasses onto the tray, and makes her way in. The grandmother clock strikes midnight, yet despite the aggressive chimes the sisters discern the rustle of blue silk. The apron has come off, they notice, and the man intimately grazes his wife’s arm, and relieves her of the wobbly tray. To each woman he hands their long-awaited nightcap. And so they all eagerly sip. ALIA AKKAM



SNOW WHITE

BAKED GLASSINE APPLES

In the story of Snow White, beauty is both a blessing and a curse. “Mirror, mirror, on the wall who’s the fairest of them all?” When her envious stepmother heard the mirror’s response, Snow White was banished to the woods. But the hired huntsman didn’t have the, ahem, heart to slay Snow White and she found shelter in a tiny house with seven tiny dwarves. The desperate and despicable queen would try again, first with a poisonous comb and then a poisonous apple that “looked so pretty that everyone who saw it longed for it.” Our buttery baked apples with a sheen as crystalline as Snow White’s glass coffin are indeed the fairest of them all.

Serves: 6

1/3 cup turbinado (raw) sugar

2 Tbsp water

1 cinnamon stick

3 Tbsp unsalted butter

a few gratings nutmeg

a pinch salt

6 crisp sweet apples (we like Galas), halved stem to base, cored if you choose

crème fraîche or whipped cream for serving

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bring sugar, water, and cinnamon stick to a simmer in a small sauce pan, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and add butter, nutmeg, and salt, stirring until butter is melted.

Place apples in a medium roasting pan. Pour syrup over apples along with cinnamon stick, turning apples to coat, then arrange cut sides up.

Bake apples, basting occasionally, until tender and glassy, about 40 minutes.

APPLE OF MY EYE

It all started with a bounty of Pink Lady apples. I’d tired of eating them plain, and needed to do something drastic to use up the rest of the batch from my apple-picking trip. I’ve never been comfortable in the kitchen—homemade sangria is as creative as I get—but, fueled by a deeply instilled notion of never wasting food, I plucked up the nerve to attempt the easiest recipe I could find: apple muffins. Methodically following the directions felt therapeutic, and the result, delicious and moist, was a revelation. Where previous cooking disasters left me insecure and lost, baking, with its scientific measurements and steps, seemed unable to fail me. Boosted by Instagram likes and a newfound wonder of what my oven could produce, I moved on to apple peanut butter bars and apple cheddar scones. Despite not being able to figure out the basics of sautéing or simmering, I took naturally to sifting, zesting, and beating. I’m far from a pro, but am slowly learning to let loose, even letting the occasional improvised substitution slip into my baking routine. Last Thanksgiving, I added a salted caramel apple tart to my typical sangria contribution. Who knows—in a few years, my magic oven may even help me produce a whole turkey. STEPHANIE WU

RAPUNZEL

CINNAMON AND CARDAMOM BRAID

So intensely tempting was the leafy rapunzel lettuce growing in their enchantress neighbor's garden, that a couple willingly swapped their future firstborn child for a bunch. Their daughter Rapunzel would spend her life locked away in a tower until a prince heard her singing and cried, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair." It's the image of her long braids (before they were so cruelly chopped off) that inspired our thick cords of cinnamon and cardamom-laced bread.

Serves: 6 to 8

DOUGH

- ½ cup well-shaken buttermilk
- 1 (¼ oz, about 2¼ tsp) packet active dry yeast
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter, cut into bits and softened

FILLING

- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tsp cardamom
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Heat buttermilk until lukewarm (105-110°F); don't worry if it looks thin or broken. Transfer to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir in yeast and a pinch of sugar. Let stand until mixture bubbles slightly and becomes creamy looking, about 5 minutes. If the yeast does not react, discard and start over with new yeast.

Beat in ½ cup flour until combined. Then, beat in egg, sugar, and salt until smooth. At low speed, beat in remaining 1½ cups flour, ½ cup at a time until combined. Then beat in butter, a few pieces at a time until they are incorporated into a doughy ball. (If you have a dough hook, you could switch to it at this point.) Beat dough at medium-high until shiny and elastic, about 5 minutes. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and leave to rise in a warm spot until double in size, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together filling ingredients until blended, setting aside 1 Tbsp for finishing braid. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough into a rectangle roughly 8 by 12-inches. Smear filling evenly over dough, then roll up lengthwise into a tight roll.

Cut roll lengthwise down the center as if you're splitting a hair. Transfer to a parchment lined baking sheet. Twist the two pieces back together into a long twist arranging the dough so with each twist, the cut sides are facing out. Form the twist into a round and pinch ends together. Smear with remaining Tbsp filling.

Bake until golden brown, about 30-35 minutes.



AFTER THE TOWER: RAPUNZEL, RETOLD

He found me; I cried; my tears fell upon his eyes, and ah! His sight was restored. This much you know. But then what? He was—he is—a kind man, my Tomas, and I love him. How could I not love someone who looked for me for years, wandering blind through tiny villages where he was kicked at by children and laughed at by adults, where—crownless, nameless, stateless, status-less: for who would believe this sad creature, filthy-bearded, his arms stretched before him like a monster, groping his way through air, was a prince, was their prince?—he sometimes earned his night's scrap of bread and brine-soaked pig foot by dancing in the square while women pointed and cackled and the ironworkers' apprentices threw slimy sheets of cabbage?

We still had no money. But I had my hair, which had grown again, though not nearly as lustrous as before, its color faded from the bright impossible orange of an autumn leaf to something paler and sadder, the shade of ale, which I cut and sold to a passing hair seller. He cried, Tomas did, but I didn't: I had had to do things in those years I waited for him that he wouldn't or couldn't imagine—I had our children, after all. My hair bought us two seats on a rattling coach. I held our daughter in my lap; he held our son in his. The coach stank of damp straw and drying dung. For day after day we trudged west, the road beneath us sometimes barely a road, the coach juddering as it groaned uphill. I listened to him talk to our children, and it was like listening to a child talk to another child. That should have been my first warning, but I paid it no mind. How could I have?

On the sixth day, we reached the castle. His father, his mother: their disapproval of me, my witchy name, my poor hair, so ragged it looked as if it'd been chopped with a scythe. They fought with him; he cried, my Tomas. They took our children; they gave us a sack of gold; they secured us a berth on a ship leaving for the New World. What could I have done, Tomas cried. He was the third son; he had no rights. We were lucky to have gotten the gold.

We set sail. The trip was long, months long. By night, I slept with the sack of gold rucked up under my dress, just beneath my breasts, as if it were a pregnancy, and this time, I would give birth to a child made of metal, one who would shine and gleam and would never want, and whom I would never disappoint.

When we landed, I went to go find us a cart to take us into the city: somewhere along our long journey, I had realized that this was how it would be—I would take care of Tomas, and he would follow. I left Tomas with the gold for just ten minutes, and when I returned, he was still there, but the gold was gone. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "I'm sorry, Rapunzel." This time, I had to sell something of myself that would never grow back as easily as hair.

That was sixty years ago. Now I am old. Tomas is blind, once more. For years, I sold it, my hair, that awful gift, but with each regrowing, it came in fainter and thinner, and now it is mere wisps, which seem not to cover my scalp but surround it, like fog. Now I live in a tower once more, a cement apartment complex, and because the elevator is often broken, I walk down and up the sixteen flights every day to and from my job at the factory, where I seal plastic strips into other plastic strips. In the evenings I come home to Tomas, who hasn't left the apartment all day, who reaches towards me, his eyes that pale milk-blue that never fails to unnerve me, his face aglow and hopeful. He has never worked, not since we came here: with each day he grew more childlike, until he became the child to replace the children I lost, and from whom I never heard again. "Rapunzel," he says, "you're home. Let down your hair."

But now there is no more hair to let down, and instead I have made a skein of softest silk, thirty feet long and as fat as a gourd, and, although he cannot see it, rosy as an apricot, and this I give him to stroke as I hobble into the kitchen to begin cooking our meal. HANYA YANAGIHARA

ON MAGIC AND ALCHEMY IN THE KITCHEN

Because cooking is a great experiment.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D GASTRONOMER

*When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he
lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.*

- Walt Whitman

Teller defines *magic* as the “theatrical linking of a cause with an effect.” Convincing viewers that the coins appearing in his hand (effect) are coming from that young woman’s ears and hair (cause), when in fact, they’re coming from somewhere else entirely. In other words, the power of magic comes from creating an expectation in the audience, then violating that expectation at every turn. *He couldn't have seen my card! How does he know?* Magic happens in the gap between what we expect and what we experience.

Food is no different. And the best restaurants in the world—the ones that provide us with those “magical” experiences—know this. Look at the menu at Alinea. The dishes are described in

the simplest terms (Lobster; Lamb; Ginger). They give nothing away, they create the lowest possible expectations. The experience, of course, is much more than biting into a bulb of ginger. Imagine, though, if each menu item came with a paragraph describing in great detail the process through which each ingredient on the plate had been prepared. Pulling the curtain back and revealing the machine creating the wizardry would surely make the magic fade. It would be like Teller walking us through where he had been hiding all those coins.

The more we know, the less mystifying the experience. Magic is about uncertainty. *Not* knowing. Being in the presence of a creation and searching in vain for its explanation. But once that creation is dissected and analyzed, where does that feeling go? Food culture has become obsessed with the man behind the curtain— with understanding the process, with seeing it unfold. The science of food has begun to explain every aspect of the eating experience, from the molecular composition of the food on the plate, to the aesthetic rules dictating its presentation, to the highly orchestrated design and description of the menu. But this insight, though it may satisfy our curiosity, comes at a cost that might not be worth paying.

PIERCARLO VALDESOLO

Sewn art by Mimi O Chun
(inspired by an Alinea dish)

ALIVE AND KICKING

The art of fermenting and activating has existed in myriad cultures since ancient times. In fact, ethanolic fermentation was one of the first chemical reactions observed by humans when, as a result of bacterial reaction, primitive man discovered that certain “spoiled” foods were, actually, rather delicious. From a health perspective, breaking down enzymes in the grains, nuts, fruits, and legumes we consume—via soaking, sprouting, dehydrating, and fermenting—works to pre-digest them, making them easier on our gut and unlocking vital nutrients. In essence, foods become more “alive,” a concept that’s music to the ears of a nutrition nut like myself. I’ve become addicted to making magic in my kitchen, where you’ll often find Puy lentils soaking, pecans

and pistachios that have been sitting in pink salt and whey-infused water activating in a low-temp oven, and the whizzed-up flesh and water from young coconuts getting funky with probiotics in a jar on the counter. Even the chemical reaction of fruit or grain into booze was originally stumbled upon in the name of health. Gin, for instance, dates back to 15th century Holland when professor of medicine Franciscus de la Boe Sylvius was trying to concoct a cure for stomach complaints using the diuretic properties of juniper berries. To make gin, fermented grain or molasses is infused with juniper and botanicals including, but not limited to, orange peel, coriander, cardamom, cinnamon, and angelica (fine gin contains between six and ten botanicals). The beloved spirit was given to soldiers before battle (Dutch courage, anyone?); in colonial India it was mixed with tonic water as an anti-malaria remedy; and the navy added it to lime juice to combat scurvy. So, for an extra pep in your step, get weird with your pantry staples and swig some gin for added vibrancy. Santé! NATALIE SHUKUR

SUGAR RUSH In his recent cookbook *Brooks Headley’s Fancy Desserts*, the James Beard Award-winning pastry chef of Del Posto, devotes two pages to warning readers against making *dulce de leche* by double-boiling a can of sweetened condensed milk, because of the potential danger of the can exploding if you’re inattentive and don’t replenish the pot’s water as it evaporates. Interestingly, this was probably the first thing I ever cooked for myself, without incident, as a college student who knew nothing about preparing food. It was the only recipe I’d learned from my Argentine parents, who made it throughout my childhood when—as recent immigrants to the U.S.—they were homesick and missed the ready availability of the stuff, decades before it was a visible presence at any supermarket in the U.S. To me, making *dulce de leche* this way has always seemed like alchemy at its simplest and most delicious—a minimal recipe that requires only the can of condensed milk, water, heat, and time (and sometimes, as my father taught me, a teaspoonful of vanilla extract mixed in once the sauce has cooled slightly). The process—the sugar’s caramelization and the Maillard reaction of the milk ingredients—is a form of everyday magic that any of us can practice... as long as we wield this power responsibly. DIEGO HADIS

CHEMICAL ROMANCE

The alchemists of old studied the mysteries of nature, hoping to satisfy both their intellectual and spiritual curiosity. Alchemy was equal parts magic, myth, religion, and experimentation. It’s often considered a precursor to modern chemistry, but as the sciences developed, the wizardry and enchantment fell by the wayside. It’s hard to find magic in a science lab, but there’s plenty of it in the kitchen—if there are alchemists at work today, they are chefs. Great cooks have intimate knowledge of their ingredients, turning eggs and flour into a perfect plate of pasta is less about the formula than it is about something intuitive and inexplicit. Learning and experience are instrumental, but it takes six senses to serve up a memorable experience. We all look to food for meaning: it connects us to the people around us and to the earth; it is the quintessential elixir of life; and, at its best, it can help us reach a sense of transcendence. To a diner, a perfect meal may be unique in place, time, and taste, but to create it, chefs tap into our collective sense of connection to culture, history, and symbolism. It’s why we worship them as striving magicians who have attained the lofty goal of truly exceptional transformation in the kitchen. ANJA RIEBENSAHM



MAGICAL HERBS

Nature might be the greatest magician of all, its vast array of herbs the proverbial tricks up its sleeve. In the simplest terms and most convenient definitions an herb is a useful plant, but really herbs are a phenomenon, each culture and century further contributing to their magical legacy. Here, we lift them to their rightful exalted status, excerpting a glossary of herbs from a new book, taking tally of herb-forward digestifs, and then letting herbs take the lead in a crop of recipes. Thyme and mint star in a duo of cocktails; lovage with a silken panna cotta; caraway alongside Brussels sprouts; and Thai basil is woven into scallion pancakes. As Mary said in *The Secret Garden*, “if you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden.”

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Gentl and Hyers FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

THE SECRET HISTORY OF MAGICAL EDIBLE HERBS

Or rather, magical. Because nature has its own tools that, when brandished correctly, can bring about change. In his latest book, *The New American Herbal*, **Stephen Orr** delves into the wide and wild world of herbs, revealing their inherent magic. Here, an excerpt from his vast herbal glossary.

1. **Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

The scent of rosemary, especially when burned as incense, has been used for thousands of years as an air purifier. In some cultures, the evergreen of its leaves is associated with funerals and a desire for an afterlife. On a happier note, rosemary also symbolizes fidelity and remembrance, appearing in wedding garlands and bouquets.

2. **Fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

The attraction of sweet fennel must have proven powerful enough over the centuries to inspire the old saying “he who walks by fennel and does not gather some is the devil.” The Puritans would call them “meetin’ seeds” and chew on them to ward off sleepiness. In other traditions, fennel gave strength and helped aid in the digestion of rich foods.

3. **Patchouli** (*Pogostemon cablin*)

When weavers in colonial India sent their wool and silk shawls to England they would place a few leaves of the herb between the fabric folds to guard their wares from moths. Subsequently, and perhaps by association, the scent became an exotic symbol of luxury in Europe in the 18th century. Folklore considers the scent of patchouli to be a female aphrodisiac when men wear it, though not vice versa. A tea scented with a little of the herb’s oil calms an upset stomach.

4. **Rue** (*Ruta graveolens*)

Rue’s common name, herb-of-grace, derives from its many ancient uses. It was once thought to be an antidote to poison, and dried rue leaves strewn around the house would rid rooms of fleas and protect inhabitants from plague. Rue was believed in many Mediterranean cultures to be protection against the evil eye when worn in a locket, concealed in clothing, or hung in sheafs above a doorway. In Italy, you might also see a pale, bleached rue sprig infusing a bottle of vinegar or grappa.

5. **Bay** (*Laurus nobilis*)

Because of a slight narcotic power in its chemistry, bay is said to induce clairvoyance, which was helpful to the Delphic prophets, who chewed the leaves to deepen their trances. Wiccan author Scott Cunningham wrote that bay is a “protection and purification herb par excellence” either worn in an amulet or scattered around the house to chase away poltergeists. Plant a bay tree near the front door to protect against illness and unwanted visitors (see poltergeists). According to folklore, if you write a wish on a bay leaf, then burn it, it will come true.

6. **Basil** (*Ocimum spp.*)

Perhaps because of its powerful flavor and strange heat, ancient herbalists mistrusted basil and associated it with poison. Though it was unclear whether they thought it was actually toxic, ancient Greek writers noted that the bushes harbored and even bred scorpions and

snakes. In the Victorian language of flowers, basil signified hatred, however, in Italy basil is a symbol of true love.

7. **Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*)

As a useful herb, pungent sage lives up to its common name, which derives from the Latin *sapere*—to taste, have good taste or be wise. It must be no accident that old herbal texts abound with stories of elderly people of such a great age that no one knows when they were born. Naturally, their gardens were said to be filled with sage.

8. **Parsley** (*Petroselinum crispum*)

For such a seemingly innocuous herb, a long list of sinister folk traditions surround parsley. The seeds, which are notoriously slow to germinate, were said to burrow down to the devil and back seven times before emerging from the ground. Another legend says that only a portion of the seeds sprout because the devil always takes a tithe. There are also superstitions surrounding the act of transplanting parsley from one home to another or giving it away, bad luck for the giver. “Where the mistress is the master, the parsley grows the faster,” goes one old saying.

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**9. Caraway** (*Carum carvi*)

Since the times of ancient Egypt and Rome, caraway has been a carminative (digestive) and used to counter gas pains, heartburn, acid reflux, and flatulence—charmingly called “wind” in the old herbal texts. The pungent seeds also encourage fidelity, attract lovers, and induce a desire to have sex.

10. Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)

In folklore, oregano and its close relative marjoram are almost always associated with happiness. British herbalist Eleanour Sinclair Rohde wrote that the ancient Greeks believed that

if these herbs grew wild on a tomb, then the deceased had died happy. To make travel safe and pleasant, place a few leaves in your shoes before departing.

11. Perilla/Shiso (*Perilla frutescens*)

The attractive annual herb is warming with antibacterial components. A medicinal oil made from the leaves is rich in linoleic acid and used to relieve stomachaches and as a general blood tonic in Asia. Umeboshi, Japanese green plums pickled with salt and purple shiso leaves, are said to have made samurai exceptionally strong.

12. Lavender (*Lavandula spp.*)

The name of this fragrant herb comes from the Latin verb lavare (to wash) and denotes the plant’s long use in laundry and cosmetics. The phrase “to be laid up in lavender” means to be handled with great care—as in storing clean linens with herbed sachets. But “to be laid out in lavender” is to scold a person severely, and has roots in the practice of strewing a body awaiting burial with fragrant lavender. In aromatherapy, lavender is a mild sedative for those feeling plagued with negative or nervous thoughts.

13. Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*)

Lemon balm has calming and sleep-inducing qualities and can be used in many types of beverages from wine, to tea, to a medieval concoction called Carmelite water or eau de Carmes that was popular both as a restorative digestive and a cologne. To make a replica of it, steep lemon balm with lemon peel, nutmeg, and angelica root in a neutral grain spirit.

14. Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*)

A few leaves or seeds of this celery relative in a sachet will scent an entire bath and reportedly get rid of freckles. In magical circles, it is believed that bathing in water infused with a handful of the leaves before heading out for an evening makes one irresistible to new acquaintances. Lovage contains small amounts of myristicin, a psychoactive substance also found in nutmeg.

15. Salad Burnet
(*Sanguisorba minor*)

This cucumber-flavored plant was grown in Tudor-era gardens as a vulnerary, an astringent to stop bleeding. Accordingly, the genus name derives from the Latin words *sanguis* (blood) and *sorbeo* (absorb). Culpeper wrote in his 1653 *Complete Herbal*: “Two or three of the stalks, with leaves put into a cup of wine, especially claret, are known to quicken the spirits, refresh and cheer the heart, and drive away melancholy.”

Adapted from *The New American Herbal*,
Clarkson Potter (September 30, 2014)

THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

The first time I tasted absinthe was in London in the late '90s, when it was still illegal in the US. How *fin de siècle* that sounds, and indeed there was an underground, speakeasy feel to the scene. The British had just “discovered” that absinthe had never been banned in the UK. It had disappeared for decades, since being outlawed in France and the US at the beginning of the 20th century. On my first sip I noticed its pleasantly bitter, anisette flavor; then the loveliest buzz began to set in, lucid and clear and not fuzzy-drunk at all, merely, well, happy. The psychoactive compound in absinthe, thujone, comes from the *artemisia* (wormwood) plant; there are several hybrids, all with beautiful silver foliage and a slightly menthol scent. I was immediately hooked.

I purchased a bottle of absinthe at duty-free and prayed my bags weren't searched at customs. At home, I tried the fetishized ritual of pouring absinthe over sugar and setting it aflame. I tried cocktail recipes from books that rhapsodized about absinthe in the old days. I tried to recreate my first cocktail from London. Each time I fell more in love. Soon I was strategizing about how to obtain another bottle. Years later, after I was married, my husband and I discovered that absinthe could be ordered online from a Czech website. It came to us wrapped in beautiful paper like a present, with a customs tag that read: Gift enclosed: Souvenir Bottle. Not for Consumption. I felt like a spy. Or a successful smuggler of contraband, which I guess I was. Those were exciting days. We saved the absinthe for important occasions: the most special dinner party, the worst day at work. And always it delivered: simple happiness. No hangover, though I learned to go slow, or I wouldn't remember much of my bliss the next day. Now they've gone and made absinthe legal. The FDA decided that perhaps thujone isn't so dangerous after all. Pernod restarted production in France and I can buy absinthe at my local liquor store. In short, the romance, mystery, and danger have been stripped away from absinthe drinking. No matter; my love is true. And I still feel like I'm flouting the rules when I drink it. HEATHER LONG

CARAWAY AND BROWN-BUTTER ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Caraway has had a long shelf life—experts have traced it as far back as the Stone Age. The seeds are believed to protect against evil spirits, strengthen memory, and render objects theft-proof. The latter may not hold true for our caraway brown-butter roasted Brussels sprouts, which will most certainly be promptly pilfered.

Serves: 6 to 8

- 1 branch Brussels sprouts, rinsed well
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ cups hot water
- 6 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 tsp caraway seeds, crushed

1 Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking pan with foil leaving a little overhang all around. Place branch in pan and drizzle with oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Pour hot water around branch and cover with more foil sealing to make a pouch. Roast 30 minutes.

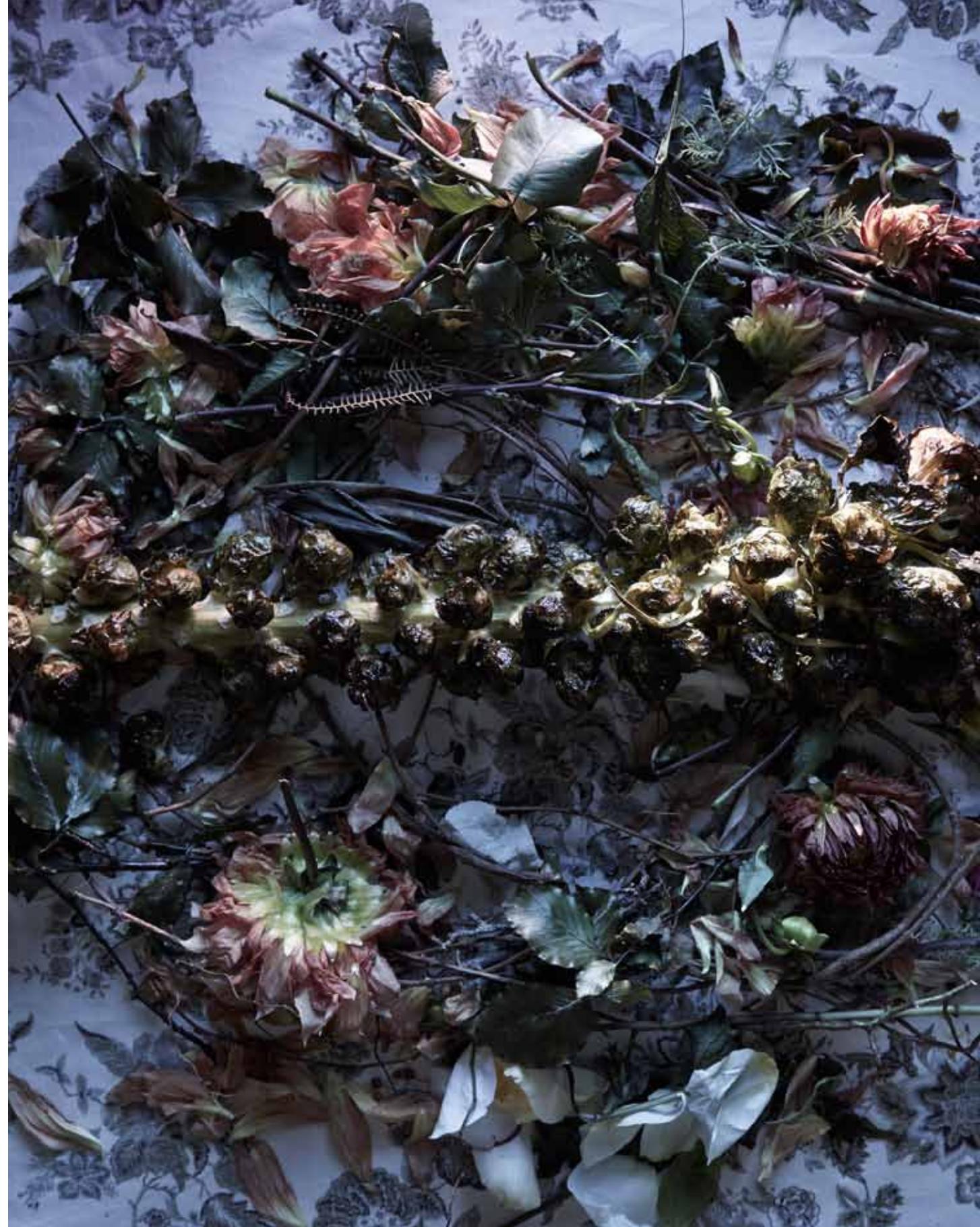
2 Uncover and rotate branch bringing the bottom sprouts to the top. Roast for 20 minutes rotating the branch midway through cooking. Pierce each sprout with a fork twisting slightly to open them up a bit; this will help cradle the caraway butter. Continue roasting and rotating until sprouts are tender and browned, 20 to 30 minutes longer.

3 While sprouts are roasting, melt butter in a small saucepan until just beginning to brown and smell slightly nutty. Transfer to a bowl and stir in caraway seeds. Let steep while roasting sprouts.

4 When sprouts are tender and browned, generously baste sprouts with caraway brown-butter.

ALL SPICE

Caraway, the Apiaceae relative of fennel and anise, has been considered root, plant, or seed depending on epoch and empire. Seeds were found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians, and they were sprinkled on the coffins of medieval Germans to ward away evil spells. In 1550 BC Egypt, caraway was already known by the living to ease digestion; perhaps it was also thought to ease passing into the next life. From Stonehenge to the Hapsburgs, the miraculous but quotidian plant protected sweet-toothed children from witches and transformed fickle lovers into faithful husbands. In its most biblical incarnation, the caraway root turned the tides in the second year of Julius Caesar's Civil Wars, when he and Pompey the Great battled for the leadership of Rome. After Caesar's army had consumed every ear of corn for miles, hunger threatened the siege on Pompey's well-supplied garrisons. But Caesar's soldiers stumbled on the caraway root, and called it "chora." Mixing it with milk, they raised so many loaves of bread that the army was sustained until the next crops of corn began to ripen. Caraway seems to affect us this way always—we eat it, in love or in war, in rye or in sauerkraut, and we are satisfied. MAUD DOYLE





FIELD OF DREAMS AND TERROIR & PEACE COCKTAILS

The magic of the herbs in these cocktails “dragged through the garden” lie in their healing powers—mint worn around the wrist will stave off illness, and burning thyme will bring good health.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Bartender **Dave Flatman**, of New York’s Marc Forgione Restaurant, combined gin, Fernet Branca, and Chartreuse, the herbaceous elixir of long life which has been made by monks outside Paris since 1605, topping it off with wild mint. If you make it, they will come.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- 2 oz London dry gin (we like Plymouth)
- ½ oz fresh lemon juice
- ½ oz Yellow Chartreuse
- ¼ oz Fernet Branca
- ¾ oz honey syrup*
- wild mint for garnish

Shake ingredients with ice. Serve on the rocks in a coupe glass with wild mint sprig.

Honey syrup: Stir 2 parts **honey** to 1 part **water** together until combined. Do not heat.

BOTANY OF DESIRE

Living on the concrete island of Manhattan, my patio garden has become more than just an airier extension of my cramped apartment: it’s become a lifeline, a sanctuary that connects me to seasons, the sun and moon, the moments of wonder that only nature can provide. For six months of the year, it’s the place I begin and end my day: I watch for the skittish pigeon that monopolizes the bird feeder; the sole star that burns in Gotham’s light-polluted sky (hi, Vega); the stray butterfly whose herky-jerky visit always gives me a pang of joy. But I’ve recently discovered another one of my garden’s transformative powers. When a lavender plant began to grow hyperactively, I placed a few sprigs in a jar with gin on a whim. As it infused, the gin became sweet, smooth, and enchantingly scented; with soda and lemon, it was downright magical. Inspired, I’ve become a backyard booze-botanist, discovering that rosemary pairs well with vodka; sage with tequila; and peppery nasturtium gives Bloody Marys an unexpected kick. The enlivening alchemy of making a homegrown cocktail allows me space to breathe, to think, and to dream—a little muddle, muddle mitigating the week’s toil and trouble. Some believe that gardens have souls, and I dare say I agree. If nothing else, I can attest to the spirit-raising power of plants—both in the metaphorical sense, and the potable. APRIL LONG

TERROIR & PEACE

Mushrooms figure into this wildly aromatic cocktail creation from frequent foragers **Josh Habiger** and **Matt Tocco** of Nashville’s Pinewood Social. They let fungi funkify in gin for two weeks before blending with a heady thyme-infused syrup and vermouth.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- 2 oz mushroom-infused gin*
- 1 oz Dolin dry vermouth
- ¼ oz thyme syrup**
- lemon peel

Combine infused gin, vermouth, and thyme syrup. Stir and strain into a chilled coupe glass. Lemon peel expressed and discarded.

Mushroom-infused gin: Fill a quart-sized Mason jar ½ to ⅔ full with **mushrooms**, ideally chanterelles. Fill rest of the jar with **gin** and let sit for up to two weeks.

Thyme syrup: Heat 1 cup **sugar**, 1 cup **water**, and six sprigs of **thyme** in a saucepan. Slightly simmer until sugar dissolves. Strain.

THE BITTER END

No matter where you live in the world, everyone seems to agree on one thing: after an overly indulgent meal, nothing provides a magical cure-all quite like a few sips of a proper digestif. Here, a look at some popular—and mystical—stomach-settlers from all over the globe. LEAH MENNIES

Linie Aquavit

Provenance: Norway

Aquavit is consumed before, during, and after meals all over Scandinavia, but Linie's take on the caraway, anise seed, coriander, and sweet fennel-infused potato vodka goes on an additional journey before making its way into the bottle: sherry casks filled with the spirit travel by ship across the sea for four months, crossing the equator twice and passing through 35 countries in the process.

Cynar

Provenance: Italy

Smoother, softer, and more caramel-ly than its more popular amaro counterpart Fernet Branca, this bittersweet liqueur is infused with 13 different herbs and plants, though only one is ever prominently disclosed—artichoke, which lends it its slight vegetal notes.

Jeppson's Malört

Provenance: USA/Chicago

Chicago's most popular postprandial sipper is modeled on a recipe for Swedish schnapps that was brought over to the Midwest by a Swedish immigrant named Carl Jeppson—who sold it legally as medicinal alcohol during Prohibition. The predominant botanical in Malört is the ultra-bitter wormwood, which has prompted the phenomenon known as "Malört face," or the scrunched-up nose associated with taking your first sip.

Underberg

Provenance: Germany

Part of a family of German liqueurs called Krauterlikors, Underberg is the tiniest—it comes in petite, paper-wrapped single-serve bottles, designed to be ripped open and glugged in one go after a meal. While it's becoming more fashionable in cocktails, its primary function is as a post-meal tonic—based with a proprietary blend of herbs from 43 different countries, allegedly—meant to aid digestion.

Amer Picon

Provenance: France

This cult-favorite elixir of U.S. bartenders, characterized by a bittersweet combination of gentian root, cinchona bark, and orange zest, is near-impossible to find outside of France. If you get your hands on it there, take a shot of it like they do in the Basque region: dropped straight into a pint of light lager.

Hitachino Kiuchi No Shizuku

Provenance: Japan

Produced out of the venerable Kiuchi brewery in Japan (known for its Hitachino Nest beers) this libation is actually a brandy distilled from Hitachino Nest White Ale. As a result, it retains the brew's notes of hops, coriander, and orange peel, yet drinks like a grappa.

Fernet-Vallet

Provenance: Mexico

Frenchman Henri Vallet emigrated to Mexico in the 1860s, and his complex, bitter Fernet—with a blend of cinnamon, cloves, Quassia wood, cardamom, and gentian root reminiscent of Angostura bitters—is still distilled there today.

Antioqueno Aguardiente

Provenance: Colombia

Translating to "firewater," aguardiente is the national drink of Colombia, and Antioqueno its most popular producer. Derived from sugarcane and flavored with anise, it's traditionally thrown back by the shot after hearty meals.

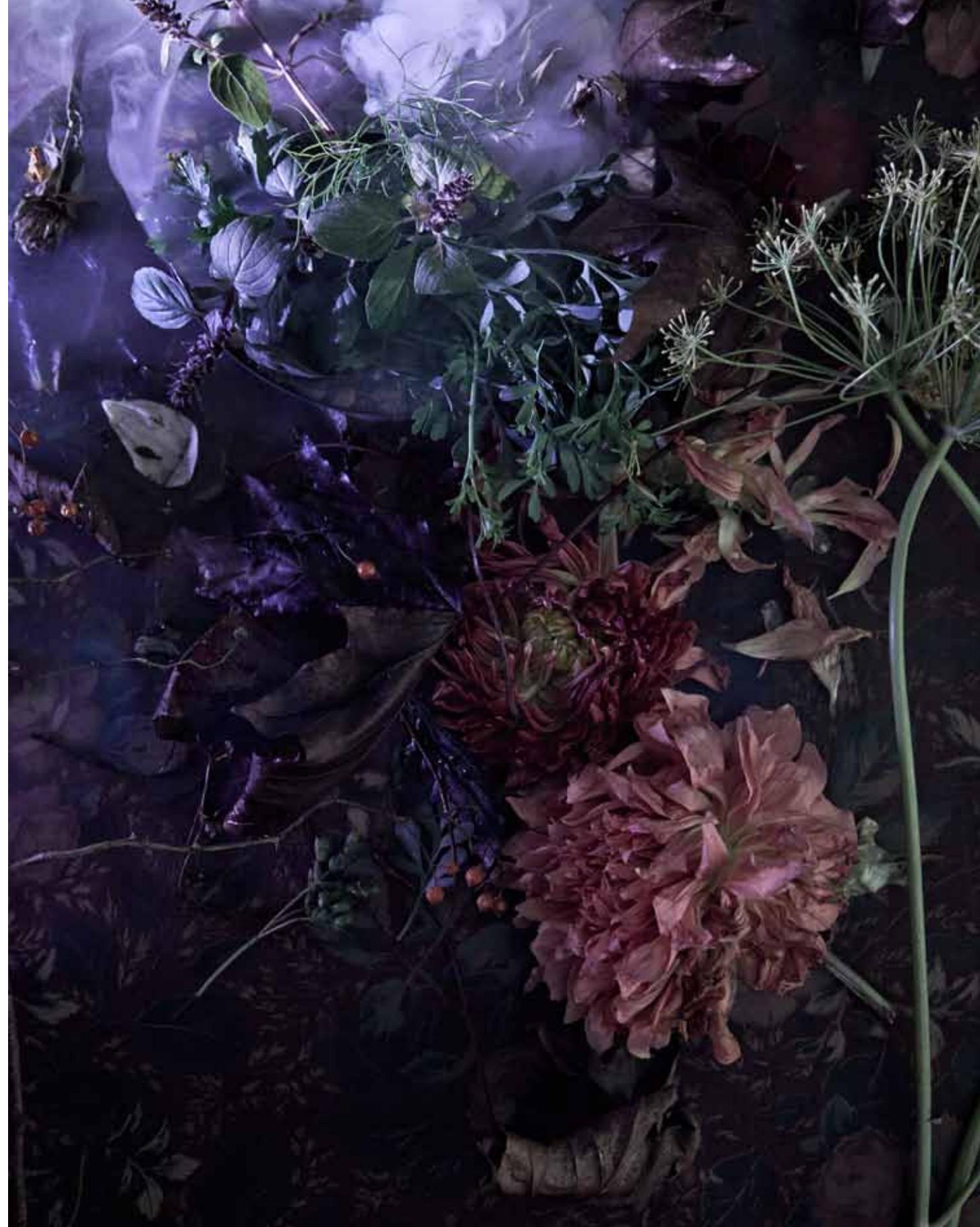
Zwack Unicum

Provenance: Hungary

As the story goes, this digestif came into existence in 1790, when the Royal Physician to the Imperial Court served it to Joseph II, the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary. Since then, the exact recipe remains a secret, though the herbal spirit does contain 40 different herbs and spices imported from countries including Morocco, China, Nigeria, Australia, and Sri Lanka.

LIQUID COURAGE

I tried my first herbal tincture at a party, in a narrow room lined with silver mylar reflecting waves of strange blue light. Someone poured me a glass of sparkling water, then used an eyedropper to add a clear liquid. It went immediately cloudy as it hit, dispersing in seconds. The taste was smoky, restorative, a little funky; a tincture, it turns out, of Lapsang Souchong. Shortly thereafter I tried a wild fennel picked in the Hollywood hills (delightfully sweet and aromatic) and a lavender (it bloomed broadly across my tongue and transported me to a field in Provence). Tinctures are powerful distillations of fresh and dried herbs that have been used for medical, magical, and culinary purposes since twelfth-century mystic Hildegard Von Bingen catalogued them in her massive *Physica*, a dictionary which laid the groundwork for modern herbalism. Tincture-making feels like some strange alchemy, the potent medicinal properties and living flavors of the herbs distilled and made immortal. And making your own is easy: Just pack a glass container with lightly crushed fresh herbs, and cover with vodka. Place the jar in a dark, cool place for at least a week and up to a month, shaking occasionally and tasting as you go. When you've achieved your desired potency, strain through cheesecloth into dark glass bottles. Stored in the fridge, your tincture will keep for up to two years and many parties. EMILY BEYDA





COCONUT PANNA COTTA WITH LOVAGE SYRUP

Lovage. The name itself conjures bygone eras of heaving bosoms and romantic courtship. So the fact that this herb with a flavor akin to celery, but sharper, is known informally as “love parsley” is fitting. Our lovage-infused syrup will inspire a passionate response, especially when poured generously over rich coconut milk panna cotta.

Makes: 6

PANNA COTTA

- 1 (¼ oz, about 2¼ tsp) packet unflavored gelatin
- ¾ cup whole milk
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 1 cup well-stirred, unsweetened coconut milk
- 6 (4-oz) ramekins or teacups

LOVAGE SYRUP

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup lovage leaves, torn

1 Sprinkle gelatin over 3 Tbsp water in a small bowl and let stand to soften, about 4 minutes. Heat milk in a small saucepan with sugar, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Stir in softened gelatin and and bring to a bare simmer stirring to melt gelatin completely. Remove from heat and stir in cream and coconut milk.

2 Pour into ramekins and and chill, covered, at least 3 hours or overnight.

3 Meanwhile, bring 1 cup water and sugar to a simmer in a small saucepan, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat and stir in lovage. Steep 1½ hours. Strain and chill completely.

4 Unmold panna cottas (or, if you went the teacup route, serve in those) onto plates by setting the ramekins very briefly in warm water and then inverting onto dessert plates. Serve drizzled with lovage syrup.

FORCES OF NATURE

While on a walk in the Malibu hills, California herbalists Kelsey Barrett and Melanie Beckett came across a tiger lily; according to old herbal folklore, the dark spots on the bright orange flower were believed to be fairy fingerprints. “The tiger lily is a symbol of mystical, fairy magic.” In fact, for them “magic is everywhere.” By “magic,” they mean the magical properties of plants and by “everywhere,” they mean everywhere, even between the cracks of a city sidewalk. Together, they, along with Erica Wohldmann, make up Heavy Nettle Collective, which serves city dwellers keen on learning about Western herbalism. And food is a big part of their work. Among the most beloved botanicals in the Collective’s kitchen pharmacy are mugwort and their namesake nettle. Nettles, resilient and high in plant protein, find their way into soups and pestos; while mugwort, whose name comes from Greek moon goddess Artemis, is an herbal ally to women and used in everything from beer to marshmallows. “Plants are elemental expressions and there is an element of magic interwoven into the expression of nature,” they say. Through the teaching of herbal stewardship, plant attunement, and plant medicine crafting, Heavy Nettle Collective reminds those in urban environments that they, too, are part of the natural world. CAITLIN KELLER

THAI BASIL AND SCALLION PANCAKES

As backyard-friendly herbs go, basil ranks high, but its history is more ominous than one might expect. Its name is said to be derived from basilisk, a mythical snake monster than can kill with a glance (*Harry Potter* fans, you know of what we speak). Our tribute to the once frightful herb laces its Thai variety with scallions in a slim pancake.

Serves: 6 as a starter

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups very cold water
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¾ cup packed Thai basil leaves
- 5 scallions, thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil

DIPPING SAUCE

- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp unseasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tsp sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- pinch red pepper flakes

1 Whisk together flour, water, eggs, and salt until smooth. Tear the basil leaves and stir in along with the scallions and let stand 5 minutes.

2 Stir together sauce ingredients and set aside.

3 Heat a 10-inch non-stick skillet with a Tbsp oil over medium heat, swirling to coat evenly. Pour 1 cup batter into skillet and cook until set and golden, about 4 minutes. Flip pancake and cook 1 or 2 minutes longer. Make 2 more pancakes with remaining oil and batter.

4 Cut pancakes into wedges and serve with dipping sauce.

HOLY BASIL

Witches never really use eye of newt, tongue of frog, or wing of bat in their potions. That's a vicious rumor spread by those witches' bitter exes. Any self-respecting potion uses basil—in soups, salads, sauces, and sandwiches, from Italy to Thailand by way of every herb garden in San Francisco and Brooklyn. It's even used with holy water, because, y'know, sometimes even holy water needs an extra kick. Basil, the king of herbs—indeed, its Greek root means “king”—is that rare thing that is much more than an ingredient. Like a kiss blown or an eyelash batted or a cheek blushed, it flutters to the kitchen at the last minute, its flavor fresh yet fleeting, the unicorn of herbs, no mere king. That royal title is bequeathed to us, in basil's infinite generosity, to pluck from our windowsills and crush in a mortar and pestle until—Abracadabra! Presto pesto! The alchemy is not in the dish, but in ourselves, as we are emboldened and empowered to say, where mere mortals and commoners would mutter, “It could use some salt,” something transformative beyond even the wildest dreams of gauche guacamole gurus: “Maybe some basil?” Basil pancakes! Basil ice cream! Basil mayo! Doesn't every tastebud—every dish—deserve to dance with a unicorn? RICHARD MORGAN





the dream approaches

Far removed from the reason and rationale of waking life, the magical essences of familiar foods are roused as figments of the imagination. Gnarled tomatoes; a glistening stream of milk; pomegranates, flush and swollen; a gilded pineapple; delicate strings of sage; a precious cornucopia of seafood—all of them transcend from the commonplace to the astonishing, their myths illuminated in words and pictures. And somewhere in that intersection of fantasy and reality, there's magic.

photographs by rachel stern poetry by paul legault

2019

Two thousand and nineteen is the arbitrary #
time's counted up to. There's more than that,
but she stopped for a year to think by the water.
What's the difference between beach music
and Bach? It depends on what you're wearing.
B's more B than my body is built for.
I keep thinking you said something else.
What's your favorite skin care destination?

Your granddaughter's name is Verizon.
She was in that beautiful TV show.
It is an anonymous runway tonight.
Sometimes when I go out onto it
I want to distinguish myself like how
I wish I could turn on my italics
but in real life, really leaning in, like
I'm a good listener with bad hearing.

My eyes are bigger than my hands can sow.
Do you think I should do something about that?
Maybe there are mandrakes after all,
though they're all dead or liminally
existent like an advertiser in the garden
branding the roses. Make it rain
cash like petals on a wet black bough.
I dream! I was at a Korean spa in Rio.

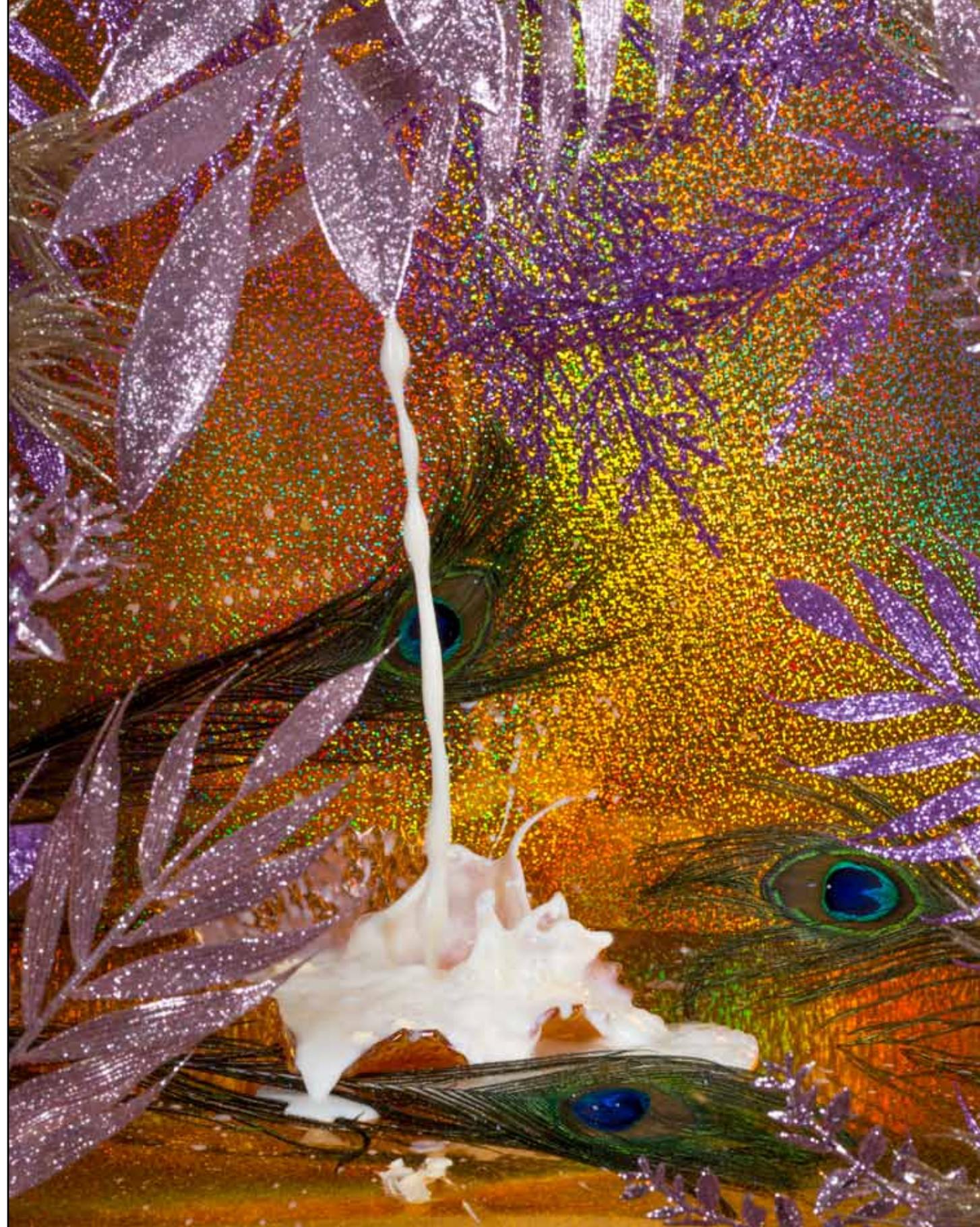
I think a gnat just went into my eye on purpose.
Dragons are so in right now.
We got pierced in a secret place called:
The Mall. Protest is an adaptive response
to how killing someone is like yelling forever.
Suddenly all I can think about is one direction:
up, and how things should always go that way.
Like a plant, my concealed weapon is time.

I need you to balance my power systems.
I want you to meet the vegetable I invented.
This vine-jewel emits as from a godly source:
the backyard. Its properties of alchemy include
minor fruit-necromancy, satanic doodlings,
and a deadly poison. Americans are immune
to it via a ghost vitamin the founding fathers
deliver to them daily in an old version of light.

FACT: American sunlight is strongest in Puerto Rico.
FACT: Eve's apple was probably a tomato. Leave it
there, like a delight, and then return, young pilgrim,
only to find it again, laid out: what the Sun made
with its helpers. Nature's a bad baker. Everything's
about distribution. My name's Monsanto, and I'm post-
Earth. I live mostly on the moon and in St. Louis.
I guess that makes me bi-spherical.

>>

A wing makes these parts of flying:
a shining web, a floating ribbon of milk.
A mother makes these parts of life like
a god makes being a badass its thing.
Here's your elevator and its attendant opening
out into the penthouse of basic existence.
They ain't paying you to drink, Krishna,
but it's do or die. "I absorbed her entire life force
in self defense." The whole thing's written
except for this part that you can actually see.





<<

I left my golden bell somewhere,
probably among all these pomegranates.
Your hair is so good right now, Persephone.
I hear there's a temple in your locks that
you have to be a shampoo to get into.
The myth of you is stuck on repeat.
The underworld is an animated .gif
of something the world makes up here.
Zeus is most definitely an asshole.
Weather only bought a timeshare.

Your mom ran around the earth with torches
like if the whole Olympics were a mother.
Hades wants a nondisclosure agreement.
There are these seeds that grow into time,
months of it, and then you do leave hell
like a bad situation. Girl, both hit and quit it.
I think this is a superfood. Sayat-Nova,
I name you the emperor of naming
the color of things exactly as they are,
so what's red in the complete dark?

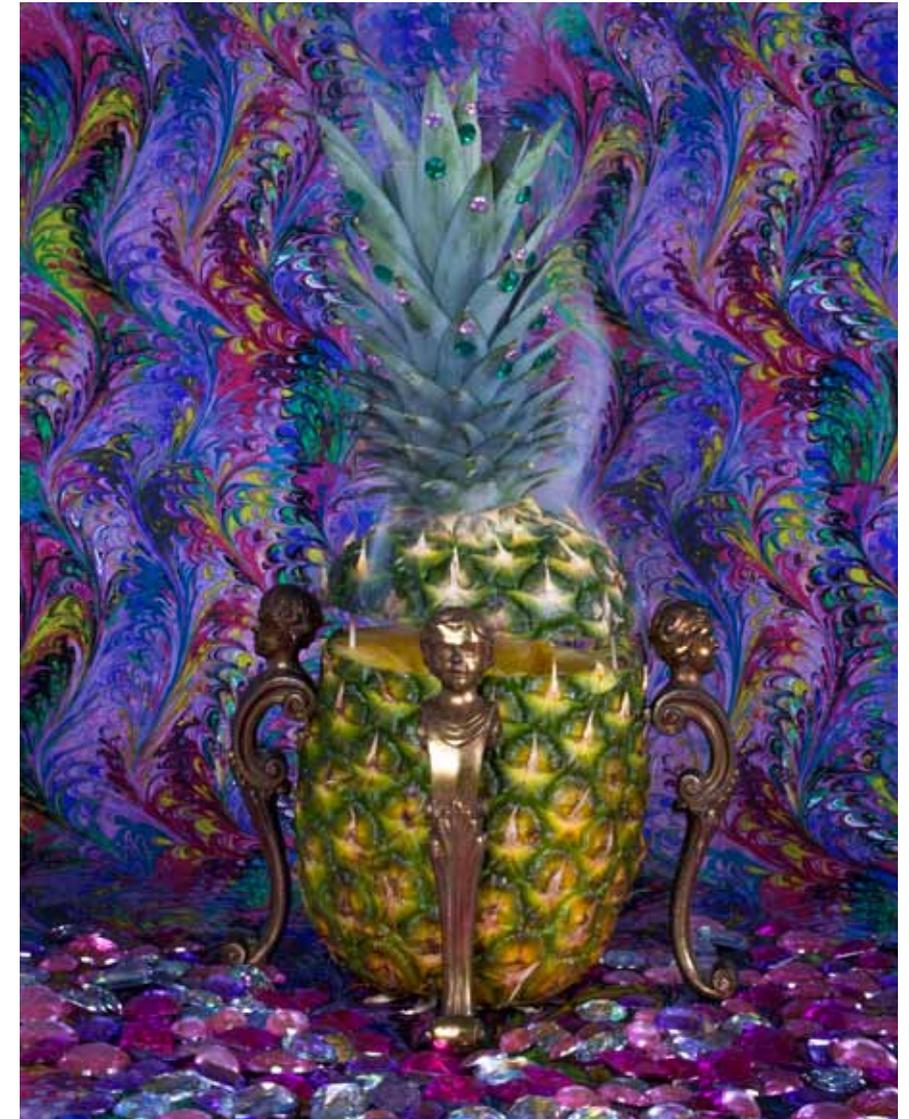
There's this strange root that's dug in.
Glow like a fat bug, nocturnal plant. Say:
I like the pageantry of when they bring us up
from the ground and say: "Fruit, I see you there,
not what you are the root of, the way color
makes things seen, as if from nothing."
Night vision is like having visions.
My eye cones are filled with the moon.
Bats make things seen to sound. I'm wearing
an lbd to the party. Basic or not, I'm well-lit.

The temperature of yellow can affect you.
Taste's turned into this turning over of
the exact thing you encountered at the beach.
They hand them out like grenades in Grenada.
If fruit could bear arms, this apple's packing.

Everyone is here. There is a feathering
that pineapple does to flavor.
It's like burying a time capsule
and opening it simultaneously
just to mark the new New Year.

Maybe Neptune invented the Kraken
as a kind of preemptive sculpture.
Medusa gives good face. Ice makes
walking hard but walking on water pretty easy.
That's only one way of being Jesus.

Make the Atlantic into a complicated Nebbiolo
and drink it with your friends. Like everything,
tax the rich, pool our resources, learn to swim,
maybe forget how to be a god sometimes,
and then, sometimes, make everything stop.



The money's under the blanket.
Your delicate ear is carefully garlanded.
"The sage is on fire," is the message
the sage being on fire signals to you
in smoke, like how smoke can signal
a word like 'smoke.' What happened
in Florida? Let's be in touch wherever.
Whatever happens, you need to grow up
from the earth and shake flavor out from under
its green cushion. Woodfeather, what wound bird
unwound its spool into what - leaf-thing you are?
It was Sage with her wide eyes in the herbarium.
Sage the Gemini knows she's going to shake it
like a red nose. Sage draws beautiful things
like a printmaker. Sage draws evil spirits
from the body. Lana del Rey's mystery illness
is that she's made of money. I want to be as naked as
Johnny Cash in a pile of cash in heaven in spring.



I move around a lot but I'm mostly from the sea.
Heaven sent its messengers again.
You're the Frank to my ocean, you are
the sea of fruit to my sea of water.



THE MAGIC HOUR

Music is itself magic—capable of healing, transforming an environment, dramatically shifting your mood, or providing an immediate escape. It's a marvelous notion, and one these two artists considered when curating dinner party-ready playlists especially for *Gather Journal*. Stream them via Spotify at gatherjournal.com/mixtape.

DANIEL KESSLER OF INTERPOL

The widespread success of 2002's *Turn on the Bright Lights* nudged Interpol into the position of helping to define the New York sound of the early aughts. A number of albums and band shifts later, the group's latest, *El Pintor*, was released in September. Along the way, guitarist Daniel Kessler developed a side passion for food and is now co-owner of Brooklyn restaurant Bergen Hill.

Concierto de Aran juez Miles Davis

Stop Them Jah Augustus Pablo

Milkshake Kelis

Jubilee Stree Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds

Pledging my Love Johnny Ace

The Rip Portishead

Dripping Blonde Redhead

NYC Burial

Something on Your Mind Karen Dalton

Avalon Roxy Music

Black Sheep Boy Scott Walker

Tapper Zukie In Dub Tappa Zukie

Little Girl in Bloom Thin Lizzy

Open Up the Gate The Congos

WARPAINT

Only two albums in (2010's critical darling debut, *The Fool*, and this year's utterly enchanting eponymous follow-up), this all-female, California-born band has already amassed a fervent following. Warpaint's singular sound—at once dark and illusory and seriously beautiful—is best illustrated in their live performances where it has ample room to wander and drift.

Requiem Pour Un Con Serge Gainsbourg

No God Cate Le Bont

Tiers Monde Francis Bebey

Atomic Bomb William Onyeabor

Strawberry Letter 23 Shuggie Otis

Reason to Believe Karen Dalton

Hornets Nest Jonti

Beautiful Dreamer Justine & the Victorian Punks

St. Elmo's Fire Brian Eno

Produkt 29 aphex twin

Silver Caribou

Water Get No Enemy Fela Kuti

Yama Yama Yamasuki Singers

Painting by Stella Maria Baer

All the Moons of our Solar System, to Scale, in Order of Closeness to the Sun, 2014, watercolor on clay on wood, 22" x 30"



THE MARKETPLACE

“Oh, ho, ho, it’s magic, you know, never believe it’s not so.” Look no further. This is your destination for all things mystical and spellbinding, including *Gather Journal’s* very own love potion. Shop for everything online at gatherjournal.com.

Photograph by Stephen Kent Johnson

1. Crescent Moon Planter by Small Spells

Hung in a lofty corner, Brooklyn-based ceramicist Rachel Howe’s shiny black glazed crescent moon planter will have you gazing skyward. \$40

2. Quartz Crystal Ball

Long a means for divination, the powerfully energetic quartz can also get rid of negative vibes and be used as an aid for meditation: Just stare deeply into it. \$18

3. White Magic Energy Spray by Species by the Thousands

With dark patchouli, peppermint, and ginger, Brooklyn brand Species by the Thousands’ spray is made to incite an energy shift, purify, and lift spirits. Spray on yourself or around your room. \$16

4. Magic Pouch by Leather by Lisa

Call it a medicine bag or a gris-gris, these tiny totes for slinging around ritual objects or special charms have cross-cultural significance. We especially like them for carting our caches of crystals. \$40

5. Tarot Deck and Book by The Wild Unknown

This is tarot beyond your wildest dreams. Exquisitely illustrated by Kim Krans, the deck and guidebook are ideal for both seasoned and novice tarot readers. \$40 and \$20

6. Unicorn Pie Vent by JN Ceramics

The most enchanting creature ever transformed into a tool to help in all your fantastical pie-making adventures. \$20

7. Moon Dusts by Moon Juice

Based on ancient empiric formulas, the California apothecary’s Dusts are designed to fortify from the inside out. Brain will kickstart your mental flow while Beauty will tone and hydrate skin, hair, and nails. Because beauty and brains? They go together. \$65 and \$50

8. Magic 8 Ball by Mattel

The so-called oracle with answers to all your questions (well, at least those of the yes-no variety) has been doling out advice since 1950. Should you put this ball into regular rotation? Signs point to yes. \$12

9. Rose Quartz Crystal Wand

Known as the heart stone it helps heal emotional wounds and open someone up for new romance. That it takes the shape of one of the most famous magical devices only serves to amplify its potency. \$24

10. Custom “Gather” Love Potion Essence by Dori Midnight

Clinical herbalist Dori Midnight designed a love-minded essence especially for *Gather Journal* readers. Let the love shine in. \$21

11. “Black Magic” by Whitley Strieber

A vintage copy of one of Strieber’s—the writer behind vampire story-turned-movie *The Hunger*, and *Communion*, cult favorite account of his own alien abduction—horror tales. Ideal for paperback hoarders and Strieber acolytes alike. \$10

12. Moon Calendar by Pioneer Square Pantry

Pioneer Square Pantry’s moon calendar outlines all of its mysterious phases. Printed on softest cotton, dyed with a natural indigo, and with a ready-to-hang wooden dowel. \$140



Stella Maria Baer

Baer is an artist who draws on her upbringing in the high mountain desert of Santa Fe. Her latest project is a series of watercolor paintings of planets and moons. Baer now lives in Connecticut with a sheepdog named Fox and a bearded man named Seth. See her work at stellamariabaer.com and follow @stellamariabaer. **Favorite magic trick or ingredient:** When her Georgia-born husband makes New Mexican green chile on their stove in Connecticut.

Erin Case

The Michigan-based collage artist's surrealist-style creations have been exhibited around the globe and featured in publications including *Lola* and *Prototype*. Case is also working on dual degrees in fine art and psychology. **Favorite magic trick or ingredient:** Garlic is so magical! It's flavorful, has too many health benefits to list, and is used in protection charms.

Grant Cornett

Photographer Cornett wanders the woods in the Catskills, where he lives with his beautiful wife, lovely new daughter, and two standard poodles. He is currently shooting this and that for the people. Glimpse his life's goings-on at thelivest1.com. **Favorite magic trick or ingredient:** Pimentón

Gentl and Hyers

Partners in photography and life, Andrea Gentl and Martin Hyers met while students at Parsons. Focused on food, travel, interiors, and portraits, their clients include *Condé Nast Traveler*, Bergdorf Goodman, and Grey Goose, and they've picked up a slew of SPD awards. Hyers, a fine-art photographer, recently

published *Empire* with William Mebane. His work can be seen at hyersandmebane.com. Gentl also shoots and writes *hungryghostfoodandtravel.com*. See the couple's work at gentlandhyers.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Really good salt; it can transform anything!

Stephen Kent Johnson

Photographer Johnson has worked as an art director at *Martha Stewart Living* and MAC cosmetics, and shot for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Food & Wine*, and *Martha Stewart Weddings*. See his work at stephenkentjohnson.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Vinegar and baking soda volcanoes; I can never get enough of that shit.

Carrie King

With degrees in writing, the culinary arts, and a Masters in education, King is adept at expressing herself in the kitchen and on the page. A contributor to *Honest Cooking* and *Remedy Quarterly*, she teamed up with chef Amanda Freitag on her upcoming book. **Favorite magic trick or ingredient:** Parmesan rind. Once I get to the last bit I freeze it and use it to add a subtle flavor to stocks, risottos, soups, and sauces.

Keirnan Monaghan

Monaghan is a native of New York City. He currently lives in Brooklyn with his wife Theo and two Cornish Rex cats, Joan and Lois. The focus of his work are portraits, still-lives, and landscapes. See his work at keirnanmonaghan.com.

Marcus Nilsson

Born in Malmö, Sweden, Nilsson moved to New York to cook. After working as a chef, he decided to pursue a degree in photography. Since 2006, when Nilsson began

making food his subject, his client list has grown to include *Bon Appétit*, *Departures*, *New York*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Swallow*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. When he's not shooting, the avid wine collector enjoys throwing dinner parties in his Bushwick digs. See his work at marcusnilsson.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Cook anything but just finish with good brown butter or the brilliant Masía El Altet's olive oil. Magic!

Mimi O Chun

The San Francisco-based graphic designer and artist has worked for General Assembly and Airbnb, among others, and is currently in the early stages of a new start-up. The "visual situationist" uses her art (like her Stuffed Hipster Emblems) to reveal patterns in things oft-overlooked and banal. Her work has appeared in *Fast Company* and *White Zinfandel*. See her work at mimiochun.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: I'm often against single-purpose kitchen tools, but there are a few with undeniable powers: my lemon squeezer, garlic press, and pastry cutter.

Stephen Orr

Orr, currently the executive editor at *Condé Nast Traveler*, has contributed to *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, and held positions at *Martha Stewart Living*, *House & Garden*, and *Domino*. The gardening expert, who splits his time between New York and the Catskills, has authored three books, including his latest, *The New American Herbal* (Clarkson Potter).

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: I marvel at what my pressure cooker can do. Allspice berries and Aleppo pepper are also pretty magical.

Maggie Ruggiero

Gather's food stylist and co-recipe editor entered the gastronomical world after selling her East Village bar and using the proceeds to attend culinary school. She logged time in some of the city's most esteemed restaurant kitchens before shifting her focus to food styling and recipe development. See her work at maggieruggiero.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: I can make anything deep-fried disappear.

Rosie Schaap

Author of the memoir *Drinking with Men*, drink columnist for *The New York Times Magazine*, and a contributor to *This American Life*, Schaap has also written for *Bon Appétit*, *Lucky Peach*, *Marie Claire*, *Saveur*, and *Slate*, among others. A working bartender, she has logged time as a fortuneteller, a librarian at a paranormal society, a community organizer, and a preacher. Schaap is currently writing a book about whiskey. See her work at rosieschaap.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Nutmeg. It makes almost anything better, from cocktails to greens.

Molly Shuster

Gather's co-recipe editor, Shuster started off her career in publishing at Harper Collins before changing courses to attend the Institute of Culinary Education. Since earning her degree, she has worked as a freelance food stylist and recipe developer, dividing her time between New York and Boston. See her work at mollyshuster.com.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: A sprinkle of Maldon salt on almost anything, sweet or savory.



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Rachel Stern

The New York-based artist is a graduate of RISD and the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, and will soon earn an MFA at Columbia. Stern has exhibited in New York and Boston at Humble Arts, Invisible Exports and Carroll and Sons, among others, and been featured in publications like *MATTE*, *BLINK*, and *Outpost Journal*.
Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Garlic is my magic ingredient; it's impossible to add too much to anything!

Martyn Thompson

An Australian ex-pat, the New York-based image maker created avant-garde clothes before deciding to document them instead, working as a fashion photographer in Paris, then moving to London and into the world of interiors. Author of *Interiors* and *Working Space: An Insight into the Creative Heart*, he recently launched Cezanne's Shadow, a line of wallpapers and textiles created from his photo series "Falling in Love at the Institute." See his work (and sign up for his newsletter) at martynthompsonstudio.com.
Favorite magic trick or ingredient: My magic ingredient is cinnamon and my magic trick is hope.

Piercarlo Valdesolo

An assistant professor of psychology at Claremont McKenna, co-author of the book *Out of Character*, and contributor to *Scientific American*, Valdesolo's research focuses on moral behaviors. He claims no experience in the worlds of food and style. See his work at valdesolo.com.
Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Watching my daughter make all the meatballs disappear.

Theo Vamvounakis

Canada-born, Brooklyn-based Vamvounakis studied photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology before embarking on a career as a prop stylist. Her clients include American Express, Anthropologie, West Elm, Estée Lauder, and *Bon Appétit*.

Hanya Yanagihara

The New York-based writer and editor is the author of *The People in the Trees* (Anchor) and the forthcoming *A Little Life* (Doubleday) out in March 2015. Follow her @hanyayanagihara.

Favorite magic trick or ingredient: Yuba. It's the skin that forms when you're boiling soybeans to make tofu; it has a mild, milky taste and slightly chewy texture. I buy a year's supply, dried, on my annual trip to Kyoto. In the winter, I drop it in soups, in summer, I rehydrate it and stir fry with olive oil and green beans for DIY fresh-made noodles.

And also...

Alia Akkam, Lara Belkin, Emily Beyda, Aerial Brown, Sara Cardace, Ellen Carpenter, Richard Chudy, Katie Dickens Lopez, Maud Doyle, Hilary Fitzgibbons, Alica Forneret, Francesca Giacco, Sasha Gora, Samantha Gurrie, Diego Hadis, Pearl Jones, Caitlin Keller, Daniel Kessler, Paul Legault, Melissa Liebling-Goldberg, April Long, Heather Long, Gillian Macleod, Kiyomi Marsh, Kendall Jane Meade, Leah Mennies, Nicole Michalek, Richard Morgan, Sylvie Morgan Brown, Sarah Moroz, Mai Lynn Miller Nguyen, Joanna Prisco, Anja Riebensahm, Mallory Rice, Shannon Sharpe, Natalie Shukur, Holly Siegel, Laura Silverman, Tania Strauss, Stephen Treffinger, Warpaint, Stephanie Wu

WE ARE



Michele Outland
Creative Director
michele@gatherjournal.com

Favorite magic trick or ingredient:
Baking always feels like magic: cakes, pies, cookies, pavlovas, they never fail for that ta-da moment.



Fiorella Valdesolo
Editor
fiorella@gatherjournal.com

Favorite magic trick or ingredient:
Anchovies and my second cousin Mimmo's bootleg olive oil always have the magic touch.

Maggie Ruggiero and Molly Shuster
Contributing Recipe Editors

The Brothers Mueller and Mercury
Contributing Digital Gurus / gatherjournal.com

Favorite magic trick or ingredient:
Brown butter is our favorite magic-maker.

Isabel
Staff Mascot

Favorite magic trick or ingredient:
Making beer vanish when people leave the room.

We'd like to give an extra special thanks to everyone who contributed their talent and time to this issue of *Gather*, particularly all those listed to the left. Plus, these other awesome folks for their endless support: the Outland family, the Valdesolo family, Nate Martinez, Stephen Orr for giving us the magic nudge, Frits Kouwenhoven, Tom Berry and Joe Caputo, Rida Chin and Pure Space NYC, Bill Stepanoski, and the entire Vamvounakis-Monaghan family.

Ten percent of the profits from the sale of each issue of *Gather Journal* will be donated to Growing Chefs and The Food Bank for New York City. Growing Chefs (growingchefs.org) is a farm-based education program founded in 2005 with the goal of connecting people with their food, from field to fork. The Food Bank for New York City (foodbanknyc.org) has been committed to providing hunger relief to people in the five boroughs since 1983.

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Illustrations: Nicole Michalek

How do you make
FROZEN DESSERTS without preservatives,
NUT BUTTERS without salt and sugar,
HOT SOUPS without flavorings,
MAYONNAISES without emulsifiers,
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VISION QUEST

For one whole year my life was ruled by a factory-made prognosticator: the Magic 8 Ball. In retrospect, it seems silly that I would seek solace and wisdom from a plastic orb made by Mattel. It's a toy, really. And about as accurate as Zoltar. But when you're an angst-racked almost-teen, it's perfectly logical to expect a 20-sided die floating in toilet bowl-blue liquid to accurately portend all queries. Most of them, not surprisingly, were about boys. "Does Matt like me?" "Will Matt ditch that jerk Jenny for me?" I'd then feverishly wait for the die to settle on a satisfactory prediction. "You may rely on it." Often I would badger the ball until it came back with one of ten affirmative variants. Most frustrating was the response that was no response at all. Seeing the phrases "Reply hazy try again" or "Ask again later" pressed against that tiny windowpane was enough to send me into a ball-shaking tailspin. As if the soothsaying sphere just needed a little time to peer into my future, to provide me with the fortune I deserved. As a modicum of maturity took hold in eighth grade, I decided to leave my destiny to fate and the Magic 8 Ball was packed away with so many other childish pursuits. Until a few months ago, when I unearthed the thing and returned it to its rightful place on my bookshelf, where it awaits my next inquiry. It is decidedly so. KATIE DICKENS LOPEZ

Illustration by Gillian MacLeod

RELAXATION
has no dress code

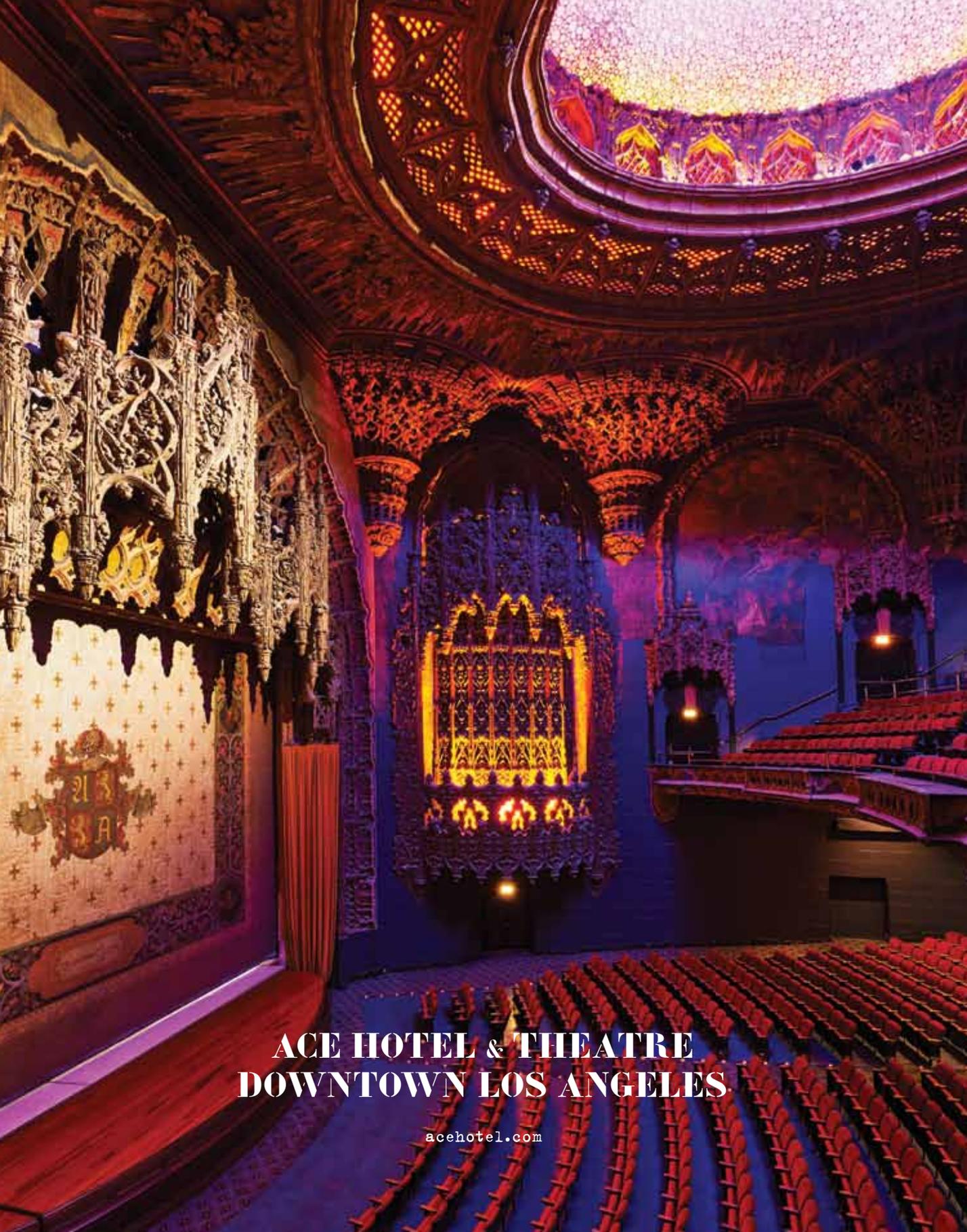


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