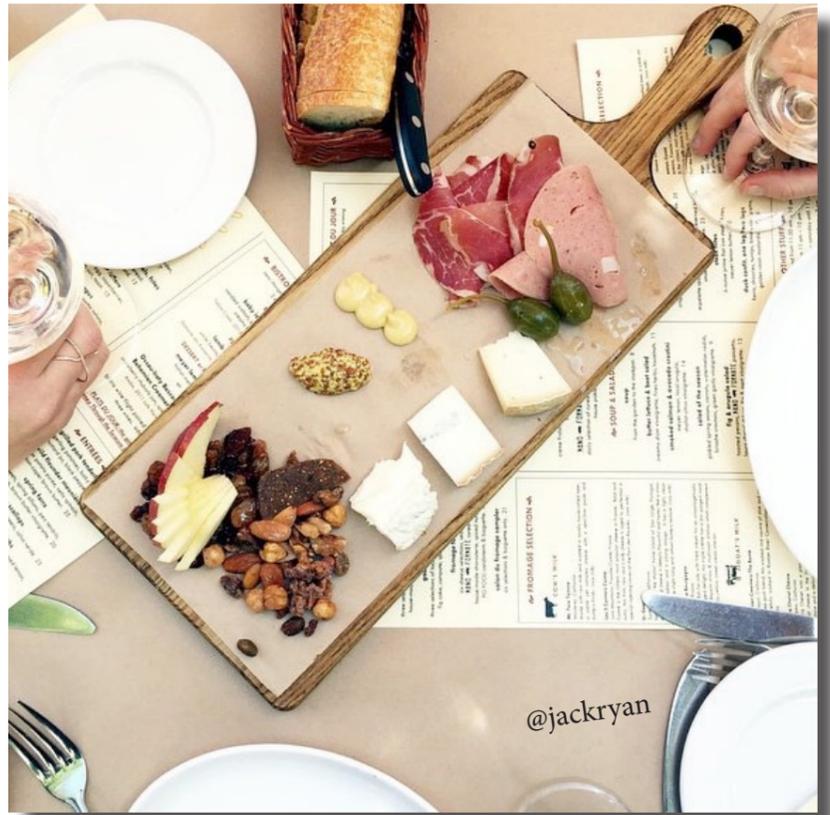


#figchronicles

from the heart & minds of the girl & the fig in Sonoma



Lusciousness
in so many ways





when you are visiting us don't forget to hashtag
your photographs with #figchronicles



the girl & the fig
 110 west spain street
 sonoma, ca 95476
 707.938.3634
www.thegirlandthefig.com



the fig cafe & winebar
 13690 arnold drive
 glen ellen, ca 95442
www.thefigcafe.com



Suite D
 21800 schellville road
 sonoma, ca 95476
 707.933.3668
www.figsuited.com



the girl & the fig CATERERS!
 21800 schellville road, ste c
 sonoma, ca 95476
www.figcaters.com
 707.933.3000



the farm project
 sonoma roadside
 20820 broadway
 sonoma, ca 95476



the fig rig
www.thefigrig.com
 707.933.3000



ONLINE STORE
www.girlfigstore.com



Rhône-Alone
 the girl & the fig
 Wine Program

#figchronicles

Editor

Sondra Bernstein

Contributors

Durae Hardy, Alastair Bland,
Ariel Andrews, John Toulze, Jennifer Worsham

Photographers

Megan Steffan, Steven Krause, Jessamyn Harris,
Sondra Bernstein, Durae Hardy

#figchroniclrs

@denisecab, @jackryan, @figgirl, @amylipsite
@benhuh, @bontraveler, @moheeca

BLOG

sonoma-figgirl.com

INSTAGRAM

@figgirl

PINTEREST

@figgirl

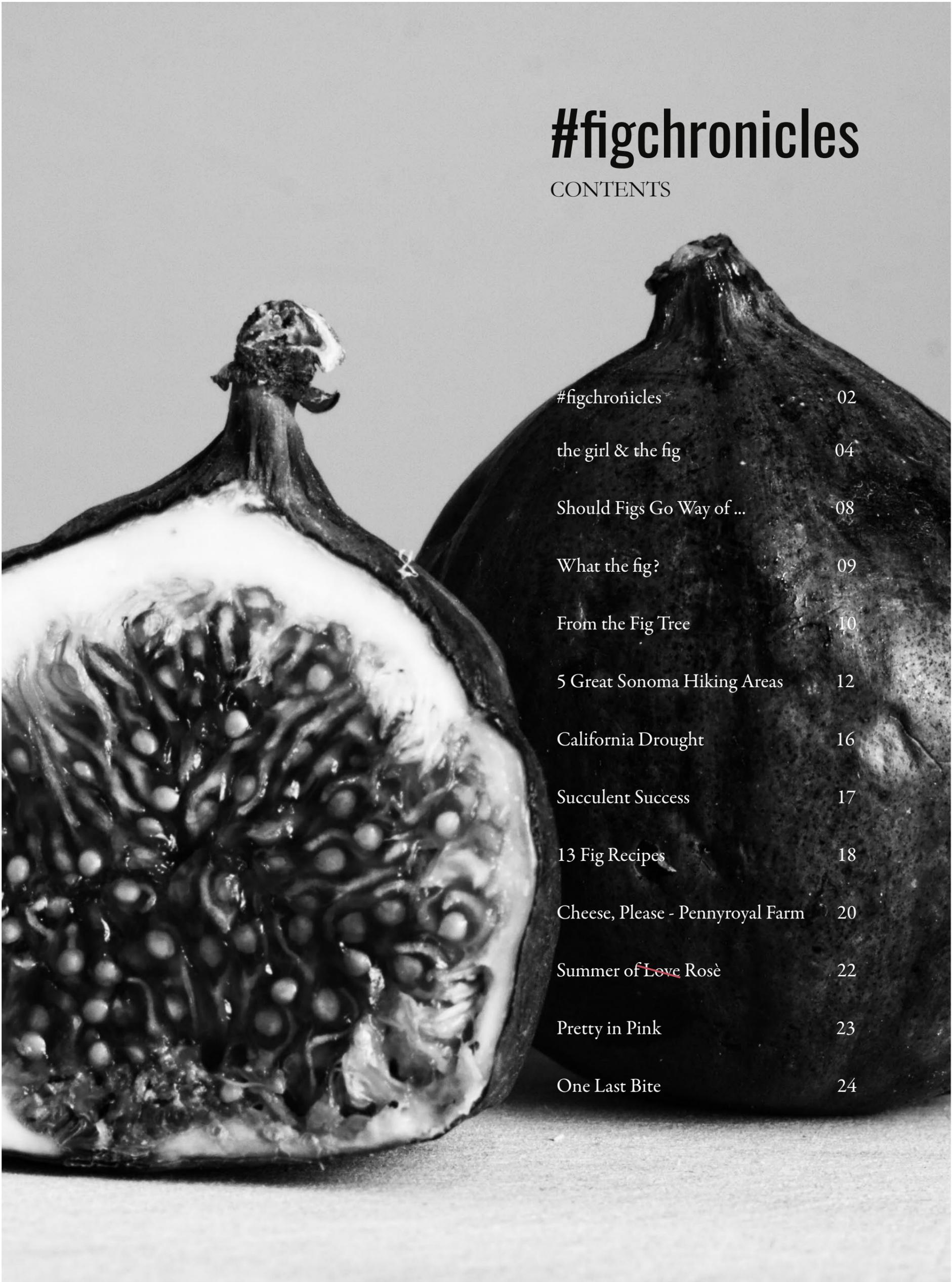


Five Great Sonoma Hiking Areas (page 12)



#figchronicles

CONTENTS



#figchronicles	02
the girl & the fig	04
Should Figs Go Way of ...	08
What the fig?	09
From the Fig Tree	10
5 Great Sonoma Hiking Areas	12
California Drought	16
Succulent Success	17
13 Fig Recipes	18
Cheese, Please - Pennyroyal Farm	20
Summer of Love Rosè	22
Pretty in Pink	23
One Last Bite	24

Should Figs Go The Way Of Apples And Become A Year-Round Fruit?

by: Alastair Bland

first seen on npr, the salt 4.24.14, reprinted with permission

True fig lovers are well-practiced in the art of patience. We watch the calendar, dreaming of summer and the fruit's silky, sappy flesh. The season lasts through June and July, with another crop from August to October. And then we're back to almost eight months of oranges, apples and, if we must, Fig Newtons.

But these figless days may be coming to an end.

Farmers in California, where more than 90 percent of American figs are grown, are locked in a tight race to do what has never been done before: produce ripe, fresh figs during the cooler months, when the trees typically shut down and shed their leaves.

"It's been a dream of mine to make figs more like strawberries, to grow them as close as possible to year-round," says fig famer Kevin Herman, owner of The Specialty Crop Company. It doesn't hurt that he can charge triple for the first figs of the year.

Herman's company is based in Madera in the San Joaquin Valley — the heart of the state's fig industry. But Herman also now grows figs in the perennially balmy Imperial Valley, near the Mexican border. There, he is finding that figs can be coaxed into ripeness nine months of the year — and maybe more. The unique climate — warm through the winter — helps, but Herman is pushing the trees to their physiological limits by experimenting with pruning, fertilizing and irrigation schedules.

And it's working. Since planting his trees seven years ago, Herman has inched closer to the goal of the year-round fig, extending his season by a few more days each year. In 2013, Herman harvested figs almost into February — his latest harvest ever — and resumed on May 7. This

year, thanks to extra dry and extra warm weather, he began harvesting his first "summer" figs on April 23.

A record? Not quite. It turns out a competing grower in the same valley beat him to the April harvest, picking his first figs the day before.

Fruit packer George Kragie, owner of Western Fresh Marketing of Madera, is selling those April 22 figs, and says they're the earliest of his career in fruit packing. Kragie declined to identify the farmer growing the fruit (to protect his business), but he tells *The Salt* the figs went to a small Southern California fruit stand, where they are selling for about \$7 for a half-pound package.

Some growers use an industry trick to help them get their figs to market before anyone else: They dab a little olive oil on the underside of their half-ripe fruit to make the figs swell up and turn black. They don't grow any sweeter, but they appear ripe, which is enough to sell them to wholesalers. Herman says he was about to start swabbing oil on his Imperial Valley figs when, early this week, "they started ripening on their own almost overnight."

While Kragie and Herman are competitors, they do share a long-term vision: getting fresh figs on the shelves all year.

"I'd like to keep people thinking about figs at all times, not just in the summer," Kragie says.

Herman believes year-round production can be achieved in California — though he says he has considered planting orchards in Mexico, where February-through-April production may be a likelier bet.

Kragie, however, says he and his farmer have experimented with a variety of growing methods, includ-

ing hydroponic, soil-less systems in greenhouses. But nothing has worked, he says, in bridging the fig-less wintertime gap. He doubts that California fig trees will ever produce fruit in February or March.

That's why Kragie recently resorted to importing figs from Chile, where the harvesting season runs opposite to California's, peaking in February and March.

Until 2011, fresh figs were tough to import into the U.S. for commercial sale because of growers' concerns about introducing mites that would damage California's orchards. Kragie says he managed to bring in Chilean fruit by getting a permit and proving the fruit has been fumigated heavily with methyl bromide, which kills the pest.

Herman believes the imported Chilean figs could mess up the game plan just a bit. He has tried these figs, he says, and he wasn't impressed with their stiff, dry texture and flat taste. His concern is that such fruit will tarnish the reputation of all figs — even those grown in California.

Fig farmer Richard DeBenedetto, based near Fresno, has the same fear.

"The Chilean figs have been pretty lousy," he tells *The Salt*. "They've been inferior, and that tends to impact everyone in the industry. It sucks down the prices of all the figs, even our high quality ones."

But even as year-round fresh figs get closer to reality, not all fig lovers are thrilled. Sondra Bernstein, owner of The Girl and the Fig restaurant in Sonoma, Calif., says figs are her favorite fruit of the summer — and eating them in the winter and spring wouldn't be the same.

"If figs become available all the time, you'd lose the romantic part of waiting for the season and watching your tree as the fruits get bigger and start ripening throughout the summer," Bernstein says.

Already, many fruits that were once seasonal specialties — like grapes, cherries, peaches and oranges — have become available year-round, thanks to global transport, development of early and late-ripening varieties and better greenhouses. Long-term refrigerated storage, too, can now keep fruits like apples in good condition for almost a year.

"We've become so spoiled by having these fruits all the time," says Louise Ferguson, a tree fruit specialist with the University of California. Figs, she observes, were until recently among the very last seasonally available fruits, along with persimmons and pomegranates. "Now, it seems figs might become just another crop we expect to have year-round."

If you decide you need to try one of the early figs, it'll cost you. Herman's Imperial Valley figs retail at more than \$10 a pound, and Kragie's early figs are going for as much as \$15 a pound at the fruit stand. (Compare that to most summertime figs, which sell for \$3 or \$4 a pound.)

"It's ludicrous," Kragie admits.

Worth the price? Not to Bernstein.

"I might want a fig more than anything in May, but even if they're from California ... I'm not going to pay for them," she says. "I can wait."



What the fig?

Some may think that I would lean towards having juicy, luscious figs all year round, but in fact they would be misled. Part of my infatuation with figs is their interesting lifeline. Figs generally have two harvests each year, the first (sometimes as early as June depending where you live) is called 'breba', which include the figs from the growth of last year's branches. The second, more prominent and larger harvest comes after a bit of a gap (could be a week or so, or maybe a month). These figs are from new branches that have grown within the year.

Though there are many fig trees in Sonoma, our needs are great and many of our figs come from the Fresno area. Oftentimes, the only way we know that the breba season is over is a call from one of our purveyors telling us that we are gapping and it often comes with a price fluctuation.

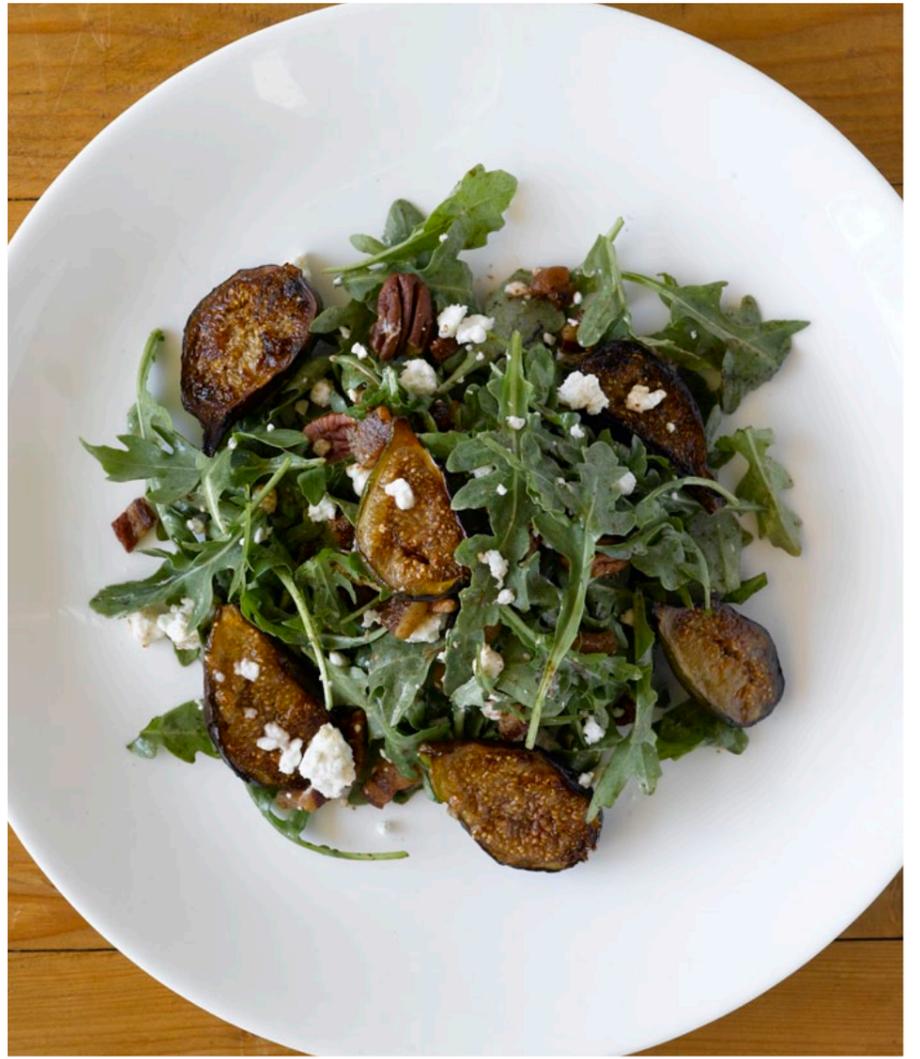
During the gap, we juggle our menu from fresh figs to dried figs and back again from dried figs to fresh figs. I really think it would be a shame not to do our juggling game. I want my figs to taste like the season that it is, the time of year that I call early summer, the heat of the summer or late fall. I don't mind the juice dripping down my chin from the intense sweetness from the sun, and I look forward to the search for the season's most perfect fig.

I am not sure I would be as obsessed with figs if I could have them anytime at all – somehow takes the mystery and romance out of fig season!



FEATURED RECIPES (pg 18-19)

From the fig tree



Black Mission Fig Jam on Morning Bun
Photograph by Megan Steffen



Fresh figs are such a fleeting indulgence. Fig season generally only lasts from June to September, (a few lucky years I had figs through Thanksgiving). Their soft flesh and delicate skin doesn't lend well to keeping – so finding ways to enjoy them simply and while they're in perfect condition can be a challenge (especially if you are someone who does not enjoy preserving).

During the summer months, we often rely on friends and neighbors to keep us well supplied in figs at the girl & the fig and the fig cafe. Large crates arrive at the back door, sometimes daily, of perfectly ripe figs still warm from the sun. These go into salads, jam & compote, our signature fig crisp, seasonal fruit and cheese plates, and countless other creations.

If you are lucky enough to have access to a fig tree or a local supply, we've put together a few super-simple but totally delicious recommendations for enjoying them!



“To eat figs off the tree in the very early morning, when they have been barely touched by the sun, is one of the exquisite pleasures of the Mediterranean.”

Elizabeth David

We've put together a list to share, of some of the best hiking areas in the valley from folks that actually hike!

Sonoma Overlook Trail

(overlookmontini.org)

*no fee

Sonoma Overlook Trail is located on First Street West, near the entrance to the Mountain Cemetery. There is a relatively easy 3 mile trail with amazing views of Sonoma Valley. There are also connecting trails from the cemetery and Montini Preserve. The trailhead kiosk offers trail information and self-guided checklists.

No dogs or bikes permitted on trail on the Sonoma Overlook Trail

Hood Mountain

Southwest Entrance -

1450 Pythian Road, Santa Rosa

North Entrance -

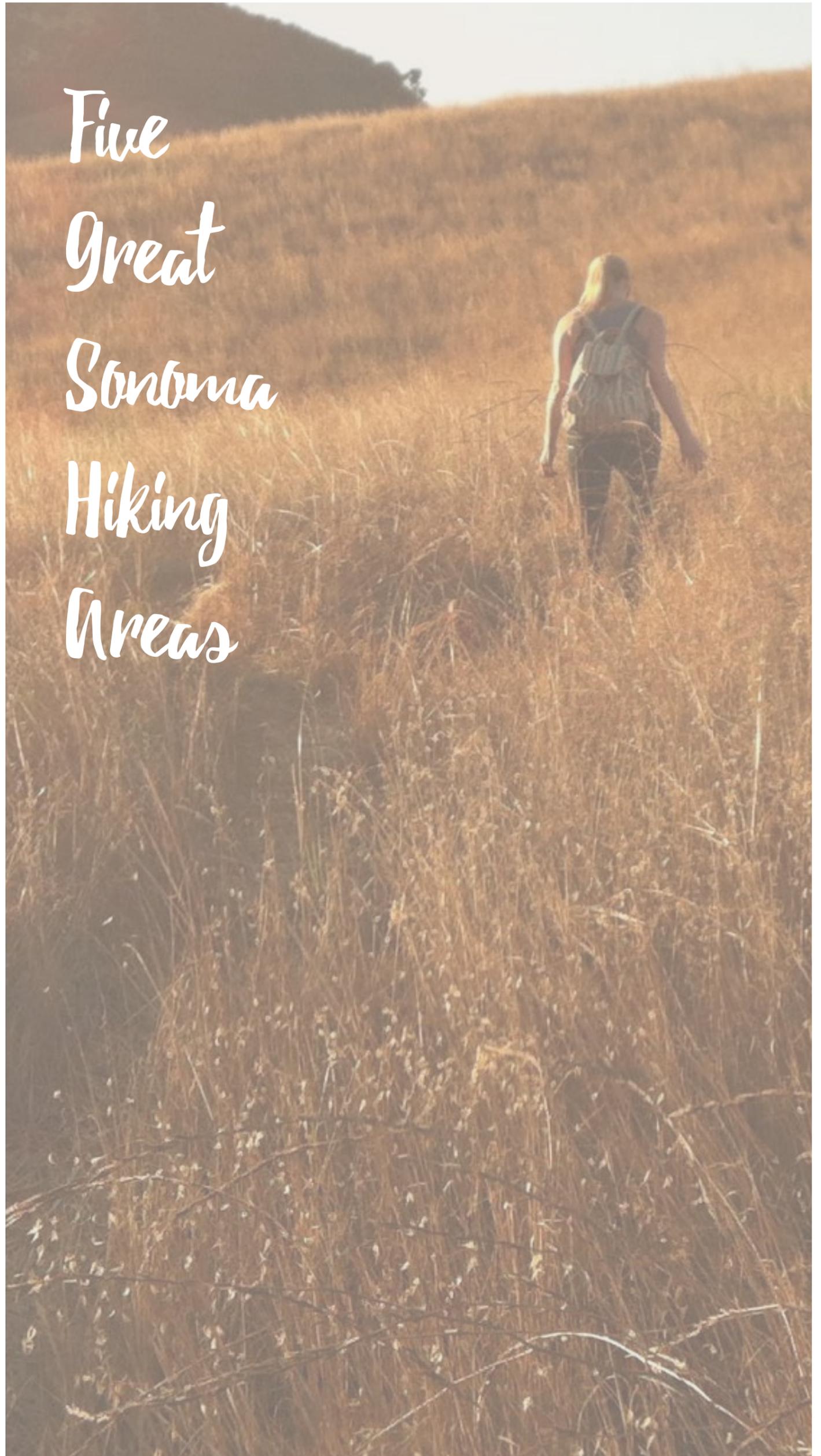
3000 Los Alamos Road, Santa Rosa

(parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Get_Outdoors/Parks.Hood_Mountain)

*fee

Hood Mountain is a beautiful 1,750 acres park that is perfect for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Visitors should always come with a partner, plenty of water and snacks, and appropriate clothing for weather changes. On clear days visitors can see The Golden Gate Bridge from The Valley View Trail and the Gunsight Rock trail. Hood Mountain is perfect for experienced hikers that are looking for great views of Sonoma County.

Licensed dogs permitted on leash no longer than 6 feet.





Jack London State Park

2400 London Ranch Road, Glen Ellen

(jacklondonpark.com)

*fee

1400 acres include back country trails, House of Happy Walls Museum, Wolf House ruins, and over 20 miles of trails. Walk through redwood groves, mixed forest, oak woodlands, and grassy meadows. Please remember to always use a map, the elevation varies from 600 to 2,300 feet, and bring plenty of water and snacks.

Leashed dogs are welcome in the historic areas of the park, including the trail to the Wolf House ruins. Dogs are not allowed inside any buildings or on the back country trails.

Annadel State Park

6201 Channel Drive Santa Rosa

(parks.ca.gov/?page_id=480)

*fee

Over 40 miles of trails throughout the 5,500 acres of hills, streams, woodlands, and meadows. Enjoy biking, horseback riding, fishing, and amazing views of Sonoma Valley.

Dogs are not allowed on trails. Dogs are allowed on a leash under your control only on Channel Drive (a paved road) within the park.



Quarryhill Botanical Gardens

12841 Highway 12, Glen Ellen, CA

(quarryhillbg.org)

*fee

In Glen Ellen is a world-renowned Asian woodland Garden. Experience flowering plants from Asia, waterfalls, and ponds throughout this 25 acre botanical garden. Quarryhill has been able to flourish and expand through the help of staff, volunteers, and members.

Pets (except service dogs), biking, and smoking are prohibited.



agave leopoldii

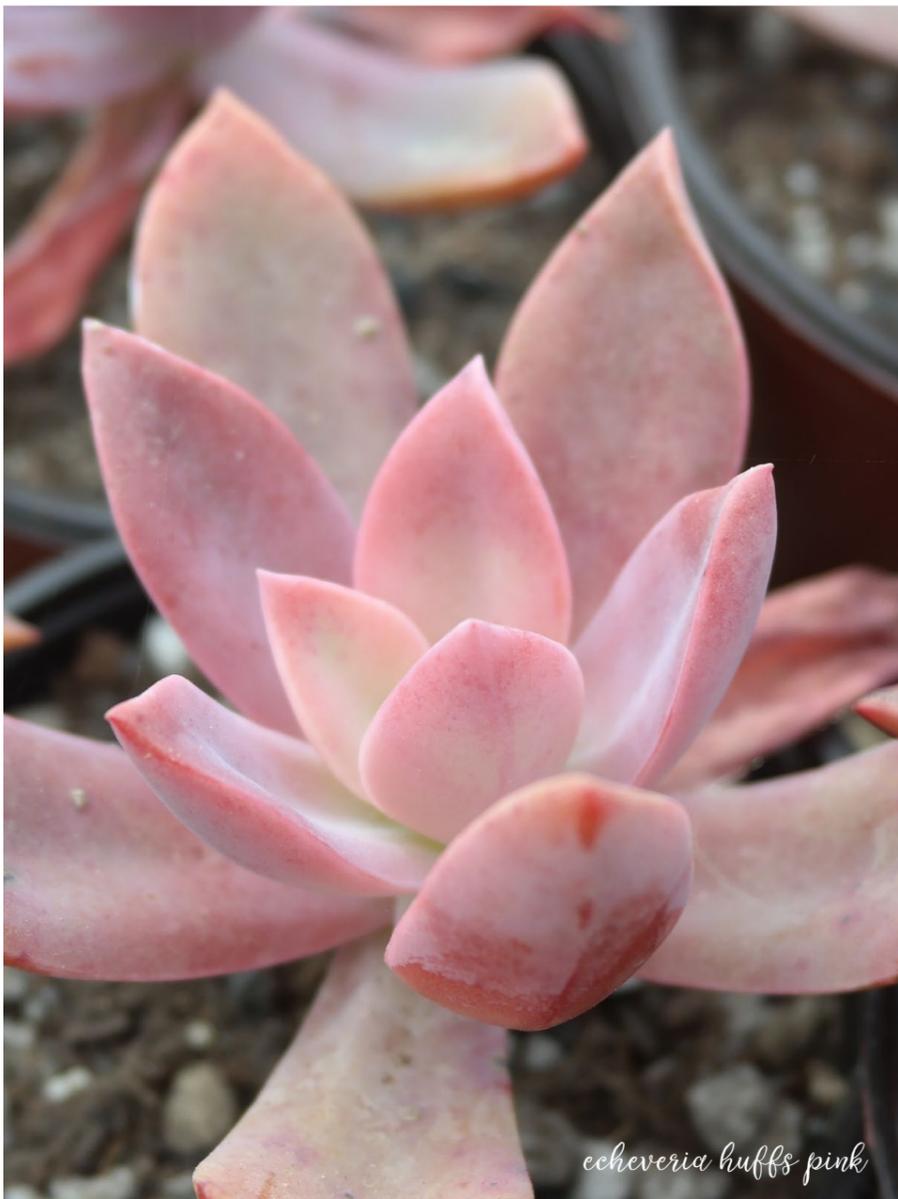
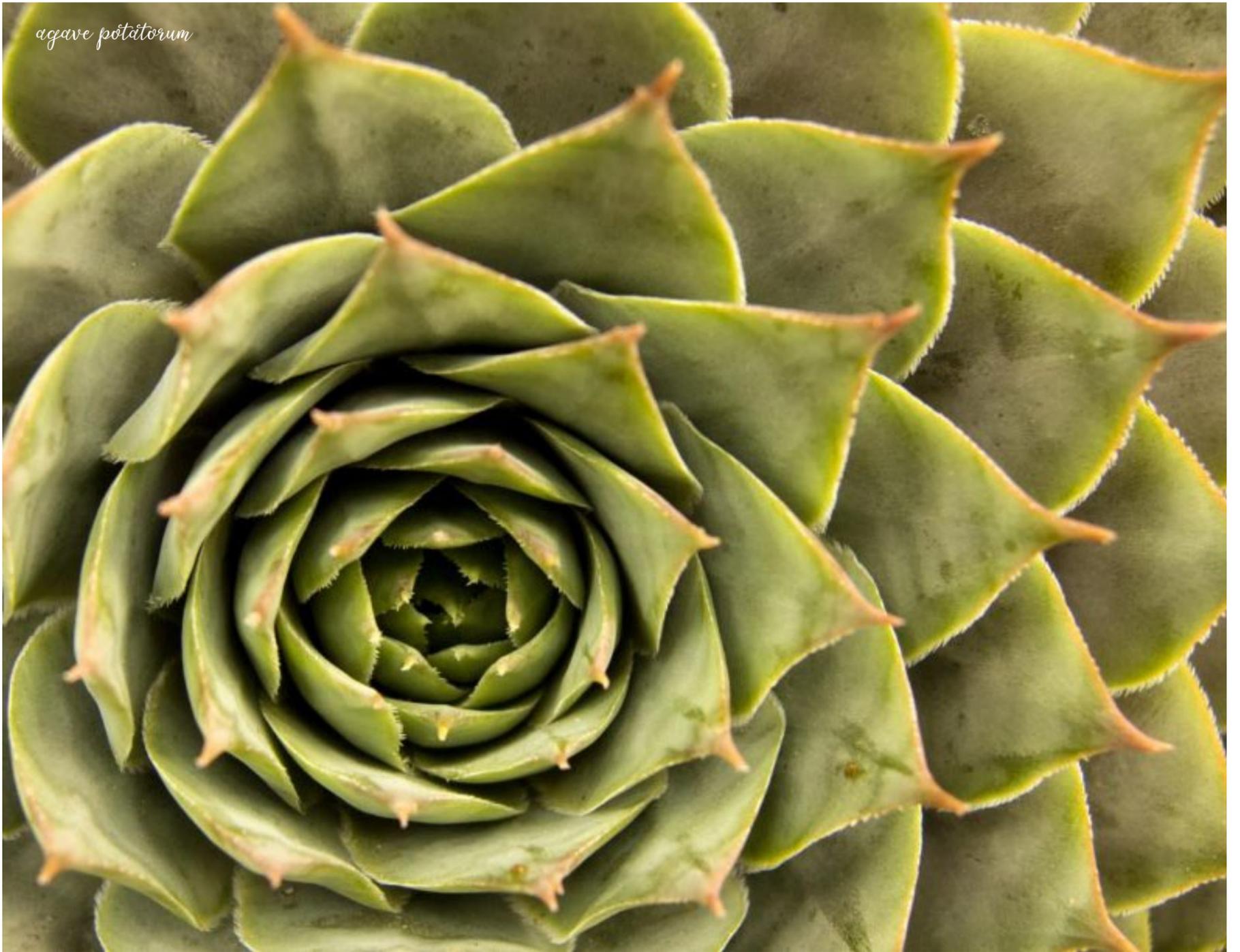


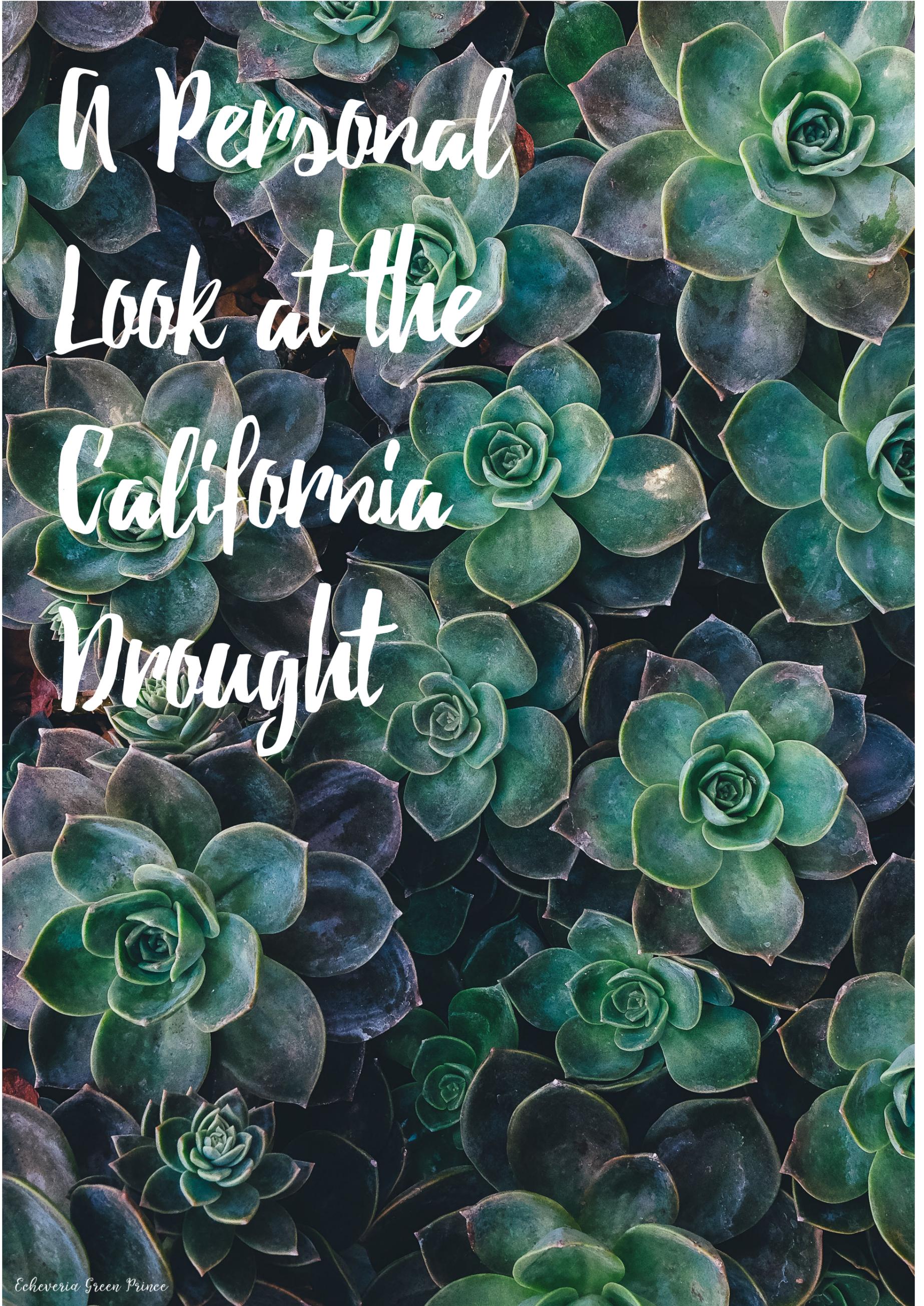
aloe polyphylla



echeveria john caitlin







A Personal
Look at the
California
Drought

Echeveria Green Prince

California is in a drought. While I've lived my entire life here, and can't remember a time when we were not instructed in school or at home on water-conservation, recent years of "severe, extreme, and exceptional drought" have brought the fragility of our state's situation to everyone's attention.

Looking around our county, lawns have been allowed to go brown and crisp in summer months, the hillsides' abrupt transition from green to gold seems to come earlier and earlier, and the stark, exposed rocks of dry creeks and watersheds serve as constant reminders.

Sonoma's climate is characterized by warm, dry summers and mild, wet winters. In a typical year, which we haven't experienced since 2012, Sonoma County averages approximately 30 inches of rainfall during winter months. 2014 logged the hottest temperatures on record for the state (records date to the 1850s), and a scant 12 inches of rainfall in Bay Area counties.

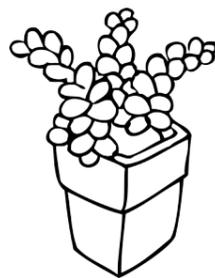
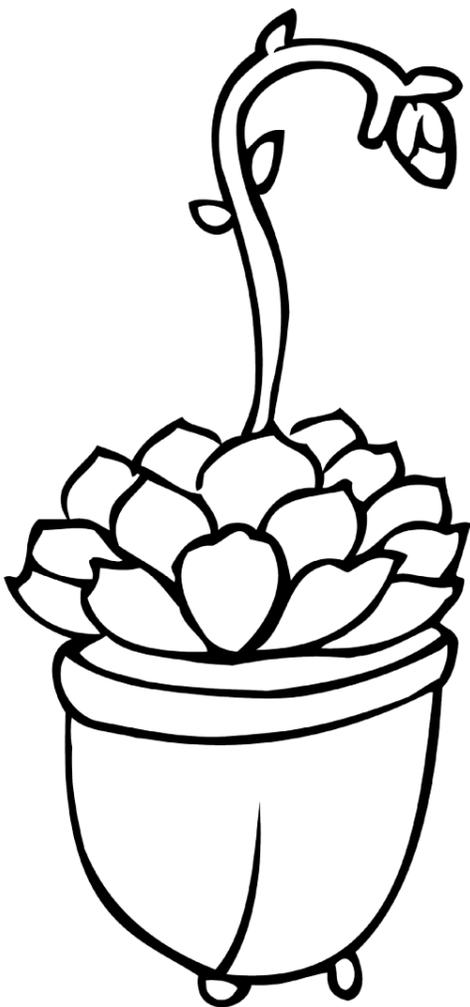
You can't be in the business of growing and not feel the sting of water scarcity. And when you stack year upon year of shortages in rain and snowfall, the situation begins to look bleak.

Ever resourceful, vegetable and grape growers in Sonoma have redoubled efforts to conserve our precious ground and surface water. "Dry farmed" produce, grown with little-to-no supplemental water, has gained new status. (As well it should - you haven't lived until you've experienced the deep hues and intense flavors of a dry farmed heirloom tomato picked at the height of summer.)

At our own farm, methods to reduce water use and retain what water is applied have made a significant impact. Simple techniques, such as planting with water requirements in mind, mulching, creating natural wind blocks to prevent excessive evaporation, close interplanting to retain moisture, and the constant addition of organic matter add up to big water savings each summer.

While the issue is far from resolved, a shift in thinking toward conservation is a heartening step in the right direction. Especially when every drop matters.

Durac Hardy



Succulent Success

We love succulents for their quirky, sculptural beauty as well as their low-maintenance personalities.

Succulent plants develop shallow, intricate root systems to capture any precipitation that might come their way, however slight, which is then stored in their "leaf" tissue - acting as a reserve during dry spells.

An assortment of succulents adorns the girl & the fig's outdoor spaces. While they're hardy in warm or cool climates, they thrive in semi-protected spaces (such as a garden patio) where they can be sheltered from intense afternoon sun or extreme cold.

These desert beauties are able to thrive with very limited water, making them the ideal plantings for preserving a precious resource.

Here are just a couple of handy tips to keep your succulents thriving drought or no drought! There is a wealth of information available and frankly the best way to learn about succulents is to plant a small selection, experiment and watch them grow!

In the summer heat, water your succulents generously in the soil, not the plant itself and let the soil dry completely between waterings.

Do not overwater and do not let your succulents sit in soaking wet soil. Make sure your pot has a drainage hole.

In the winter, your succulents do not require as much water, once or every other month. Don't forget to bring them inside so they don't freeze on those super cold nights.

Most succulents like about 6 hours of bright, indirect sunlight a day. Harsh, direct sunlight can be damaging and cause spotting on the leaves. If you have your plants inside, give them a breath of sunshine once in a while, it will do wonders.

Bright green succulents will have the best chance to live inside with little care. Succulents in purple and orange hues are best suited for your outdoor patio.

FEATURED RECIPES

Fig Kiss

Makes 2 Cocktails

3 ounces St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur
1 ounce Figcello di Sonoma
2 ounces cranberry juice
1 fig, cut in half, for garnish

Combine the St-Germain, Figcello, and cranberry juice in a cocktail shaker. Top with ice. Shake vigorously to incorporate and strain into chilled martini glasses. Garnish with ½ fig on side of the rim.

Prosciutto-Wrapped Figs

from the girl & the fig Cookbook

12 fresh figs, cut in half
12 slices of prosciutto, sliced very thin
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 350°F.
(Another great idea for the grill!)

Wrap the fig halves with the prosciutto and drizzle with olive oil. Roast the figs for 15 minutes and serve.

Grilled Fig & Arugula Salad

from the girl & the fig

Serves 6

For the vinaigrette:

(or you can purchase the girl & the fig Vinaigrette)

3 dried Black Mission figs
1 cup ruby port
¼ cup red wine vinegar
½ tablespoon minced shallots
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons canola oil
Salt and pepper to taste

For the salad:

½ cup pancetta, diced
12 fresh figs, halved
6 bunches baby arugula
1 cup pecans, toasted
1 cup goat cheese, crumbled (preferably Laura Chenel Chèvre)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

To prepare the vinaigrette:

Pour the port in a bowl, add the figs, and re-hydrate until soft. Transfer the port and figs to a saucepan. Reduce the port over medium heat to ½ cup, about 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer the port mixture to a food processor and add the vinegar. Purée until smooth. Add the shallots and slowly whisk in the oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper to taste.

To prepare the salad:

Sauté the pancetta in a small sauté pan over medium heat until the pancetta is crisp. Set the pancetta aside, reserving the “oil.” Brush the figs with the pancetta “oil.” Grill the figs for 45 seconds on each side. In a stainless-steel bowl, toss the arugula, pecans, pancetta, and goat cheese with the vinaigrette.

To serve:

Divide the salad among 6 chilled plates and surround it with the grilled figs. Grind the pepper over each salad.

Rosemary Skewered Figs

from the girl & the fig Cookbook

12 fresh figs
12 3-inch long rosemary sprigs
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
salt & pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F.
(This could also be done on the grill!)

Skewer each whole fig on a rosemary sprig and drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Roast the figs for 10 minutes and serve.

Refrigerator Fig Jam

Adapted from Mark Bittman

Yield: About 2 cups of jam.

1 pound figs, stemmed and chopped
1 vanilla bean
2 thyme sprigs
¼ cup sugar, or to taste

Combine the figs, vanilla bean, thyme and sugar in a small-to-medium saucepan; fruit should be at a depth of a couple of inches. Bring to a boil over medium heat. (You might have to add a tablespoon or two of water to the figs, but hold off until you see how much of their own liquid they produce.)

Adjust the heat so mixture bubbles steadily. If it looks too soupy, use a higher heat to reduce it; if there is not much liquid, use lower heat to avoid burning.

Cook, stirring mixture is liquid but thick. Cool and refrigerate mixture; all will thicken as it cools. Store, refrigerated, for up to a week. Remove vanilla bean and thyme stems before serving.

Fig Scones

6 scones

1½ cups all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1½ teaspoons granulated sugar
1 pinch salt
¼ cup butter, cold
½ cup diced dried figs
1 egg
½ cup milk
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. Cut in butter until coarse crumb consistency. Stir in the dried figs. In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg and milk, stir in flour mixture until just mixed.

On a floured surface pat dough out to a 1-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter, cut into scones and place on buttered and floured baking sheet. Re-roll scraps and cut into scones.

Make an egg wash by whisking together the egg and milk. Using a pastry brush, brush egg wash over scones.

Bake for 20 minutes or until golden.

Fresh Figs with Fromage Blanc & Pine Nuts

the girl & the fig Cookbook

¾ cup fromage blanc (we recommend Bellwether Farm's Fromage Blanc)
¼ cup honey
¼ cup pine nuts
12 fresh figs

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Mix the cheese, honey, and toasted pine nuts in a bowl. Slice off the top third of each fig. Gently scoop out the fig flesh with a melon baller. Fill each fig the the fromage blanc mixture. Roast the figs for 10 minutes and serve.

Fig & Prosciutto Pizza

Two 12-inch Pizzas

2 dough portions, see below
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
1 cup Asiago Cheese, shredded
8 fresh figs, medium, sliced
8 thin slices prosciutto
cracked black pepper

Place a pizza stone in a cold oven and preheat to 450°F.

Roll out the dough by hand or with a pin into a 12 inch circle and transfer to a floured pizza peel. Brush the dough with the olive oil. Top each of the pizzas with half the mozzarella and half the asiago cheese, and arrange the figs on top. Carefully slide the pizza onto the preheated pizza stone, and bake until the crust is browned and the cheese is melted, about 15 to 18 minutes.

Using the pizza peel, transfer the pizza to a cutting board. Tear each of the prosciutto slices in half and arrange them on top of each pizza. Crack fresh black pepper over top, cut into slices and serve immediately.

Pizza Dough

Yield: 5 pizzas

¼ teaspoon yeast
1 teaspoon sugar
1½ cups water
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
4¼ cups 00 flour

Heat the water to 100°F in a pan over medium heat. In a bowl combine the yeast and the sugar. Stir in the warm water and let sit until the yeast is activated and frothy. In a mixer with a paddle attachment, combine the flour and salt. Add the yeast and stir until dough comes together and gluten is developed, about 5 minutes. Mix in olive oil. Let rest for 5 minutes and knead for an additional 8 minutes. Lightly coat a large bowl with olive oil and place the dough in the refrigerator. Cover with a wet towel and leave in the refrigerator for at least 12 hours to rise. Punch the dough down and let rise for another 2 hours, remove and roll into 7 ounce balls and place in the refrigerator.

If you don't plan on making all of the pizzas, the dough will freeze and you will need to reduce the ingredients proportionally.

Do you have some favorite fig recipes that you want to share with us? If so please send them to figgirl2@gmail.com.

Roasted Chicken with Figs, Fennel & Onion

Adapted from Florence Fabricant & Judy Rogers

One 2¾ pound chicken
4 thyme sprigs
4 small garlic cloves, lightly crushed and peeled
2 teaspoons fine sea salt
freshly ground pepper

4 medium yellow onions, peeled & quartered, keep intact
2 medium fennel bulbs, cut into about the same size as the onions
3 tablespoons olive oil
8 fresh green or black figs, halved

½ cup dry white wine
½ cup chicken stock, approximately
1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoons verjus

Gently loosen the skin from the chicken breasts and thighs. Stuff the thyme and garlic under the skin and spread in an even layer. Sprinkle the salt all over the chicken and season with pepper. Cover and refrigerate for at least 24 hours.

Heat oven to 500°F.

In a bowl toss the onions and the fennel with the olive oil. Preheat a large cast-iron skillet in the oven for 5 minutes. Put the chicken in the skillet, breast side up, with the onions and the fennel and roast for 20 minutes.

Turn the oven heat down to 350°F.

Turn the chicken breast side down and roast for about 15 minutes longer, or until the juices run clear when a thigh is pierced. Remove the chicken, onions and fennel from the pan and transfer the chicken to a board and let rest for 10 minutes; carve.

Place the pan over medium-high heat, add the white wine, figs, chicken stock honey and verjus. Bring contents to a simmer. Scrape all of the roasted bits into the sauce and cook a few minutes until sauce starts to get syrupy. Check the seasoning of the sauce.

Plate the chicken dividing the ingredients so each plate gets a chicken, fennel and onion drizzle fig sauce over chicken.

Apple Fig Sorbet

Serves 6

1 cup sugar
2 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
6 to 8 fresh Black Mission figs, crushed (enough to make 1 cup; stems removed)

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar and apples with 2½ cups water and cook over medium heat until the apples start to lose their shape, about 10 to 12 minutes. Add the figs and cook for 2 more minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and roughly puree the mixture in a food processor, keeping the texture chunky. Refrigerate the mixture until chilled. Add the mixture to an ice cream maker and follow manufacturer's instructions.

(Note: this is a very simple recipe to make, but does require an ice cream machine.)

Warm Fig & Thyme Crisp

Makes 9 x 12 crisp

Pastry

2 cups walnut halves
6 tablespoons + ¼ cup granulated sugar
¾ cup packed light brown sugar
1½ teaspoons salt
1½ teaspoons baking powder
4½ cups flour
¾ pound (3 sticks) butter, thinly sliced
3 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 egg yolks

Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a food processor, grind the walnuts (until medium fine) with the 6 tablespoons of sugar and set aside. In an electric mixer, mix the ¾ cup sugar, the brown sugar, salt, baking powder and flour until well combined. Add the butter and mix until the mixture clumps. Add the vanilla and egg yolks to the mixture and mix for 40 seconds. Pack two-thirds of the dough into the bottom of an un-greased pan and bake until dough is light brown about 25-30 minutes.

Jam:

2½ pounds dried figs
¾ cup granulated sugar
zest of 3 lemons, grated
1 bunch thyme, tied with twine
3 tablespoons lemon juice

In a heavy bottom pot, combine the figs, sugar, lemon zest, thyme and lemon juice and pour in enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and boil for 10 minutes. Reduce the heat and simmer until the figs are tender, about 30 minutes. Remove the thyme. Puree the mixture in a food processor until smooth.

To assemble the crisp, spread the jam evenly over the baked dough. In a bowl crumble together the remaining third of dough and the walnut and sugar mixture. Sprinkle the mixture over the fig jam and bake for 50 minutes.

Fig Thumbprint Cookies

About 40 cookies

8 ounces butter, softened
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 egg yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups all purpose flour

2 egg whites
1 cup walnuts, finely ground

½ cup fig jam

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, on medium speed, beat together the butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until soft, light, and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the the egg yolks and vanilla and continue beating until smooth. Lower the speed and beat in the flour.

Chill the dough for about 1 hour in the refrigerator but don't let it get too hard.

Using a 1 ounce ice cream scoop, scoop the dough into balls and place on a parchment lined sheet pan.

Gently roll the dough in the walnuts. Brush the dough with the egg whites. Press your thumb in the middle of the dough creating a small divot and add the fig jam to the divot.

Bake for about 15-20 minutes.

Rosemary Olive Oil Cake, Fig Honey Relish

Serves 6

For the cake:

2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 cup white wine
2½ cups all purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
2¼ teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 vanilla bean
2 tablespoons chopped rosemary

For the relish:

1 basket fresh figs, ¼" dice
2 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons mint, torn into small pieces
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey
Pinch salt
2 tablespoons saba, (can substitute balsamic reduction) for garnish
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the cake:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.
Line the bottom of a 9-inch round cake pan with parchment paper.

Beat the sugar and the eggs together on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add the oil, wine, flour, salt, baking powder, vanilla and rosemary. Continue to beat for 1 minute. Pour the batter in the baking pan.

Bake until the cake pulls away from the sides, about 30 minutes. Let the cake cool in the pan for about five minutes. Remove the cake from the pan and let cool on a wire rack and 2 hours.

For the relish:

In a bowl combine the figs, sugar, mint, lemon, honey and salt. Let sit for 5 – 10 minutes to let flavors meld.

To serve:

Place a piece of the cake on a plate. Add a nice spoonful of the fig relish on top and drizzle with the Saba and the extra virgin olive oil.

In Sonoma? Got figs?

We will take them and exchange them with a giftcard for the market rate.
Here is the deal:

Tuesday – Friday – 8 AM – 11 AM
Back Kitchen Door

The chef will weigh the figs.

Leave your address and phone number.
Within a week your giftcard will arrive – good to use at the girl & the fig or the fig cafe.

THANK YOU!

CHEESE PLEASE - PENNYROYAL FARM

DURAE HARDY

On any given morning in Boonville, as the fog rolls back toward the coast and the shapes of low-lying hills emerge, you'll likely find a flock of goats, tails wagging, tucked into stalls in the small milking parlor of Pennyroyal Farm. But you might not hear them.

The most striking feature of the farm (aside from the beauty of its natural surroundings at the southern point of Anderson Valley, in Mendocino County), is the resounding quiet. "It's a peaceful place," says Sales Manager Star White, when she toured us around the farm in March. These animals are content and remarkably calm, and it's easy to see why.

The one-hundred acre farmstead and vineyard, family owned for generations, released its first cheese in the spring of 2012. Named for the wild pennyroyal mint that blankets the pastures, the family raises goats, sheep, chickens, and bees, grows hay and grapes, in such a way that each endeavor complements the other.

And the cheese? It's prepared just steps from where the happy animals reside, and it is truly divine. But, we'll get to that in a moment.

The Farm is at the same time homey and state-of-the-art. Gleaming stainless steel in the milking parlor, an immaculately kept path winding from barn to creamery, aging rooms, visible through glass partitions to the newly built tasting bar, are pristine, gorgeous, and welcoming.

"We make farmstead cheese, which is different than artisan. All of our milk comes from right here," Star tells us. A rust-colored barn, erected in 2009, is the center of activity on our visit. It's massive southern roof is paneled with solar cells which fully supply their energy needs; the surplus (about 80% of what's produced) goes back to the grid. Inside the barn, ample stalls open out to green pasture, happily munching does lounge in beds of straw, and in spring, bouncing baby goats (almost 100 of them!) totally steal the show.

The Creamery is just steps from where the goats are milked each morning and evening, and, of course, delicious cheese begins as delicious milk. "I hear

people say that they don't like goats' milk," says Star. They only think so! The familiar "goaty" flavor of your run-of-the-mill, grocery store goats' milk is due to handling, and the fragile nature of fat molecules. Frequent pumping and agitation during processing break down the walls of the lipoproteins surrounding milk fat molecules. Oxidization of the fragile fatty acids occur, which imbues the milk with that pungent flavor that's off-putting to some.

Not so at Pennyroyal. Goats are hand milked or machine milked via gentle vacuum suction, the milk is rolled ever-so-carefully up a (smooth) path to the creamery (not pumped or piped), and then gravity-fed from tanks. No pouring. No jostling. Some is prepared as raw cheese. Some is gently pasteurized for other preparations.

The Goats The team at Pennyroyal is on a first-name basis with every goat on the property. Kidding season, which was in full-swing when we visited, holds as much anticipation and excitement as the waiting room of a hospital nursery, and each new kid is held, named, bottle fed and welcomed immediately upon arrival.

The herd is a carefully selected blend of Alpine, Nubian, La Mancha, Saanens, and Oberhasli. They are huge, bright eyed, and beautiful. They produce milk for approximately eight months of the year (at an average of one gallon per day!), and then rest through the winter until kidding season arrives in spring.

The Sheep I cannot forget to mention the sheep! Sheep have been in residence on the Pennyroyal Farmstead for over on quarter of century, and are an important part their sustainable vision. The family's practices were pioneering when they raised vineyard trellis lines by nine inches to accommodate the sheep. These are primarily a blend of East Friesian and Lacaune; they have smaller udders than the goats, are more difficult to milk and produce less, so their milk is prized. The family raises a flock of Baby Dolls on their neighboring property, Navarro Vineyard, for weed management.

On a side note, if you've never been sung to by a chorus of bleating lambs, it's one of the funniest things I have

ever experienced! We could not get a word out in the sheep barn without them chiming in. Fantastic.

The Cheese One that is adored on our own ever-evolving cheese menu is Pennyroyal's Velvet Sister. Creamy and bold with underlying mushroom flavor, this rennet-style cheese was named for some of Boonville's early inhabitants, sisters fond of wearing luxurious fur coats.

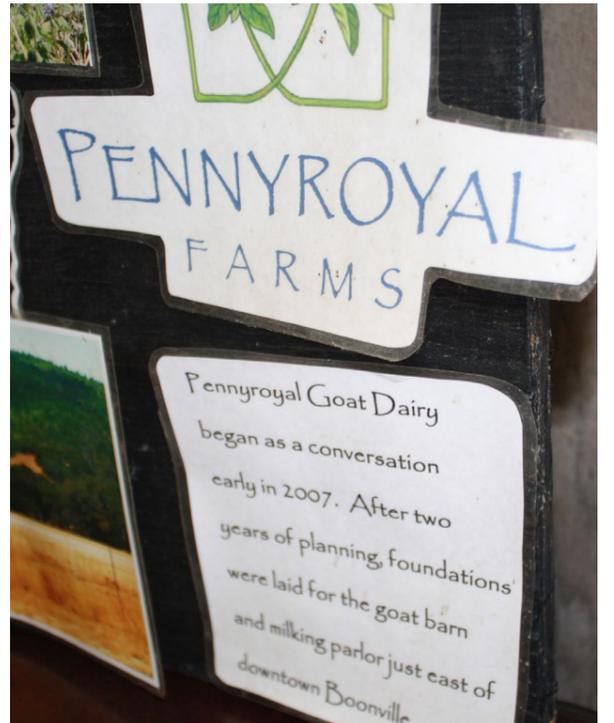
In fact, all of their cheeses are named from the colorful dialect Boontling, spoken by native "Boonvillians" in the early 19th century. (By the way, if you're ever looking for a curse, wonderful and peculiar in its' specificity, study up on your Boontling! It's amazing.)

On this particular visit, when milk production was just beginning again after a winter hiatus, we sampled an assortment of aged cheeses, beginning with the Boont Corners. This is a raw milk cheese, sometimes prepared from a mixture of sheep and goat milk, sometimes all goat, depending on the season. It's made in various vintages, aged from two to six months and beyond. The younger cheeses are sweeter, with a soft, pliable texture, and, as they age, the Vintage and Reserve cheeses firm up slightly, the flavors developing subtlety, complexity, a mild nuttiness. Words do not do them justice.

Boonter's Blue is a heavenly creation we also tasted on our visit. This is a mild but totally distinct blue, with a fudgy texture and rich, lingering flavor. All that I can say is, eat this cheese at your earliest opportunity! It will change your life.

Pennyroyal's tasting room in Boonville is open Thursday - Monday from 10 - 5. Until then, the best way to order their cheese is direct. They also visit a few farmers' markets during the summer months, and their cheeses make appearances at select local restaurants. We are so fortunate to be one of them.

****Many thanks to Star, Sarah, and Casey for the visit! We'll be back again soon!**



Summer of ~~Love~~ Rosé



The Rise of Rosé

Brian Casey - the girl & the fig Wine Director

Summer is in full swing: flowers, bees, swimming pools and yes, Rosé. Over the last few years we have noticed a dramatic increase in sales of the pink wine. The best French rosés from Bandol and Tavel must be purchased in January before they have even been bottled.

If you have a restaurant with a patio, a good rosé wine list is mandatory. Here at the girl & the fig we have been providing some of the best rosé the world has to offer, both French and domestic.

Some of my favorites this year have been the Bastide Blanche Bandol, made primarily from Mourvèdre and the Manissy Tavel Rosé that incorporates two of the lesser known grapes, Clairette and Bourboulenc. These wines are almost gone but don't worry, we have reinforcements on the way, Rock Angel, the brother to Whispering Angel from Château d'Esclans, the 2015 vintage was one of the best and most balanced wines they have ever made. If you haven't heard of Chêne Bleu yet, you will soon. They are making one of the best rosés in Vaucluse, France, flying under the radar of most American consumers but we have been on to them for years and our shipment is on the way.

Chêne Bleu 2015 Vaucluse

Light pink color to go with the perfumed notes of rose petals, framboise and strawberries. Elegant and complex, with a fuller body and wonderful berry nose and good acidity. (91 points Jeb Dubnick - Robert Parker)

Chateau d'Esclans, 2015 Rock Angel, Côtes de Provence

Pale, barely pink with a youthful nose that is both fresh yet intense on the palate. It is crisp and refreshing with a long finish. Grenache grapes make this a big, bold & voluptuous wine. This wine will age gracefully over the next few years.

Hammell Wine Alliance 2015 El Crüe Rosé, Santa Barbara

Predominately grenache grapes, very aromatic, strawberries. Very, very limited production.

Kale 2015 Syrah Rosé, Sonoma County

A majority of Grenache and tiny bit of Mourvèdre from Kick Ranch and McGah Vineyard were racked to concrete egg for fermentation, with the intent of preserving freshness. Successful in that quest, this orange-pink wine is dry, tangy and well-integrated in terms of acidity, subtle in cranberry, dried cherry and orange, with a light, refreshing finish. (Virginia Boone)

"The grapes most often used in Provence for rosés are Cinsault, which gives the strawberry aroma; Grenache gives light cherry and other red fruit flavors and structure to the wine; Syrah for deep color, tannin and spicy dark red fruits; Mourvèdre gives structure and body with flavors of dark fruits, herbs and minerals."

Sharon deRham

Grapes from Chateau du Font du Loup

Pretty in Pink

Jennifer Worsham

While most people think of rosé as a basic “blush” wine, there is another drier side to pink wine that deserves to be explored. “Blush” is a term that is generally used to describe the sugary, massproduced pink wines in North America, which are taken considerably less seriously than other wines. While these sweet pink wines have caused many people to turn their cheek even to the idea of rosé wines, the dry rosés display a sophisticated series of flavors with a versatile food pairing potential, and also carry with them an intriguing story of how they are produced.

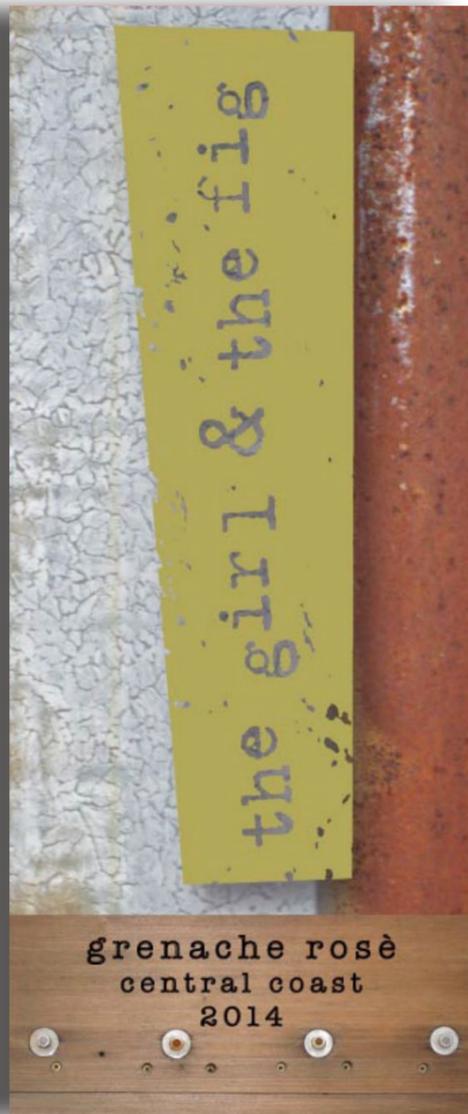
The production of a rosé can most commonly occur in one of two ways. One process, called maceration, is used when rosé is the primary wine being produced, and requires that the skins of crushed red grapes have contact with their juices for only a short amount of time during the fermentation process. This gives the wine its pink hue while removing the harsh tannins that you would otherwise find in red wines, where the skins remain present throughout fermentation.

The second process known as bleeding, or “saignée,” takes place when a rosé wine is created as a byproduct of a red wine by “bleeding the vats.” In this process, the winemaker removes lightly colored grape juice from the freshly pressed grapes at an early stage in the fermentation of a red wine. This process allows for the initial red wine to intensify in flavor, while also creating a lighter rosé wine from powerfully flavored grapes. Because of the tart acidity that the tannins attribute to the wine, the length of time that the grape skins are allowed contact with its juices in either method of production determines the hue and flavor intensity of the final product.

Just as important to the final flavor of the wine is the varietal used to produce it. An array of different grapes is used in various wine growing regions around the world, and each varietal brings its own unique characteristics to the blend. Grenache and Mourvèdre are common varietals used in France and usually present flavors of berries and citrus, while the Garnacha and Tempranillo varietals common in Spain also include a mineral flavor, and Sangiovese in Italy contains that of floral. Many rosé wines from America are made from the classic Rhône varietals such as Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah and consist mainly of the lighter and sweeter berry flavors. Its aromas are similar to its taste and usually include light floral scents, red berries and fruit. Generally, rosé wines are the perfect blend of a light, refreshing and delicate white wine with the tart berry flavors of a red.

Rosé wines have the best of both worlds with a balanced mix of qualities of both red and white wines. The presence of low to mild tannins and a low acidity level and alcohol content allows for pairings with both the heavier, high protein dishes that would commonly be paired with reds and the lighter more delicate dishes that would be paired with whites. This summertime wine is frequently paired with meats and vegetables just off the grill, and is also a great accompaniment to salads and greens, poultry, seafood, and spicy dishes. Served chilled, rosé is truly versatile and can be perfectly paired with almost anything.

Delicate, flavorfully sweet and beautifully balanced, rosé wines are a budding favorite among wine drinkers, and are becoming increasingly more recognized as a wine worthy of drinking regularly. With a sophisticated range of flavors, intricate means of production and versatile potential, rosé wines present an exciting alternative to the wine drinker as a subtle, refreshing and innovative wine.



the girl & the fig Rosé

Santa Barbara County

The Grenache is picked specifically for our rosé production. The grapes are crushed and immediately pressed in to stainless tanks for a long, cold fermentation. The wine is blended with co-ferments of Counoise, Cinsaut and Mourvèdre that are saignée. Saignée is a winemaking process where we “bleed” off a portion of slightly pink juice from a red must right after crush. The juice is then filtered and bottled early, to capture brightness and vibrancy.

Color:

Very light coral, salmon and pink.

Aroma:

Bursting with aromas of framboise, tangerine and citrus notes – some creamy luscious elements.

Tasting Notes:

Perfect for a summer day; dry, crisp, on the palate, this wine has plenty of natural acidity which ensures a crisp, long finish.

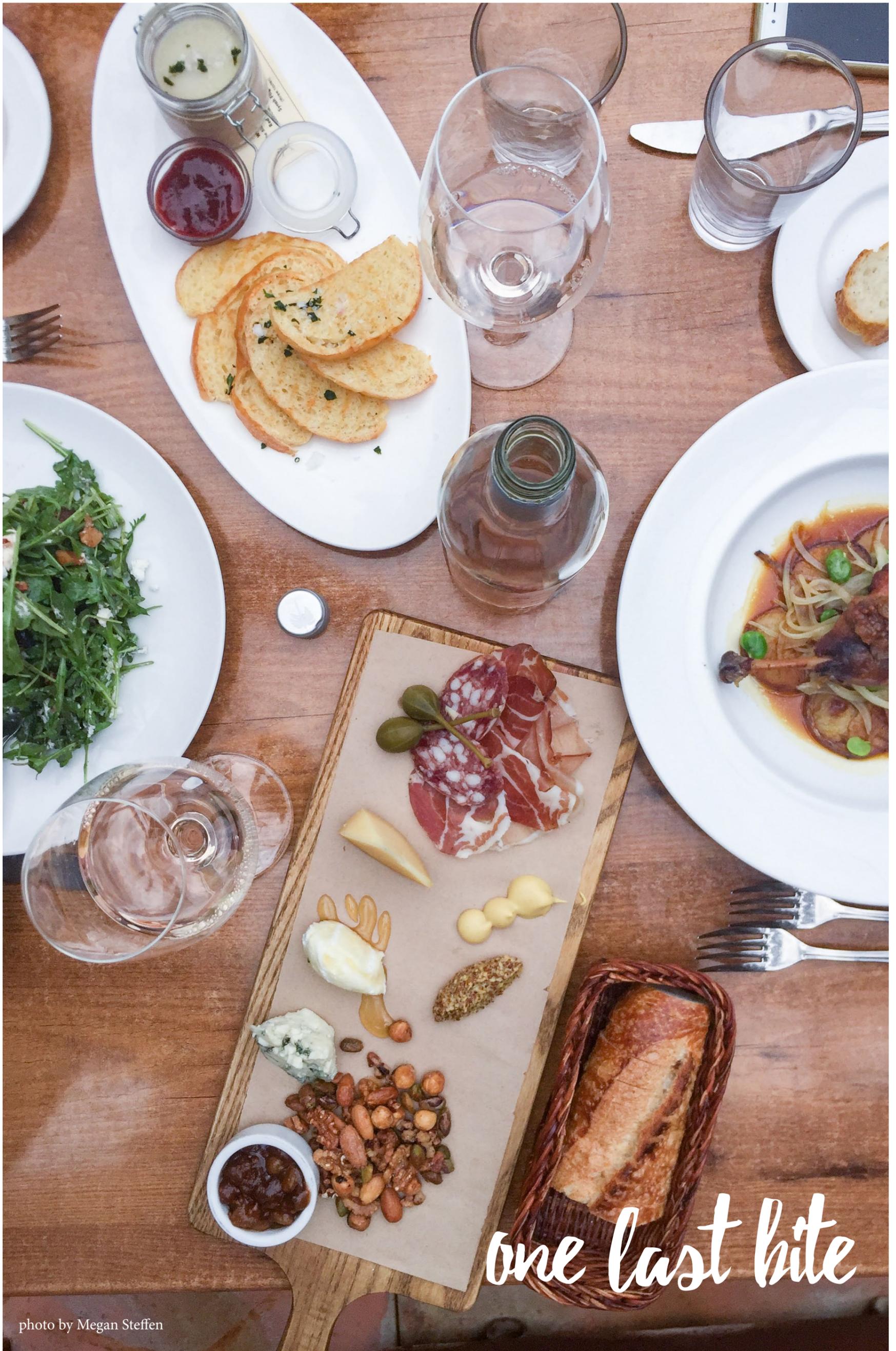
Food Pairing:

This wine is very versatile and would complement so many dishes, however, we think it would be particularly lovely sipped alongside a rich, gooey grilled cheese sandwich, a savory quiche, or charcuterie platter.

A patio table with a view also highly recommended!

Wine label design by Patti Britton
Britton Design, Sonoma





one last bite

photo by Megan Steffen