

\$13

DIGEST

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1 ♡ SUMMER 2021

HI-ACID VINEGARS

NUTCRACKERS!!!

MAPLE CREEMES

Brine in the Blood
**FIGHTING THE POWER
WITH GREEN CRABS**

When It's Good It's Great
GRILLIN' WITH TONY CROCITTO

Deep Fried & Double Wide
SUNDAYS AT THE TRAILER PARK

Burgers

Cocktails

Salads



— FOOD & SUCH —

11:30 - 10:00 SUN - THURS
11:30 - 12:00 FRI - SAT

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Here at Digest HQ, our ovens have been off for months, and our air conditioners deserve a Medal of Honor. The high temperatures in the Northeast (and beyond) are no joke. This season's offerings take advantage of the heat: wade into the cool waters of the Rhode Island coastal lagoons and go hunting for crabs and clams. Taste the best Maple Creemees in Vermont. And drift into a numb bliss sipping an ice-cold nutcracker on a hot beach.

This is a very important issue for us. It marks the anniversary of providing you gorgeous readers with the-best-gosh-dang-content for one whole year and we want to thank everyone, old and new, for being here with us. We really hope you all loved the past 4 issues as much as we loved making them. Summer 2020 was filled with hot dogs, Kkanpunggi, lobsters, Sunset Park, tamales, and camping; this year, we're letting the good times roll with Sunday Brunches at the Trailer Park and letting Tony Croccito whip us up his Skirt Steak in his Staten Island backyard.

Dive into this joyously scrumptious summer issue in a lounge chair, lakeside, poolside, beachside, grillside... However you're summering, we're just glad you're getting turnt and sun burnt while flipping through the pages of Digest.

And remember, no running allowed in the pool area. But we won't make you wait thirty minutes after eating to dive on in.

Read it + Eat. 🍷

xoxo,
Us

On the cover: Sab Mai and Phoebe Tran serve up delicious eats at "Friendship BBQ" a pop-up at Honey's in Bushwick, Brooklyn. See page 40.

Lunch at Lucca's on the Lake, Moreau Lake State Park Gansevoort, NY July 11, 2021

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BRINE IN THE BLOOD

DANTE PILKINGTON



“I’M A BAHAMANIAN SWAMP YANKEE.” JASON JARVIS GRINNED, AS HE SLUNG A TWELVE-FOOT LONG CLAM RAKE OVER HIS SHOULDER. “AND THIS, IS MY OFFICE.”

He waved a free hand, laden with scars and tattoos, toward the coastal lagoon the Rhode Island locals (“Rhodies”) call Quonochontaug Pond, serene and cool on the first sweltering weekend of June.

When Greencrab.org threw the Digest Instagram a follow, I jumped at the opportunity to learn more about sustainable crabbing. Commercial overfishing is destroying our oceans to the point that eating an expensive slab of tuna is the environmental equivalent of sucker punching a pregnant panda on a private jet, while it dumps diesel fuel onto a coral reef.

When I buy fish, I find myself playing a game in my head, “I can do squid. I heard squid is sustainable. The ocean is full of squid. No shrimp. Shrimp’s out. I read somewhere child slaves in Southeast Asia harvest all our shrimp. But lob-

ster’s cool, right? Maine does a pretty good job making sure that industry is sustainable.”

The Rolls Royce of the crab game, the Alaskan King Crab, is known for its humongous size, fickle seasonality, lethal fishing practices, astronomical price point, and being absolutely awful for the environment. But a full-sized green crab can fit in the palm of a hand, clings to almost every inch of the Northeast coastline, and can be caught all year round.

“They’re an invasive species.” Jason said, as he pulled up crab trap after crab trap from the bottom of the saltwater pond. Each trap overflowed with thousands of green crabs. Their claws clattering all at once, like the sound of rain falling on a tin roof.

Greencrab.org, hopes to elevate these little crabs, the invasive pests of New England fishing, and turn them into haute cuisine. Their website

“IN MY PREVIOUS LIFE I WAS A CHEF.”

sells a cookbook with recipes like “Beer Battered Green Crab Sandwich” and “Green Crab Curry”. And, in order to stoke consumer interest, Green-crab.org pairs fisherfolk willing to set crab traps, like Jason, with fishmongers willing to sell these abundant and overlooked crabs.

“Green crab dot org saved my ass.” Jason said. “March 2020 was absolute hell. No money. Commercial fishing went in the toilet. Then I get a call, ‘hey, can I get forty bushel of green crab?’ Forty bushel! Next week, it was sixty bushel. Week after that, sixty bushel again. And here I was thinking these things were only usable for blackfish bait.”

Jason, after making over \$12,000 in just two short months selling green crabs, wanted to see what the fuss was all about, “I was skeptical until I ate them.”

He described boiling the female green crabs, and making a bisque with their roe. I asked where his culinary inspiration came from, and Jason replied, “In my previous life I was a chef.”

I watched Jason Jarvis, with his dreds pulled back. He let a few crabs fall out of his trap, and explained to the heavens and anyone who cared to listen, “We’ll let a couple of them escape. We’ll be a good Daoist.” I can’t help but think Jason has had many previous lives.

“My family moved here in 1976. We were the second *negro* family to move into Westerly. My dad was a master shipwright in the Mystic shipyards, until he was forced to retire at 85.” Jason is still to this day one of the only black fishermen in the area, “It’s a pretty racist existence here.”

Despite the local prejudice of the predominantly aged and Irish-American local fishing



industry, what has kept Jason fishing the same fifteen mile stretch of southern New England coastline is food sovereignty, “Being able to supply your area with food.” Jason pointed back at the saltwater pond behind us. “I can get two thirds of my diet from this area—the woods, the pond. When Covid hit, no one knew how to feed themselves, but I was eating venison and digging for quahogs.”

I confessed to Jason that I thought Quahog was a fictional town, and not something I could dig up.

Jason grinned, “You’re kidding me. C’mon, let’s take a walk.”

Jason slung the twelve-foot long clam rake (or bull rake)—an open cage with a jagged rake edge at its mouth—over his shoulder and beckoned me into the saltwater pond with a wave of his thick capable forearm. We waded in up to our waists, Jason hoisted the clam rake into the water and dug just below the surface. When Jason lifted the rake out of the water again, the metal basket was full: two dozen clams and what looked like a cluster of black rocks, the size of a softball.

Jason thrust a hand into the bull rake and pulled out a handful of clams. He clutched the hefty bounty in one burly hand and pointed down at the clams with a tattooed finger, “These are quahogs. They grow all over. You can eat the little ones raw and throw the big ones in a stew.”

Jason dumped the quahogs into my outstretched hands then retrieved the softball from the metal basket. It was jet black like obsidian and glistened like polished metal in the midday sun. Jason placed his mits around the ball and cracked it open like a fresh apple.



“IF PEOPLE JUST GOT THEIR FISH FROM 1,000 MILES AWAY INSTEAD OF 10,000 MILES, WE’D BE SO MUCH BETTER OFF.”



“Sea snails. You can eat these raw too. We have everything we need in our own backyard.”

I surveyed the pond. Quonochontaug Pond is small for a body of water, about the size of Yankee Stadium. Its calm blue waters matched the cloudless summer sky as it drifted on out to the Atlantic. I thought about how many of these inlets and lagoons that lined the Eastern Seaboard, from Northern Canada all the way down to the Florida Keys, all of which, at this very moment, are teeming with mountains of crabs and clams and snails and mussels, just below the surface. So why do I read article after article about the devastating impacts of overfishing?

“No one wants to eat [this type of shellfish]. 80% of our seafood is exported.” And the consumer market is filled with people who eat tilapia from Chile, catfish from China, and Bluefin tuna from the bottom of the Atlantic that’s been frozen and shipped to Japan and back. “If people just got their fish from 1,000 miles away instead of 10,000 miles, we’d be so much better off.”

And even if people wanted to eat their local shellfish, commercial fishing interests have made it impossible for local fisherfolk like Jason to sell directly to the customer. Fish is treated like a commodity, like soybeans and barrels of oil. Dead fresh fish are dumped back into the water when

the price dips, and, to block local competition, most fisherfolk are banned from selling directly to their customers.

“People want fresh fish, but I can’t sell my fish to a human” Jason mentioned, incensed and exasperated. As the Board President of the fishing advocacy group NAMA (Northwest Atlantic Maritime Alliance), Jason has gone down to Washington, to speak on behalf of the livelihoods of fisherfolk.

And this very reason, when Jason loaded up my cooler with pounds of green crabs and quahogs, he gave me a wink and told me the price for this heaping pile of fresh shellfish was merely, “shameless self-promotion”.

Among my pile of goodies, fresh from the calm waters of the Quonochontaug, were a dozen oysters. Crabs are Jason’s side hustle, Quonochontaug Pond is mainly used for oyster farming. Jason works for Quonnie Siren Oysters, a female-run Oyster farm, that sells direct to consumers, “Prettiest boss I’ve ever had.”

As I sat in beach traffic on the I-95, I plotted with my girlfriend about what we were going to do with the pounds and pounds of fresh shellfish, icing in the backseat of the rental car. GreenCrab.org cited the Venetian use of the green crab (moeche in Venetian dialect) which lurks in

their famous lagoons. Thinking about platters of Italian seafood, I thought about one of my favorite dishes from my mom's region in Italy: Lumachine di Mare al sugo, sea snails in a tomato broth. Although greencrab.org only recommends using mostly the roe, a little bit of the meat, and frying the green crabs with soft shells, I wanted to try the whole crab. All along the coast of the Adriatic, from Venice, down to my mom's region in the Marche, Italians combine tomato sauce with briney, hard-to-eat shellfish. The salt from the sea with the tomato base creates a salty sweet umami. So my girlfriend and I decided to treat the crabs almost like langoustines, and make an 'alla Busara', another Venitian dish which combines langoustines and a tomato sauce.

Everything was going well—I'm the son of a retired Italian chef, so I can make a tomato sauce with my eyes closed, my arms tied around my back, and hanging upside down like a slab of prosciutto—but when it came down to the prepping the crabs, I was anxious to drift into uncharted culinary waters. One of the main reasons green crabs have been omitted from the kitchen is because they often have tough little shells. I wanted to taste the whole crab without having to fight my way through my meal. So as a compromise I smashed the cephalothorax (or as I like to call it, "the helmet", the main shell that compromises the head of the crab) with the back

of my chef's knife and pried this part of the shell off, revealing the soft meat and roe underneath.

Our impulse was right. The brine from the nooks and crannies of the crabs, blended with the tomato sauce, filled my girlfriend's Bed Stuy apartment with a salty, sweet rich smell, that brought me back to hot summer nights on the Adriatic, sitting at a beachside restaurant, kicking off my shoes and digging my toes into the cool sand as I dug into the freshest fish the sea had to offer that day.

We shucked a dozen of Quonnie Siren's finest oysters, so fresh and so good, that I just slid them straight down my throat, salty and cool—perfect on a hot summer's evening. We brought out a platter of shucked oysters and our steaming piles of crab pasta to the back garden and feasted.

I sucked on a crab leg, belly full, and gazed up at the fading light. It was one of those nights near enough to the summer solstice, when the sky turns every shade of blue at dusk. I thought about the pure blue of Quonochontaug Pond, and what it meant to Jason Jarvis: freedom. It was the freedom to feed himself, to feed the community, the freedom to be satisfied and full from the abundance in our own backyard. 🍷

DANTE PILKINGTON IS A TV PRODUCER AND AN EDITOR OF DIGEST MAG. HE SPENDS MOST OF HIS DAYS DAYDREAMING ABOUT #3 FROM LITTLE THANH DA. FOLLOW HIM ON INSTAGRAM @DANTEPILKINGTON



GREEN CRAB ALLA BUSARA

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ CUP OF OLIVE OIL
- 3 GARLIC CLOVES
- 3 SHALLOTS
- 3 WHOLE CARROTS
- 3 STALKS OF CELERY
- 3 BAY LEAVES
- 1 TEASPOON OF SAFFRON
- 2 TEASPOONS OF CHILI FLAKES
- ¼ CUP OF PERNOD
- 1 CUP OF DRY WHITE WINE
- 2 CANS OF SAN MARZANO DOP WHOLE TOMATOES
- 2 TABLESPOONS OF CHOPPED PARSLEY
- 2 TABLESPOONS OF CHIFFONADED BASIL
- 1 BOX OF BUCATINI/PERCIATELLI
- 5 POUNDS OF GREEN CRABS

(SERVES 12 WAIFISH BUSHWICK HIPSTERS, 8 HUNGRY PEOPLE, OR 6 PEOPLE WHO CAN EAT A FREAKIN' HORSE)



METHOD

1. MISE EN PLACE

Fill a large sauce pot a quarter full of water and put it onto to boil. Chop up your celery, carrots, shallots, garlic, and parsley nice and fine and chiffonade your basil.

2. THE CRABS

This recipe is not for the squeamish cook. If you have a problem with sustainable eating and cooking, I recommend veganism.

Clean the crabs, give them a good rinse and scrub in the sink. If they're putting up too much of a fight for your liking, run them under hot water for a minute.

Take the back of your biggest baddest knife and give the cephalothorax (the head) a few sharp whacks to break the shell. The top of the shell should then just come off when you pull on it. Don't be afraid to get in there and give it a real yank.

If you want to *be fancy* scrape the roe (which is bright orange like sea urchin roe) and the shell meat into a separate bowl.

When the inch of water has come to a roiling boil, dump in the cup of white wine and the quarter cup of pernod, and really let the alcohol cook off. You have to let the alcohol cook off or your seafood will be bitter. Then, once the liquid in the pot is really steaming hot, add the crabs.

3. THE SAUCE

Dump the olive oil in a big saucepan. I recommend putting your prepped vegetables into the pan in this order:

Carrot, Celery, Shallots, Garlic

Let each one get nice and golden before adding the next chopped vedge. Once you've added the garlic, you can then add the chili, saffron, and bay leaves.

As the vegetables just start to brown, add in the San Marzano tomatoes. Crush the tomatoes into the sauce with the back of your sauce spoon.

It's at this point, if you've separated the meat and roe from the crabs, you should add it to your sauce.

4. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now dump your sauce onto your crabs and turn the heat under the saucepot down low.

This step is crucial. If boiled, your tomato sauce will lose its sweetness and turn bitter.

Stir in the parsley. I like to wait until the very last minute to add the chiffonaded basil.

While your crab sauce is stewing, fill a tall saucepot two-thirds with water. Add a tablespoon of salt. Let it come to a roiling boil, and then add the full box of bucatini.

After about five minutes, once the pasta is al dente, take the heat off the saucepot and

pour most of the water out of the pot over a strainer into the sink. Add two table-spoons of butter and a teaspoon of cracked pepper into your pot. Stir in the butter till it melts. Then add your bucatini to your sauce. If your saucepot isn't big enough, ladle the bucatini into a pasta bowl and then pour the sauce on top of it.

If you remove the roe and meat from the crabs, you can decide whether or not you want to leave the shells in the pasta. Keep the leftovers. This sauce is incredible the next day, too.

Serve with good wine and great company.



Volatile Conversations with Hi:Acid Vinegars

Interview by Mimi Soule
Photos by Ellie Kitman

Design by Bailey Hummel



Lily Soule

Founder of Hi:Acid Vinegars



In the infamous series and cook-book *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat*, Samrin Nosrat, beloved food writer and chef, outlines the four key flavors necessary to any balanced dish. Of these four episodes, Acid stood out to me.

When I think of tart foods, I conjure various images: the puckering face of a braggadocious friend, who just bit into a bright green lime wedge, blindly plucked from a plate of tacos. But there is another player lurking in the background of this sour world: vinegar.

While vinegar might not appear as conspicuous as a slice of lemon or lime, its potency lies in its ability to add sharpness and complexity to delicious sauces, dressings, and dishes we so easily take for granted. But, vinegar as a stand-alone product has not received the same food industry attention as artisanal, craft olive oils and fancy seasonings. If vinegar really is the secret to balanced meals, why have we been limited to the major brands in grocery stores the world over—the Heinz, Colavita, Alessi and Braggs' in the classic red, white, balsamic, and apple varieties?

Acid lovers, fear not!

In the last couple years, there has been an emergence of cottage-industry, craft vinegars makers such as Tart Vinegar (endorsed by Samrin), Acid League, American Vinegar Works, Keepwell, and Hi-Acid Vinegars who are revitalizing and reimagining this crucial ingredient and having some fun as they do it. I sat down with my sister and vinegar maker Lily Soule to chat about Hi-Acid Vinegars: her foray into the vinegar world, her process, and her take on the recent bespoke vinegar frenzy.

Hi-Acid was born out of a love for natural wines, specifically those high in acidity (hence the name). Lily, who had been working as a wine buyer for Hi Hi Room, and now for Rucola, (both restaurants in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn) noticed that during the pandemic, due to inconsistencies in business flow, there was a significant amount of by-the-glass wine going to waste.

“I felt bad with the amount of waste we were accumulating. Especially with an agricultural product that the producer and their team put years of hard work, love, and care into.”

After taking home as much as she could for cooking, she had an “aha” moment and realized she could transform old wine dregs into tasty, natural wine vinegar.



Rewinding to the early days of pandemic, as restaurants shuttered and tumbleweeds could be seen rolling across New York City streets, she began seeing that some of her favorite restaurants opened up grocery stores selling premade foods and local pantry staples to stay afloat. Perusing the aisles, she noticed that there were new specialty vinegars focusing on trendy fruits and veggies “but it was much harder to find decent everyday red and white wine vinegar.” With time on her hands, she set out to experiment with making smaller batches of vinegar and gifting them to family and friends (I was lucky enough to find one in my stocking at Christmas).

“Vinegar is one of those incredible substances that doesn’t require a lot of work and is almost impossible to mess up or ruin.”

The magic begins with a two-fold fermentation process of any raw product—be that fruit, vegetables, honey, pretty much anything containing sugar. First, the raw material is fermented into wine by allowing naturally occurring microorganisms to eat away at the

sugar to create alcohol, a process otherwise known as alcoholic fermentation. Once you have this “wine” base, you dilute the alcohol enough to create a more comfortable environment for the microorganisms (known as acetobacter) to start a second fermentation process. During this second fermentation an alien looking disc blooms, endearingly referred to as “the mother”, to transform alcoholic liquids into acetic acid. In short—one thing leads to another and, miraculously, you’ve made yourself some vinegar.


I ask Lily, as someone new to the vinegar industry: If the process is so simple, why aren’t there more producers?

“A lot of people focus on olive oil because it’s more palatable as natural product consumers are willing to spend \$20 on – you’re pressing olives much like you’re pressing grapes for wine, so it is more directly and conceptually rooted in the natural food movement.”



With this wave of consumer-consciousness that's hit the mainstream market, people are more intentional and aware of what they are buying; they want to shop small and support local, organic producers. Wine vinegar is riding on the coattails of natural winemakers and grape growers, offering a second life to an already thoughtfully crafted product.

So, what's next for Hi-Acid? For now, Lily is working on a new batch of vinegar and solidifying her design and branding, check out her Instagram @hi_acidvinegars. On the side she loves to cook with her vinegars and has perfected some recipes highlighting her various vinegars.



“Once I bottle, I start over again, I re-use the mother to start anew.”

While adding citrus as the acid component to a dish is common in areas where fresh produce is readily available, vinegar is a much older and more ubiquitous form of brightness in cooking. There are too many types of vinegar to count: red, white, distilled, balsamic, and apple cider only scratch the surface of the expansive acidic universe. As the small-batch vinegar world grows, more varieties are being added everyday, like Chris at Tart's Oro Blanco Grapefruit vinegar, Acid League's Cold Brew Balsamic, and Hi-Acid's Orange Wine Blend. At core of this new experimental era of vinegar is the cyclical process of fermentation, rooted in the act of renewal. 🍷

MIMI SOULE IS AN ECONOMIC RESEARCHER BY DAY, NOVICE BAKER AND CRAFTSWOMAN BY NIGHT. YET, ALL SHE WANTS TO DO IS DANCE. WITH A SWEET TOOTH RIVALED BY WILLY WONKA HIMSELF, MIMI CAN BE CAUGHT SIPPING ON A WHISKEY SOUR OR SAVORING AN ABSURDLY PRICED, DELICATELY-CONSTRUCTED DESSERT. FOLLOW HER ON INSTAGRAM @MIMSTRAND

RECIPES WITH HI-ACID

RADICCHIO SALAD EXTRA-BITTER GREENS ENHANCED BY CHENIN BLANC VINEGAR

- Chicories with walnuts and feta
- Mix chenin blanc vinegar with yogurt, olive oil, honey, and S&P to dress up your greens

CHICKEN & POTATOES CUT THE FAT WITH ORANGE WINE BLEND

- Halfway through cooking - sprinkle some vinegar to help crisp up skin and potatoes
- Equivalent to adding lemon and mustard but vinegar adds a more complex brightness and flavor to cut the fat/richness of the dish

SAUTEED MUSHROOMS WITH RED WINE VINEGAR

- Cremini mushrooms are my favorite for sautéing as a side dish when I want to add some depth to a meal.
- Cut and clean seared mushrooms, garlic, shallot, salt—add a dash of red wine vinegar at the end to enhance and enliven the richness of the umami



Winging It: GRAVLAX

ALESSANDRA PILKINGTON

It was 8:00, fifteen minutes before my Park Slope Coop shift began.

8:00 pm, right before closing, is the sweet spot when the Coop is not jammed packed with grown men in sandals jousting for brazil nuts, while a white woman in a sarong is yelling into the loudspeaker, demanding to know the whereabouts of the particular brand of seaweed her doula recommends. I hustled my way to the frozen area and dug for one of the last remaining single portions of wild alaskan salmon. Brad Leone said frozen salmon is your best bet for gravlax, since raw salmon can give you worms—which, speaking from experience, is something that is best to avoid.

The salmon defrosted in the Coop lockers, while I worked my 2.5 hour mandatory shift. While I made sure all the beyond burgers were stacked high in their rightful place in the frozen food section, I dreamed of my gravlax to be. By the time I clocked out the salmon was perfectly squishy.

I tore through my parents' spice cabinet. Gravlax was a means to preserve. So why not use the spices my parents have been “preserving” since the Iraq War? Bay leaves crumbling with age, an unlabeled jar that smells like curry powder, a sack of black peppercorns in the freezer, salt, and sugar. I blended the bay leaves and peppercorn in our coffee grinder (so please add in “the essence of coffee bean” to the recipe)





and mixed it up with the rest of my findings. I rubbed and padded the raw slab of fish as much as I could in hopes this would magically cure the poor little guy for consumption. I wrapped it in plastic wrap and poked some holes in it with a fork as Brad suggested. With no access to perforated pans or pie weights, I put the salmon in a cake tin and placed a pyrex dish on top and weighted it down with the heaviest jars I could find.

Four days passed.

I worked up the courage to open up the greasy package that was waiting for me at the back of my fridge. I was convinced this hodge-podgery of a gravlax venture would actually produce cured edible salmon that would not send me to the toilet in a few hours. The salmon worms, feeding off the ancient bay leaves, would arise like a thousand Frankenstein monsters, and have their

revenge on my personal poor little guy. To my delight, the slices revealed the dark red orange of cured delicious gravlax. Chuffed with my results, I put some avocado on a toasted english muffin, layered the carvings, and added dots of capers on top. The gravlax passed the ultimate test, when I did not spend the afternoon on the toilet cursing god and the devil! It was a delicious tasty snack. It was missing the dill, perhaps a lemon wedge, and even a schmear would have been helpful. But would I make this again? Absolutely, yes. ☺

ALESSANDRA PILKINGTON IS A CHEF, ARTIST-ARTISAN, AND A CONSUMMATE NON-LINEAR THINKER. ALL SHE WANTS FROM THIS LIFE IS TO BE A MINNOW IN LOVE'S CEASELESS FLOW. ALESSANDRA DE-STRESSES BY DATING ROUND FOODS THAT FIT INTO THE PALM OF HER HAND; CLEMENTINES & BAO BUNS. FOLLOW HER ON INSTAGRAM @COOKING.IS.MY.SALVATION



WHEN IT'S GOOD IT'S GREAT

VINCENT WONG-CROCITTO

ILLUSTRATION BY CINDY XU

One of the most nerve-racking restaurant experiences of my life was on May 6th, 2019. It was lunch at Little Prince, a small French bistro named for its location on Prince Street in Manhattan, and the eponymous children's book. My companion that afternoon wasn't a date, a partner, or even a friend. It was my father, Tony Crocitto. My father has spent over 30 years working in all areas of food. Tony's restaurant expertise follows him everywhere he goes. On one hand, you're guaranteed to love any restaurant of his choice. On the other hand, you're going to get a lecture on the restaurant's operations; if anything goes wrong, you may want to order a double espresso after dinner and settle in for a night of critiques.

Tony and I often dined at Asian restaurants, and I insisted on a change of pace. Little Prince lies in a quieter part of Soho, with a modest atmosphere to match. The food was authentic and adjacent to the simple bistros I went to in Paris several years prior. We ordered a little of everything—French onion soup and olives to start, followed by skirt steak and roasted salmon for main courses. My father and his mother often lamented for a time when skirt steak was much cheaper and a dinnertime staple for them. When I suggested making some for this feature, he was quick to remind me how expensive it is; I rarely had it growing up due to my family protesting its new value, so it became one of my favorite cuts. It was the carrot cake, however, paired with cinnamon gelato and a caramel drizzle that stood out as my favorite. The whole meal was perfect, and my father approved as well.

Though I sometimes tease my father for his restaurant analyses, I credit him for teaching me proper etiquette, respect for servers and waiters, and to love food. For all of those things, and more, I am eternally thankful. Tony is about a decade removed from the grind of cooking in a restaurant, but still works in a kitchen full time. I spoke with him to hear more about his career, how he continues to find joy in food, and to find out what he's cooking up next.

VINCENT WONG-CROCITTO: Talk to me a little bit about your earliest memories of food? Do you remember what you ate at home?

TONY CROCITTO: I have always been interested in food since the earliest days. I remember being allowed to help my mother bread the veal cutlets when I was a youngin' and being the official pasta taster for most of my life. From there, I sought interesting food—I like to find a good restaurant no matter what the food was. I always said a good restaurant was a good restaurant and that's where I would go, no matter what the food was.

VWC: When did you start really cooking meals?

TC: I got the first inkling that I might like this whole thing with food when I was in the Coast Guard, and I had kitchen duty. I learned the difference between cooking at home and cooking professionally when I nearly dropped the steamship round [an enormous cut of beef], which weighed about 80 pounds, on my foot. I started reading the New York Times food section after I got out of the Coast Guard, which changed my life. It put me into a different place with food, it made me think of food in a different way. Eventually, it led me to go to cooking school.

VWC: How did the transition into culinary school happen for you?

TC: I was still working full time from 8AM to 4PM and then I went to school at night from 4:30PM to about 11PM. I loved cooking school, I fell right into it. I always had some knife skills from my fish handling days so that's how I started to feel comfortable. [We learned] general cuisine. Mechanical skills, butchery, things like that. It was also the business side. It taught you the basics of running a kitchen, a dining room, and

a restaurant—how to pay the bills, and the outstanding fact that 90% of restaurants fail after five years.

VWC: After completing the six months at culinary school, did the way that you started eating and cooking change?

TC: You have to remember; I came away with more than just a food education from cooking school—that's where I met your mother. I got a job right away out of school at a restaurant in Manhattan, The Brighton Grill, which is no longer around—not a single restaurant I ever worked at is still in existence. I started right on the line as the middleman, the guy who cooked the vegetables for the different dishes, then I moved over to sauté cook. Your mother worked there on the salad station, and she used to give me cold towels to cool me off. It was a good first job—it threw me into the fire, got me over the nerves.

VWC: What are some misinterpretations that people have about your profession?

TC: The worst thing that ever happened to the cooking profession was televised restaurant TV shows. It has glamorized it and has shown the tippity top of the iceberg of what working in a restaurant is really like. However, when you first start, you make no money, you work like a dog, you have to prove yourself everyday - you're either going to self-improve, or you're not going to make it. You see this upper echelon on TV of restaurants and chefs with super fine dining restaurants, and it's not the same as the grill on the corner. There are a lot more cooks at those grills on the corner than at top restaurants. I always said the best place to work was the place you couldn't afford to eat in, because there you're going to learn something.



VWC: You worked at the restaurant Stars in San Francisco back when Stars set the tone for fine dining in San Francisco. What kinds of positions did you have there, and how did you handle working at such a high profile place?

TC: I worked at Stars from 1986-1990. I started at \$7.50/hour chopping tomatoes, garlic, and anything else that came my way I made a good impression on the owner, Jeremiah Tower, and that started me on my way up the ladder. I worked nights for quite a while and when the lunch chef left, I was promoted to that position for 18 months which suited me perfectly. Working lunch was seen by a lot of people as a step backwards because dinnertime has the prestige. But at Stars, we had the power brokers from city hall, a lot of arts people, and a lot of socialites would come in to have their lunch. My position also made me the trainer of waiters. Since I had to train the waiters as the liaison to the kitchen, I had to understand their job and what they were doing.

VWC: In recent years you've phased out of working in restaurants but you're still cooking. What is your work now, and how does that relate to the rest of your career?

TC: I cook food for people to eat, and that hasn't changed. I cook different kinds of food for different kinds of people, so that's what's changed. Right now, I cook at an assisted living facility. We call the assisted living facilities "the retirement home for old cooks", too. A couple of people I worked with have done the same thing, we were tired of the restaurant grind. But cooking is cooking and food is food. I don't believe that a lot of the modern trends in restaurants would have suited me. I'm not a fan of this scientific cooking at all, whether to eat it or do it. The joy and reward



you get from cooking is to see and hear people enjoying your food because you ain't making good money doing it.

VWC: Do you think that good food is objective or subjective? What does "good food" mean to you?

TC: There is a term that has served me well in my business and that is called perceived value. Cost enters into it. But good food is something that makes you feel better after you eat it. Not full, just makes you feel better. There are many places you can go and fill up your belly. But when you take a bite of something and it puts a smile on your face, that to me is the difference. Or when you eat something, and you just go "Yes." Food doesn't have to be that way every meal; not every meal is going to blow your mind. I think that's a problem a lot of people in the restaurant business have, they think every meal has to be that way.

VWC: I have a couple more questions before we finish up.

First, what are some of your favorite things to cook now, whether at home or at work?

TC: At work, I have my name attached to fish and chips.

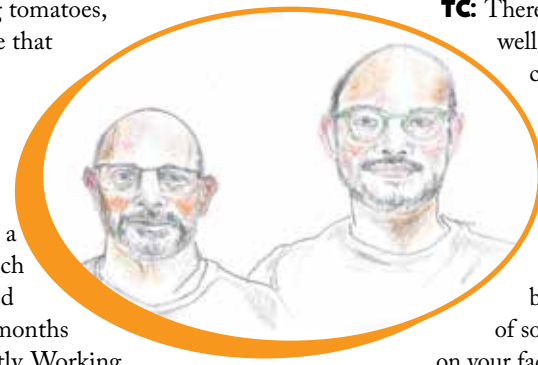
It's a batter that I developed, nothing exotic, but it's really good. I make that all the time with basa fish, it's outstanding. I'm very proud of it. At home, I eat very simply. I rarely cook anything exotic because I look forward to having simple things to eat. Pastas, barbecue stuff.

VWC: What would your last meal be?

TC: Italian sausage. One of my favorite food groups is sausage.

VWC: Give me a full plate, a full dish. You've got anything you want at your disposal

TC: Polenta, Italian sausage, and a glass of wine.





I asked Tony to prepare a meal suited for warm weather as we approach what is guaranteed to be a great summer. He drew inspiration from our lunch at Little Prince by using skirt steak but instead paired it with a fresh mango salsa. For an anytime, anywhere side dish, Tony made a roasted onion seasoned with balsamic vinaigrette that you can throw on the grill or in the oven. He prepared the mango salsa while waiting for the grill to heat and the onion to cook—everything was ready in 30 minutes. It had been ages since I ate anything my father cooked, and I savored every bite. The spices of the skirt steak were perfectly balanced by the tangy salsa. But I was even more impressed watching my father cook; while talking to me, his knife control and motions were fluid. Even as I hovered over his shoulder with my camera, his precision didn't waver. It is truly an art to behold. Over the years of my father's storied career, thousands of people have gotten to enjoy his cooking and now you can, too. 🍴

VINCENT WONG-CROCITTO IS A SNEAKER AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS EXPERT BASED IN SUNSET PARK. WHEN HE'S NOT EATING, HE ENJOYS PHOTOGRAPHY AND FINDING VANITY LICENSE PLATES. WHEN HE IS EATING, SOME FAVORITES INCLUDE DIM SUM AND HIS GRANDMOTHER'S LEFTOVERS. FOLLOW HIM ON INSTAGRAM @ANORDEROFDUMPLINGS

MANGO SALSA

- 1 RIPE MANGO
- 1 RED ONION
- 1 CHILI PEPPER - SERRANO OR JALAPEÑO
- 2 LIMES
- 1 BUNCH CILANTRO

METHOD:

1. PEEL AND DICE MANGO AND ONION (OPTIONAL: SAUTÉ ONIONS BEFORE MIXING WITH OTHER INGREDIENTS)
2. CHOP CHILI PEPPER (OPTIONAL - DISCARD SEEDS)
3. FINELY CHOP CILANTRO
4. TOSS ALL INGREDIENTS IN MIXING BOWL
5. SQUEEZE JUICE FROM BOTH LIMES
6. MIX IN BOWL AND ENJOY
(OPTIONAL: ADD SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE)

FIRE ROASTED ONION

- 1 RED ONION, PEELED/WHOLE
- 1 SLICE BACON OR PANCETTA, CUT IN THIRDS
- 1 OZ BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE DRESSING
- ALUMINUM FOIL

METHOD:

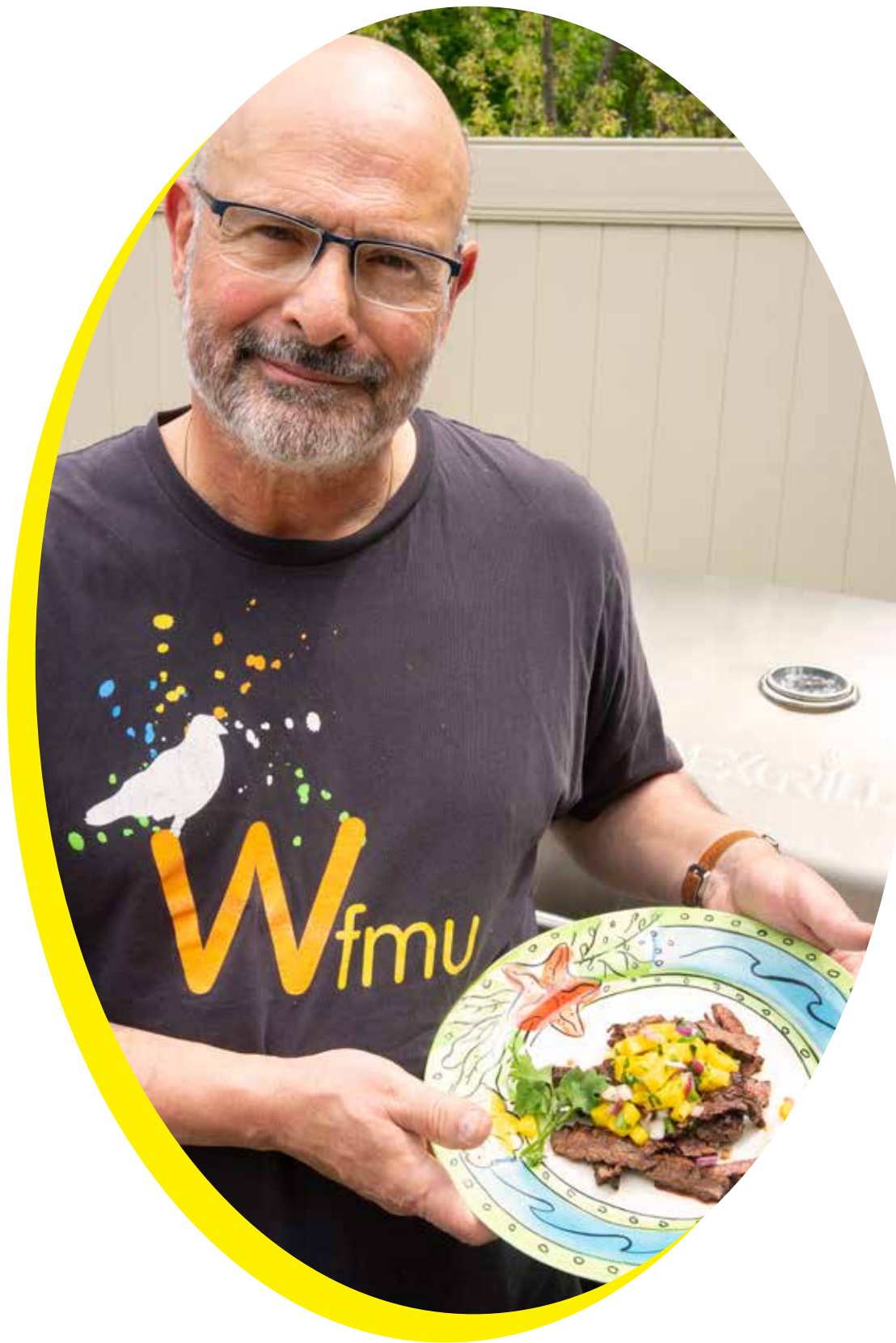
1. PREHEAT GRILL (OR OVEN TO 400°F)
2. SLICE PEELED ONION 2/3RDS OF THE WAY ACROSS THE RINGS, MAKING THREE SLITS. PLACE BACON OR PANCETTA IN THE SLITS
3. PLACE THE ONION INTO A SHEET OF ALUMINUM FOIL
4. FORM A POUCH AROUND AND ABOVE THE ONION WITH THE FOIL
5. POUR VINEGAR OVER THE ONION, THROUGH THE SLITS AND SOAKING THE ENTIRE ONION
6. TWIST AND SEAL THE FOIL POUCH
7. COOK UNTIL ONION IS SOFT (APPROXIMATELY 15-20 MINUTES IF GRILLING, 30 MINUTES IF USING OVEN)
8. REMOVE FROM FOIL AND LET COOL BEFORE EATING
(CAREFUL! FOIL WILL BE HOT)

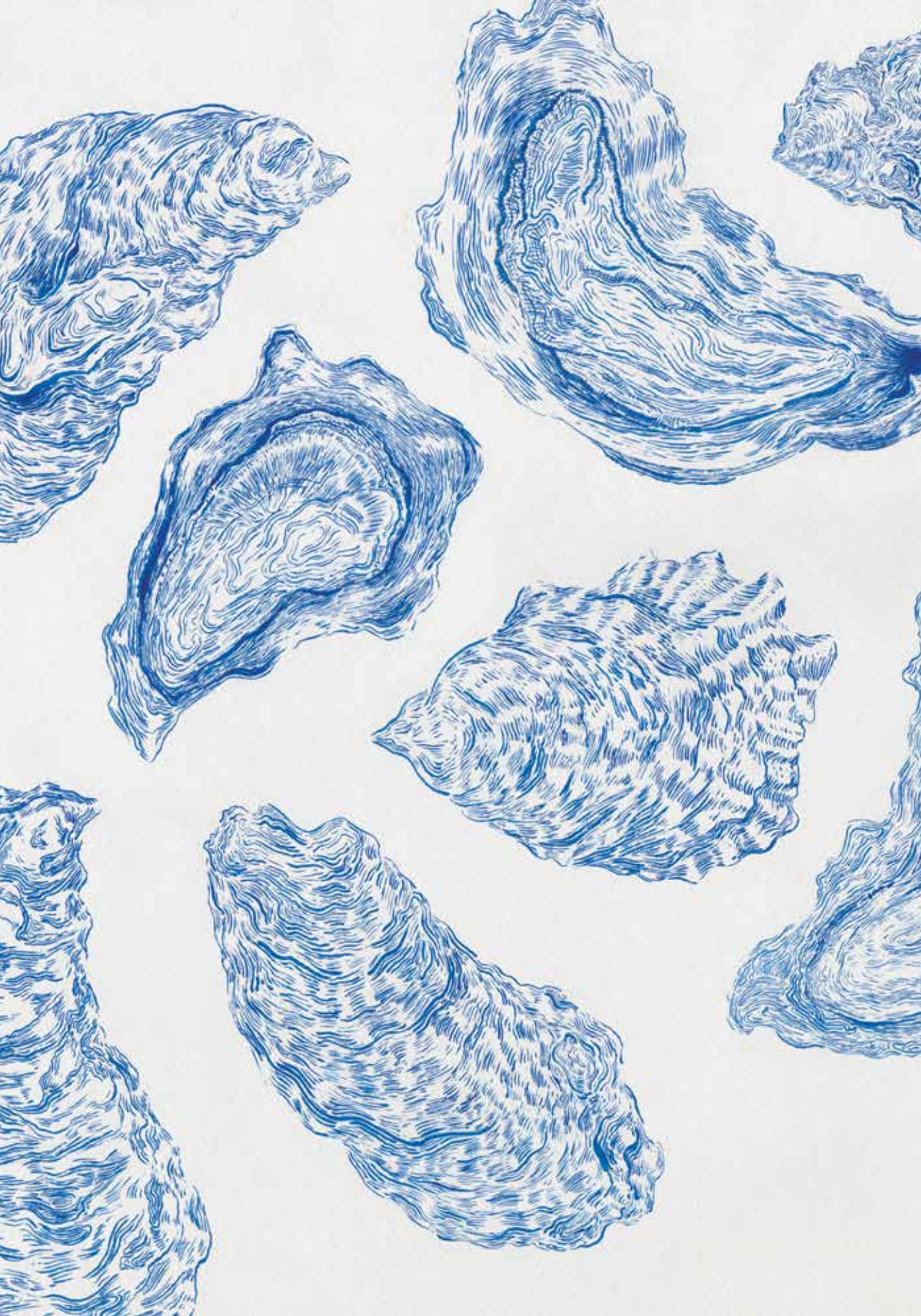
SKIRT STEAK

- 1 LB SKIRT STEAK
- CHILI POWDER
- CUMIN
- SALT

METHOD:

1. COAT SKIRT STEAK WITH CUMIN AND CHILI POWDER, COVER AND LET SIT OVERNIGHT
2. ADD SALT TO TASTE
3. PREHEAT GRILL AS HOT AS POSSIBLE (AT LEAST 15-20 MINUTES)
4. COOK TIME WILL VARY DEPENDING ON THE THICKNESS OF MEAT AND DESIRED PREPARATION (TONY RECOMMENDS MEDIUM RARE)
5. FOR BEST PREPARATION, CUT THE SKIRT STEAK ACROSS THE GRAIN (AS SHOWN IN PHOTOS)





OYSTER MEDITATION

ROSA SHIPLEY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIELLE LAURETANO

OYSTERS ARE ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS IN THE WORLD.

I would probably get a tiny tattoo of one, if they weren't so confusing to look at. I like them because they are impossible to understand, and so insistent. Where do you go when you're hit with brine?

Oysters are an 'acquired taste'. That means, I think, that things just change. What our bodies learn to tolerate becomes increasingly complicated. I love the scene in *Mad Men* where Don tricks Roger into eating too many oysters

and drinking too many martinis. Then, Roger becomes sick and learns a lesson. Too much of a good thing.

In Bordeaux, I would go to the Marché des Capuchins in the mornings, hungover. It is a sizable covered market, expansive with vendors. Sometimes I would meet friends there and we would wander through stalls in search of vegetables, dried fruits, and nuts, all entirely convinced

that our bodies were disintegrating from the flour, white sugar, and red wine that had come to sustain us. We searched in vain, looking for the wrong thing.

One March morning, I rose early and went alone. In an overcoat smelling dankly of perfume and cigarettes, I trudged along and listened to “Queen Jane, Approximately”. I was having a latent teenage rebellion, cloaked in a mood of carelessness and some gentle fury, right beside the sea. I romanticized chaos without really possessing the energy to be anything but good.

Bordeaux as a city is small, which is why I liked it—easy to understand quickly, easy to be confident. The market, conversely, was big and confusing. I felt dingy and little. Each week things shifted around, the chocolate moving from North to West and the Moroccan spices moving South. Thinking about where places had recently been left me disoriented and mesmerized. Unmoored, and without sense memory, I decided to build a vendor map in my mind: cardamom must go next to goat cheese, roses then almonds, cookies and then cured meats.

The one consistency was the oyster bar. I will never, ever forget the gentlemen in that corner of the market. I watched them as I stood, lactose intolerant by the cheese stand. They sat, past fields of flowers, hanging meat, and Turkish Delight, at a few tall dark wooden tables, with stilted chairs orbiting around. Oysters on each table, towering, vertiginous piles. The market men held court. They were old, loud, in berets, cashmere, and tweed, smoking cigarettes in the inside/outside of the open air. They laughed, shucked, ate oysters, and drank white wine. It was 10 am. I remember watching the rain just outside the market, so close to touching their backs, and the steam and smoke they exhaled mingling together.

I watched them for a couple minutes each week, but I could have watched them for hours. It was something about the way that they fit into the space—so perfectly held in their enjoyment, so expansive among delicacies, so rugged in their breaking fishmeat loose. I would come to recognize a few of them by face, but mostly I knew them in a zoomed out sort of way; as one would know a mountain range, or some wild wisteria on a nearby house, or a patch of stinging nettles.

Sometimes, I feel like the same kind of man as they seemed to be. There’s a gruffness to enjoying what you want when you want it, to cornucopia

and cacophony, to doing nighttime things in the daytime. Occasionally, in my own body, I consider it radical. I find myself there when I am eating an oyster.

The first time I shucked an oyster, I didn’t cut open my hand. I was surprised and very proud of myself. Later that night, I got an insane case of shellfish poisoning. It felt like I was throwing up the ocean. So it goes.

What an ironic elegance in something so elemental. You are slurping something up—impossibly crude and straightforward. That big inhale, that big exhale, and you return for more. Last year, I was invited to go harvest oysters. We had to go in secret, because we’d be harvesting on property that was both private and abandoned. We walked through the empty oyster operation at twilight, wood shacks eerie with windchimes, until we got to the oyster pond, where three different varieties were born and grew up. The water was peaceful and murky. Though my boots weren’t tall enough, I walked in up to my knees to find the oysters at the bottom. It was less glamorous than I had imagined, and surprising, too; the biggest, flat ones were tasteless. The smallest, crustiest ones ended up sparkling on my tongue.

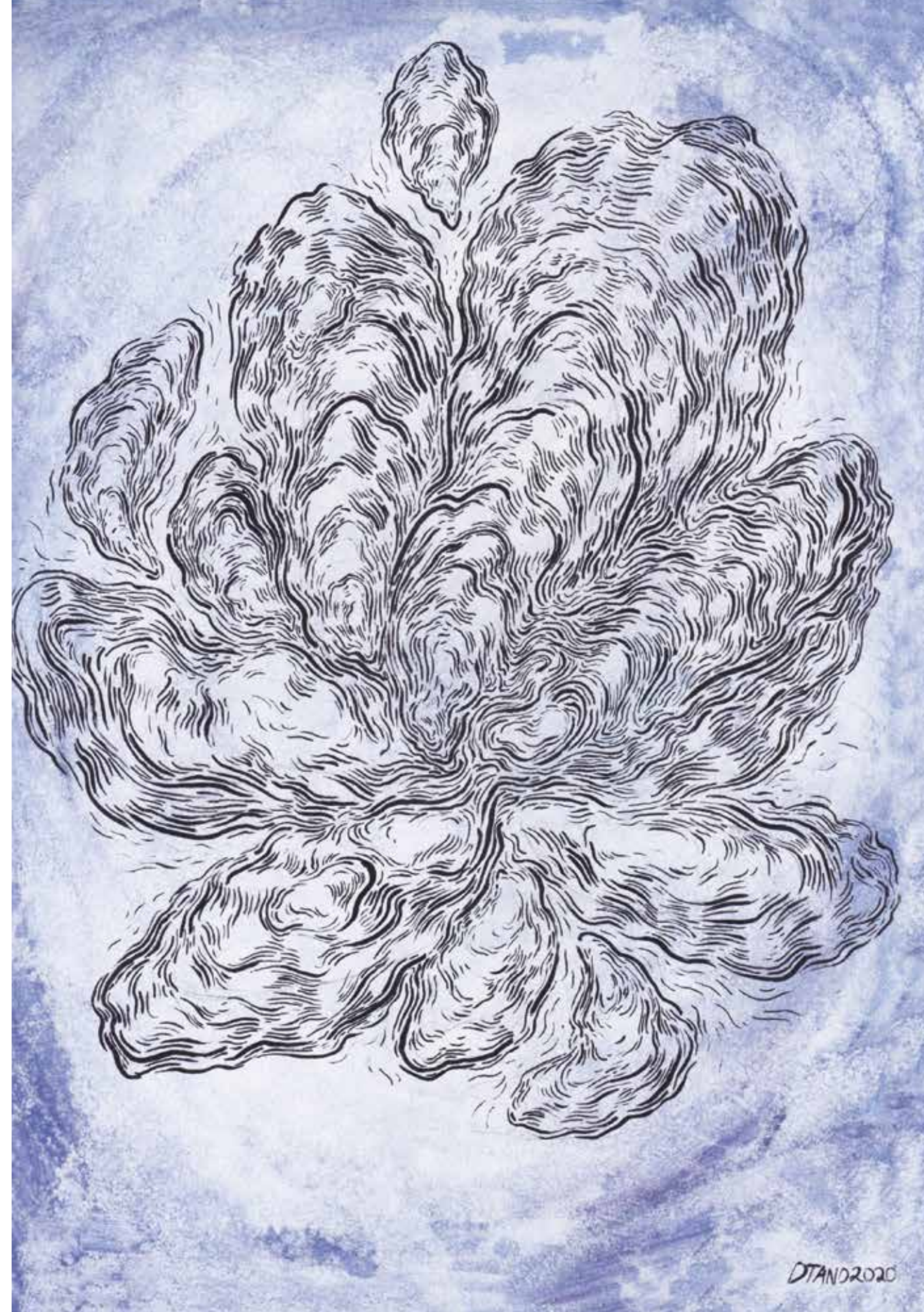
The whole thing brought to mind how ancient Greek fisherman would scatter pottery pieces in the water, as beds on which baby oysters could settle. I can only imagine the colors; bright Aegean blue next to clay brown, next to baby barnacle gray. The Greeks also used oyster shells for voting; they would carve their choices into shells, and cast them away.

Centuries after their votes were cast, Jung called synchronicity the Quantum Sea.

Oyster names, born of that time, are breathily beautiful. *Crassostrea Gigas*, *Kumamoto*, *Ostrea Lurida*, *Crassostrea Virginica*.

I wonder, in the quiet moments, what an oyster really is. Trying to figure it out is like putting your ear to a seashell and wondering if that’s really the ocean you’re hearing. And still—maybe an oyster is just some flesh inside a piece of stone. So I am left with the thing itself, lapping it up, over and over. What are we together, this oyster and me? An embodied movement towards indulgence, a licking from bone, a rush, a prayer. ☪

ROSA SHIPLEY IS A CHEF, WRITER, + FOOD CREATIVE. HER WORK’S AIM IS ALWAYS TO CLEANSE THE PALATE. ROSA’S FAVORITE FLAVOR IS SOMETHING SHE LIKES TO CALL ‘SWEET NEUTRAL’ :) FOLLOW HER ON INSTAGRAM @PALATE_CLEANSE



ON A SUPER SUNNY AND HUMID SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN JUNE, I VENTURED TO HONEY'S IN BUSHWICK FOR "FRIENDSHIP BBQ",

a Vietnamese pop-up organized by Phoebe Tran and Sab Mai. Phoebe is the chef and founder of Bé Bép Baby Kitchen and an urban farmer at Brooklyn Grange. Sab is a graphic designer, artist, musician, and founder of the band "No Vacation."

In an ongoing quest to find a parallel between food and community, I discovered this pop-up at Honey's, which epitomized New York's return to outdoor summer celebrations. Good food, good company. Keep an eye out for future pop-ups by Phoebe @bebep.babykitchen and Sab @bodega.superstar

Consumed in the order as follows, sweet before savory:

I drank Vietnamese Iced Coffee and ate tangy, moist Banana Bread Pudding with hints of coconut and rum.

Jackfruit Salad with Black Sesame Cracker was probably my favorite plate, crunchy and fresh: fried shallot, fried bean curd, peanuts, mint, mushroom, jicama, rau ram, sesame, radish and lime.

The Grilled Rice Paper Pizza tasted simultaneously smokey, spicy, sour, and a little bit sweet. It was fascinating to watch this colorful plate materialize through its layered assembly process—rice paper, egg, pork floss, dried shrimp, fried shallot, sriracha, and kewpie.

Meatballs and Baguette with Fried Egg was made of pork, jicama, tomato sauce, and garnished with cilantro, pickled carrot, and daikon.

In everything I ate, there was a brightness and element of surprise from both visual cues and flavors. 🍷

LUCIA BELL-EPSTEIN IS AN ARTIST, COOK, AND FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER WORKING IN FOOD AND CULTURE. SHE IS DRIVEN TO CREATE INTIMATE VISUAL NARRATIVES AROUND THE NEXUS OF COOKING, EATING, AND COMMUNITY. LATELY, LUCIA HAS BEEN WILD ABOUT YUZU, ANCHOVIES, AND COTTON CANDY GRAPES. FOLLOW HER ON INSTAGRAM @LUUUUUSH



REFLECTIONS ON "FRIENDSHIP BBQ"

A PHOTO ESSAY BY
LUCIA BELL-EPSTEIN















TEXT BY ANNIE HULKOWER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM GRAAP

NUTCRACKERS! NUTCRACKERS! NUTCRACKERS!

"IF YOU DON'T DRINK BEER, YOU'RE GONNA DIE!"

Anyone who's basked in the sun at Rockaway Beach in the last decade has likely heard this familiar verse. You hear it and laugh knowingly to yourself, before you spot Freddie, weaving through throngs of sunbathers, families sharing tupperwares of cut-up fruit, and groups of giggling teenage girls sneaking puffs of a joint. He emerges, surefooted on the uneven sand, glistening with sweat, giant bags in each hand. His opener talks about beer, but then, like so many other people selling nutcrackers on the beach, he bursts into a sometimes-rhyming, always clever, sales pitch about his other, more popular wares. On a recent beach day, I heard another man promoting his blue and red nutcrackers, saying "I've got Joe Biden and Donald Trump...and they BOTH will fuck you up!" Poetry and nutcrackers just go hand-in-hand.

For the uninitiated, a Nutcracker is a homemade, hand-bottled cocktail consisting of fruit juice and liquor. And it's not just a beach drink—thirsty summer revelers can find a Nutcracker at just about any summertime event in the five boroughs, from Orchard to Rockaway beaches, Sunset to Central parks, San Gennaro and Jourvert festivals, and even on the train. Sold on-the-go, from a cooler or a suitcase or a tote bag, it's The New York hustle at its finest. And the only constant is the opaque plastic twist-cap bottle it's served in.

Trying to pinpoint a Nutcracker recipe is a futile exercise: they can be made with rum, vodka, whiskey, tequila and more liquors beyond what the imagination can conceive (Mango Patrón Nutcracker, anyone?). But they're always ice-cold, sweet and delicious... and, like as the vendors will often assure their customers, are certain to fuck you up. In fact, I was enjoying a pandemic-era beach day last summer, when I discovered the beauty of the "420 Nutcracker"—lemonade-based, THC-laced, with a slightly green tint and a bitter, sweetly but herbaceous flavor. Although it was unforgettable, I'm getting a little too old to get that twisted on the beach.

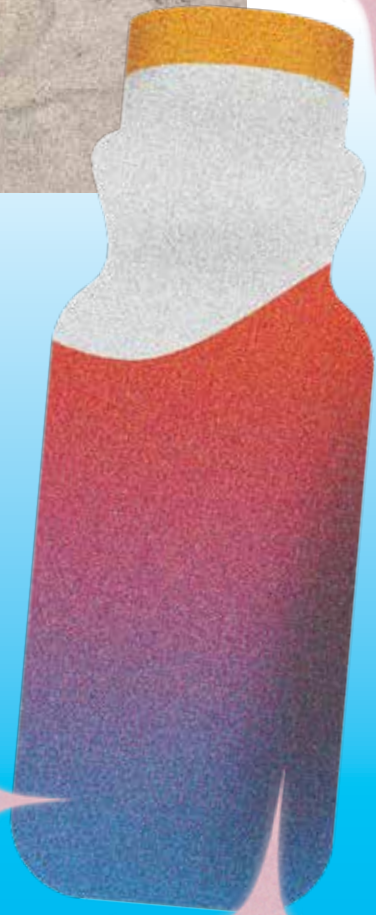
You spot (and order) them by color: blue, red, yellow, green—though recent years on the beat have seen a proliferation of more natural flavor options like coconut, lemon, and lime, or even made with fresh fruit. Freddie has been selling Nutcrackers since they first became beach staples over a decade ago (though Nutcracker lore places their origin even earlier, citing Washington Heights as the place they were first created in the mid-90's.) They were originally meant to look like the grenade-shaped juice barrels every 90's kid loved to drink. Whether it was conceived as a nostalgic-drinking for adults (grown-up juice!), an underage marketing ploy, or a good way to drink in public, it's hard to say.

Before Freddie became one of the most recog-



nizable Nutcracker vendors on Rockaway Beach, he was selling beer, water and soda, the same way his grandfather and father made the rounds on Coney Island so many years ago. Then according to Freddie, “the game switched—it was all about Nutcrackers.” It’s an ever-evolving market, with many sellers and makers, one in which “you have to stay current,” Freddie says. There was one summer a few years back where he estimates he lost out on nearly 40% of sales because people no longer carried cash. So now, Freddie accepts CashApp and Venmo, and business is booming. And now, you’ll see Nutcrackers with lovingly-designed logos, clever business names, and sleek branding as younger, tech-savvy salespeople get into the game. Instagram has become a way for vendors to grow their followings and differentiate among the other Nutcrackers at the beach or the park, with some salespeople even fulfilling bulk drink orders via DM.

One of these newcomers is Flatbush native Raheem, who sells small-batch Nutcrackers under the name “Hold On” (@holddd_onn on Instagram)—a callback to the phrase he and his friends



use when they’re surprised and delighted. Like, “hold on, that song is amazing!” When Raheem and his girlfriend started making their own cocktails during the pandemic, a response to the low-quality to-go cocktails they were seeing pop up everywhere, their reaction was “hold on—these could be big.”

Inspired by his own mother who used to sell water and homemade drinks on Brooklyn’s Eastern Parkway during the Labor Day Carnival, Jouvert, Raheem and his girlfriend started blending their favorite liquors, Patrón and Casamigos, with real fruit in their Magic Bullet blender. His clientele has expanded dramatically beyond the four walls of his home. You can catch Raheem traveling between Brownsville, Flatbush, Coney Island and Sunset Park on any given weekend. Regardless of the demand, he still makes his Nutcrackers in small batches to preserve their flavor and quality.

Historically, the NYPD has attempted to criminalize and sanction the sale of Nutcrackers, which remain illegal under NYC liquor laws. In 2011, Governor Cuomo even signed something called “The Nutcracker Bill,” which stripped barbershops of their license if they were convicted of selling alcohol to minors—a callback to the popularity of early Nutcrackers in Washington Heights, which were frequently sold at barbershops. Occasionally, I’ve witnessed multiple chase scenes between a sweaty beach cop and a Nutcracker vendor, weaving after each other between technicolor towels to the soundtrack of radio music and the cheers of beachgoers once the cop gives it up. Since he started selling Nutcrackers during the pandemic, Raheem hasn’t experienced any issues with law enforcement. These futile attempts at crackdowns are seeming more and more infrequent, and hopefully the widespread acceptance of to-go-style drinking that kept so many businesses afloat during the pandemic will provide some relief for Nutcracker businesses, too.

While Nutcracker is certainly not the only drink option for beachgoers and NYC summertime revelers, between the White Claws and Truly’s and every other soulless, faceless iteration of the hard seltzer dynasty we are living in—Nutcracker is a stronger, atmospheric, distinctly-New-York drink that enhances your buzz by a mere sense of place. Like drinking a margarita in Mexico or a Red Stripe in Jamaica. 🍹

ANNIE HULKOWER IS A READER (SUPPORT YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY!) WRITER AND HUMBLE BEGINNER SURFER. SHE WOULD EAT A LOBSTER ROLL EVERY DAY OF SUMMER IF SHE COULD. FOLLOW HER ON INSTAGRAM @AHULKOWER





DEEP FRIED

and

DOUBLE WIDE

Sundays at the Trailer Park

KITT GABBARD

LAYOUT AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARISSA WOODS

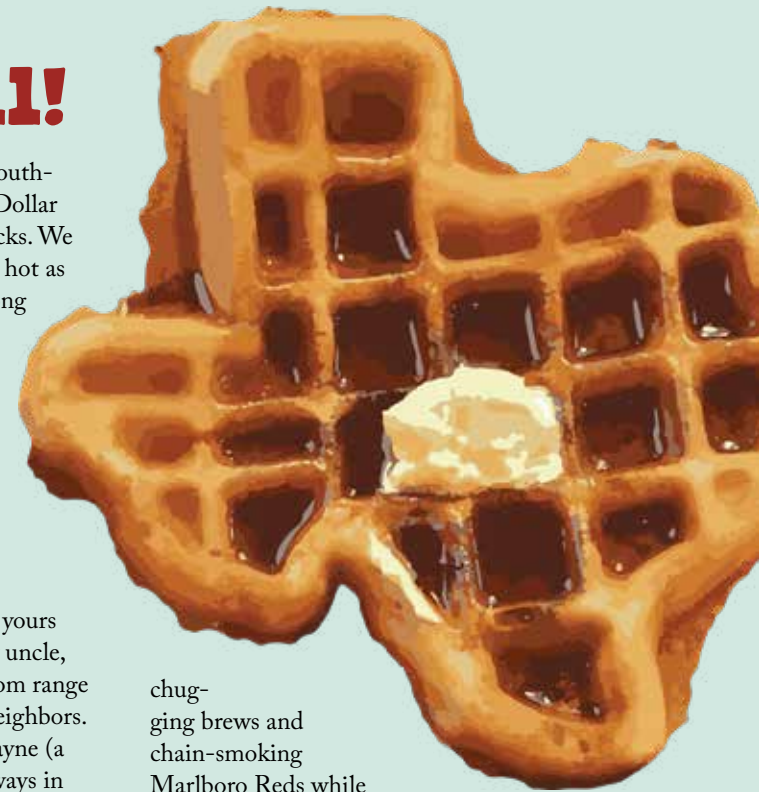


Hey y'all!

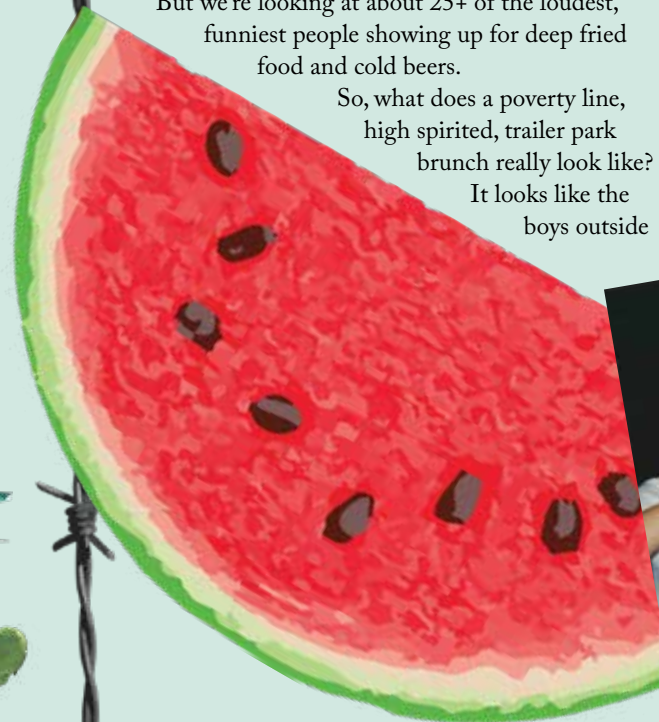
We're gonna start here by setting the "southern trash" scene of my youth; a Family Dollar decorated double-wide trailer in the sticks. We are talking Texas in Brookshire Estates, hot as hell. But the sense of community is strong and appetites are large. Monday to Saturday may have consisted of the regular scheduled programming, but Sunday was for the Good Ole Boy upstairs. Even for those who don't really give a damn about Him, there's always Budweiser and a southern home cooked brunch.

Let's start with my family's carefully curated invite list; From the top, there's yours truly, a younger brother, my mother, my uncle, his wife and her five children, all of whom range from 10 to 22. And then we have the neighbors. There's Bubba, Dusty, ZigZag, Billy Wayne (a middle-aged man with a mullet and always in daisy duke shorts), Hernan, QT, Nene, Bud, Crazy Ed, Big T, the (self-proclaimed) Taco Sisters Seleia, Amelia & Elizabeth, and the list goes on. But we're looking at about 25+ of the loudest, funniest people showing up for deep fried food and cold beers.

So, what does a poverty line, high spirited, trailer park brunch really look like? It looks like the boys outside



chugging brews and chain-smoking Marlboro Reds while manning the grill, which is lined with maple bacon, beef burgers, hot dogs (a majority of which have been cut open and filled with cheese), Adobo seasoned chicken breast, BBQ marinated shrimp kabobs, corn on the cob with crema, and a smattering of grill-able veg. Pan the camera to the kitchen, and you'll see the girls battling the heat, which somehow is worse inside. They're sweating for the sake of



WE EAT TILL WE HURT.

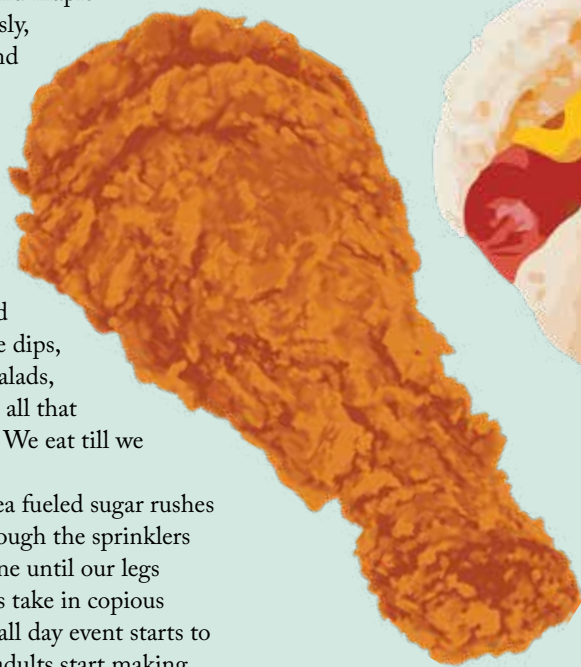
drool worthy biscuits & gravy and puffy cheddar grits. I am confident the term “finger lickin’ good” originated with Aunt Lya’s gravy recipe thrown on top of a flakey Pillsbury Grands! buttermilk biscuit. My job was always waffles.

The batter was given to me, and I proudly pressed them to perfection. I dropped each waffle on a plate, where they then waited for deep fried chicken, brown gravy, eggs and maple syrup to top her off. Obviously, there’s watermelon cut up and put out with sugar, salt, and chili powder for whatever your preference may be.

This is just what my family is cooking. Sunday brunch is a potluck, people! So the food is truly endless. Each person showed up with chips, layered cheese dips, bean dips, *Frito pies, fruit salads, and on and on it goes. Once all that food is laid out; we get to it. We eat till we hurt.

We kids with our sweet tea fueled sugar rushes play on slip n’ slides, run through the sprinklers and bounce on the trampoline until our legs give out, while the grownups take in copious amounts of alcohol. As this all day event starts to wind down, the hammered adults start making their way out the broken gate with hugs, kisses and always ending with a yell, “see ya next week darlin!” ☺

KITT GABBARD IS A HOLISTIC BODY WORKER, WHO VALUES A PRACTICAL BALANCE BETWEEN HEALTH AND GOOD TIMES.



FRITO PIE

- 1 BAG OF FRITOS
- 1 CAN HORMEL CHILI (HEATED)
- ANY AMOUNT OF DESIRED SHREDDED CHEDDAR CHEESE (DON'T BE SHY HERE Y'ALL)
- DESIRED CONDIMENTS--SOUR CREAM & JALAPEÑOS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED
- MIX A BIT, ENJOY, FEEL NO SHAME



fruity fibers

Hi y'all,
 My name is Marissa Woods. I am a layout design intern here at Digest Magazine! When I'm not designing, I run my own small crochet business. All of my pieces are hand stitched and custom made to your own size and color preference. My products include tops, bralettes, bags, hats, and more. This summer has inspired me to make some fruity creations and share them here with you. Enjoy!

Follow [@m.woods.designs](https://www.instagram.com/m.woods.designs) on instagram for more!



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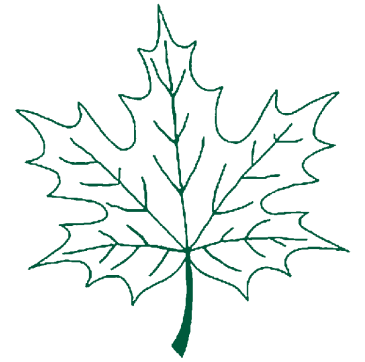
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CREATURE COMFORTS:

MAPLE CREEMEEES

JULIANA HALPERT

Vermont has many renowned, tasty exports — Ben & Jerry's ice cream, Cabot cheddar cheese, the blue ribbon-winning Heady Topper beer, King Arthur Flour, and about half of the country's entire maple syrup supply. But just about every Vermonter's favorite signature delicacy is something you can only get if you visit the state in person. It's very 'if you know, you know,' and us Vermonters like to keep it that way. It's called the Maple Creemee, and don't dare refer to it by any other name. There's no official explanation for why soft-serve ice cream gained the 'creemee' moniker in Vermont, though it's possible that its origins come from our French-Canadian neighbors to the north, who call ice cream *crème glacée*. Maybe. It's just one among many idiosyncrasies that Vermonters cherish and preserve; our tallest building is eleven stories tall, our state capital is the only one in all 50 states without a McDonalds, and, well, we keep reelecting Bernie Sanders.

During each summer, after having spent hot summer days together swimming at the pond and/or helping with yard work, my friends and I would beg our parents to bring us to Bragg Farm, a central-Vermont favorite in East Montpelier. If we got a yes, we'd sprint to the car, damp swimsuits often still on, and run to the creemee counter the second the car was put into park. As sugar-crazed kids, we'd order the super-size: a towering twist of ice cream on top of generic wafer cones, acrobatically walking them out to the patio. We'd try to savor them slowly as we watched the sunset, which never worked. With every bite, the smoky-sweet flavor of maple hits you first, gradually giving way to a more general, milky sweetness. You want that first taste again, and again, and again.

Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks is the other Montpelier mainstay. Plenty of flatlanders and leaf-peepers (i.e. tourists) visit, but it's still the real deal; brothers Elliot and Burr are the seventh generation of Morse's to run the farm. Their sugarhouse is right onsite, full of sap and steam in the winter. That said, nearly every gas station and roadside stand across the entire state also offers maple creemees, and as long as the place uses real maple, they're going to be good. If you eat them in wet bathing suits after a day out in the sun, driving along a dirt road next to a field of dairy cows, they're going to be amazing. 🍁

JULIANA HALPERT IS AN ARTIST AND WRITER. SHE GREW UP IN EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT, AND IS CURRENTLY BASED IN LOS ANGELES. SHE USED TO WORK AS A TOUR HOST AT THE BEN & JERRY'S FACTORY IN WATERBURY, VERMONT.

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