

SAN ANTONIO

# TASTE

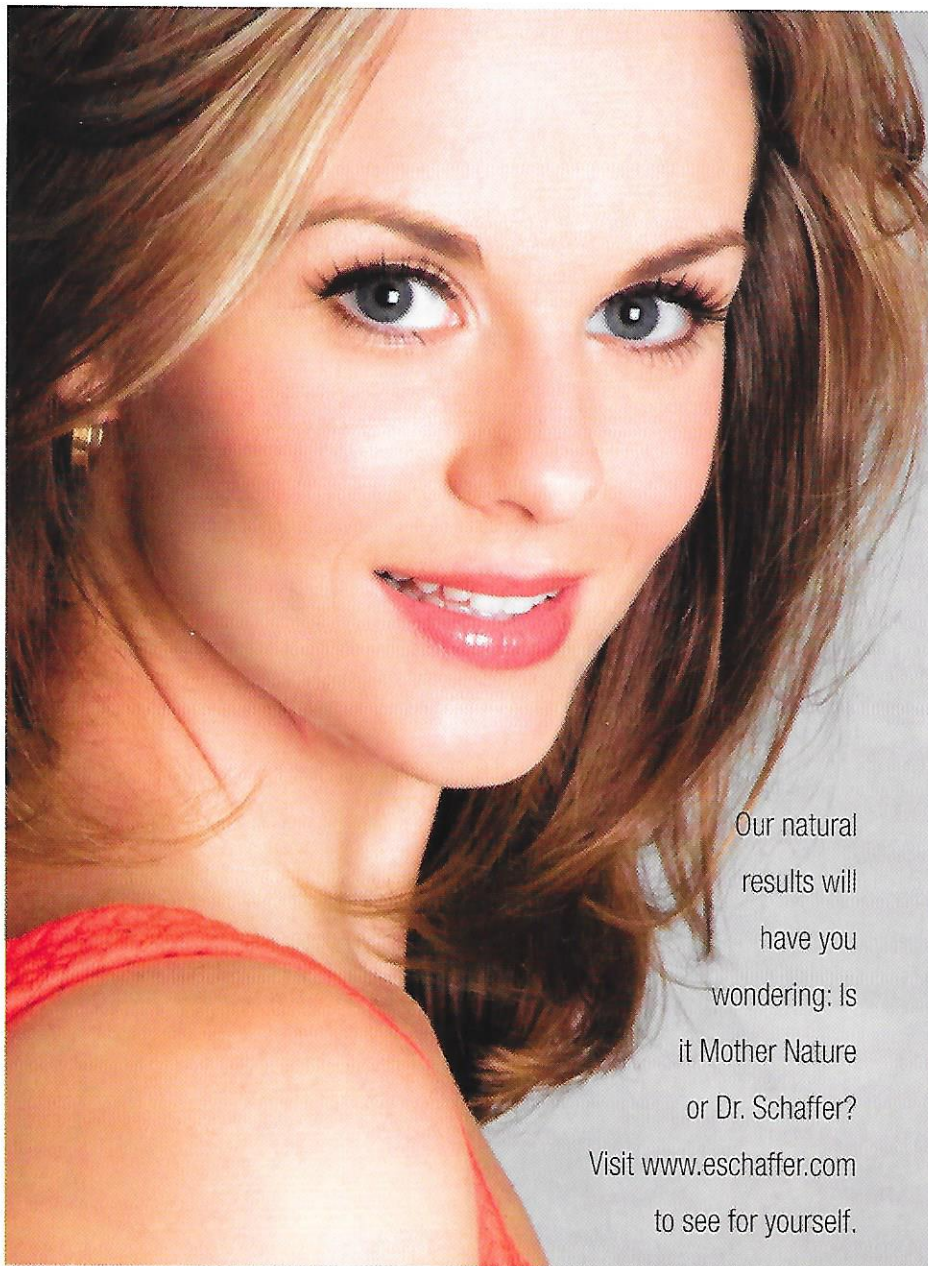
*A culinary & design magazine*



FALL ISSUE 2011



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# SAN ANTONIO TASTE

*A culture & design magazine*

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### FALL 2011

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# NOTE

from the editor



I was amazed to learn on a recent visit to West Virginia that the age old practice of hunting with birds of prey is still enjoyed by licensed falconers. The timing was apropos, as I was writing about wild game and its seemingly increased popularity. Even though civilizations have hunted and consumed game for thousands of years, somehow its discussion in locavore circles makes it seem new. In our feature "Wild About Game," you'll meet Georgia Pellegrini, a modern-day hunter and gatherer who embraces where our

food comes from with a shotgun and a sauté pan. On a recent visit to Joshua Creek Ranch, Pellegrini transformed pheasant she hunted and harvested into a fabulous gourmet dish with simple ingredients. In exploring wild game, we also talked with Chris Hughes of Broken Arrow Ranch and local chefs who are showcasing innovative dishes.

We especially enjoyed going behind the scenes with several San Antonio private club chefs. They welcomed us (and our cameras) into their kitchens as well as their busy lives, hustling to plate lavish creations, and occasionally spoon-feeding me a taste of something delicious. For this issue's Celebs at Home segment, Jason Dady, with help from wife Crystal, cooked up a family meal with little more than a spoon for tools. He calls his French country-style chicken "fun and simple." We call it fabulous.

For our fall issue, we were called to celebrate the comforts of steamy hot pancakes, and to re-visit our German culinary heritage. October is German festival month in the Hill Country and the ideal time to enjoy some *brat* and brew. As summer temperatures ebb, enjoy a picnic at one of our city's beautiful parks with the latest in baskets and totes, featured in *Al Fresco*. Our story on outdoor home theater systems brings new meaning to dinner and a movie.

With the holidays approaching, we give thanks to Lana Duke, owner of San Antonio's two Ruth's Chris Steak Houses. This year marks her seventh annual Thanksgiving feast for the children of Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives. Try dressing your fall table with Ruth's oyster dressing along with our tips on decorating from nature's bounty.

Finally, in this issue we fall in love with tureens and their timeless beauty and function. In addition to soups and stews, use them as centerpieces or to serve other dishes. We're brimming with ideas at [www.sataste.com](http://www.sataste.com) and [www.facebook.com/sataste](http://www.facebook.com/sataste).

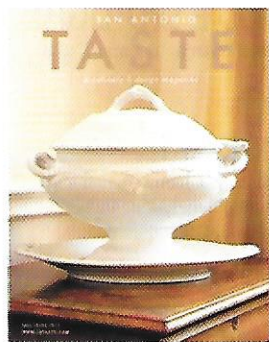
Michele McMurry

Michele McMurry  
Editor-in-Chief

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FALL 2011



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Ironstone tureen, manufactured by Edward Challinor and Company in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England, 1862-1891

Photo by Pauline Stevens



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## Filled with warm meals and memories

BY MICHELE MCMURRY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAULINE STEVENS

Tureens hark back to the days of nobility and grand feasts. The concept was one of practicality: to keep the various soups and stews warm throughout the meal. Larger groups warranted multiple tureens, with the first placed in strict custom at the head of the table and the others in opposing fashion like perfectly aligned chess pieces.

Over time, tureens evolved from functional vessels to works of art, taking on elegant shapes and elaborate patterns that chronicle family history.

**Opposite page:** Stevie Rosenblum Weissman's Haviland tureen traveled a continent before reaching her in 1995.

The original owners, Sarah and Louis Sarazan, brought it from France to Paris, Texas, around 1845 and then to St. Louis, Missouri. It was then given to their son and daughter-in-law, Earl and Esther Sarazan, in 1918 and to Stevie's parents, Pauline and Monte Rosenblum, upon their marriage in 1934.



These tureens are part of an Alamo Heights resident's family collection:

This Spode's Tower tureen belonged to her grandmother from Longview. "It was her everyday china. We used it, too, growing up, and Grandmother added to it over the years."

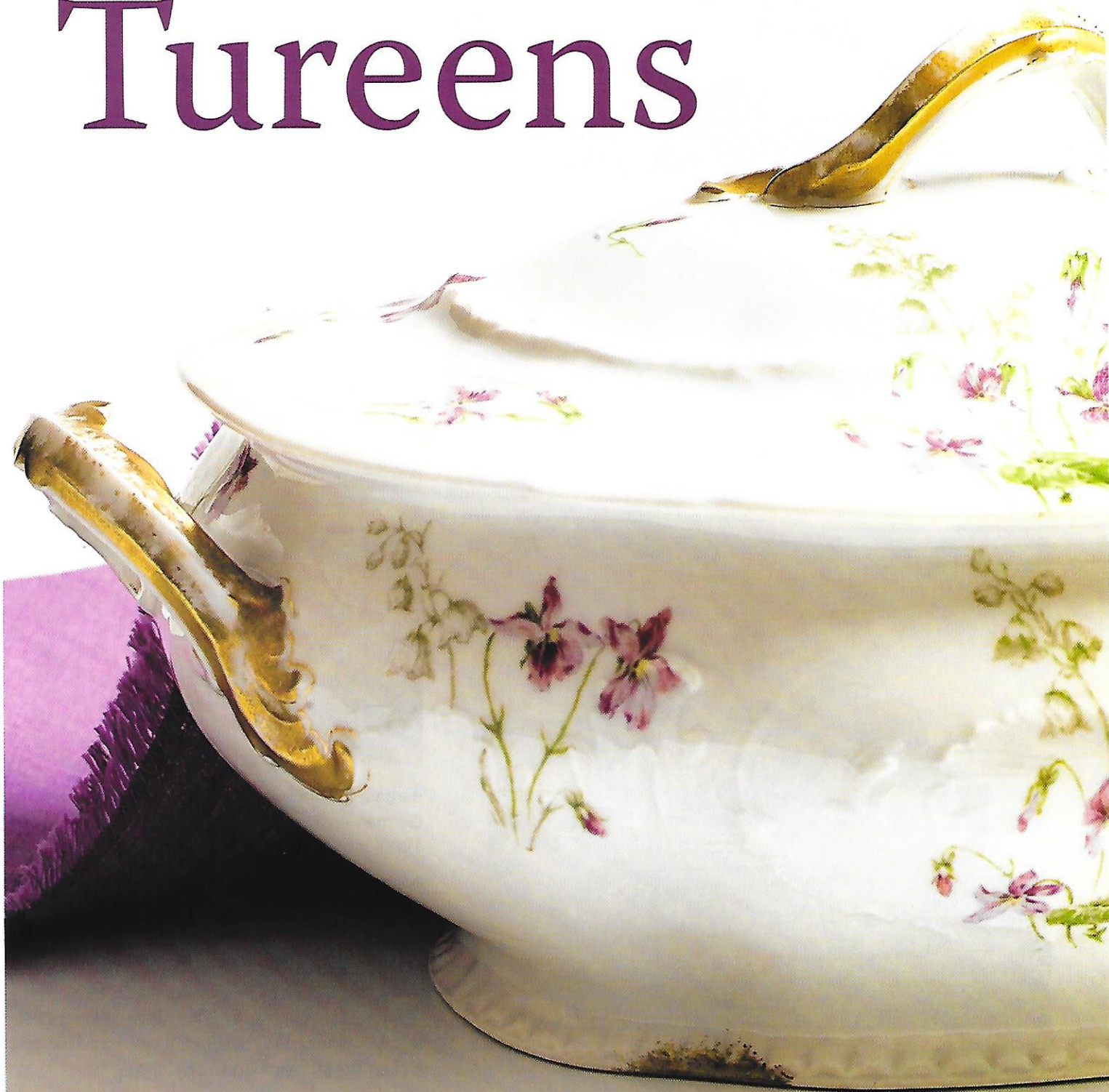


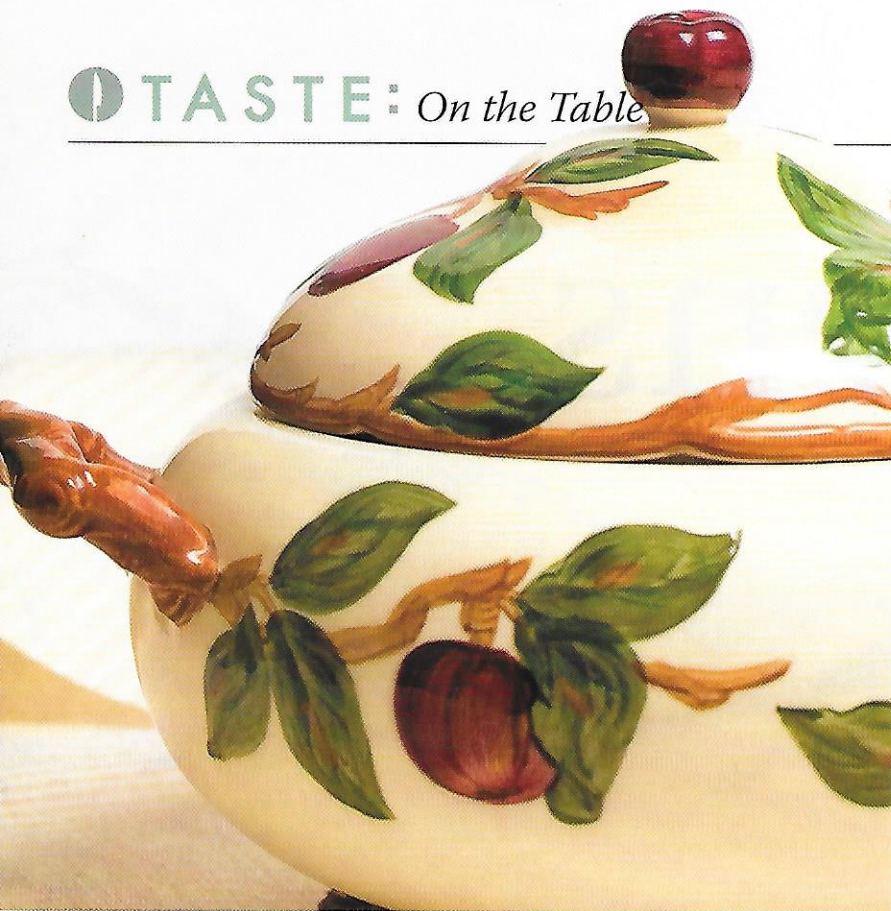
Herend's Queen Victoria pattern commemorates the monarch's coronation in 1838. "This was my wedding china; I loved it because it was just so pretty and colorful."



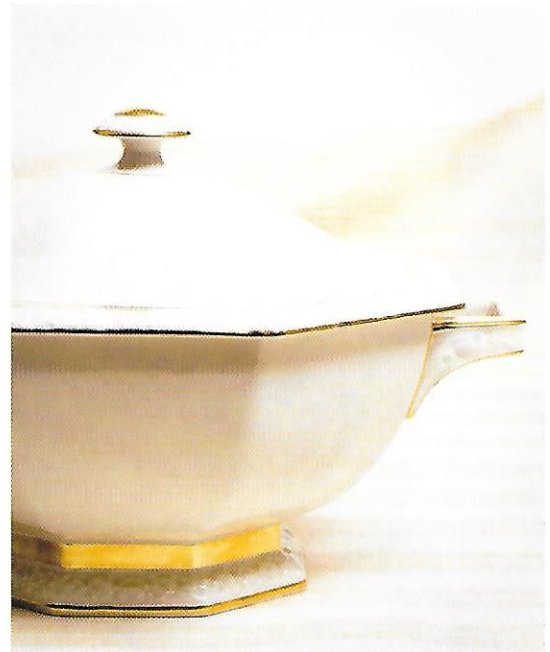
This Brownfield tureen, manufactured in 1879 at Cobridge Works, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England, belonged to her Houston grandmother, who coordinated its simple, classic design with other china.

# Tureens





Franciscan Apple, one of California-based Franciscan Ware's raised relief, hand-painted patterns introduced in 1940 and enjoyed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. "My mother loved it and had to go out and get the entire pattern," says Suzan Mendlovitz. "Every Thanksgiving, after we were married, I'd place the tureen in the center of the table with fresh fruit and greenery."



Barbara Richmond's mother purchased this German Rosenthal tureen when she remarried in 1960. It has since brimmed with matzo ball soup.



Mottahedeh and Company has made luxury porcelain for U.S. presidents and heads of State. Store owner Melissa Guerra received this intricately embossed tureen as a wedding gift in 1989. "I saw it in a magazine, and of all the wedding gifts, this was what I really wanted. It was so classic and looked like something used by royalty."

### Venison Stew

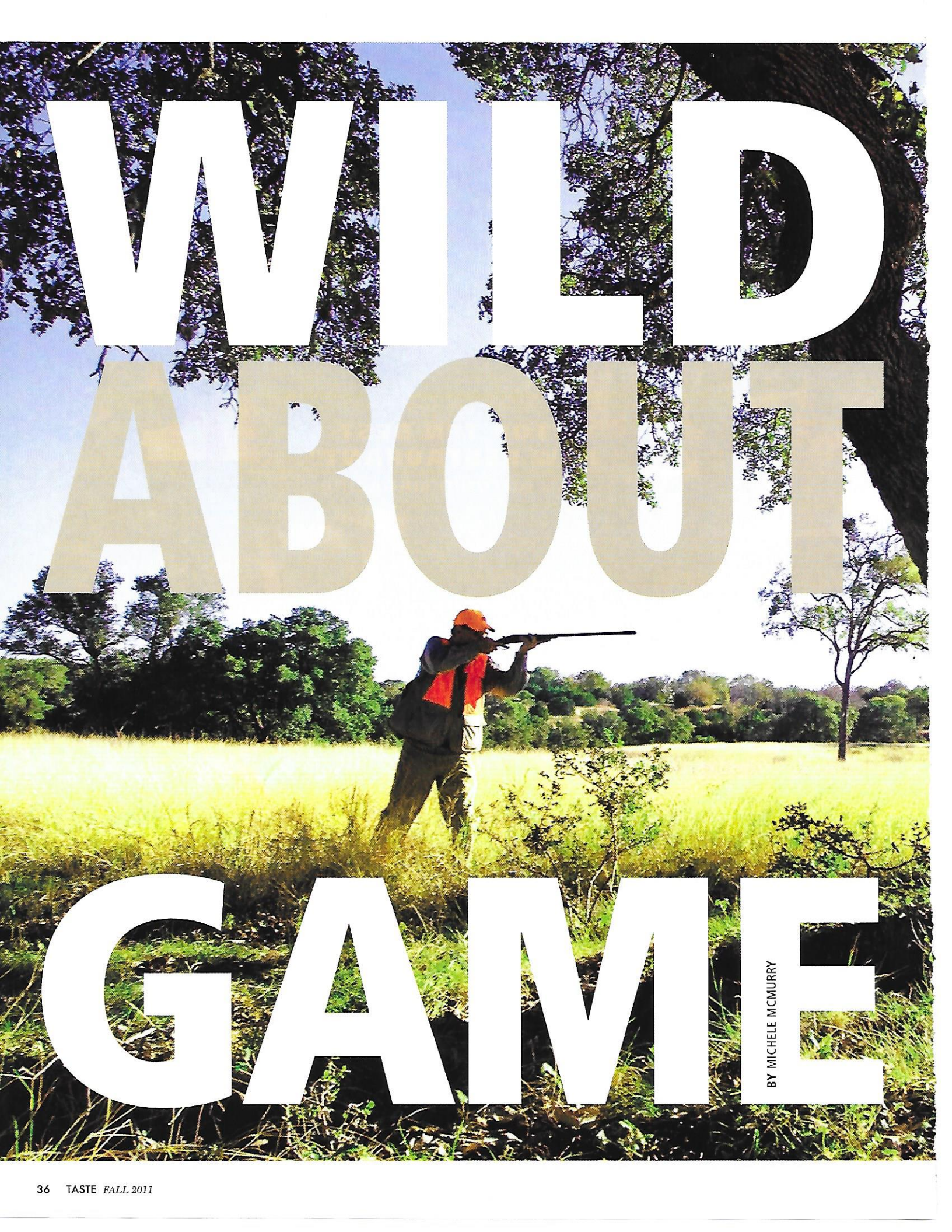
2 pounds venison, cleaned and cut into 1/2-inch cubes  
 2 tablespoons garlic, minced  
 1 tablespoon salt  
 1 tablespoon black pepper  
 3 tablespoons oil  
 1 packet stew seasoning  
 1/2 cup corn starch, dissolved in 1 cup water

2 tablespoons beef base  
 5 cups water  
 3 large potatoes  
 4 stalks celery  
 2 cups diced tomatoes  
 1 cup onion, diced  
 2 cups carrots, sliced

» In large pot, cook garlic in oil. Season meat cubes with salt and pepper. Add to garlic and brown. Add dissolved corn starch, seasoning packet, base and water. Bring to a boil, and then simmer for one hour until meat is tender. Add vegetables and let cook for 30-60 minutes until vegetables are tender. Serves eight.

Source: "Hunter's Harvest," Joshua Creek Ranch





# WILD ABOUT



# GAME

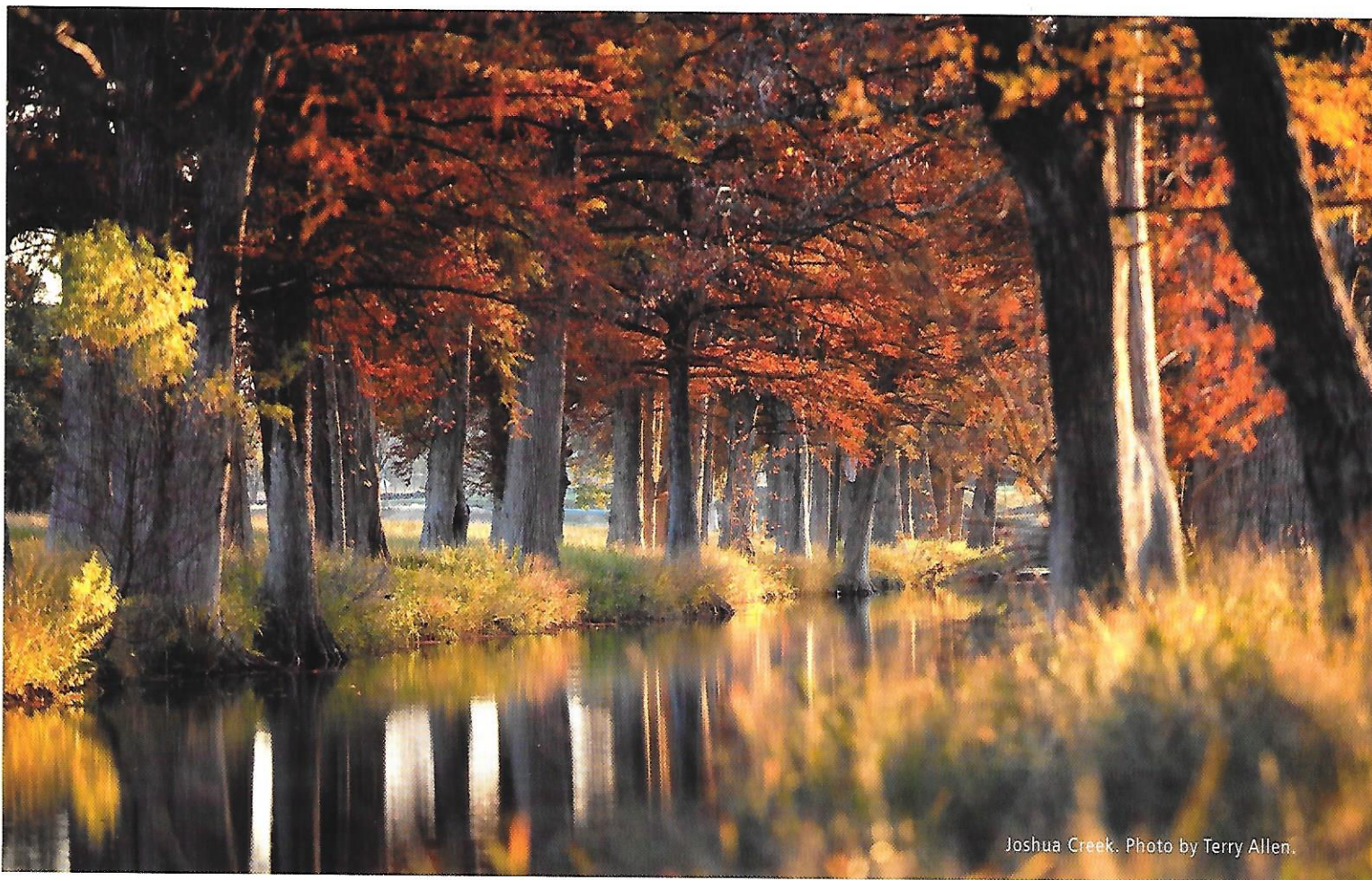
BY MICHELE MCMURRY



Joshua Creek Ranch. Photo by Terry Allen.



Georgia Pellegrini on a pheasant hunt at Joshua Creek Ranch. Photo by Terry Allen.



Joshua Creek. Photo by Terry Allen.

On a sunny fall morning at Joshua Creek Ranch, Georgia Pellegrini sets out on a hunt for the day's lunch. This is one of several stops for the celebrity huntress-chef-author, as part of a cross-country tour to haute hunting lodges that have been awarded the prestigious Beretta Trident designation for excellence.

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**I**n 2010, the 500-year-old Italian gun manufacturer launched the first system to rate shooting sports venues, evaluating them on site conditions, cuisine, lodging and service. Joshua Creek Ranch is one of four charter U.S. destinations and the only in Texas to receive the Beretta Trident Lodge designation in upland bird hunting.

"You put together your date and guest list, and we'll do the rest," says Ann Kercheville, who runs Joshua Creek Ranch with her husband, Joe Kercheville. The full-service hunting retreat has practiced sustainability for 20 years on 1,200 scenic acres outside Boerne. Professional guides ensure a bountiful harvest of quail, pheasant and chukar, which flourish in this Hill Country habitat from October to March. You can also hunt axis deer year-round on the property. At the end of the day, guests enjoy appetizers, either by the smoke pit or on the couple's private patio, before feasting on wild game creations at the lodge and retiring to luxurious bungalows.

It was in this tranquil paradise, near glistening Joshua Creek, where Pellegrini hunted, harvested and gourmandized pheasant.

"Being around food was when I was my happiest," Pellegrini recalls of her childhood years sitting at the end of a long table after school watching her great-grandmother cook.

A locavore ahead of her time, she foraged and fished as a child on the family property in New York's Hudson Valley. "It tapped into my animal instincts."

It's not just about meats for Pellegrini, who uses every part of the animal, but sourcing from the land. Purslane and heirloom tomatoes excite her as much as deer liver mousse. Side-of-the-road yellow pears have made their way (via a favorite enhancer, brandy) onto dove she likely plucked and breasted in the field.

Ivy League educated, Pellegrini also graduated from the French Culinary Institute in New York City, and after working in a number of esteemed restaurants in New York and France, published her first book, "Food Heroes: Tales of 16 Artisans Preserving Tradition," which explores artisanal cooking traditions around the world. Her second book, "Girl Hunter," to be released this fall, addresses head-on where food comes from and includes recipes inspired by her visit to Joshua Creek Ranch.

She's made it her culinary mission to debunk wild game phobia. "I think it's all mental. If you don't tell people what it is, you don't freak them out and they love it."

A few simple ingredients are best in preparing wild game, she says. "Game in general lends itself to natural ingredients. You don't need to mask it; if you treat it well, you can use it to your advantage."

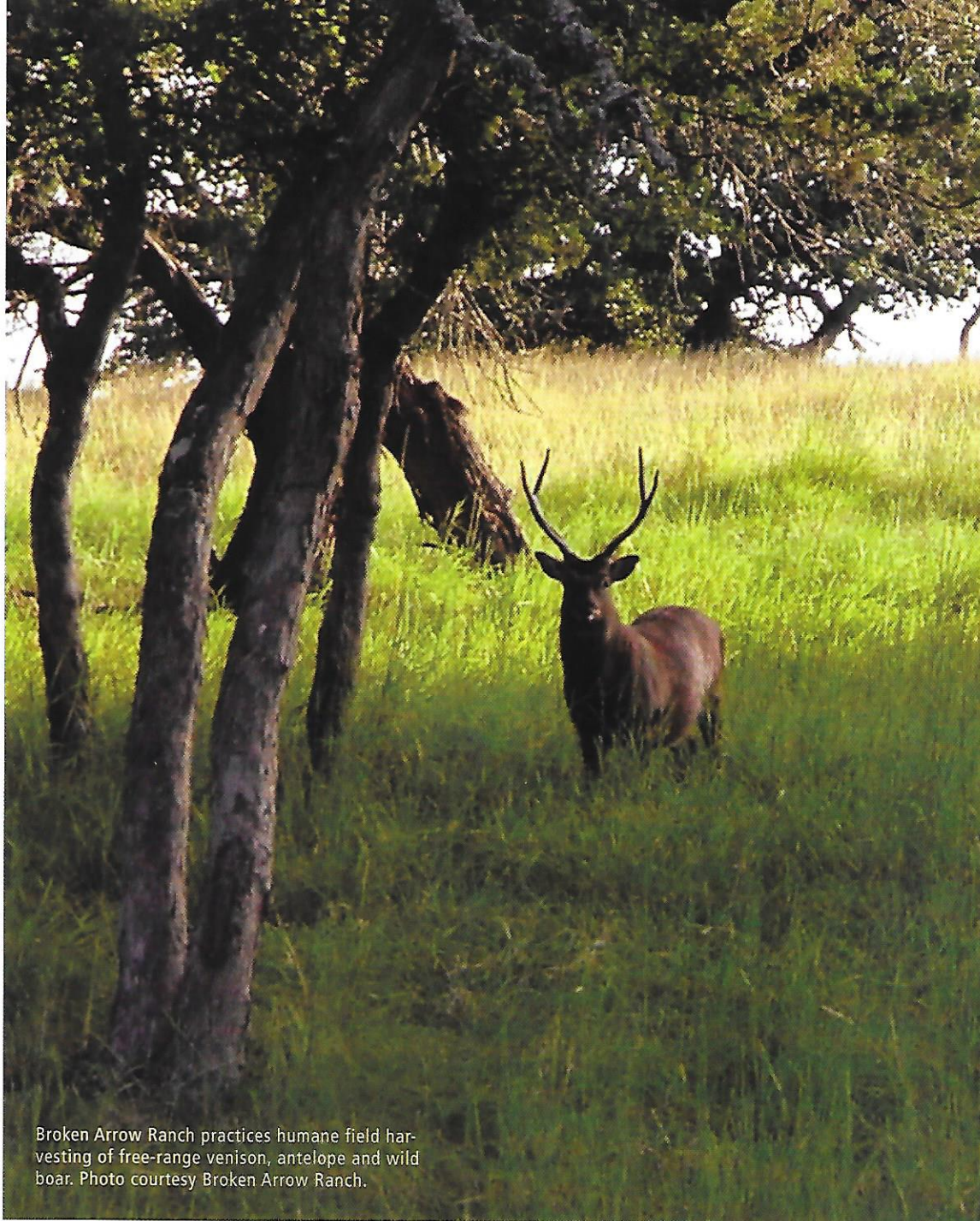
On this occasion, she dusted her freshly harvested pheasant with flour before sautéing it in butter and a little chicken stock. Red, black and green grapes, plus a touch of brandy, add sweetness and color; green cabbage lends texture, and "lemon makes it clean and fresh."

"I played a part in this meal," she says. "That's what's satisfying."

### Game on

Chris Hughes, who runs Broken Arrow Ranch in Ingram, Texas, chuckles when people ask about what seems to be an increased interest in eating wild game. "Wild game meats have been popular for ten thousand years," he says with a laugh.

In fact, our ancestors heaved rocks and wooden spears in pursuit of a meal before an evolving upper class dubbed the exercise a sport, hence the



Broken Arrow Ranch practices humane field harvesting of free-range venison, antelope and wild boar. Photo courtesy Broken Arrow Ranch.



emergence of the term “game.”

Demand, however, lies more in a growing desire to eat natural foods and an increased awareness in humanely harvested game, according to Hughes. Gone are the days of falconry, but the hunger to consume foods outside the realm of industrial farming lives on.

Much of it, too, he says, is driven by Food Network. “People are more willing to try new things than, say, 10 years ago.”

Broken Arrow Ranch, a purveyor of free-range venison, antelope and wild boar, sources its game from about 150 ranches in Texas. “In any year, there are 30 to 40 that have a population issue,” he says.

Population management is a key part of his operation. Exotic game forage on whatever vegetation can be found, and when natural food supply is compromised, hunting animals with purpose helps return population to naturally sustainable levels. The average ranch spans about 4,000 acres, and any ranch selected by Broken Arrow must include at least 1,000 acres. “Ranchettes,” Hughes says, can cause stress to animals if they don’t have ample space to roam. Broken Arrow also looks to ranchers who don’t corral or medicate animals.

Full government-inspected, humane field harvesting, which Hughes says his father, Mike Hughes, introduced and helped get approved by the Texas

Department of Agriculture in 1983, is Broken Arrow Ranch’s founding philosophy. “It was pretty revolutionary,” he says.

Mobile processing facilities with a harvest crew and government meat inspector travel to the site, reducing the stress associated with transporting animals offsite for processing. Using sound-suppressed rifles and electrostimulation to contract the muscles renders a discernable flavor, color and texture to the meat, Hughes says. A gamier taste, he adds, comes from the lactic acid an animal produces when stressed.

Restaurateurs have taken to the approach. Broken Arrow Ranch supplies much of the wild game found on local menus at Francesca’s at Sunset, Citrus, Biga on the Banks and Il Sogno, as well as Thomas Keller’s Per Se in New York. Earl Abel’s now offers bison and venison.

“I think the demand for game has never gone away,” says Jeff Balfour, executive chef at Hotel Valencia. “It remains pretty constant, but the demand for local game has definitely exploded right along with the demand for local products.

“Lately we have been seeing a lot better quality of wild boar,” he adds. It all depends on Mother Nature, says Hughes, whose hunts might produce five animals on one visit and 20 on another.

“There’s not a more natural, sustainable food out there.”



Chef de cuisine Ernie Estrada at Francesca's at Sunset, the Westin La Cantera, creates an aspic of rabbit with rosemary, celery and carrots, topped with pear vinegar foam. Photo by Jamie Karutz.



Chef Estrada's file of antelope starts with leg loin, pan seared and served atop a wax bean salad, served with Texas fingerling potatoes and mesquite smoked cherry tomatoes. Photo by Jamie Karutz.

Recipes on Page 94

### A HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE

- Because they are more active, wild animals contain an average of 4.3 percent body fat, compared to 25 to 30 percent in domesticated varieties.
- Fat from wild game meat contains a higher proportion of polyunsaturated fatty acids and less saturated fat.
- A 4-ounce serving of axis venison contains 26 grams of protein and 1.9 fat grams, making it an ideal low-carbohydrate, low-fat choice.
- 3½ ounces of wild pheasant contain less than 1 percent fat and 52 milligrams cholesterol.
- Bison contains 70 to 90 percent less fat than beef and less fat and cholesterol than skinless chicken.

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# Picnic Time

BY MICHELE MCMURRY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN GEIL  
STYLING BY STEVIE WEISSMAN

Delight in pleasing fall temperatures with a meal en plein air at one of our city's beautiful landscapes. We chose the recently opened second phase of Hardbeger Park to showcase the latest in supplies to get you there with style and ease.



Function meets style with a tote for every occasion, available at Sunset Ridge Home & Hardware: Buff canvas tote with plaid linens, cutting board, storage containers and utensils; Tahoe oversized insulated tote in red; vista blue cheese and beverage cooler; Malibu Picnic Pack in hunter green. Sandwiches, salad and cookies courtesy Picnikins Patio Café.



"The Ultimate" and "The Autumn" gourmet sandwich at Picnikins Patio Café. The latter billows with smoked turkey breast, herbed stuffing and cranberries.



### Salami and Fresh Figs

Take to the Hill Country with this classic Tuscan combination. Prepare several hours ahead, and store in the refrigerator. Tote in a covered container, and serve at room temperature.

7 plump fresh figs  
14 thin slices Genoa salami  
Toothpicks

Wash figs and cut into quarters. Arrange two quarters on each of the 14 slices of salami. Roll salami around fig, cut in half, and place a toothpick in each roll.

*Adapted from "Picnic: 125 Recipes with 29 Seasonal Menus" by Dee Dee Stovel*

### Meyer Lemon Squares

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 cup slivered, toasted almond, divided  
1/3 cup confectioners' sugar  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

Lightly butter a 9-inch square baking dish. In a food processor, combine flour, 1/2 cup of the slivered almonds, confectioners' sugar, cornstarch and

salt. Pulse until finely ground. Add the butter and pulse to blend to the texture of coarse meal. Press dough into the bottom of the prepared baking dish and refrigerate for about 30 minutes or until firm. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake the crust for about 20 minutes or until golden brown.

2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
2/3 cup granulated sugar  
2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest  
1/3 cup freshly squeezed Meyer or regular lemon juice, strained  
3 tablespoons whole milk  
Pinch of salt

Whisk the eggs, sugar and flour in a medium bowl. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, milk and salt. Stir to blend well. When the crust is golden brown, pour the lemon mixture on top. Top with the remaining almonds from above and bake for about 20 minutes or until filling is firm. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Cut into 3-inch squares to serve. Makes nine squares.

*Adapted from "Festive Picnics: Recipes, Crafts & Decorations for Outdoor Occasions" by Pamela Sheldon Johns and Jennifer Barry*




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*“My goal is to use my own life experiences to serve as an inspiration to these children”*

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# Lana Duke, Unlimited

BY MICHELE MCMURRY

“Does this tie work with this shirt?”

A common question posed to “Miss Lana” by foster youth who attend Ruth’s Chris Steak House matron Lana Duke’s annual Thanksgiving feast.

In November, Duke, who owns both Ruth’s Chris Steak House locations in San Antonio as well as two in Canada, will host her seventh such event for the children of Roy Maas’ Youth Alternatives, a local organization that provides counseling and shelter for abused and neglected children in crisis.

Each year, Ruth’s Chris staff members and local chefs volunteer their time to serve nearly 200 pounds of turkey with all the fixings to approximately 100 foster children at the Concord Plaza location. Guests, many who have never experienced a holiday meal, can even participate in a contest to design and create the official Ruth’s Chris Thanksgiving card, mailed annually to thousands of the restaurant’s patrons.

But it’s a meal that satiates more than empty bellies. Duke’s involvement with the Youth Alternative’s group began in 2005 with her hosting an evening of etiquette, which included a steak dinner and a review of the Ruth’s Chris eight points of etiquette. Since then, she has forged a bond with these children that stems from her own experience as a foster child.

“I’ve watched some of them grow up,” Duke says. “For many of these children it is the highlight of their year; they’ll bathe three times and ask ‘Miss Lana’ about what to wear.

“Along with this delicious meal, I like to give a lot of love and encouragement. I share my own story with the children in hopes that they will be inspired enough to succeed with their own dreams. They



walk out of here standing a little taller, with a little more self esteem.”

A career path that evolved serendipitously from humble beginnings to owning a successful ad agency, Duke Unlimited, in 1975, spawned a professional and personal relationship with Ruth Fertel, owner of Ruth’s Chris Steak House in New Orleans. In addition to taking on four Ruth’s Chris franchises, Duke’s entrepreneurial skills have led her into a co-venture with the Palace Truck Stop and Casino in New Orleans as well as coaching other business leaders as CEO of Lana Duke Consulting. Being part of and giving back to the community is Duke’s definition of a successful business, and each of her restaurants is involved with a local children’s shelter.

“These children have experienced unimaginable horrors in their young lives,” Duke says. “They have gone through more struggles than most of us will see in a lifetime. My goal is to inspire them to overcome these obstacles and lead full and productive lives, and I am living proof that it can be done.”

A woman with multiple awards and accolades to her credit, Duke remains grounded and candid about her struggles in gaining her own identity, and she has made it her mission to help others overcome adversity.

“I want these children to follow their dreams and believe in themselves,” she says.

She even called me “kid” during our recent meeting at the downtown restaurant and wanted to know if I were happy and feeling challenged in my job and life.

I found myself walking a little taller that day.