

Food

SECTION **D**
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FOR THE BIRDS

Steve Martin, Owen Wilson and Jack Black discuss "The Big Year," their new comedy about the world of birding

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2011

PICKS of the WEEK



Carrots

With soil temperatures starting to cool down, the first round of super sweet, crisp carrots is arriving at the farmers markets. This staple is packed with beta-carotene, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and a host of other essential vitamins and minerals to keep you healthy. This time of year, carrots are perfect for adding to hearty soups, the Fix of the Week on page D7. Certified organic available from various growers at all Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Markets. About \$1.50 per bunch or \$2 per pound loose.



Goat cheese

The farmers market is excited to welcome Drake Family Farm to the association. It is offering an amazing selection of fresh, artisan goat cheeses. With seven flavors to choose from, the cheese is creamy and delicious. Spread it onto bagels, crackers or sandwiches, crumble it over mixed green salads, or use it to stuff squash blossoms. Available in plain, basil, French herb, herbes de Provence, garlic and onion, jalapeño, and lemon pepper, you can sample them before making your selection. Now at the Saturday Santa Barbara market. \$6 per 4-ounce container or three for \$15.



Whole wheat bread

From the wheat fields to the kitchen, this exceptional bread from Creekside Apple Ranch of Solvang is a great farmers market find. Try dipping it in an egg and cinnamon mixture to make French toast topped with crumbled goat cheese and honey, or use it for sliced turkey or grilled cheese sandwiches. Soft and tasty, the bread is sliced for your convenience, making it easy to work with for those on the go. Available at the Tuesday Santa Barbara, Wednesday Solvang and Saturday Santa Barbara markets. \$4 per loaf.

Sam Edelman is general manager of the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Market Association; photos by Steve Malone, News-Press

Find out when local farmers markets are held in the Culinary Calendar on page D6.

Up to his ears

Playboy Mansion executive chef takes time out of his busy schedule to judge SB food competition

By DAVE MASON
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

It's midnight and Hugh Hefner is hungry. His latest habit is to get the Playboy Mansion kitchen to warm up apple pie and serve it a la mode. The corporate icon also has a sweet tooth for thin, crispy oatmeal cookies, reminiscent of his Midwestern childhood, and chocolate cake with chocolate icing. "It's a chocoholic's dream," executive chef William S. Bloxom-Carter told the News-Press as he stood next to two diner-style glass-enclosed shelves of cakes and pies above a kitchen counter. Below another counter, he pulled out several drawers revealing trays layered with homemade cookies varying from peanut butter with a smack of jelly to pure chocolate, far too many to fit in a jar. The Playboy Mansion, the famous stone building in the Holby Hills area of Los Angeles and home to Playboy magazine founder Mr. Hefner, is known for its decadence. That obviously extends to the kitchen. The chef, 55, laughed at the sweets before him in the area designated just for pastries. On this morning, three cooks were working in the kitchen that never sleeps, not only to warm up that midnight apple pie but to serve meals and snacks around-the-clock for Mr. Hefner, the mansion staff and all those Playmates. They're also responsible for the private gatherings of up to 80 guests. And don't forget those evening lawn parties — everything from corporate events to charity fundraisers (some wilder than others) — for close to 1,000 people. It works out to 100,000 guests annually. Yes, it's a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach.

A staff of about 14 cooks and chefs, not counting the ones brought in for the parties, keeps the modest kitchen, with walls of avocado green tile and stainless-steel counters and appliances, operating 24/7, 365 days a year. Before the lawn parties, such as

tonight's Guggenheim Partners Reception (see page D8 for menu), Mr. Bloxom-Carter reviews a map of the six-acre grounds and locations of his food stations to keep things flowing. It's his battle plan.

"It's combat catering," Mr. Bloxom-Carter said of the parties, which feature dishes from Crisp Duck, Cucumber and Mango Spring Rolls to Pan-Seared Organic King Salmon.

The chef, who lives in Oak Park in Ventura County and has been on the job since 1986, insists on high quality and creativity and will have the same standards when he's one of the judges at the Santa Barbara Chowder Fest, which will take place 1 to 5 p.m. Oct. 23 at the Montecito Country Club, 920 Summit Road. Proceeds benefit the Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County.

Mr. Bloxom-Carter got involved with the event when Michael Cervin, News-Press restaurant critic, food and travel writer and one of the judges, asked him to participate. They have both acted as judges at Central Coast wine competitions. Mr. Bloxom-Carter has helped at events for Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, so he was happy to assist with this one.

Niki Chopra Richardson, development director at Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County, said she hopes the chef and the Playboy Mansion name will draw attendees from as far away as Los Angeles. (The third judge is chef Edie Robertson, who runs her own catering business and is former co-owner of Sojourner Cafe.)

Watch out, contestants: Mr. Bloxom-Carter was born in Connecticut, grew up with New England clam chowder and knows what he likes.

"They have one chance to impress me," Mr. Bloxom-Carter said, now sitting in the dark, wood-paneled, elegant corporate dining room just off the kitchen. "It has to deliver on the first spoonful."

"That's the way we really work here," he continued. "We bring our A game every day. I have a great staff. These gals and guys are able to sit down and we start batting

Please see **EARS** on D8

STEVE GALBREATH / NEWS-PRESS ILLUSTRATION

Island in a bottle: Rusack to release first Catalina wines



Gabe Saglie

When Alison Wrigley Rusack and her husband, Geoff, planted the first-ever vineyards on Santa Catalina Island four years ago, it was a lot like planting grapes in their own backyard. After all, the rocky, 75-square-mile channel isle — located some 22 miles off the Southern California coast — is a significant part of Mrs. Rusack's family legacy.

The Rusacks own controlling shares of the Santa Catalina Island Co., which manages 11 percent of Catalina. It's proprietary control that stems back

to Mrs. Rusack's great-grandfather, William Wrigley Jr. The magnate who made a fortune selling chewing gum brands to the American public at the turn of the 20th century bought the island from fellow investors in 1919.

Perhaps most important to the Rusacks' stake on Catalina is El Rancho Escondido, or The Hidden Ranch, which was established as a Wrigley family retreat in 1931. For decades a tourist attraction, the ranch is closed now, as the Rusacks undertake a major overhaul aimed at transforming the property into a destination for weddings and corporate

events. They also plan to expand by adding a winery.

The Rusacks have had commercial success with their namesake wine venture in Santa Barbara County since 1995, so this is them spreading their viticultural wings to their other home, across the channel. Syrah was a serious consideration at first, but when weather studies pointed to ideal growing conditions for Burgundian grapes, the land was earmarked for pinot noir and chardonnay. They also selected zinfandel, a warmer weather grape that's not necessarily their ideal neighbor. But this wasn't

your ordinary zin. The Rusacks had obtained the wild vines from nearby Santa Cruz Island, thanks to its long-standing collaboration with Catalina on conservancy projects. Experts at UC Davis identified them as zinfandel, and it would be planted near its Burgundian relatives, but on a sunnier south-facing slope.

The three vineyards span six total acres that surround El Rancho Escondido: one acre of zinfandel, two of chardonnay and three of pinot noir; a portion of the pinot plot has been

Please see **SAGLIE** on D8

Harvesting the flavors of fall

By **LINDA GASSENHEIMER**
MCCLATCHY NEWS SERVICE

The colorful display of crisp, juicy apples in the stores inspired me to create this autumn dinner. Apples add flavor and texture to this recipe for Harvest Turkey Saute. An apple is a virtual fiber factory; one apple has as much fiber as a whole bowl of most cereals. Apples should be kept in the refrigerator and, if washed, dried thoroughly before replacing in the refrigerator. Granny Smith — a green, tart crisp apple — makes a pleasing contrast to the turkey.

This recipe uses turkey tenderloins, the heart of the breast meat. If you use a thinner cut such as turkey steak or cutlet, cut the cooking time by half.

The turkey saute is served over Autumn Sweet Potatoes, made with boiled sweet potatoes tossed with raisins.

Complete the meal with a green salad or a steamed green vegetable.

Wine suggestion: Turkey sweetened by apples and juice would go nicely with the richness of a sauvignon blanc/semillon blend; you'll find it in most grocery stores.



MCCLATCHY/TRIBUNE

Fresh apples add flavor and texture to turkey tenderloin to make Harvest Turkey Saute. Serve over Autumn Sweet Potatoes, made with boiled sweet potatoes tossed with raisins.

Culinary App-titude

It's harvest time and even in downtown Santa Barbara you can smell the fermentation in the air.

OK, that might be a stretch, but one of the main concerns at harvest besides forthcoming rain and stuck fermentation is how the vintage will turn out. Vintage ratings vary year to year, region to region.

There are encyclopedic, in-depth vintage reports written just for Bordeaux and Burgundy — books that aren't handy for sticking in your pocket while venturing down to the wine shop. That's where "Wine Spectator Vintage Chart" comes in. Ten countries and 30-some subregions are listed. All have a brief description of what the vintage was like, overall score for the vintage and suggestions on whether to drink or hold. There is also a map view that allows you to see where the regions are. Wine Spectator has also included literature on the history of vintage charts and criteria and procedures for making a vintage chart.

There are some glaring omissions, such as no New Zealand (!?!); however, solely as a vintage chart, this app is great. It is perfect as a quick reference guide while searching out that bottle at a wine shop, and sometimes that's all you need. Best of all, though, Wine Spectator isn't charging for this app.

Free at iTunes and Android.

— Louis Villard, News-Press correspondent

A taste of the islands

■ SAGLIE

Continued from Page D1

dubbed the "View Block" because the ocean is clearly visible in the distance on any clear day. It's over this block that the Rusacks envision building a wine-tasting room with a deck.

For now, the wines are being made at their Santa Ynez Valley facility. That means the grapes are being flown in a retrofitted Cessna from Catalina's Airport in the Sky to the Santa Ynez Airport, then trucked to the awaiting winemaking team of John and Helen Falcone. Not a cheap way to make wine.

The first Santa Catalina Island Vineyards vintage was 2009, a project made all the more thrilling by all the unknowns. No one has grown wine grapes here before; there's no past data to refer to; no past mistakes to learn from.

Mr. Falcone has made the Catalina wines very much like the Rusack wines from the Santa Ynez Valley; same facility, same barrels, same overall philosophy. His goal is to extract the genuine flavors the island imparts on the vines. "What does Catalina really taste like?" he says. And from what I can tell, the answer is, "Delicious and distinct."

I recently sat with Mr. Falcone at the Rusack vineyard property in Ballard Canyon to taste the three debut wines; in the case of the chardonnay and pinot, we tasted them alongside their Santa Barbara County counterparts. And what's clear is there is plenty of merit here; the Falcones consistently make great wine. But there's also a clear uniqueness to these wines. Terroir — or the expression of place inside the wine bottle — resides comfortably on the other side of each cork.

The Catalina chardonnay has a bouquet that's rich in fruit, with earthy, spicy and tropical notes. It's big in the mouth — round in the front and midpalate, especially — but with enough acidity, minerality and a wet-stone streak to make it very drinkable. It's delectably layered and nuanced. By comparison, the Santa Barbara County chard, made from Sierra Madre and Bien Nacido fruit, is leaner on the nose, with less acidity on the palate. Equally worth every sip, of course, but different, and a fascinating study in differences in terroir.

The Catalina pinot noir may be the most distinct wine of all three. Dark to the eye and dark in its

aromas of earth and tea leaves. But its flavors are deliciously delicate: bright red fruit, some tart cherries, flowers and a soft spicy end. It makes you want to reach for dried fruits — or a mix of nuts and cheeses — right away. And it's more focused on the palate than the Rusack Santa Maria pinot we tasted alongside, which proved broader in the mouth. Overall, a very distinctive rendition of what's become a very popular red wine.

"The '09 zinfandel saw radically uneven bud break," Mr. Falcone told me as he poured. "Like months apart."

A Catalina curveball. But the result is surprisingly attractive and sophisticated. A perfumey nose leads to velvety jamminess in the mouth, generous fruit, black pepper and — stay with me here — a lean meat feel. This is an elegant, restrained version of zinfandel and refreshingly lower in alcohol than many other, popular California zins: 14.3 percent versus 16 percent or 17 percent, or higher. "Early on, this was really just going to be an experiment," Mr. Falcone admits. What would zinfandel grown so close to the sea really do? "But honestly, when we tasted it after fermentation, we were all really impressed, so we went through with it and bottled it."

The Rusacks have been permitted to plant 12 more acres, so this project's output is bound to grow in vintages to come. And since there's no AVA, or federally assigned appellation, established on Catalina (and seeking one for such a small venture may not be worth the expense), the wine carries a "California" designation. The label features a simple drawing of the landmark Channel Island fox, seated, overlooking the vineyards and El Rancho Escondido.

With final pricing still being set, and public release expected within a few months, sales of the debut 2009 Santa Catalina Island Vineyards wine will be done through a waiting list, which you can access at www.catalinaislandvineyards.com. For more about the venture, see the Oct. 9 News-Press.

Gabe Saglie is always game for tasting wine in an island setting. He is also senior editor for www.travelzoo.com. His column appears every other week in the Food section. Email him at gabesaglie@yahoo.com.

HARVEST TURKEY SAUTE

Vegetable oil spray
¾ pound turkey tenderloins
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 Granny Smith apple, cored and sliced (about 1 cup)

1 small leek, washed and sliced (about 1 cup)
1 cup apple juice
1 teaspoon cornstarch

Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-high and coat with vegetable oil spray. Add the turkey and brown 3 minutes per side. Salt and pepper the sides. Lower heat to medium and add apple and leek. Cover with a lid and saute for 5 minutes, turning once with a fork to prevent breaking the apples. Mix 1 tablespoon of the apple juice with the cornstarch until smooth and set aside. Add the remaining apple juice to the pan, scraping up any brown bits from the bottom of the skillet. Cover with a lid and simmer 5 minutes. Test the turkey to see that it is cooked through. A meat thermometer should read 165 degrees. Remove the tenderloin, slice and divide between 2 dinner plates. Remove apple and leeks with a slotted spoon and place over turkey. Stir the cornstarch mixture into the skillet and cook until sauce thickened, about 1 minute. Serve sauce over turkey.

Yield: 2 servings

AUTUMN SWEET POTATOES

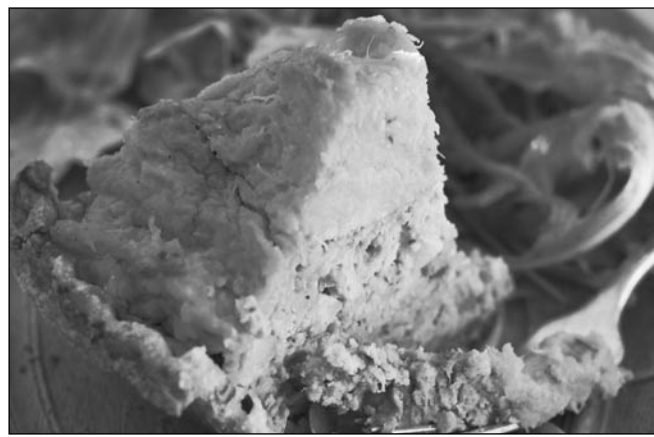
¾ pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
2 teaspoons olive oil
¼ cup raisins
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place potatoes in a medium-size saucepan. Add enough cold water to cover them. Cover with a lid and bring to a boil. Cook 15 minutes or until soft. Drain and toss with oil. Add raisins and salt and pepper to taste. Divide into 2 portions and place on dinner plates.

Yield: 2 servings

Pies can be savory, too

Sweet Potato and Apple Pork Pie



ASSOCIATED PRESS

By **ALISON LADMAN**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Though apple pies tend to dominate this time of year, on chilly nights, it's nice to remember that pie can have a savory side, too.

So we brought together another of autumn's star ingredients — sweet potatoes

— and paired it with salty, savory ground pork and sausage. For good measure and to add a touch of sweetness to balance the fatty meats, we even tossed in a few apples.

Heaped high in a purchased deep-dish pie crust, the combination was not just delicious, but also beautiful.

SWEET POTATO AND APPLE PORK PIE

2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
1 small yellow onion, diced
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage, divided
1/8 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon salt, divided
3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper, divided

1 pound ground pork
1 pound loose sausage meat
1 apple, peeled, cored and diced
½ cup breadcrumbs
1 egg
1 prepared deep-dish pie crust (raw)
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

Heat the oven to 400 degrees. In a medium saucepan over medium-high, bring about 1 inch of water to a boil. Add the sweet potatoes and cook until tender, about 8 minutes. Drain and set aside. Meanwhile, in a small saute pan over medium-high, heat the oil. Add the onion, 1 tablespoon of the sage, the allspice, ½ teaspoon of salt and ½ teaspoon of pepper. Cook until the onion is tender, about 5 minutes. In a large bowl, mix together the pork, sausage meat, apple, breadcrumbs, egg and the onion mixture. Pat this mixture into the pie crust. Bake for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, mash together the sweet potato, remaining 1 tablespoon sage, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, the nutmeg and lemon zest. After the pork cooks for 20 minutes, remove from the oven and dollop the sweet potato mixture over the surface. Return the pie to the oven and cook for another 25 to 30 minutes, or until the sweet potato begins to brown and the pie registers 165 degrees at the center. Cool slightly before slicing and serving.

Yield: 8 servings

CULINARY CALENDAR

FARMERS MARKETS

Camino Real Marketplace Farmers Market: 3-6:30 p.m. Thursdays and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sundays. Storke Road and Hollister Avenue, Goleta.
Carpinteria Farmers Market: 3-6:30 p.m. Thursdays. 800 block of Linden Avenue.
Montecito-Coast Village Farmers Market: 8-11:15 a.m. Fridays. 1100 and 1200 blocks of Coast Village Road.
Downtown Santa Barbara Farmers Market: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays, Cota and Santa Barbara streets.
Old Town Santa Barbara Farmers Market: 4-7:30 p.m. Tuesdays. 500 and 600 blocks of State Street.
Orcutt Farmers Market: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesdays. Clark Avenue and Bradley Road.
Harding Elementary School: 3-6:30 p.m. Wednesdays. 1625 Robbins St.
Santa Barbara City College Farmers Market: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesdays. SBCC's West Campus, outside Luria Library, 721 Cliff Drive.
Santa Maria Farmers Market: 12:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesdays. Main Street and Broadway.
Solvang Village Farmers Market: 2:30-6:30 p.m. Wednesdays. First Street and Copenhagen Drive.

Vandenberg Village Farmers Market: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sundays. Burton Mesa Boulevard, adjacent to Constellation Road.

EVENTS TODAY

Epicure.sb: Various times and locations in Santa Barbara County through Oct. 31. "Epicure.sb: A Month to Savor Santa Barbara" includes food and drink festivals, cooking classes, winemaker dinners and seasonal menus. Co-presented by Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau and Film Commission and Santa Barbara Downtown Organization. For schedule, call 966-9222 or go to www.santabarbaraca.com.

SATURDAY

California Lemon Festival: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. today, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 16. Girsh Park, 7050 Phelps Road, Goleta. Food booths, pie-eating contests, live entertainment, carnival rides and games. Also: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. today, "Goleta Fall Classic Car & Street Rod Show." Free admission. 967-2500 or www.lemonfestival.com.
Santa Barbara Beer Festival: Noon-4 p.m. Elings Park, 1298 Las Positas Road. Unlimited beer tasting from Central and West Coast microbrewers, food and entertainment. All proceeds benefit Elings Park and the Santa Barbara Rugby Association. Age 21 and

older. \$45 advance, \$55 at door, \$10 designated drivers; \$5 parking. For tickets, call 569-5611 or go to www.sbbeerfestival.com.

Los Olivos Day in the Country: Various times and locations in downtown Los Olivos. Pancake breakfast, food court, wine tasting, pie contest, parade, arts and crafts, live music, 5K walk and run, children's activities and vintage tractor and antique car display. Free admission. Email losolivosb.usinessorg@gmail.com or go to www.losolivosca.com.

Harvest Festival: Noon-4 p.m. Growing Grounds Farm, 820 W. Foster Road, Santa Maria. Organic vegetables, fresh flowers, art, live music and raffle. Also: chicken barbecue served noon-3 p.m. All proceeds benefit Transitions-Mental Health Association's employment and horticultural therapy. Sponsored by Santa Barbara Foundation. Free admission; barbecue is \$10 general, \$5 children 10 and younger. 934-2182 or www.t-mha.org.

SUNDAY

A Taste for Carpinteria: 1-5 p.m. Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, 5315 Foothill Road, Carpinteria. Includes wine and beer tasting and food sampling from local wineries and restaurants, and live and silent auctions. All proceeds benefit Girls Inc. of Carpinteria. \$50. For reservations, call 684-6364, ext. 23.

TUESDAY

Wines and Cheeses of Italy: 6-7:30 p.m. Wandering Dog Wine Bar, 1539 Mission Drive, Unit C, Solvang. Learn about a variety of Italian wines paired with Italian cheeses. Advance reservations required. \$37 Wine Society members, \$47 nonmembers. 686-9126.
Beer Dinner: 7 p.m. Wine Cask Restaurant, 813 Anacapa St. Five-course meal paired with national and international ales. \$75 with pairings, \$55 without; tax and gratuity not included. For reservations, call 966-9463.

WEDNESDAY

Solvang Third Wednesday: 2-7 p.m. Various locations in downtown Solvang. Theme is "October Fall Frolic." Includes scarecrow and pumpkin carving contests, farmers market, "Wine Walk" and live entertainment. Presented by Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau. Free admission, discounts offered at participating merchants; \$20 "Wine Walk," includes logo glass. 688-6144 or www.solvangusa.com.

Submit events for consideration two weeks in advance to *Culinary Calendar*, P.O. Box 1359, Santa Barbara 93102-1359, or by email to listsings@newspress.com. Include description of the event, time, date, place and phone number.