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*Silver-Mounted Exhibition Pistol, 1854-55, Louis-Julien Gastinne-Renette (Paris, France),
Engraver unsigned; Silver and wood (ebony). Collection of Robert M. Lee.*



Contents

fall 2019

Features

30

Best of the Sierra

Discover the best places to eat pie while admiring fall colors or to buy fresh apple donuts. Learn where to extend a wine-tasting trip during harvest season and how to navigate the best secret road trip. Our 23 recommendations cover our entire region and showcase the most interesting organizations, trends, food and drink, arts and entertainment, shopping and recreation. Come be a part of autumn in the Sierra.

By Matthew Bieker, Tim Hauserman, Katrina Paz, Paula Riley, Hadley Rood, Thea Marie Rood, Whip Villarreal, Kathleen Vivaldi and Kimberly Wilkes

36

Local Attraction

Behind every charming business in the Sierra Nevada is the backstory. Meet an innkeeper and café owner—a Plumas County native—who went away and came back, and her new venture benefits out-of-towners and locals alike.

By Thea Marie Rood



In Every Issue

10

Editor's Note

The *Real* Best of the Sierra

13

Locally Sourced

Q&A with Spartan Champion Robert Killian *By Matthew Bieker*

In Season: The Essence of Fall...On A Plate, Autumn Produce, Perfect Pairs *By Thea Marie Rood and Paula Riley*

Carbon Footprint: Protecting the Tuolumne *By Whip Villarreal*

Handcrafted: Rodeo Cowboy Girl Turned Filmmaker *By Tim Hauserman*

23

Events Calendar

40

Regional Restaurant Guide

46

Sunset Chasers

Photography by Kial James



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Postmaster: Send address changes to Sierra Living, 5750 New King Drive, Suite 100, Troy, MI 48098. Subscription price: \$15.95 for one year. For subscription inquiries: call (866) 660-6247.

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CEO: **Stefan Wanczyk**

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Editor's note

The Real Best of the Sierra

As we were working on this issue, my daughter and I made a trip to Reno—and rediscovered this ever-changing city: Noble Pie Parlor in Midtown, for example, on a breezy evening, with its dog-friendly patio and killer food, fully exceeding the salads and pizza and cocktails from an ordinary pizza joint. Or the next morning, we walked to The Basement in the old Post Office, stopping to admire the Art Deco detail, the mailboxes, the original tables (where you wrote out an address in longhand and put on the proper postage).

Next, we walked to Sundance Books & Music, housed in a historic mansion, the entrance wreathed in little tasteful flags advertising the Nevada Museum of Art. Inside, we were charmed by the old house's wide staircase, creaking floors, a woman reading a little girl RBG's "I Dissent" on a comfortable couch. We found my climber son a 1969 hardcover called "Introduction to Rock and Mountain Climbing," written by a couple who met and married through this shared hobby; we picked up a suspense novel and a Beatles album; and—best of all—bought a "Blind Date" book: wrapped in brown butcher paper with only one line from the text (in our case "I always considered myself to be a lucky person"). We returned to the Marriott on Ballpark Lane, and had the entire covered pool and hot tub to ourselves—lounged there by the river all afternoon, reading and swimming, soaking, swimming some more, reading some more.

During our stay, we also met up with local Sierra Living writers Paula Riley, Whip Villarreal and Matt Bieker. They all had distinct memories of my daughter making and studying a big pile of art history note cards when we were in town three years ago—September 2016—on a quest to talk these writers into signing on as part of SL's "bench." It was a leap of faith on their parts, for sure—the magazine didn't exist; it was just a proposal and a big notebook full of ideas (a notebook I added to after wide-ranging conversations with all of them). This visit, we once again sat outside by the Truckee River—on the Marriott patio—and had more hours-long, idea-filled conversations, but as affectionate friends and colleagues now. And all three writers wished my daughter well as she embarks on her next fall academic venture: law school.

While she studies contracts and torts, we have our own task: namely, presenting you with our Second Annual Best of the Sierra issue, this time with a distinct nod toward autumn, always a stunning time to be here. Just like last year, we are proud to shine a light on the people and places that make the Sierra Nevada both fascinating and endearing—whether you live here full-time, part-time or just use your vacation days in the valley to explore our mountains and lakes and forests.

We also bring you our regular features, so you can pair local wines with fall dishes, find farmers' markets still rolling with seasonal produce, and create a perfect (and simple) fall dessert. You can also meet a local filmmaker who is wrapping up a documentary on a woman as feisty as she is, and discover a historic general store with a new purpose in Plumas County.

In this time of heart-breaking headlines and national divisiveness, it has been so meaningful to drive around the friendly Sierra, watching people interact with my daughter, inadvertently offering her the very advice, story or Zen comment she needs to hear as she digs in at Boalt Hall. That is what I feel the Sierra's true gift is: inspiring us to be our best.

Thea Marie Rood
 edit@sierraliving.com



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Fall is shoulder season in the Sierra, which makes it the perfect time to come discover this unique and endearing place. Whether it's for a weekend or a lifetime, you'll find autumn trees that rival anything back east, farm-fresh produce that makes the simplest meal outstanding, and inspiring people who never give up when they are in sight of their dreams.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIAL JAMES

Q&A *with* Robert Killian

BY MATTHEW BIEKER



On Sept. 28 and 29, Squaw Valley at Alpine Meadows will host an obstacle course that's much different than the one you used to trip over in gym class. The Spartan World Championship is the culmination of a year's worth of organized competitive obstacle running events spanning the entire globe. Athletes run for miles at high altitude, battling grueling obstacles while adhering to the official race rules as they attempt to complete the course in the fastest

time. To Robert Killian, a U.S. Army Green Beret, Operation Iraqi Freedom combat veteran and a professional endurance athlete, he's just counting the days. Killian's military and athletic careers have taken him all over the world from his home in Boulder, Colorado, winning countless qualifying races and events along the way, but the Spartan World Championships hold a special place for Killian, who won the title in 2015 after competing in only four previous races.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT KILLIAN

What was it like growing up? How'd you get started as an athlete? I grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. Born and raised there, went to college there. I kind of grew up not really doing a bunch of sports per se. I had a little 50 cc dirt bike. I was always outside. My family split up so I went to live with my uncle. He was in the military and he was a cross country coach at my middle school and high school. So being with him and having that influence is how I started, first, with running. (But) I never really had any experience in mountain running. There aren't any hills in South Carolina! We'd run up bridges and parking garages—literally that's what I would do a lot of the time, is run up parking garages.

So how did you get introduced to high altitude, long-distance running? Or "Sky Running" as I've heard it called.

I actually started doing triathlon. Once I got commissioned, I did my four years at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Again, no mountains, no hills, just a lot of flat roads and a lot of open terrain. That's where I started doing some running and cycling. I didn't really grow up swimming, so that's one of the things I had to battle through and figure out, because it's a lot of technique. As a goal, I always wanted to do the Kona Iron-

man. The big, very grueling event, 140.6 miles total. So I started training for that. (Eventually) I had enough leave, and I had about six months that I could do what I wanted and still get paid. And that was my first time ever getting to do it without having to focus on other things. So I just put all my eggs in the basket and competed for the U.S. Army at Kona Ironman World Championship. And I noticed 25 percent of athletes at Ironman were from Boulder, and I thought, what's the deal with Boulder? So I did some research and I decided to move there in 2009, and that's where I got introduced to my first mountain running.

"The Tahoe World Championship is 12-plus miles and 30 obstacles, which is a beast."

You won the Spartan Race the first time you competed in the World Championships in Tahoe in 2016. What was it like? Can you tell us what a competitive obstacle course looks like? The Tahoe World Championship is 12-plus miles and 30 obstacles, which is a beast. And I would say probably 75 percent of these races are held at ski resorts or big mountains. They really want the terrain to be one of the biggest obstacles—having to bushwhack through the woods. One of the things we do a lot in the military is orienteering: we go out with a compass to find control points—and there aren't any trails, there aren't any roads. Sometimes if you want to pick the quickest route you just go through the woods. So I think a lot of that training in the military is very similar to what we do in a Spartan Race. The biggest part of the race is to get from point A to point B the fastest, but you have all these obstacles in your way that challenge different muscle groups, whether it's grip strength, or carries or just balance. (The Spartan Race) is the fastest growing sport in the world with over 5 million participants worldwide. We have 40 different countries. I think we have 70-something races in the United States.

This is apparently going to be the last year the World Championships are held in Tahoe. You won the first year it was here, what's your plan to win before it moves on? I decided this year, after two to three years of just racing my heart out, to scale back a little bit. And it shows in my results. It doesn't matter when it was, what format it was, I'm winning every race I'm doing now. So going back to Tahoe, I'm focusing on the mountains a lot more. Spartan Race has developed some of their obstacles, and standardized them, made them not as hard as they used to be in 2016. I think that's the other reason I was beating [2019 champion] John Aboin and some of these guys who are pure mountain runners and don't have a lot of strength. And I think that has me more focused on the running than I have in past years. But, yeah, I think it's going to be quite difficult.

We wish you luck, Robert.



The Essence of Fall...On a Plate

A simple autumn dessert will impress your most discerning guests. ----- BY THEA MARIE ROOD

It's easy to get stuck in a rut and think fall automatically means apple or pumpkin pie. And because pie dough can be challenging (although can we just say, there is no shame in buying frozen pie dough balls from foothill bake shops), you can easily end up grabbing dessert in the grocery story bakery aisle this time of year.

But you don't have to. Here is an easy end-to-a-meal that incorporates the season perfectly, but is also a cinch to prepare. It comes to us from Newcastle Produce, one of our go-to farm shops and one of our most frequently utilized recipe websites to solve our personal dinner or entertaining dilemmas.

In fact, Newcastle Produce's owner, Jan Thompson, knows food. She comes from a long, continuous line of Placer County farmers—from her great-great-grandfather all the way down to her dad—and partners now with PlacerGROWN,

which links local family farms and farmers' markets to consumers. Through this history and partnership, Thompson is able to source some of the finest fruit and vegetables in the region. They are available for sale in her Newcastle shop and are also the ingredients used in her on-site deli for handcrafted salads, sandwiches, quiches, soup, casseroles and baked goods. Eat them there, take them to-go in a picnic basket, or pick them up for dinner to feed a crowd that night.

And Thompson's culinary instruction doesn't stop with her physical venue: Newcastle Produce also has those wonderful online recipes. Scroll through them when you're bored and hungry, or when you want something more interesting to serve your family or your guests. You will slowly be inspired to use seasonal, farm-fresh, locally sourced ingredients, like the ones called for here, and to cook in your own kitchen. Thompson guarantees you "will taste the difference."



Baked Pears with Pecans

- 1/3 cup pecan halves, toasted
- 2-1/2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 firm-ripe pears
- Garnish: 4 pecan halves
- Good quality vanilla ice cream

INSTRUCTIONS: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a food processor, pulse toasted pecans until fine. Add 2 tablespoons sugar and butter and pulse until combined. Halve pears, use a spoon to gently carve out the seeds, and arrange, cut sides up, on a small baking sheet. Divide pecan mixture among pear halves, mounding it in center, and garnish each mound with a pecan half. Sprinkle pears with remaining 1/2 table-spoon sugar. Bake in middle of oven until pecan mixture is golden, about 10–15 minutes. Serve with ice cream.

NEWCASTLE PRODUCE

Newcastle Produce is located at 9230 Cypress St., Newcastle, CA, 916-663-2016. Store hours are Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Online ordering and recipes are available at newcastleproduce.com.



Autumn Produce

A snap in the air doesn't mean the end of farm-fresh fruit and vegetables.

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

Well, I will just say it:

About this time of year, I'm tired of tomatoes. And zucchini. Even, I'm sorry to admit, strawberries. Luscious as all of it was in early summer, I'm ready for the tastes of fall. A stew with root vegetables, a hearty soup, an apple tart. I want to put orange and white pumpkins on the porch; I want to be the first to spy the mandarin farmer's truck at the Shell station.

But—see above—I am still interested in buying all this produce directly from the people who grew it. And while it's true some farmers' markets shut down by Labor Day, especially those that feature bounce houses and kettle corn, there are others that still roll on weekday or Saturday mornings well into autumn. Some markets are even open year-round—and of course there are increasing numbers of Community Supported Agriculture farms that will bring a box of veggies and fruit right to your front porch.

Still Open

El Dorado County Farmers' Markets—the American Legion Hall parking lot, 2732 S. Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA, Tuesdays 8 a.m.–1 p.m. (through Oct. 8); and Ivy House parking area, corner of Main Street and Cedar Ravine Road, Placerville, CA, Saturdays, 8 a.m.–noon (through Nov. 9).

The Market at Grass Valley—North Star House, 12075 Auburn Road, Grass Valley, CA, Saturdays, 8 a.m.–noon (through Nov. 23).

Nevada City Farmers' Market—Robinson Plaza on Union Street in Downtown Nevada City, CA, first Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.–noon (through Nov. 23).

PlacerGROWN Farmers' Market—Commons Beach, Commons Beach Road and N. Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, CA, Thursdays, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. (through Oct. 10).

Sonora Certified Farmers' Market—Downtown Sonora, CA, Saturdays, 7:30–11:30 a.m. (through Oct. 12).

Truckee Certified Farmers' Market—10500 Brockway Road, Truckee, CA, Tuesdays, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. (through Oct. 15).

Open Year-Round

PlacerGROWN Auburn Farmers' Market—Old Town Courthouse Parking Lot (Auburn-Folsom Road at Lincoln Way), Auburn, CA, Saturdays, 8 a.m.–noon.

Boa Vista Farm Market—2952 Carson Road, Placerville, CA, open daily 7:30 a.m.–6 p.m.

Lake Tahoe Markets—place your order for produce on the website by Friday, free delivery by Monday (Incline Village to the "Y" in South Lake Tahoe); laketahoemarkets.com.

Mountain Bounty Farm—offers pick-up points for fresh farm boxes throughout Grass Valley, Nevada City, Truckee, Incline Village, Kings Beach, South Lake Tahoe and Reno; see mountainbountyfarm.com for a specific list.

Outer Aisle Farm and CSA—produce bags are delivered to pick-up points every other Thursday in Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne counties; outeraislefoods.com.

Sierra Bounty—produce boxes can be picked up every Monday at Stellar Brew in Mammoth Lakes, CA, 2–4 p.m.; sierrabounty.org.



Produce

FALL

FRUIT

Apples, Avocados, Blackberries (through October), Dates, Figs (through October), Grapes, Kiwis, Kumquats, Limes, Mandarins (November), Nectarines (through October), Peaches (through October), Pears, Persimmons, Plums, Pomegranates, Quinces, Raspberries, Strawberries

VEGETABLES

Artichokes, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Butternut Squash, Carrots, Corn (through October), Olives, Onions, Parsnips, Peas, Peppers, Pumpkins, Rutabagas, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes (through October), Tomatillos



PERFECT PAIRS

by Paula Riley

From Taste Restaurant & Wine Bar

Gold and diamonds, JLo and A-Rod, water lilies and Monet—some pairs seem born to togetherness, even when they aren't. Truth is, great matches are most often the alchemy of experience, know-how and a touch of genius. The making of fine wines, for instance, or fine meals. Better yet—the pairing of those two, a specialty of Taste Restaurant & Wine Bar in Plymouth, California.

Taste, set in Amador County wine country, works with many small, local farmers to acquire fresh, healthy, organic ingredients on which to base flavorful dishes. This takes time, of course, and

Amador County Big Crush Harvest Festival

October 5–6, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Want to pick up some new wines for pairing at home? This is your chance to watch wine harvest activities up close, enjoy live music, and sample offerings by 40-plus Amador vintners. Purchase a glass and a wristband from any participating winery to enjoy wine tasting, food pairings and more. Find the map of wineries at amadorwine.com/event/big-crush.

requires various considerations: harvests, yields and quality, among others. It's just one of the reasons Taste has earned the highest Zagat rating in the region.

Under the direction of Executive Chef Micah Malcolm and found at no other restaurant in the area, diners may split portions at no charge and choose multiple half-portions, the better to

sample the menu. "You could taste three entrees before you reach dessert," says Malcolm. For the first-time guest he recommends asking the server "who we are and what we're about, and ask how we can blow your mind."

If you're new to Taste, you might also follow Malcolm's approach to taking the measure of a restaurant—by the tastiness and inventiveness of its appetizers, which offer a window onto the courses that will follow. From Malcolm's perspective, outstanding appetizers = creative entrees.

For a little California dreamin', request a "chef's tasting" dinner with optional wine pairing, or opt for a "wine lunch," featuring local wines for which Taste's staff has developed courses "as perfectly balanced" as possible. This means choosing herbs and spices, proteins and vegetables that favor a wine's acidity, tannins and flavors of oak, jam and fruit. A wine can be delicious by itself, as can the food, but when balanced, says Malcolm, they create a "whole new experience that would have been missed" had they not been paired together.

While credit for Taste's wine chops starts with Chef Mark Berkner, owner of Taste with his wife Tracey, Malcolm holds a Level One sommelier certificate to better take advantage of an extensive wine list split roughly 60 percent Amador County, El Dorado County and Lodi area wines to 40 percent sourced from the Pacific Northwest, France and Italy.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS FROM TASTE:

Appetizer: 2015 Eighteen Sixty-One by Skinner Vineyards of El Dorado County, and Passmore Ranch sturgeon with farro, fennel, poached egg

Entrée: 2015 Tempranillo by Fate Wines of Amador County, and fall squash ravioli with Cipollini onion, marjoram, pepitas, toma cheese, shallot

Dessert: Tawny Splash, a seven-vintage blend by Narrow Gate Vineyards of El Dorado County, and pumpkin custard with gingerbread, cranberry, apple crisp, salted caramel

Taste is open weekends for lunches, and all but Wednesdays for dinner, with a prix fix menu on Mondays. Vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free diners are welcome. Taste Restaurant & Wine Bar, 9402 Main St., Plymouth, CA, 209-245-3463; restauranttaste.com



Protecting the Tuolumne

A trust ensures the river will continue to provide for generations to come.

BY WHIP VILLARREAL

The iconic Tuolumne River

stretches 149 miles long and begins at 13,000 feet in Yosemite National Park. The enormous river flows all the way through California's Central Valley and connects to the San Francisco Bay.

It provides drinking water to about 2.6 million people in the Bay Area and irrigates hundreds of acres of farm land in the Central Valley along the way. It provides world-class whitewater rafting and other outdoor recreational opportunities. It supports many species of fish and wildlife, including bald eagles, spotted owls, prairie falcons, beavers, river otters, trout and salmon.

“We are advocating for more water to be released into the river for fish, wildlife and recreation.”

About 83 miles of the Tuolumne has been designated a “wild and scenic river” by the federal government. With that designation comes federal protections from new dams and diversions being built in the area.

Because wildlife and humans alike are dependent on the Tuolumne River staying healthy, the Tuolumne River Trust assists in efforts to keep it in pristine condition. The trust deploys numerous volunteer efforts to help maintain the river: tree planting, monthly river cleanups, removing noxious weeds, restoring streams, as well as meadow and trail work.

The trust has also assisted in efforts to

restore burned areas from large wildfires in recent years.

“We of course had the Rim Fire in 2018 which burned 250,000 acres and so we help out planting trees in those burned areas,” says Patrick Koepele, executive director of the Tuolumne River Trust. “In the Rim Fire, some areas were burned at really high severity, meaning it burned at very high temperatures and, in those areas, it burned all of the vegetation and soils. It has been slow to recover in some places where we may not see trees for decades unless they are planted. Without the tree-planting work, some areas may convert from a forest to more of a shrub land.”

Koepele explains that right after the Rim Fire, there was significant runoff and erosion because trees were destroyed and soils were flushed down into the river, causing it to fill with sediment and mud.

He also says it is important to restore the health of the forestland surrounding the Tuolumne River to try to avoid large, catastrophic wildfires in the future. The trust is working to remove high density buildup of forest fuels in that region.

He adds that conditions in the area where the fire burned have improved in part because of the record snowpack from last year's winter, but the trust continues its work to rebuild parts affected by the wildfire.



The trust also advocates for public policies that ensure the river's health will be secure.

“We are advocating for more water to be released into the river for fish, wildlife and recreation,” Koepele says. “Only about 20 percent of the natural flow of the river is actually released into the river below the Don Pedro damn. That has a real significant impact. We advocate that at least half of the natural flow should be allowed to continue its way down from the river into the bay.”

To learn more about ways to volunteer, to donate to the trust, or to comment on public policy proceedings, visit tuolumne.org

PHOTO COURTESY OF TUOLUMNE RIVER TRUST

RODEO COWBOY GIRL TURNED FILMMAKER

BY TIM HAUSERMAN

A Gold Country local won't take "no" for an answer—just like the subject of her new independent film.



Lisa Michelle is a former rodeo barrel racer and mother of two from West Point, California, a town of about 700 people located along Highway 26 in Calaveras County. She wrote several screenplays that won awards, but couldn't find a taker to bring them to the screen. So she said "the hell with it," and did it herself.

First she made a short film focused on bullying called "Common Ground." Now she has taken on a more ambitious project: telling the story of Sammy Thurman Brackenbury, who was recently inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame. Brackenbury was a rodeo champion in the '50s and '60s when women were a rarity in the rodeo world.

"I started 'Cowboy Girl' about a year ago," says Michelle. "I make films because I feel they are stories that need to be told, and they are not being told unless I film them."

When Michelle was a teenager she started riding horses. But she didn't have her own horse, so she "would borrow someone's lawn mower and mow lawns for \$5," Michelle recalls. "Once we had enough money we would hitchhike into Castro Valley to rent horses for an hour."

Eventually, she became a professional barrel racer, worked as a farrier, and bought horses that she would train and sell. She spent several decades on the rodeo circuit and during that time, "I knew the legend of Sammy and wondered if she truly was the badass I'd imagined," says Michelle.

It was also while competing in rodeo that

she began writing. She noticed older men and women coming back to the rodeo after being out for years. "They looked out of place, but I'd see them and think I would be them some day," says Michelle. "It gave me the seed for the story 'Spirit of the West,' about an older woman rodeo star, Rodeo Rose. I wrote the screenplay. That sucked me in, thinking that this writing-screenplay-stuff was easy."

This led to making "Common Ground," a short film about a young boy who wears his recently deceased mother's pink sweater to school, and is bullied because of it. She filmed the movie at an elementary school near her Calaveras County home.

Then Michelle started "Cowboy Girl" about a year ago. "It's about Sammy's life," she says. "Being a woman in a man's world that is the cowboy world. Competing against and beating the men. In the '50s she was already leaving her third or fourth husband and rodeoing. Her father raised her like she was a boy, she roped with him in rodeos when she was only 16. She is just amazing. I just want to sit by the campfire and listen to her wild stories."

Why the name "Cowboy Girl"? According to Michelle, a "cowboy girl" is a real cowboy. She can ride, rope, fix a fence, shoe a horse and doesn't mind getting dirty. A "cowgirl," on the other hand, is a woman who wears a perfect hat and looks sexy on a horse.

Brackenbury is truly the former: She won the 1965 Barrel Racing World Title and competed in 12 consecutive Rodeo National Finals. She was also a stuntwoman in movies,

serving as a double for Jane Fonda, Linda Evans and Dolly Parton.

Having a great story is a start, but then you have to make the movie. "The No. 1 challenge is the money—paying the bills," says Michelle. "We have no sponsors. I would love one but not if they would try to change the movie. I don't want to exchange the authenticity of who she is or the story."

Michelle made the decision to take on "Cowboy Girl" by grabbing a camera, driving to the high desert and filming Brackenbury. "Within five minutes I knew I wanted to climb this mountain," Michelle says. "I also knew I would get halfway through and realize how tough it was and wish I'd never started this."

Michelle felt so strongly that Brackenbury was not given her due, however, she's continued working toward making it happen. She nominated Brackenbury for the Pro Riders Hall of Fame, and then worked diligently to provide the committee the information they needed to induct her in August 2019.

Now Michelle is in the editing process for "Cowboy Girl," and working hard to come up with the funds to get it out to the public.

She is also in the process of revising her novel: a rural thriller about Calaveras County. "It's 90 percent true, but I'm calling it fiction to protect the guilty," she says with a laugh. "The style is like Larry McMurtry writing a book with Stephen King."



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EVENTS Calendar

fall 2019



Gold Country Harvest Haunt Express Weekends throughout October

Jump onboard a historic excursion train decorated for the season and staffed by a "skeleton crew." Each weekend has a costume theme: Critters & Creatures (Oct. 5–6), Superheroes & Villains (Oct. 12–13), Pirates & Princesses (Oct. 19–20) and Witches & Wizards (Oct. 26–27). Train departs at 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for kids 6–17 (children 5 and under ride free). Raintown 1897 State Historic Park, 10401 Reservoir Road, Jamestown, CA, 209-984-3953, raintown1897.org.

Big Crush Harvest Festival October 5–6

Come be a part of the Amador County grape harvest, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Explore any of the 40-plus participating wineries, where you'll find food and wine pairings in the tasting rooms, as well as harvest activities out in the vineyards and crush pads. Amador Vintners Association, 9310 Pacific St., Plymouth, CA, 209-245-6992, amadorwine.com.

Silver Screen Classic Movies October 5/November 2

On Oct. 5, see "The Lady Vanishes" (1938), one of the last films Alfred Hitchcock made in England before David O. Selznick lured him to Hollywood; this classic mystery-thriller stars Michael Redgrave and Margaret Lockwood. On Nov. 2, catch "The Third Man," a post-WWII suspense film that won an Oscar for best black-and-white cinematography and stars Joseph Cotton and Orson Welles. Showtimes are noon, 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and admission is free. Beecher Room, Auburn Library, 350 Nevada St., Auburn, CA, 530-878-7938, auburnsilverscreen.com.

Kyoto Temple Market October 5–13

Kodo Arts Warehouse turns into a bustling Japanese antique market, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Shop for Japanese furniture, home and garden décor, art, kimonos—and find unique items to fit any budget. 571 Searls Ave., Nevada City, CA, 530-478-0812, kodo-arts.com.

Preston Castle Haunt Fridays & Saturdays, October 11–26

Featured on Ghost Hunters, and as the location for several horror films, Preston Castle bills itself as Northern California's only "real" haunted house. Gates for the haunt are open 7–10 p.m. and food and merchandise vendors will also be on-site. Tickets are \$30 and must be purchased in

advance. 900 Palm Drive, Lone, CA, prestoncastle.com.

Mountain Harvest Beer Festival October 12

Don't let the small-town venue fool you: More than 20 craft brewers will be in attendance, meaning you will have dozens of beers to sample. Breweries include Sierra Nevada, Lost Coast, North Coast, Mad River, Eureka Peak and The Brewing Lair. Also "talk beer" in this friendly, relaxed setting with the brewmasters and listen to live music, 1–5 p.m. Plumas-Sierra County Fairgrounds, 204 Fairgrounds Road, Quincy, CA, plumasarts.org.

Great Sutter Creek Chili Cook-Off and Car Show October 13

See 100 classic cars at one end of town, and taste and vote on homemade chili and salsa at the other end. The car show runs 9 a.m.–3 p.m. and the chili tasting is 11 a.m.–3 p.m., with awards announced at 3. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children, and include a wristband for unlimited tasting, as well as a cup, spoon, napkin and ballot. Have a craft brew at the beer garden on the corner of Main and Keyes streets and buy a raffle ticket by the flag pole too. Main Street, Sutter Creek, CA, 209-267-1344, suttercreek.org.

Nevada City Fall Colors Mid-October–Mid- November

Weather conditions in the Sierra Foothills make for a brilliant fall landscape. Use Nevada City as a base and tour the 160-mile Yuba-Donner Scenic Byway loop. Or stay in town and walk the Victorian neighborhoods of the Historic District, where you can find spectacular century-old Red Maple trees planted by early settlers. Nevada City Chamber of Commerce, 132 Main St., Nevada City, CA, 530-265-2692, nevadacitychamber.com.

Placerville Wine and Art Fest October 19

This annual festival combines local artists' work with wines from a variety of foothill wineries, as well as food and live music, 5–9 p.m. Shops, business, galleries and restaurants will all be open too. Historic Main Street in Placerville (the street will be closed for this event), placerville-downtown.org.

Silent Movie Night October 25

Don't miss a film classic: "The Phantom of the Opera" (1925), starring Lon Chaney. Halloween costumes are encouraged and the evening includes a buffet dinner, dessert and popcorn. Live organ music will accompany the show. Tickets are available in advance online or at the door (ages 5 and under are free). Ironstone Vineyards, 1894 Six Mile Road, Murphys, CA, 209-728-1251, ironstonevineyards.com.

Halloween in Nevada City October 31

Trick-or-treat along Broad Street (the main drag of Nevada City's historic downtown), attend Fright Night at the Miners' Foundry (which includes live music) or take a spooky "ghost tour." Costumes are always encour-

aged. Nevada City Chamber of Commerce, 132 Main St., Nevada City, CA, 530-265-2692, nevadacitychamber.com.

Harvest Festival November 2

Join the winemakers for grilled sausage, fettuccine Alfredo, salad and cobbler, as well as newly harvested wines straight from the barrel, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Madrona Vineyards, 2560 High Hill Road, Camino, CA, 530-644-5948, madronavineyards.com.

AmadorArts Winefest November 9

Taste more than 25 locally sourced wines and desserts, plus enjoy art, live music and a silent auction, 4:30–9 p.m. Tickets are available in advance on the website or at the door and all proceeds benefit AmadorArts. Historic Downtown Sutter Creek, 209-267-9038, amadorarts.org.

Downtown Holiday Market November 9

Kick off your holiday season by shopping local: find deals, sales, door prizes, raffles and snacks, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Historic Downtown Grass Valley, CA, downtowngrassvalley.com.

"The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge" November 15– December 14

In this irreverent holiday production, Scrooge is back and suing Marley and the three ghosts for kidnapping, slander and emotional distress. Friday/Saturday evening performances are at 8 p.m. and Saturday/Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$18–\$20. Volcano Theatre Company, Historic Cobblestone Theatre, 16121 Main St., Volcano, CA, 209-419-0744, volcanotheatre.net.

Holidays at Empire Mine

December 14 & 15

Start off the Christmas season turn-of-the-20th-century-style with antique decorations, period costumes, live music and free holiday cookies. Tour the mine shaft, the blacksmith shop and the gift shop—where you can, for example, buy that gardener on your list unique heritage roses. Santa and Mrs. Claus will take Christmas wishes in the clubhouse, and local vendors will sell coffee and snacks. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$3 for kids ages 6–16 (5 and under are free). Empire Mine State Historic Park, 10791 E. Empire St., Grass Valley, CA, 916-653-6995, empiremine.org.

Lake Tahoe

Yoga at Granlibakken

Every Saturday

Yoga Room teacher Ellie Perry offers a flow and dynamic movement class for all ability levels, 9:30-10:45 a.m. Visitors, locals and Yoga Room members are welcome; pre-registration is advised. Granlibakken Tahoe, 725 Granlibakken Road, Tahoe City, CA, 800-543-3221, granlibakken.com.

Wine and Cheese Tour

Tuesdays & Fridays, through October 18

Meet the estate's curator and get an extended tour of George Whittell's 1930s mansion, as well as a docent-led tour of the historic site. There will also be chef-prepared appetizers, wine, beer and non-alcoholic drinks. Tickets to the 2 p.m. event are \$100, partially tax-deductible and available at activitytickets.com (all proceeds benefit the Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society). Catch a shuttle bus at the Incline Visitors Center, 969 Tahoe Blvd. (Highway 28) Incline Village, NV. For more information, call 775-832-8750 or see thunderbirdtahoe.org.



Oktoberfest

October 5 & 6

This free, family-friendly event combines locally crafted beer and wine with German food and desserts—all on the shores of Lake Tahoe, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Activities for the kids include face-painting, a pumpkin patch, craft booths and a bouncy castle. Adults can dance to live music, grab a souvenir beer mug and try an IPA-infused bratwurst (there is even a bratwurst-eating contest Sunday at 3 p.m.). Everyone is encouraged to enter the costume contest—including the family dog! Parking is free in the Eagles Nest Campground; a free bike valet is in front of Mountain Sports. Camp Richardson Resort, 1900 Jameson Beach Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-541-1801, camprichardson.com.

Lake Tahoe Marathon

October 11–13

Choose between more than 20 events, ranging from Friday's Lakeside Marathon and Nevada Half Marathon, Saturday's Cal-Neva Marathon and Carnelian Bay Half Marathon, and Sunday's 24th Lake Tahoe Marathon and Emerald Bay Half Marathon. There are also four-person relays, a 72-mile ultra run, a Super Hero 5K and a Kids Free Pumpkin Run. Or choose to swim, kayak or paddleboard on the lake during this gorgeous time of year. For a complete list of events, see laketahoemarathon.com.

Historical Haunted Tour

October 17 & 18

Have some spooky fun in this

guided walking tour of six historic sites in downtown Truckee, including the Truckee Hotel. Each tour is limited to 16 people and participants must be 21 or older. Tickets are \$55 per person; you can also reserve a VIP tour for you and 15 of your friends or clients. Proceeds benefit arts and culture in the Truckee/Tahoe area. For more information, see truckeehistorytour.org.

Haunted Walkway

October 11–13

The walkway of the Pope-Baldwin Estate is transformed into a 1920s-era haunted history lesson, as high school students perform as "ghosts" of past occupants of the house and tour guides put it all in historical context, 6:30–8 p.m. Purchase tickets in advance at the Baldwin Museum or by phone; proceeds benefit the Tahoe Heritage Foundation and South Tahoe High School. Tallac Historic Site, 1 Heritage Way, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-541-5227, tahoeheritage.org.

Annual Valhalla Holiday Faire

November 22–24

Held in the Valhalla Grand Hall, with holiday décor, twinkling lights and a huge Christmas tree, this three-day arts and crafts event features more than 30 local vendors and artisans, as well as seasonal treats, hot cider and hot mulled wine. The South Lake Tahoe's Children's Choral Society will perform carols and Santa will also be on-site. Tallac Historic Site, Highway 89 past Camp Richardson, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-541-4975, valhallatahoe.com.

Holiday Hop

November 30

Start off your holiday shopping on Small Business Saturday in a picturesque and festive mountain setting. Stroll

through local shops and enjoy complimentary snacks or wine, noon–5 p.m. Pick up a "shop local" card and fill your reusable shopping bag for the chance to win fun prizes. Downtown Tahoe City, visittahoe.org.

Mammoth Lakes/ Eastern Sierra

Outside on the Eastside
Month of October

One of the prettiest times to come to the Mammoth Lakes area, you can take a drive, hike, mountain bike, horseback ride or row out on a lake to fish—all in full view of stunning gold, orange and crimson fall landscapes. The best views: Reds Meadow Area, McGee Creek Canyon, the Mammoth Lakes Basin, Lee Vining Canyon and June Lake Loop. Download a pocket guide or an up-to-the-minute "fall colors report" once you arrive, both of which include specific recommendations depending on your favorite activity; visitmammoth.com.

Lone Pine Film Festival

October 10–13

American movie audiences have long embraced the Western film genre—and this festival offers some of the best examples. The event begins Thursday night with a cocktail reception at the museum (\$10/members; \$20/non-members); day tickets are \$30 and include admission to all films and panel discussions. The Museum of Western Film History, 701 S. Main St., Lone Pine, CA, 760-876-9909, lonepinefilmfestival.org.

Date Night

Every Thursday,
through November

Order an elegant, seasonal four-course dinner for two and get 50 percent off a bottle of wine—all for \$50, 5–9 p.m. And if the kids are miffed about being left behind, bring

them any Sunday, 5–9 p.m., when their meal is free. Camp Mammoth, 6210 Minaret Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 760-934-0669, campmammoth.com.



Mammoth Mountain

Opening Day

November 9

There are important traditions for opening the mountain and welcoming winter: Breaking through the Broadway Express banner, for example, or making a beer toast on the sundeck and celebrating a new ski season with good friends. Come join the festivities, 8 a.m.–4 p.m., 10001 Minaret Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA, visitmammoth.com.



"Jungle Book"

November 9

This Theatre for Young Audience production follows Mowgli, Bagheera and Baloo as they come face-to-face with monkeys, vultures and the man-eating tiger, Shere Khan. Tickets are \$10–\$15 online or \$17 at the door; showtime is 4 p.m. Edison Theatre, 100 College Parkway, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 760-934-6592, edisontheatre.org.

Closing Day

November 15

This is the last day in 2019

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for catch-and-keep fishing on Mono Lake—but don't despair. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed all year round on East Walker River, West Walker River, Hot Creek and the Upper Owens River. Hours for all types of fishing are one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset, and anyone over 16 must have a valid fishing license. For more information, including sustainable fishing practices, see monocounty.org.

Thanksgiving Day

Turkey Trot

November 28

Organizers of this event suggest Thanksgiving can be more than dozing in front of a football game: Learn what it's like training at 8,000 feet by entering this 2-mile road race in Mammoth Lakes on Thanksgiving morning. Race starts at 9 a.m., bib pick-up is at 8 a.m. Pre-race entry is \$15 (or \$20 on race day), which includes the hot chocolate social afterward. Mammoth Creek Park, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA, mammothlakesrecreation.org.

Reno

Off Beat Music Festival

October 3–5

Now in its fifth year, this citywide, multi-venue festival highlights "things being created right here in Reno"—so you can explore small bars, night clubs, restaurants, art galleries and large theaters to see live music and art, as well as discover new chefs/brewmasters and their locally sourced menus and craft beer. Downtown, Midtown, 4th Street Corridor; offbeatreno.com.

Reno 1868 FC vs. El Paso Locomotive FC

October 5

Enjoy a fast-paced evening of soccer in this last home game of the season: Kickoff

against El Paso is 5:45 p.m. and tickets are \$15 and up. Oktoberfest, sponsored by the soccer team, will also be rolling in the stadium's plaza, noon–7:30 p.m., and commemorative beer steins will be given away to the first 1,000 ticket holders. Greater Nevada Field, 250 Evans Ave., Reno, NV, 775-334-7001, reno1868fc.com.

Wine Walk

October 19 & November 16

Sip wine along the relaxing Truckee River in The RiverWalk District of downtown Reno every third Saturday, 2–5 p.m. For \$20, get a tasting glass and a wine map of participating art galleries, restaurants and shops. The RiverWalk District, P.O. Box 1606, Reno, NV, 775-825-9255, renoriver.org.

Jerry Seinfeld

October 19

See this award-winning comedy icon—famous for his nine-season NBC show and now the critically acclaimed web series, "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee"—appear live doing his stand-up act. Tickets start at \$69.95 and showtime is at 7 p.m. Reno Events Center, 400 N. Center St., Reno, NV, 775-335-8800.

Pumpkin Palooza

October 20

Now in its eighth year, Pumpkin Palooza has been named a "Top Fall Event" by Food Network Magazine. It includes a costume parade, story-time in a haunted schoolhouse, a Pumpkin Derby, pumpkin-decorating, and competitions in pie-eating, zombie walking and marshmallow shooting. Pumpkin Palooza benefits the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living. Victorian Square, 764-794 Victorian Ave., Sparks, NV, pumpkinpalooza.org.



Nevada Day Parade

October 26

Held in the state capital, and commemorating Nevada's 1864 entrance into the Union, this parade is the largest and longest-running in the nation. More than 200 entries—floats, marching bands, horses, and Burning Man creations—are led by law enforcement and public officials. A hot air balloon launch on Carson Street is at 8 a.m., followed by a flyover of military aircraft at 10 a.m. and the start of the parade (from William and Carson streets to Stewart and Carson streets). Come early and bring a lawn chair or blanket for a good view, and enjoy food vendors, a chili feed, a beard contest and a tour of the governor's mansion afterward; 8 a.m.–4 p.m.; visitcarsoncity.com.

Dirty Wookiee 10K

October 27

"May the course be with you!" Now in its third year, this marathon starts at 9 a.m. at Brewer's Cabinet Brewpub near downtown Reno and ends at the Brewer's Cabinet Production Facility just west of Reno. After the race, compete for a costume award and enjoy snacks and free beer (including Dirty Wookiee Brown Ale). Registration is \$30–\$60 and benefits the CARE Chest of Sierra Nevada, which provides medical resources for Nevadans in need. 475 S. Arlington Ave., Reno, NV, 775-342-8895, desertskyadventures.com.

Veteran's Day Parade

November 11

This parade is preceded by a

traditional opening ceremony at the Virginia Street Bridge at 11:11 a.m. (11th minute of the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The parade itself goes north from the bridge on Virginia Street to Fifth Street, through the heart of Downtown Reno; visitreno-tahoe.com.

"A Christmas Story—The Musical"

November 29–December 1

"You'll shoot your eye out!" This musical version of the beloved 1983 holiday classic film follows Ralphie Parker as he schemes to receive a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas. Evening and matinee showtimes are available; tickets start at \$49. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, 100 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-686-6610, pioneercenter.com.

"The Nutcracker"

December 13–15

Don't miss this holiday favorite—featuring Clara, the Sugar Plum Fairy and dancing mice—performed by Reno's A.V.A. Ballet Theatre and the Reno Philharmonic. Tickets start at \$27. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, 100 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-686-6610, pioneercenter.com.

Yosemite Area

Yosemite Wine and Paint Fridays through October 25

Learn how to paint a Yosemite landscape, step-by-step, with guidance from professional art instructor Lora Spielman, 2–4 p.m. This afternoon class is designed for all artistic levels—beginning to experienced—and includes two glasses of wine, a cheese and fruit plate, and all the materials and supplies you need. Class meets in the Mountain Room Lounge at Yosemite Valley Lodge, shuttle stop 8. Ages 21 and up, \$46.50 per person, yosemiteconservancy.org.



Yosemite With Your Dog

October 13

This Sunday adventure welcomes you and your best friend, and allows you to connect with other dog-lovers, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Get helpful tips for experiencing and exploring the park with pets, as well as learn about other dog-friendly public lands in California and around the country, such as national forests. Participants must be physically fit and dogs must be well-trained and leashed. Expect moderate hiking (4–5 miles) and elevation (4,000 feet). Registration is \$99; yosemiteconservancy.org.



Backpack to Half Dome

October 13-15

This two-day summit challenge is led by an experienced naturalist guide who offers guidance along the way. It begins with a Friday evening get-together in Yosemite Valley, a Saturday morning hike to Little Yosemite Valley to set up camp, and the ascent on Sunday via Half Dome cables. Hikers must be physically fit with an intermediate to advanced experience level; hike is con-

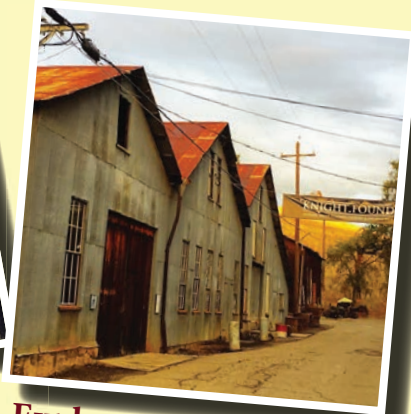
VISIT SUTTER CREEK

— *“One of California’s best kept secrets”- Sunset Magazine* —

Sutter Creek is nestled on Amador County’s historic Hwy 49 in the oak studded Sierra foothills. Experience the charming downtown featuring historic buildings, world class wines in our tasting rooms, specialty boutiques, art galleries, restaurants, bed and breakfast inns, hotels, and more. Don’t miss our year round events including music festivals, art shows, cook-offs, car shows, and everyone’s favorite holiday celebration, our Old Fashioned Christmas Open House.



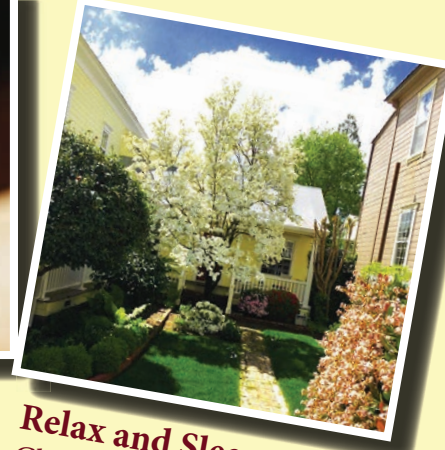
Shop Historic Downtown
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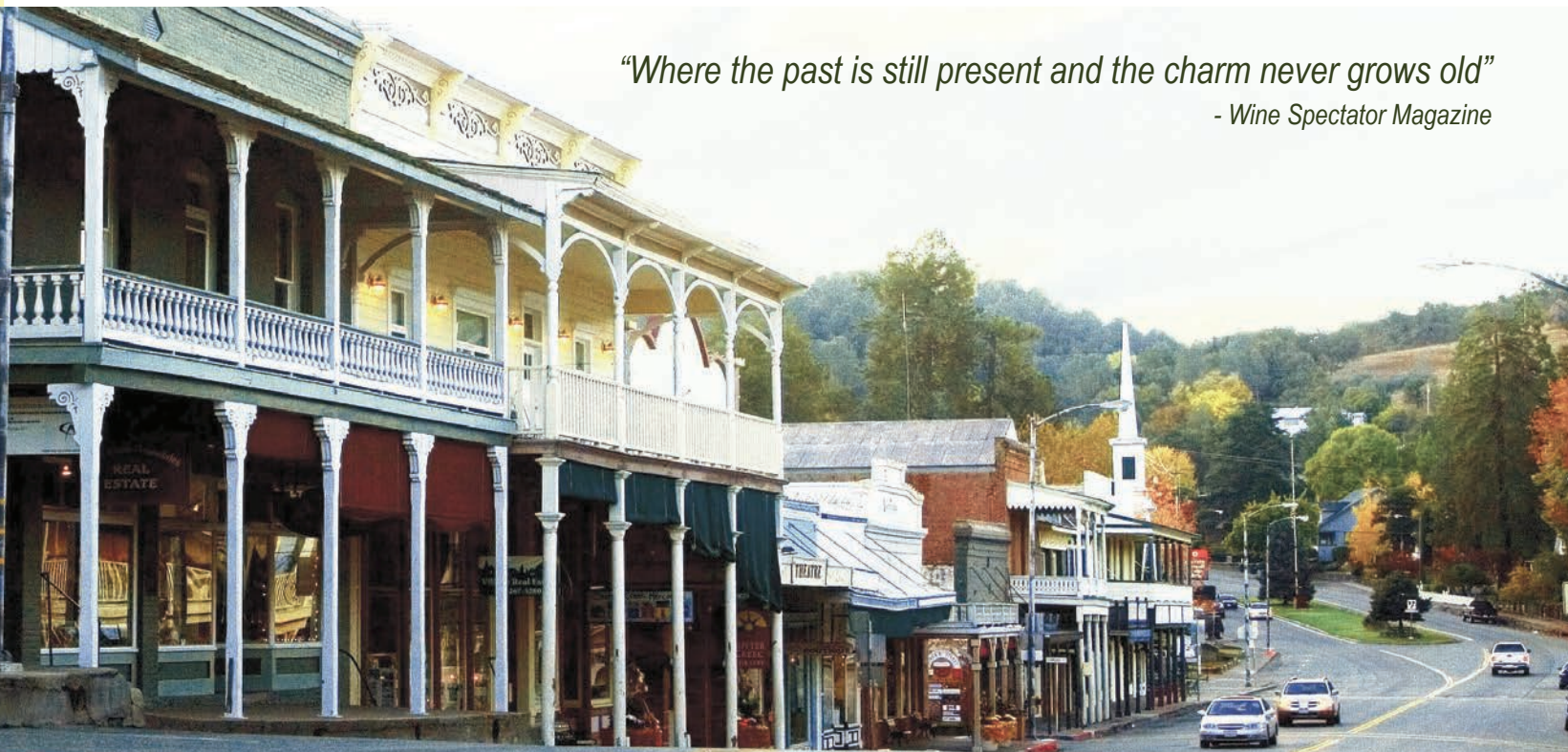
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“Where the past is still present and the charm never grows old”

- Wine Spectator Magazine

sidered “very strenuous” and elevation ranges from 4,000 to 8,000 feet. Registration is \$279; yosemiteconservancy.org.

Autumn Light Photography

October 17–20

In autumn, you’ll find smaller crowds and incredible fall colors, as well as interesting light and shadow. Capture it all with three full days of guided outdoor photography of Yosemite Valley and the surrounding areas, Friday–Sunday, which includes a daily 7:30 a.m. start and one night session. Easy hiking, no photography experience required, and both digital and film cameras are welcomed. Registration is \$449 (which includes camping at Upper Pines Campground and can be upgraded for a stay at Yosemite Valley Lodge instead). To register, see yosemiteconservancy.org.

Fall Colors in Yosemite

October 20–22

See Yosemite during one of its prettiest seasons. The weekend begins at The Ahwahnee Hotel with a welcome reception; on Saturday, participants can hear a Yosemite Conservancy update and take guided walks; an elegant reception and dinner is held Saturday night; and finally on Sunday, the group will see some of the projects John Muir Heritage Society donations have made possible. Donors with annual gifts of \$1,000 or more are invited to attend; for

more information, contact Holly Kuehn at 415-434-8446 x 316; yosemiteconservancy.org.

National Parks Free

Admission Days

November 11

In honor of Veterans Day weekend, all the parks will offer complimentary admission, making it a perfect time to pack up the kids and come to Yosemite; nationalparks.org.

Day of the Woodpecker

November 16

There are 11 species of woodpeckers in Yosemite—more than any area in the U.S. With limited foliage and no summer birds, it’s a perfect time to search for them, especially with expert naturalist Pete Devine, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Expect easy–moderate hiking and elevation. Registration is \$99; yosemiteconservancy.org.

Sequoia Stroll in

Mariposa Grove

December 14

Tranquility settles over the forest when the park’s busy season is over. Depending on weather conditions, hike or snowshoe with an expert naturalist and learn about the ecosystem that supports these giant trees in this peaceful grove. There is moderate hiking (7 miles, round trip) and a 1,200-foot elevation gain. Registration is \$99; yosemiteconservancy.org.



What’s in a Name?

After a four-year legal dispute, the names of Yosemite’s most iconic hotels and camps have been restored, so park visitors this fall will find some nostalgia along with the red and gold autumn leaves.

The conflict started in 2015, when Yosemite decided not to renew its contract with Delaware North, which had been the park’s concession provider for decades. It signed a 15-year contract with Yosemite Hospitality instead, part of the Aramark company.

But what was revealed in the contract change? Delaware North had trademarked the names of the Yosemite hotels and other sites it managed, and demanded \$50 million from the National Park Service to give them up.

NPS and Yosemite Hospitality felt the trademarks were only worth \$3 million—and said no. This strategy, however, meant renaming places the public held dear—for example, The Ahwahnee Hotel became the Majestic Yosemite Hotel, Camp Curry was labeled Half Dome Village, and the Wawona Hotel became Big Trees Lodge. The reaction, safe to say, wasn’t a good one, in part because many of the original names were in honor of Native American tribes in Yosemite.

After a lengthy battle, on July 15, the dispute was settled—Aramark agreed to pay Delaware North \$8.16 million and the U.S. government kicked in an additional \$3.84 million, still significantly less than the original demand. The park announced the victory that morning by posting photos on Twitter, one of a plastic sign that said “Half Dome Village,” quickly followed by the second: the original wood sign reading “Camp Curry.”

Since then, all the names have been officially restored, both on-site and online. So when you book a room in the 1920s Art Deco hotel to see the fall colors in our own beloved national park this year, please look for The Ahwahnee. At last.—*Thea Marie Rood*



“I love how friendly the residents and staff are. The food is always excellent and beautifully presented. There are many activities from which to choose. Therefore, we are always interacting with others, keeping our brains and bodies active.

I believe people live longer here!”

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Best of the Sierra

and the winner is ... (fall)

Once again, here are Sierra Living's Editors' Picks for the best and the brightest in our region—this time with a fall twist. Like last year, many of our categories are playful, but our admiration of all our winners is nothing short of heartfelt and genuine.



BY MATTHEW BIEKER,
TIM HAUSERMAN, KATRINA PAZ,
PAULA RILEY, HADLEY ROOD,
THEA MARIE ROOD,
WHIP VILLARREAL,
KATHLEEN VIVALDI AND
KIMBERLY WILKES



Best Projects

Resilience Butte County Proud IPA

With the one-year anniversary of the Camp Fire approaching on Nov. 18, we thought it only appropriate to recognize one brewery's mission to help rebuild. In the days after the fire ravaged the town of Paradise and the surrounding areas, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. announced it would brew "a fundraiser beer for our resilient community." Calling it Resilience Butte County Proud IPA, the brewery pledged to donate 100 percent of the proceeds to the Sierra Nevada Camp Fire Relief Fund.

For the project to succeed, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. "sent out the 'bat signal'" to friends and competitors alike. The response they received was extraordinary. In total, 1,400 breweries brewed Resilience worldwide, including many in our region: From Knee Deep Brewing Co. in Auburn to The Fox Brewpub in Carson City, breweries across the Sierra answered the call. The inspiration even carried as far as England and Germany. This gargantuan effort resulted in more than 17,000 barrels of Resilience Butte County Proud IPA—about 4.2 million pints, according to Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.'s website.

The beer has since been archived and is no longer available, but recovery from the fire is far from complete. That's why Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. co-founded the Butte Strong Fund, along with the North Valley Community Foundation and the Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund at NVCF. Even if you missed out on the beer, you can donate directly to support their ongoing projects at buttestrongfund.org.—H.R.

Tahoe Food Hub

Over the years, Sierra Living has covered many a chef and restaurant, and one organization has come up time and again: Tahoe Food Hub. Executive Director Susie Sutphin first came across the term "food hub" during a year-long independent study in 2011. After that, according to Sutphin, it was "game over"—she immediately set to work to create Tahoe Food Hub, which centers around the goals of fair trade for diversified local farms and increased food security for consumers. What started as a collection of five farms and five restaurants has since grown to more than 50 producers and 40 buyers. Meanwhile, the Farm to School Pro-

gram provides educational outreach for kids, and the Feed Your Neighbor program partners with Project MANA “to get local food in the hands of the hungry.”

Besides dining at one of the restaurants that sources ingredients from Tahoe Food Hub, there are plenty of ways you, too, can get involved. Tahoe Food Hub sells regionally sourced goods directly to consumers at the Farm Shop, located at the Truckee-Tahoe Airport, open Tuesday–Friday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m.–1 p.m. The organization also partners with Slow Food Lake Tahoe for a dinner series they call Community Soup Night. Lastly, on Tuesday, Oct. 22, it will screen “The Biggest Little Farm,” a documentary on eco-conscious farming. Visit tahoefoodhub.org for details on these and other upcoming events.—**H.R.**



Best Trends

Women in Politics

So of course it made the national news when the Nevada state legislature became female-dominant in 2018, filling 23 seats in the Assembly and 10 seats in the Senate for a 52 percent majority. But it goes deeper—and wider—than just a headline: Women are increasingly taking on influential political roles throughout the Sierra Nevada.

For example, the Nevada Assembly majority floor leader and minority whip are both women—Teresa Benitez-Thompson (D) and Lisa Krasner (R)—as are the Senate assistant majority leader and the co-minority whip—Julia Ratti (D) and Heidi Seevers Gansert (R). Reno has a female mayor, just elected for a second term, Hillary Schieve; two-thirds of the Reno City Council are women (Wards 1–5); and half the Carson City Council is

female. In California, there are female mayors in Auburn, Grass Valley, South Lake Tahoe and Mammoth Lakes (Cheryl Maki, Lisa Swarhout, Brooke Laine and Cleland Hoff, respectively); the Truckee Town Council and the Nevada City Council are female-dominant; and half the Grass Valley City Council members are women. There are also women serving on the board of supervisors in Mariposa, Placer, El Dorado and Calaveras counties.

What does this all mean? Well, it’s safe to say it’s changing the conversation. And we are all for that.—**T.M.R.**

Community Wildfire Preparation

If one thing was made patently clear in Paradise last year, it was that a wildfire can outpace emergency response. With similar topography and one-way-in/one-way-out roads throughout the Sierra Nevada, many of our cities and towns are at “very high fire risk,” according to CalFire, including Colfax, Auburn, Nevada City, Grass Valley, Placerville, Sonora, Kings Beach and Yosemite Valley.

So residents are taking action themselves. One way is to become a “Firewise” community through the National Fire Protection Association, which encourages neighbors to work together and be proactive to prevent losses. Another is by holding neighborhood forums to discuss evacuation plans if roads are blocked—discussions that have led to local ranchers and farmers agreeing to allow their pastures to work as alternate routes or as shelter-in-place zones. Local governments have also responded, with reflective street signs that can help residents navigate an evacuation route even in heavy smoke, or Nevada County’s 2019 Ready! Set! Go! Handbook that arrived in mailboxes this past spring with advice about defensible space and Go Bag checklists.

All of this we deem a trend that sadly must continue, but also one that shows the characteristic grit and ingenuity of the Sierra Nevada.—**T.M.R.**

Food & Drink

Best Way to Extend a Wine-Tasting Experience

How does one make an afternoon of wine-tasting last? After all, three-to-four glasses of small sips does not take very long. Fortunately, wine-tasters in the Amador region can run to Runquist winery—and rent

its “R” Vineyard House, overlooking Jeff Runquist’s working vineyard.

This beautiful, Spanish-style, four-bedroom home is perfect for a wine getaway. Guests can relax, swim in the private pool, lounge on the deck by the fire pit, or eat a lovely meal on the patio, sipping some delicious vino and watching the sun set over the grapes.

Not only is the “R” Vineyard House nestled right on the winery property, making for easy on-site wine-tasting, but there are many wineries up the road to explore—and then head back for more extending.

Fall events at Jeff Runquist Wines include The BIG Crush, Oct. 5 and 6, part of the Amador Vintners Association’s annual Big Crush Harvest Festival, where you can experience the fall crushing at the winery. Or come for the Wine Club Release Party, Nov. 2, where you can pick up ordered wine—or buy while there and party on. New release wine and small bites will be offered (wine club members only, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.; open to the public, 4 p.m.–6 p.m.). 10776 Shendoah Road, Plymouth, CA, 209-245-6282, jeffrunquistwines.com.—**K.V.**

Best Place To Eat Chocolate in an Evening Gown

What’s better than eating chocolate? Eating this delicacy while dressed in your finest attire and supporting a good cause. The 31st Annual Tahoe Chocolate and Wine Festival is set for Saturday, Nov. 2, at the Hyatt Regency in Incline Village, Nevada. This year’s theme is “A Night of Pure Imagination: A Celebration of Dreams.” Event organizers call it “imaginative black tie,” meaning you can gussy up in your formal gown or tuxedo and add creative touches that fit in with your interpretation of the theme. Dozens of chocolatiers and restaurants provide sweet creations, such as Dorinda’s Chocolates, the Hyatt, Jake’s on the Lake and Unreal Chocolate. In between satisfying your inner chocoholic, munch on appetizers and sip boutique wines from California wineries such as Rutherford, Opolo and E16. It all benefits Sierra Community House’s programs in North Lake Tahoe and Truckee, including the nonprofit’s legal advocacy, safe houses for victims of domestic violence and victim support services. Tickets are \$125; 775-298-0010, sierracommunityhouse.org.—**K.W.**

Best Place To Eat Homemade Pie Under Fall Foliage

You can't go wrong with a slice of pie for dessert. But pie becomes even more special when it's paired with a setting of brilliant fall foliage at Hope Valley Resort Café in Markleeville, California. Savor slices baked by the café's owner, Leesa Lopazanski, then feast your eyes on the orange, reds and yellows of aspens growing around the café.

Lopazanski is best known for pies made from unusual fruit combinations. Daily flavors have included tropical fruit and plum, plum blueberry, nectarine raspberry and mango apple, as well as more traditional flavors like pumpkin and apple. All her pies have a streusel topping, even the pumpkin. Lopazanski's also known for her flaky crust. The secret ingredient? "Real butter," Lopazanski reveals. She makes at least 10,000 pies every year, including 300 special-order whole pies the day before Thanksgiving. And don't limit yourself to just pie: Lopazanski's other baked goods include some of the moistest scones you'll ever taste and perfectly sweet-tangy lemon bars.

The restaurant serves breakfast and lunch daily. Pie is served until late afternoon, but can sell out early on weekends. Snowshoe Springs Road, Markleeville, CA, 530-694-2323, hopevalleyresort.com.—**K.W.**



Best Place for Handmade Everything (and we mean everything!)

Three Forks Bakery & Brewing Co. was a welcome addition to Nevada City when it first opened its doors five years ago. Anchoring the iconic Broad Street, it serves up fare locals didn't know they were missing—fresh, wholesome food embodying the flavors and personality of the region. The thriving eatery was an immediate hit, claiming its place on the burgeoning brewery scene, but also quickly becoming known for its unfussy yet innovative (and almost exclusively house-made) cuisine.

The menu is created weekly, after discussions and deliveries from local farmers and suppliers (where they get 99 percent of their ingredients). That means only the freshest strawberry elderflower cake, brown butter polenta with maple caramel, or signature pizzas with organic wild yeast crust. Three Forks also makes its own pizza sauce, jam, mustard, charcuterie and cheese on-site. It features more than three dozen teas, kombucha, locally roasted coffee and a daily agua fresca, which in late summer included kumquat lavender shrub.

Co-owner Shana Maziarz believes they have a responsibility to be the changemakers when it comes to taste: "Customers are compelled to try new things because they trust us. They get to taste things they might not otherwise have tried."

The artisan detail extends from the menu to the dining room and kitchen, where just as much thought went into creating a welcoming space. Local blacksmiths and woodworkers were tapped to create everything from shelves to bread racks, and the dining tables were made by Maziarz's parents. 211 Commercial St., Nevada City, CA, 530-470-8333, threeforksnc.com.—**K.P.**

The Most Coveted Seven Tables in South Lake Tahoe

Seven may be your lucky number—and not just at a lakeside casino. Because, yes, it's true: There are really only seven white-linen-covered tables at the cozy, intimate and popular Café Fiore.

Driving down the small lane to this tiny alpine house is part of the fun. Once inside, the warm atmosphere, coupled with Chef Gilberto Ramos' homemade dishes, will have you feeling like you hit the jackpot to have grabbed a spot.

With over 300 wines on the menu, it's not surprising Café Fiore has earned a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence each year since opening. As for the food, Chef Ramos has dedicated two decades to Café Fiore—and his loyal following, not to mention hard-to-get reservations, is proof of his success. Mainly Italian fare is served, but the menu is extensive. Try the chef's signature eggplant crepes, house-special lamb chops, fresh lobster fettuccini or the veal scaloppini.

Make reservations well in advance: Café Fiore's seven tables are filled every night, year-round. 1169 Ski Run Blvd., South

Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-541-2908, cafeiore.com.—**K.V.**

Arts & Entertainment

Best Place to Discover You're Good at Art

What's red, white, and sparkling blue all over? The wines served during public and private painting sessions and—just down the walkway—the stunning gem of the Sierra: Lake Tahoe. It all adds up to inspiration galore in a place to discover "fun art, not fine art," says Dawnda Smith, owner of Lake Tahoe Paint and Sip.

Each gathering for open studio lessons or private party get-togethers is led by a multi-faceted local artist providing step-by-step guidance. Don't know which end of the brush to hold? Don't worry! Supplies, tools and know-how are part of the package, plus mood music, a complimentary glass of happy juice (or a non-alcoholic beverage) and all the instruction you need for discovering the Kahlo-Picasso-Hopper within you. Lots of people "come in intimidated," says Smith. "By the time they're done they're feeling good."

Reservations are recommended. 900 Ski Run Blvd./Ski Run Marina, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-600-0662, laketahoepaintsip.com.—**P.R.**

The Hardest You'll Laugh at a Show About Nothing

You know the face, you know the voice, and you definitely know the name. Jerry Seinfeld has spent the better part of four decades making the world laugh, putting his name to the '90s sitcom he co-produced with Larry David, which would later become the most popular comedy show of all time. Since then, Seinfeld has gone on to co-write and produce feature films and Broadway plays, organize his own charity efforts and star in his Emmy-nominated web series "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee." Even before Soup Nazis, Festivus poles or coffee with Obama, though, Seinfeld has always been a standup comedian, and on Oct. 19 he will bring his 70-plus minute act to the Reno Events Center. The show is a rare opportunity to see a living comedy legend in his element, with Brian Logan of the Guardian writing in his review, "Perhaps because what Seinfeld is saying is often trivial, attention strays to how he's say-



ing it—with a sense of rhythm and cadence so finely tuned it could be applied to almost anything and still make you laugh.” While Seinfeld could make you laugh at nothing, expect to hear reflections on the comedian’s life in his sixties, his family, society’s foibles and a few old classics as well.—**M.B.**



Best Place to See a Play in a 154-Year-Old Theatre

Even gold miners needed entertainment, and they were able to find it over 150 years ago in the same place people do today—the Nevada Theatre. Built in 1865 and located in downtown Nevada City at the top of Broad Street, the theatre plays an integral role in cultivating the area’s rich performing arts scene. From cabaret and “M. Butterfly” to Dickens and “James and the Giant Peach,” scores of performances have lit up the stage, which in its humble beginnings was nothing more than a dirt clearing surrounded by wooden benches.

That stage has seen the likes of Mark Twain and Jack London—and it was rumored John Wilkes Booth was set to perform before

a hotel fire claimed his costumes and props. The theatre has been used almost continuously throughout the years, save for a brief closure from 1959 to 1965. After numerous upgrades, it still holds its charm and offers a plethora of entertainment options each week. In addition to concerts, musicals and award-winning plays, the theatre also hosts the annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Nevada City Film Festival and the Nevada Theatre Film Series. 401 Broad St., Nevada City, CA, 530-265-6161, nevadatheatre.com.—**K.P.**

Best Art Museum with an On-Site French-Inspired Restaurant

With a 70,000-square-foot building designed by renowned architect Will Bruder, Reno’s Nevada Museum of Art invokes the Black Rock Desert’s crenellated mountains, steely grey at dusk.

NMA is accredited for its in-depth programming by the American Alliance of Museums, a designation unique in Nevada and enjoyed by only 5 percent of U.S. museums. Through fall, visitors can experience the modern Native American art of Jack Malotte and the sensuous paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe, followed next by Galen Brown and John Banovich. The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays.

Equally stirring works are found inside NMA at Chez Louie, a French-inspired eatery highlighting seasonal ingredients, such as starters of seared ahi and Bri en Bric, and small plates of smoked salmon crepes and omelette au fromage. Expect special burgers,

pan-roasted salmon, Za’atar spiced chicken, and oo-la-la desserts, as well as wines, cocktails and beer. Nevada Museum of Art/Chez Louie, 160 W. Liberty St., Reno, NV, 775-329-3333/775-284-2921, nevadaart.org/chez-louie.com.—**P.R.**

The Best Place to See a Film for a Good Cause

Looking to catch a movie outside the traditional cinema experience while also supporting science at the lake? Look no further than the annual Tahoe Film Festival.

The fifth annual Tahoe Film Fest takes place Dec. 5–8 at Incline Village and all proceeds go toward the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, also in Incline. The Center helps fund scientific studies of Lake Tahoe and documents how it continues to change. TERC also publishes the annual State of the Lake report.

There are multiple movie genres represented at the festival that will entice all kinds of movie-goers. The festival features about 30 films and its main focus is to highlight new environmental films, such as last year’s premiere of “Biggest Little Farm.” The festival is also known to premiere important films in the running for prestigious awards.

“Last year we premiered ‘Roma’ that ended up winning three Academy Awards,” said Robert Roussel, director of the Tahoe Film Festival. “And we had ‘The Ballad of Buster Scruggs,’ a Cohen brothers’ film. We had two other films from Netflix and four from National Geographic.”

Attendees might even get a chance to rub shoulders with some of the actors and filmmakers featured at the festival (for example, last year Director Ethan Cohen was there). Films will be presented at Incline Village at Northstar and the Crystal Bay Crown Room. Look for announcements of films featured at this year’s festival in mid-October, and for more information, visit tahoefilmfest.com.—**W.V.**

Shopping & Services

Best Place to Buy a Pumpkin and Fire a Giant Slingshot

Sure, you can go to the local grocery store and buy a carving pumpkin. But why do that when you can visit Corley Ranch and get said pumpkin, but also fire apples from a giant

slingshot and pet cute farm animals—all in one visit? The Gardnerville, Nevada working ranch hosts a Harvest Festival on October weekends with family-friendly activities (admission is \$7 for adults and children, kids 2 and under are free, seniors 55 and over are \$5). Lay down some extra bucks to buy the perfect pumpkin in the 10-acre patch—the ranch grows 10,000 of them for the festival. Or wait to see if you win a pumpkin while trying the giant sling shot. For \$1, fling three apples up to 100 yards at eight different targets. Hit one of the targets to claim a prize. Other weekend activities: petting goats and piglets, pig races, riding the train (\$2), exploring the kiddieland straw maze, and enjoying a hay slide, miniature golf, hay wagon rides and a corn maze. The pumpkin patch and Country Store are open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout October. The Harvest Festival is on October weekends. 859 U.S. Highway 395, Gardnerville, NV, 775-790-1705, corleyranch.com.—**K.W.**

Best Place to Buy Fresh Apple Donuts

In the small town of Camino, California, everything comes up apples. On any given fall day, visitors can choose from apple pie, apple dumplings, caramel apples, apple strudel, apple turnovers, apple crumbles—catching on? But one of the most popular apple treats adults and kids come for is the good ol' homemade apple donuts.

The epitome of fall in our region is heading to Apple Hill to peruse all the cute orchards and family farms to pick and buy all the delicious apple items that signify autumn has arrived. There are lots of choices, but two establishments in Camino best known for their donuts are Rainbow Orchards and High Hill Ranch.

Family-owned since 1977 and home to the famous HOT apple cider donuts, Rainbow Orchards' donuts were voted 2018 Mountain Democrat Readers' Choice Best Donuts (the newspaper's readers also awarded the orchard Best Apple Pie). Rainbow Orchards has an on-site Apple Barn, full of varieties of apples to choose from, and a bake shop to pick up apple donuts and other baked goods. Of course, feel free to eat up those hot apple cider donuts right on the spot at the outdoor picnic tables. Open Labor Day–mid-December, 2569 Larsen Dr., Camino, CA, 530-644-1594, rainboworchards.net.

Family-owned and -run since 1960, High Hill sits on 155 acres and is the largest and most visited farm in Apple Hill. Their mission statement is “from our orchard to your table” and one of High Hill's most popular items is, yes, the apple donut. This large ranch also offers one-stop shopping and entertainment with fishing, hayrides, craft fairs, picnic areas, and tastings of hard apple cider and wine. Open August–December, 2901 High Hill Road, Camino, CA, 530-644-1973, highhillranch.com.—**K.V.**



Best Revitalization of a Historic Downtown

Grass Valley has seen its share of highs and lows for nearly two centuries, but the historic hamlet is currently in the midst of an energetic resurgence, one that's sure to hang on for years to come: 2018 saw the opening of the Grass Valley Brewing Company (the town's first brewery) as well as The Pour House (with game nights), Cork 49 (monthly bottomless mimosas) and a number of new coffee shops. The libation scene is made even more lively with Grass Valley Brewing partnering with the downtown association to launch the first-ever Brew Fest, Sept. 14.

The Bank Building, which originally opened in 1917, was beautifully renovated and now houses chic boutiques and Cake Bakery, which creates an entirely decadent experience to accompany its canelés and crème brûlées.

New shops, such as His. A Gentleman's Sundry, sit side-by-side with longstanding familiar businesses like the Nevada Club, Clock Tower Records and Yuba Blue. The Del Oro Theatre and Grass Valley Library keep

the town's aesthetic firmly rooted in times gone by while the Center for the Arts moves forward. The center, long known for bringing top performers to the community, is set to complete a multi-million-dollar renovation this fall. Grass Valley Downtown Association, 125 Neal St., Grass Valley, CA, 530-272-8315, downtowngrassvalley.com.—**K.P.**

Best Place to Stock Up (in Yosemite)

John Muir, famous mountaineer and conservationist, wrote in his 1912 book “The Yosemite,” “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and places to pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to the soul.” As for the beauty of nature, you'll find it in jaw-dropping abundance at Yosemite National Park and the surrounding Tuolumne Meadows. As for bread (and a few other necessities), you might need somewhere with air conditioning. The Yosemite Village Store is a complete grocery store, camping outfitter and gift shop located at Yosemite Village in the very bottom of the granite-walled valley. Fresh fruits and vegetables, steaks and meats for grilling, and snacks and desserts are available for comparable prices to hometown grocery stores, and if you don't feel like cooking, there's an on-site deli serving sandwiches—including vegetarian options. Parking is in short supply, however, and even though the store generously stays open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Yosemite National Park's record-breaking visitor numbers in recent years might require an early start to beat the crowds for that last bag of trail mix—or chocolate cake. Up and at 'em, campers! 9011 Village Dr., Yosemite National Park, CA, 209-327-1253.—**M.B.**

Most Eclectic Place to Shop

The MidTown District, a section of Reno that has undergone significant urban renewal, adds a distinct new vibe to The Biggest Little City. When Sierra Living first reported about the then-up-and-coming MidTown District, city leaders, entrepreneurs, business owners and locals were working on changing and improving the once neglected part of town. Fast forward to today and the area has been transformed into a successful, ever-growing, hip and—dare this reporter say—the most eclectic area in town to eat, drink and shop.

With an amazingly diverse selection of eateries, coffee shops, bars and nightlife, MidTown Reno offers different culinary and

shopping options for every day of the week. When venturing into the MidTown District, here are just a few of the must-stops: Piñon Bottle Co., Press Start Arcade & Bar, Süp, Recycled Records, Rum Sugar Lime, The Z Bar, Junkee Clothing Exchange, Chapel Tavern, Bibo Coffee Co., Brasserie Saint James, Noble Pie Parlor, Blüm Reno Dispensary and Bubble Tea Station Cafe.

Foodies can also take the MidTown and Murals Tour, every Wednesday and Friday at 1:30 p.m., and indulge in six tastings from several iconic MidTown restaurants (tickets are \$45–\$84, renofoodwalks.com).—**W.V.**

Sports & Recreation

Best Kept Secret Road Trip

U.S. Route 395 runs the length of what has been called “California’s backbone.” Terminating in Hesperia, California, in San Bernadino County at the south end, and the Canadian border to the north, 395 covers as much ground as the more well-known I-5 (which terminates somewhere near the North Pole, it seems) but in a much more winding, sometimes unpredictable way. Those who grew up in Reno know 395 for its dreaded intersection with the major East-West interstate, I-80, in the middle of town. However, locals also know that just a few miles outside of the city in either direction, 395 opens up to beautiful scenery overlooked entirely by the quicker routes. Sites I’ve personally witnessed travelling 395 include the frozen forests of southern Oregon, glistening in the morning sun after a snowstorm; the silent silhouettes of the many-armed Joshua Trees standing dark against the cotton-candy pink desert sunsets of Death Valley; and countless small communities that are nothing more than a post office, general store and a few perfectly manicured lawns in the shade of the Sierra pines. Route 395 traverses more history than most continuous West Coast routes, passing dusty ghost towns, museums, fossil fields and volcanoes in equal measure. But the real beauty of a drive down 395 is hopping in the car and hitting the road with as much or as little of a plan in place as possible. You’ve got San Diego at one end, Seattle at the other, and if you need something to listen to for the drive, check out Capital Public Radio’s excellent podcast “395” for some little known history (and some great storytelling) about this overlooked stretch of pavement.—**M.B.**

Best Way to See Fall Foliage by Bike

Just a few miles outside Tahoe City, and nearly a thousand feet higher, sits Page Meadows. This series of aspen-bordered meadows is the place to ride a mountain bike in the fall when the leaves turn to yellow, orange and red. The different orientations of the five meadows allow you to find the peak of color in one spot, when the next meadow is just beginning to turn. Thus, you’ve got about a month in the mid-September to mid-October range to roll through a blaze of autumn.

I get to Page via a bracing uphill ride from the end of Rawhide Street, then I jump on the Tahoe Rim Trail for one of the best miles of single track in the Tahoe region. The TRT brings you to the first meadow with Twin Peaks as a backdrop. From there, roll your

climbers for decades. In fact, some of the pioneering Yosemite climbers from the ‘70s and ‘80s used to escape the summer crowds of Yosemite to climb on Donner Pass.

Favorite places to climb on Donner Summit include School Rock, which is good for beginners and has a good assortment of easier climbs just off the road. Snowshed is the area’s most popular wall, just down Highway 40 a piece from the Rainbow Bridge. It’s a moderate climb with a northern exposure that keeps it cool on hot days. And experts can take on the challenge of Star Wall, which provides climbs for the more skilled.

To get zeroed in on the best climbs on Donner, pick up a copy of “North Tahoe—A Rock Climber’s Guide,” by Josh Horniak.—**T.H.**



way in a big loop past all the meadows. Each provides its own highlight from the reddest trees to the tallest trees. In late summer and early fall, you might catch an additional treat when a ride across the dry meadows sends forth a wave of flying grasshoppers.—**T.H.**

Best Place to Climb a Crag of Granite

The Tahoe/Truckee area’s go-to spot for climbing is the top of Donner Pass on Old Highway 40.

“You will find a huge range of climbs for every ability level on Donner Pass,” says Mike Grobicki, climbing expert with Alpenglow Sports in Tahoe City. “There are a lot of different aspects to the rock, and you can chase the shade on a hot day.”

All that good climbing is also easily accessible from Highway 40, with some climbs less than 100 feet from where you can park your car.

Donner Pass has been a haven for rock

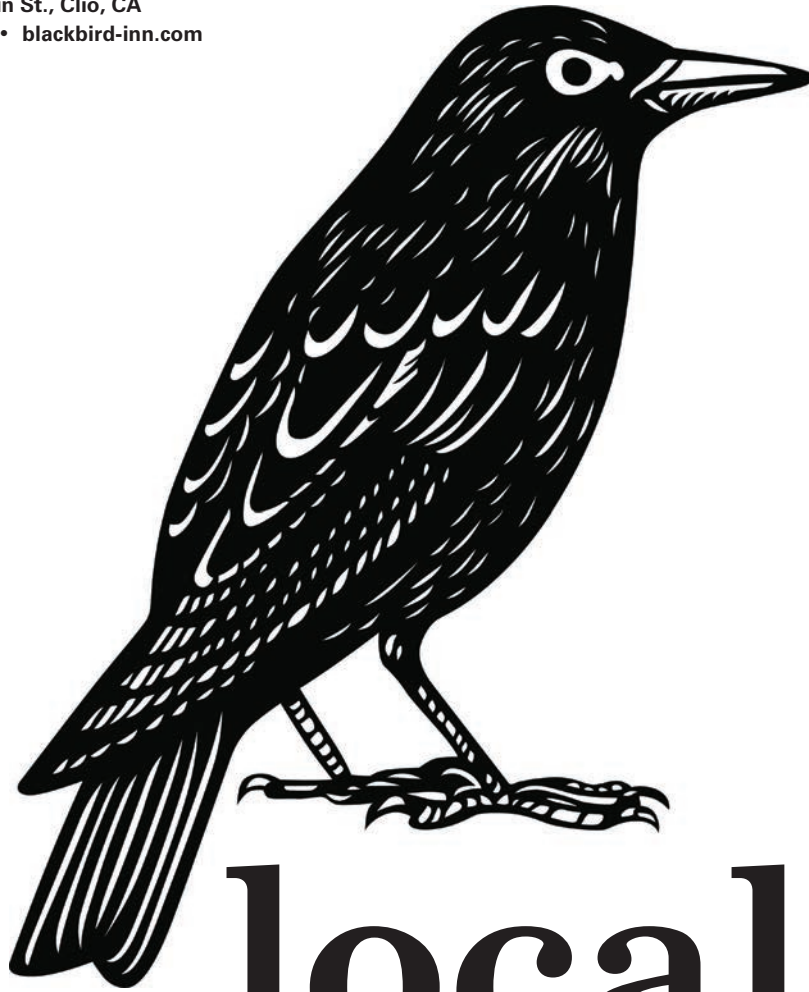
Best Place to Celebrate Oktoberfest While Watching a Soccer Match

If you thought Oktoberfest was nothing but beer and brats, think faster, sweatier and more exciting—it’s about USL soccer too. In fact, Oct. 5, Reno 1868 Football Club hosts its second Oktoberfest on the plaza at Greater Nevada Field in downtown Reno.

You know it as the stadium where both our hometown soccer and minor league baseball teams play, but in October it becomes the site of music, food, imported German beer and commemorative steins commissioned for the occasion. Saturday hours are noon–7:30 p.m., with Reno 1868 facing El Paso Locomotive at 5:45 p.m. Tickets run \$15–75, and a free commemorative beer stein goes to the first 1,000 ticketholders.

Says team staffer, Sean Smock, “The first Reno 1868 Football Club match you see will be something you won’t forget.” We’ll toast that! 250 Evans Ave., Reno, NV, 775-334-7000, reno1868fc.com.—**P.R.**

Blackbird Inn and Ricochet Café
275 Lower Main St., Clio, CA
859-242-6058 • blackbird-inn.com



local attraction



It started out in 1900 as the Clio general store, where locals picked up the makings for dinner and probably the occasional beer. Now it's an inn and a café, drawing out-of-area folks, but also the neighbors—who can still get dinner and that beer.

By Thea Marie Rood
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GINA MUNDA



plumas County, an hour northeast of Reno and Lake Tahoe, at the base of the Cascade and Sierra mountain ranges, is an interesting place. For example, residents are fond of quoting this statistic: There are nine people per square mile.

You can't take that literally of course: It's the population figure (not quite 22,000) divided by the county's area (2,618 miles). But it is true there are many wide open spaces, roads where you won't meet another driver, and only one incorporated city (Portola).

All of which makes it understandable why a young woman from Quincy—the Plumas County seat—might take off for a new adventure back east.

But there are other statistics people here like to quote: The county has 100 lakes, 1,000 miles of river and more than 1 million acres of national forest. What

may not be immediately obvious—but is at least implied—in that math is the surprising gorgeousness of this place, with views that go on forever, putting visitors in mind of Montana. Not to mention summer thunderstorms that blow in out of nowhere and leave just as quickly—revealing a deep-orange sunset and double rainbows—and a fair amount of snow in winter. The stars and constellations seem weirdly bright to city folks. The residents are both progressive politically and endearingly friendly.

All of which makes it understandable why that same woman—wiser now—might return home and start a new adventure right here.

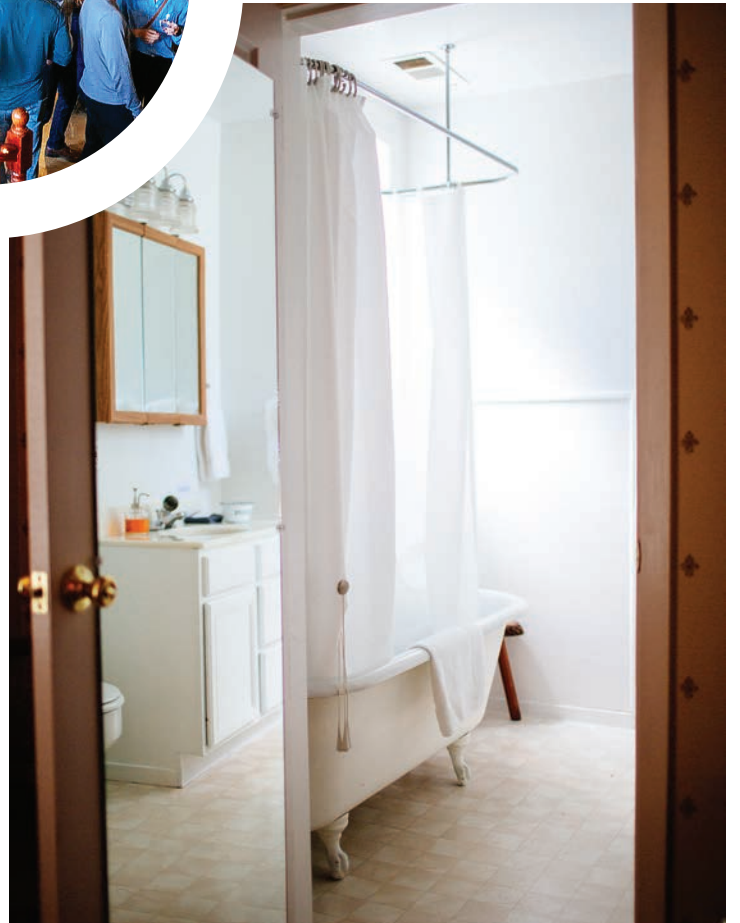
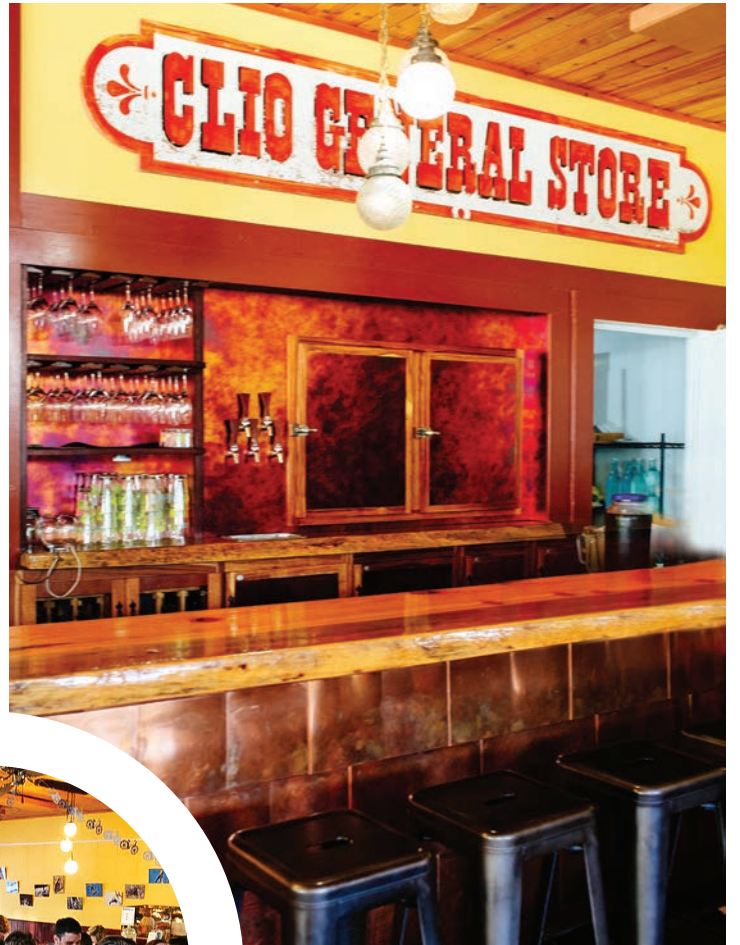
coming home

Cheryl Duniphin was lured back to Plumas County by her twin sister, Susan Delano, who wanted help running the



brewery she and her husband, Rich, started eight years ago, The Brewing Lair. "It's called that because there's a dirt road you drive up, into the woods," says Duniphin. "It's a little hidden."

Duniphin definitely had the professional experience to run a taphouse. She'd most recently owned a food truck in Kentucky that she named the Ricochet, because she was out and back, out and back, and felt like she was constantly bouncing around in it. But there was ultimately a bigger opportunity than just helping at the brewery: The Blackbird Inn, about 4 miles away in Clio, was for sale.





FALL COLORS

Autumn is a particularly good time to make a trek to Plumas County, when the reds and ambers of fall foliage can be seen pretty much anywhere, including the off-the-beaten paths of trails or forest roads.

The best easily accessed spots: Feather River Canyon, Bucks Lake, Lake Almanor, Indian Valley, the Quincy-Oroville Road, the Quincy-La Porte Road, Round Valley Reservoir Road and the Lakes Basin. Get a free copy of the Plumas County Fall Color Guide or follow the Awesome Autumn blog at plumascounty.org

"I've been in the food and hospitality business for 20 years," says Duniphin. "And when I came in here, it was so cute and so beautifully redone. (Original inn owners) Fletcher and Alana Darquea put in all the hard work in making it such a cool place, did all the remodeling. I got to plug-and-play."

But the Darqueas were also expecting their first child that summer (a boy), and had been running the entire six-room inn and bar/café on their own. They were tired, and happy to have someone buy them out. Duniphin, on the other hand, knew she could take the Blackbird to a new level—and that included making it a local hangout in her renamed Ricochet Café.

"I wanted to cater to locals, to make the locals feel comfortable, able to get a

good meal at a good price," she says. "So in the winter, we have guest chefs come in with a (global) flair—we've had Ethiopian and Peruvian food. In the dead of winter, people walk down from their houses to come for dinner."

Similarly, every summer, Duniphin closes down Lower Main Street in front of the inn and throws a street party. "We have bands, we have a water balloon fight—the kids love that," she says with a laugh. "This past summer, we had 250 people show up. I like to provide those things for the community."

coming here

Whether you live nearby or you're scooting in for a relaxing weekend—devoid as Clio is of so much as a traffic light—you'll find the former general store to be an interesting mix of vintage character and modern convenience.

For example, the inn's rooms are located on the second story of the turn-of-the-20th-century building, and retain the original hardwood floors and angled wood ceilings, as well as comfortable antique end tables, lamps and easy chairs with strong, clean 1930s lines. Descriptions of the rooms are even mini-history lessons. For example, the Sawmill Room at the top of the stairs is named in honor of Clio's three mills—the McKenzie Mill, the Burkhard and Gracey Mill and the Clio Lumber Company—when the rent in Clio was \$8.50/month and the average millworker's salary was \$1.50 an hour. Or The Wash Room explains how Clio was originally known as "Wash" until the postmaster got fed up with the frequent confusion with mail to Washington, D.C., and changed the town's name to Clio because he saw the word on a stove—a stove, by the way, that is on display in the inn's main lobby.

Room rates—hold on to your city-folk hats—range from \$89 to \$179 a night, and all rooms have private bathrooms (some with claw foot tubs), comfortable queen-size beds, coffee makers, mini-bars and high-speed internet. "You can stream a movie," says Duniphin.

Outside, you can sit on the front porch and read all afternoon or take a drive up Lakes Basin Road, where you can hike,

mountain bike or fish. The fall colors—all over Plumas County—are spectacular this time of year.

Like the inn, the café downstairs is both comfortably retro and cutting-edge at the same time. For example, the Clio General Store sign hangs above the bar. The wainscoting and flooring are original. There is the old "Clio" stove. You can imagine the gas pumps that used to sit out front.

But the food is nothing short of daring, with an assortment of savory waffle plates, like an open-faced waffle served with slow-cooked pulled pork, cabbage, chipotle and Kentucky bourbon barbecue sauce. Or consider the Zesty Kimchi Tacos, which are two corn tortillas topped with a vegan bean burger, kimchi, cabbage and cilantro lime sauce.

"Sometimes people look at the menu and honestly are a little scared," laughs Duniphin. "But then they try it and say, 'Who knew?'"

Helping with the distinct flavor is Duniphin's local sourcing from nearby farms and farmers' markets and her commitment to organic ingredients. She also is able to offer gluten-free and vegan entrees. No plate costs more than \$15.

Last but not least, of course, she has several local beers on the menu, including her sister's brewery, The Brewing Lair. "We keep two of their beers on tap and we also have Knee Deep out of Auburn and Truckee Brewing Company," she says.

down time

Despite Duniphin's naturally ambitious nature, she has learned over time to give herself the occasional rest. She doesn't try to do it all herself, for example, and during the summer high season is fully staffed with eight to 10 employees. She also lives in what she calls "the tiny house" behind the inn, so she is on-site...but yet not. "It's my little escape," she says.

And what was she doing this particular day? "Packing for a four-day getaway to Morro Bay," she says. "My boyfriend's mom and my aunt live there, and we're going to see a friend from college in a golf tournament."

She'll be back though. Plumas County is home. SL

Regional Restaurant Guide



Pad Thai from
Alchemy Cafe

Auburn/Loomis/Newcastle

Carpe Vino This welcoming restaurant, complete with an excellent wine shop, is one of the region's best-kept dining secrets. Carpe Vino's two menus—one for the wine bar, the other for the dining room—change frequently. Look for specialties such as Alaskan halibut with snap peas and turnips, chicken liver mousse, and arugula and fava bean salad with strawberries and fennel pollen. 1568 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA, 530-823-0320, carpevinoauburn.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Flower Farm Café This cozy café is situated on 10 acres of a working citrus orchard that was built in 1905 and now functions as a bed-and-breakfast, plant nursery, gift shop and wedding venue. The kitchen uses produce directly from the on-site garden and nearby Placer County farms. The breakfast menu includes house-made baked goods, and the lunch menu offers sandwiches, wraps, panini, salads and flatbread pizzas. Specials change daily. 4150 Auburn-Folsom Road, Loomis, CA, 916-652-5661, flowerfarminn.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Katrina's Café A beloved Auburn institution, Katrina's serves some of the best breakfast fare in the region. Cheery and tiny, it's packed on weekends, and the menu includes hearty dishes such as the chili con carne omelet and French toast topped with strawberries and cream. Don't miss the delicate lemon-yogurt pancake, rolled like a blintz and sprinkled with

powdered sugar. 456 Grass Valley Highway, Auburn, CA, 530-888-1166, katrinas-cafe.com. \$

Newcastle Produce This farm stand off I-80 goes back 150 years, is committed to sustainable farming practices and supports other local small farms with similar goals. You can eat in the deli, order online in advance, or pick up lunch or dinner on your way home. A grocery area sells fresh organic produce and goods. The deli offers healthy soups, salads, sandwiches, casseroles, quiches and desserts. (These include homemade scones, brownies, cookies and turnovers.) 9230 Cypress St., Newcastle, CA, 916-663-2016, newcastleproduce.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Sourdough Solutions Sourdough Solutions, located in Colfax, was inspired by Owner Rob Ferguson's 125-pound weight loss. The healthy café uses a sourdough starter that contains probiotic enzymes—which means it is digestible for even the most gluten-sensitive people. The restaurant prepares all food in-house and uses only the healthiest local ingredients. The sourdough food is made from organic, non-GMO flour and then whole-milled. Options include bread, vegan waffles, pizza crusts, and homemade crackers. Try the mini pizza with chicken, house-made pesto and cheese, or the Belgium waffles and add butter, syrup and fresh berries. There is something delicious for everyone. Online ordering is available with a delivery fee. 255 Highway 174, Suite A., Colfax, CA, 530-512-5191, sourdoughsolutions.com.

Tap & Vine Offering fresh, seasonal menus in a sleek, industrial space in Old Town Auburn, Tap & Vine is the local's new favorite. A house specialty is fried chicken, which is served with waffles at brunch or with Bloomsdale spinach and smashed fried fingerling potatoes at dinner. There are also weekly food-and-drink specials: Burgers & Beer lunch, Taco Tuesdays, Wine Wednesdays, Thirsty Thursdays and Sunday Brunch & Football. 907 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA, 530-889-VINE, tapandvineauburn.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Calaveras County

Alchemy Café On Main Street in Murphys, you will find locals enjoying chef-owner Jason Wright's vintage-chic restaurant. The strawberry-balsamic glazed salmon, Angus beef rib-eye, and the ultimate meatloaf are favorites, but everyone really comes for the bread: a crispy, chewy, flatbread with generous amounts of cheddar and Parmesan. 191 Main St., Murphys, CA, 209-728-0700, alchemymarket.com. \$\$\$

Grounds Grounds is owned by River Klass, a Sorbonne-trained chef, and was one of the first restaurants to move into Murphys' downtown district, just prior to the area's revival. It began as a coffee and pastry spot, before expanding into full-service dining, so it still boasts an espresso bar and opens early for breakfast. Try the French toast (made from Grounds' own fresh-baked sourdough) in the morning, the

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An advertisement for Avio Vineyards and Winery. The background is a close-up of a wooden door with a brass handle. The word 'Avio' is written in a large, elegant, red cursive font. Below it, the text reads 'per l'amore di famiglia' and 'Avio Vineyards and Winery is a destination that embodies the spirit of Northern Italy.' Further down, it says 'Your own personal escape to the Italian countryside.' At the bottom, it lists the tasting room hours and website: 'Tasting Room: Fri - Sun Sutter Creek, CA www.aviowine.com'.

twice-baked potato at lunch, or the boneless barbecued pork ribs for dinner. 402 Main St., Murphys, CA, 209-728-8663, groundsrestaurant.com. \$\$

V Restaurant, Bar & Bistro Located in the historic Victoria Inn, this restaurant's European style extends to its menu. Start in the bar with a specialty cocktail, and order the Devils on Horseback (consisting of Medjool dates stuffed with blue cheese and wrapped in applewood bacon). Dinner in the restaurant offers beef, lamb and fish. A popular plate is the porterhouse steak, but menus change seasonally. 402 Main St., Murphys, CA, 209-728-0107, vrestaurantandbar-murphys.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Coloma

The Argonaut Farm to Fork Cafe The Argonaut is housed in a rustic building in the center of the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, but this isn't your ordinary park fare. Partnered with Bee Love Farms, this café prides itself on fresh, seasonal, organic, locally sourced food. Try a breakfast sandwich like The Egg (egg, cheddar cheese, and avocado) and choose from handmade sandwiches, seasonal soups, hot panini or salads for lunch. Later in the day, snack on the fresh vegetable, fruit and cheese plate, and add a locally made gelato. 331 Highway 49, Coloma, CA, 530-626-7345, argonautcafe.com. \$\$-\$

Sierra Rizing Bakery This unassuming bakery-café is just west of where the American River snakes out of Coloma, but don't let its plain exterior fool you: It regularly draws a crowd of kayakers, rafters, campers and families with fresh fruit pies, hot panini, meat or vegan chili, soups and fresh-baked loaves of bread. 7310 Highway 49, Lotus, CA, 530-642-1308, sierrarizing.com. \$\$-\$

Grass Valley/Nevada City

Diego's This eclectic, art-filled Chilean restaurant opened in 2002, and is run by mother and daughter Diane Robison and June Atkinson. Try the tilapia fish tacos or the portobello sandwich (sliced and grilled in seasonal balsamic, topped with guacamole, tomato, green beans and garlic mayo). And don't miss everyone's favorite: warm, house-made Chilean bread rolls, served with garlic butter and cilantro sauce. 217 Colfax Ave., Grass Valley, CA, 530-477-1460, diegosrestaurant.com. \$\$\$

Lefty's Grill Situated overlooking Deer Creek in Nevada City, this restaurant is a favorite destination. Lefty's prepares all dishes from scratch, offers daily specials, and is known for its award-winning pizzas. Sit outside on the upper or lower patio and enjoy a bloody mary with secret ingredients. Other options are to dine in the Deco Room with a full-service menu or in the bar upstairs for drinks and appetizers. 101 Broad St., Nevada City, CA, 530-265-5838, leftysgrill.com. \$\$

New Moon Café A local favorite since it opened in 1998, this café has a very seasonal menu that "changes with the moon." Daily handcrafted ravioli, line-caught wild fish, Grimaud Farms duck, and Mary's organic chicken breast—all made or served with locally sourced, organic produce—are offered



Assorted Breads from Three Forks Bakery & Brewing Co.

regularly. Offers an extensive beer list. 203 York St., Nevada City, CA, 530-265-6399, thenewmooncafe.com. \$\$

Three Forks Bakery & Brewing Company This restaurant prides itself on organic, locally sourced ingredients and near zero-waste (Three Forks' coffee grounds, spent beer and food trimmings go to local farmers to feed their animals). The jams, pizza sauce, mustard, charcuterie and cheese are all made from scratch, as are the pastries, cakes, pies and cookies. The seasonal craft beers on tap are brewed on-site, too, in the seven-barrel brew house. Menu items also include wood-fired pizza, handcrafted sandwiches and salads, soup, espresso and regional wines. 211 Commercial St., Nevada City, CA, 530-470-8333, threeforksnc.com. \$\$

Twelve 28 Kitchen This restaurant in Penn Valley is run by Zach Sterner, a notable young chef who has worked in Michelin-starred kitchens in the Napa/Sonoma Valley. Now in the heart of the Gold Country with a family business of his own, Sterner sources local meats, produce, wine and beer for his creative, seasonal and always-changing menus. Be sure to order the "Dirty Smashed Fries": crispy, twice-cooked Yukon Gold potatoes, with Napa cabbage kimchi and house green sriracha aioli—and for \$4, you can add crispy braised pork belly from Cosmic Roots Ranch in Grass Valley. 10018 Commercial Ave., Penn Valley, CA, 530-446-6534, twelve28kitchen.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Jackson/Sutter Creek/Plymouth

Amador Brewing Company This small craft brewing company brings delicious, well-balanced beer styles to a fun and friendly atmosphere. Come on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday during the taproom hours and go out back to the patio where food trucks are parked and ready to feed you with your perfectly paired Amador Brewing Co. beer. Try the Altbier Northern German Amber Beer, which won a silver medal at the California State Fair. 9659 Main St., Plymouth, CA, 209-507-1900, amadorbrewing.com. \$

Amador Vintage Market The market offers house specialties like fresh sandwiches, home-style salads, charcuterie, artisanal cheeses and desserts. Take your meal to go or sit down to eat. Try the Amador Turkey Club with smoked turkey, bacon, gorgonzola, tomato, avocado mayo and green onions on a rustic roll. If you are heading out for an afternoon of wine tasting, order from one of the wine tour lunch options: box lunch, family-style basket lunch, bento box or wine country platter lunch. 9393 Main St., Plymouth, CA, 209-245-3968, amadorvintagemarket.com. \$\$-\$

Element Adjacent to the Hanford House Inn, this sleek and attractive eatery has both dining room and patio seating. Try the Hanford House Benny (slices of rustic bread with soppressata, wilted spinach, poached eggs and Element citrus hollandaise) or the Gold Country Cakes (gingerbread flapjacks with a maple molasses drizzle, pomegranate and roasted nuts). Element is open for breakfast only. 61 Hanford St., Sutter Creek, CA, 209-267-0747, restaurantelement.com. \$\$-\$

Taste Taste changes its seasonal menu frequently. Always recommended, however, is the Mushroom Cigar starter (crimini, shiitake, oyster mushrooms, fresh herbs and goat cheese wrapped in phyllo). Watch for the Beeler Farms pork tenderloin with roasted Tahitian melon or the day boat sea scallops with Dragon Farms brown beech mushrooms. The large selection of local wines—prompting an Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator magazine—includes wine flights, as well as red wines on tap from the Sierra Foothills and Shenandoah Valley. 9402 Main St., Plymouth, CA, 209-245-3463, restauranttaste.com. \$\$

Lake Tahoe-North/West Shore

Christy Hill This lakefront bistro features French-inspired California cuisine with a Mediterranean flair, and has views from every table so that patrons can enjoy the sunset while sipping wine from the ample

wine list. Christy Hill's motto—"Locally sourced and crafted with love"—is reflected in the elegant menus. The pan-roasted Alaskan halibut is served with baby artichokes, cauliflower, pearl couscous, olives, fennel, and saffron barigoule; and many rave that the bread pudding is a showstopper. 115 Grove St., Tahoe City, CA, 530-583-8551, christyhill.com. \$\$\$

Gar Woods Grill & Pier Offering a waterfront deck and lake views, Gar Woods is more than just pretty scenery: It also serves hand-cut steaks, slow-smoked St. Louis ribs and fresh Pacific seafood. Order the 7-ounce, bacon-wrapped filet mignon and garlic prawns, with Point Reyes blue cheese butter and garlic mashed potatoes; or the Dungeness crab risotto, served with sauteed green beans, baby carrots and a blood orange beurre blanc. Sample from the large wine list or try one of the famous signature cocktails. 5000 N. Lake Blvd., Carnelian Bay, CA, 530-546-3366, garwoods.com. \$\$

Jake's on the Lake This family-owned restaurant in Tahoe City has been around since 1978. Jake's has great views of the harbor and Lake Tahoe, so opt for patio seating when weather permits. Jake's offers family-friendly, casual dining, with a menu that shows California and Hawaiian influences and uses local and sustainable ingredients when possible. For starters, try the Monterey Bay calamari with lemon remoulade and chili water. From the main menu, Scampi Fettuccine Provençal is an excellent choice (shrimp, basil, garlic, heirloom tomatoes, and spinach) or go for the traditional Angus beef burger with grilled onions and white cheddar. 780 N. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, CA, 530-583-0188, jakestahoe.com. \$\$

Lone Eagle Grille This lakeside destination is a gorgeous place to dine. Reminiscent of a warm Tahoe lodge, the dining room and lounge have floor-to-ceiling windows that offer panoramic views of the private beach and Lake Tahoe. Lone Eagle Grille also has a patio with fire pits, so you can put your feet up, choose from the wide selection of seasonal cocktails and take in some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. A large menu includes game meats, seafood and vegetarian selections. Order the Niman Ranch all-natural lamb chops with mint hummus and lemon oil. 111 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, NV, 775-886-6899, loneeaglegrille.com. \$\$\$

Manzanita Hop on the gondola and take a scenic ride up to Manzanita, located in The Ritz-Carlton Hotel at Northstar ski resort. This Zagat-rated restaurant sources organic, sustainable, locally raised meat and produce when possible. A vegetarian option is the Farro Risotto: rainbow carrot, Tokyo turnip, kohlrabi, royal trumpet mushroom, radish, burrata and Parmesan. Or go casual and order a margherita pizza from the wood-burning oven. The large lounge—serving beer, wine and cocktails—also overlooks the Sierra. 13031 Ritz-Carlton Highlands Court, Truckee, CA, 530-562-3050, manzanalaketahoe.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Moody's Bistro, Bar, and Beats This lively bistro, in the Truckee Hotel, is a casual spot to hang out, eat at the bar and listen to some live music. Moody's is Zagat-rated for its menu and wine list. A big draw here is the wine on tap. The bar menu has ahi poke

and a variety of pizzas, burgers, soups and salads. Moody's emphasis is on high-quality, organic, seasonal and local ingredients: Try the house-made pasta like the torchietti (English peas, house bacon, mint, espelette and burrata). 10007 Bridge St., Truckee, CA, 530-587-8688, moodysbistro.com. \$\$\$

Pianeta Ristorante Step in to Pianeta and take a step back into Old World Italy. This cozy, rustic place in Downtown Historic Truckee serves Northern Italian cuisine at its finest. All pastas are homemade, like the ravioli Bolognese: house-made ricotta and Parmesan cheese ravioli, classic beef, veal, and tomato ragu, with spinach, melted mozzarella and Parmesan. Choose from a classic antipasto menu: olives, bruschetta, carpaccio and salsicce. Pair any dish with wine from the extensive wine list. 10096 Donner Pass Road, Truckee, CA, 530-587-4694, pianetarestauranttruckee.com. \$\$\$

PlumpJack Café and Bar Steps from Squaw Valley ski lifts and the Olympic skating rink, PlumpJack is a perfect mountain escape that has won "Best of" awards from Wine Spectator magazine. In the bar, share a plate like the jalapeno lime chicken wings or indulge in a bowl of savory popcorn. Favorite entrees include the Double R Ranch filet mignon with potato leek gratin, blue lake green beans and bourbon bacon marmalade; or kale and artichoke enchiladas with tomatillo poblano salsa, pickled red onions, red mole and spiced corn nuts. 1920 Squaw Valley Road, Olympic Valley, CA, 530-583-1578, plumpjackcafe.com. \$\$\$

Sunnyside Sunnyside is a casual, lodge-style restaurant with panoramic views of the lake and mountains—visible from almost every table in the dining room and from the large patio right on the water. Come and enjoy the comfortable atmosphere—a tradition since 1965—while nibbling on the fried zucchini. And you can't go wrong ordering the grilled Sunnyside burger: local wagyu Angus beef, aged white cheddar, soft potato bun and shoestring fries (add bacon, fried egg or avocado). 1850 W. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, CA, 530-583-7200, sunnysideresort.com. \$\$

Wolfdale's Cuisine Unique Overlooking the picturesque lake, the restaurant changes its menu frequently to feature seasonal ingredients. Chef Douglas Dale's theme is "fresh food, simply prepared," like oysters on the half shell as a starter; and for an entree, seafood gumbo with prawns, scallops, shrimp, spinach, shiitake and okra. Wolfdale's also offers a fun happy hour menu. Reservations recommended. 640 N. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, CA, 530-583-5700, wolfdales.com. \$\$\$

Lake Tahoe—South Shore

Café Fiore Drive down the snowy road after a day of skiing to this small alpine house and get ready for a hearty, homemade Italian meal. With over 300 wines on the menu and 40 half bottles to choose from, Café Fiore has earned a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence every year since opening. As you sip your wine and unwind, try the signature eggplant crepes and the house special lamb chops. With only

seven white tablecloth tables for dinner service each night, make reservations in advance (in warmer weather, patio seating is also available). 1169 Ski Run Blvd., #5, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-541-2908, cafeiore.com. \$\$\$

Cold Water Brewery & Grill A casual, fun atmosphere on Highway 50, Cold Water Brewery has a selection of eight rotating house-made, all-grain craft beers, with brewmaster Ryan Parker on-site. In the grill, Chef Patrick Harritty takes a unique twist on California comfort food, like the CW Burger or South-shore Fish Tacos; the menu also changes seasonally. Come by on Sunday for brunch, which includes a build-your-own bloody mary bar. 2544 Highway 50, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-544-4677, tahoe-coldwaterbrewery.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Chimayo Tacos y Tortas This casual farm-to-plate restaurant features traditional Mexican family recipes with a fusion of Texas barbecue. Options include dine-in, takeout and catering. A happy hour menu is offered every evening, with beer and wine. Meats include carne asada, pulled pork and chicken. Choose from enchiladas, tortas, combination plates, salads and sides. 1142 Ski Run Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-600-3900, chimayotahoe.com. \$\$

Echo Restaurant Echo is a casual spot to grab and go or eat in. Echo serves locally grown vegetables and meats, and popular menu choices include build-your-own burgers, pastas and pizzas. One option from the small sample plate is the Sunny Root Mix with jicama, tender greens, shaved Manchego and grain mustard vinaigrette. From the large sample plate, try the Crescent Bay Wild Salad, with grilled salmon and balsamic vinaigrette. While relaxing on the patio, order one of the signature cocktails, like the coconut hibiscus mojito or blood orange and basil lemonade. 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-543-2140, tahoesorthotel.com. \$\$

Evan's American Gourmet Café Located in a converted cabin in the Sierra, Evan's has been serving new American plates for 28 years, using fresh ingredients for all handcrafted meals, including daily fresh seafood specials. Choose a bottle of wine from the extensive wine menu and start with the scallop quenelles with sherry-lobster cream. For an entree, order the grilled filet of beef with horseradish-green peppercorn butter and syrah reduction, served with cheddar gratin potatoes. Zagat-rated. 536 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-542-1990, evanstahoe.com. \$\$\$

MacDuff's Public House Run by the Sievwright Brothers—originally from Aberdeen, Scotland—this authentic Scottish pub creates traditional fare using only fresh ingredients. Try Real Shepherd's Pie, made with fresh ground lamb, carrots, onions, celery and corn in a potato crust, or slow-cooked corned beef served with mashed potatoes, carrots and sauteed dill cabbage. Locally crafted wine and beer are available, as well as an interesting spate of ales from London, Dublin and Glasgow. 1041 Fremont Ave., South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-542-8777, macduffspub.com. \$\$

Off the Hook Locally owned and operated since 2004 by Chi and Tizzy Chen, this stylish, centrally located spot offers fresh sushi and sashimi, as well as 40 sushi rolls, cooked appetizers and entrees. Check out the fun names—like a spicy tuna tempura maki roll called Fire in the Sky—or order a steaming bowl of Tori Udon after a day in the snow and then order the mochi ice cream. 2660 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-544-5599, offthehooksushi.com. \$-\$\$

Primo's Italian Bistro The original Primo's opened in 1962 on Beacon Hill in Boston. Continuing that tradition today is the original owner's son, Jim Primo, who serves only organic free-range chicken and milk-fed veal, as well as house-made sauces, pastas and desserts. Try the homemade lasagna, the rigatoni with sausage and mushrooms in vodka sauce, or the saltimbocca—sauteed cutlets layered with sage, prosciutto and provolone cheese. 2180 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-600-2220, primositalianbistro.com. \$\$

Revive Coffee & Wine With a stone fireplace, cozy seating and a handcrafted wood bar, as well as a front porch only steps from the beach, there is a reason the slogan here is "Get Revived." Drip, pour-over and nitro coffee selections will fuel your day; and with a wide choice of local wine and beer, come relax and unwind later. Pastries, panini, small plate entrees and desserts are on the menu and there are frequent live music events. 2180 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA, 530-600-4007, revivecoffeewine.com. \$

Eastern Sierra

Black Velvet Coffee A craft coffee roaster, this sleek, contemporary space also features microbrews and local wines. At the espresso bar, choose between a variety of organic, rain forest alliance, micro lot, fair trade and direct trade coffees, as well as a rotating four-tap draft beer system and more than 20 bottled craft beers. The wine bar offers 30 selections from Melville, Lola, Merry Edwards and other local wineries. 3343 Main St., Mammoth Lakes, CA, blackvelvetcoffee.com. \$

Campo Mammoth Campo Mammoth offers farm-fresh ingredients, handcrafted meats and creative wine and cocktail pairings. Pasta, risotto and wood-fired pizza options change daily, or try the pork plate or cassoulet. Thursdays are date nights—\$50 for a four-course dinner and 50 percent off a bottle of wine; on Sundays, kids eat free 5–8 p.m. 6210 Minaret Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 760-934-0669, campomammoth.com. \$\$-\$\$\$

Placerville/Camino

Heyday Café Family-owned and -operated since 2007, Heyday is housed in a Historic Downtown Placerville building with big windows and red brick walls. It serves a fresh, seasonal menu that changes frequently; don't miss the spinach salad with toasted walnuts in a tart cherry dressing or the portobello mushroom ravioli in browned butter sauce. There is always a wide range of appetizers (artisanal cheeses

or bruschetta), interesting panini and pizzas, and both local and international wines. 325 Main St., Placerville, CA, 530-626-9700, heydaycafe.com. \$\$

The Independent Restaurant and Bar Inspired by the success of Heyday Café, the Thoma/Carter family took the plunge and opened The Independent in 2011. Located in the Emerald Street Building in Placerville, with a big patio and outdoor fireplace, it offers a self-described "American fusion menu" and a full top-tier bar. The menu is seasonal and interesting: beer battered leek rings served with wasabi coconut crème, or Dijon and tarragon crusted lamb rack with Winterhill extra virgin olive oil. Check out the local wine list and craft beers, as well as creative cocktails like the Bourbon Ginger Smash: Jim Beam bourbon, orange-infused cognac, fresh mint and lemon, house-made ginger syrup. 629 Main St., Suite 102, Placerville, CA, 530-344-7645, independentplacerville.com. \$\$\$

Smith Flat House This comfortable yet elegant restaurant has a long history of supporting local farmers, winemakers and other cottage industries to bring fresh, seasonal, locally sourced products to its menu. Try the brick oven artisan flatbread pizzas (from house-made dough), Tuscan-style bolognese pasta, or the local cider-soaked pork tenderloin. Very local wine and beer (almost exclusively from the surrounding foothills) and a full children's menu are available. 2021 Smith Flat Road, Placerville, CA, 530-621-1003, smithflathouse.com. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

The Farm Table This restaurant and market specializes in what it calls the "farmstead arts of preservation and whole food cookery": house-made sausages and charcuterie, pickled seasonal vegetables, preserves and condiments, local wine and beer. The menu changes seasonally, and has dine-in, takeout and picnic box options, which range from meat and cheese platters (including house-made pate) to more formal fare like the flat iron steak, served over locally milled polenta with house-made chimichurri. 311 Main St., Placerville, CA, 530-205-8140, ourfarmtable.com. \$\$-\$\$

Reno/Sparks/Carson City

Cafe at Adele's Owned by fourth-generation, award-winning chef Charlie Abowd and his wife Karen, this restored, art-filled Victorian retains 19th century touches like a brick fireplace surrounded by built-in bookshelves. The food is cutting-edge, however, with a growing list of nearby farms, ranches and dairies supplying fresh ingredients. Look for the braised beef short ribs with sweet onions, carrots, bacon and garlic in a cabernet demi-glace. There is also a good selection of local wine and beer, as well as cocktails with house-made ingredients. 1112 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV, 775-882-3353, adelesrestaurantandlounge.com. \$\$\$

Beaujolais Bistro Located in a charming red brick house, this authentic French bistro changes its menu daily to take full advantage of the freshest seasonal products, with meats and produce from local organic farms and ranches. Chef Bill Gilbert offers traditional

French cooking with a modern twist: gnocchi with porcini, ramps, carrots, lemon and brown butter; or Niman Ranch leg of lamb persillade, with pommes boulangere and haricots verts. Local and French wines. 753 Riverside Drive, Reno, NV, 775-323-2227, beaujolaisbistro.com. \$\$\$

The Blind Onion Pizza & Pub With the slogan "Love Fades But Pizza is Forever," this fun and irreverent restaurant will give anyone with the name of Fred \$1 off a draft beer. But it is mostly known for its fresh ingredients and daily house-made pizza dough (hand-braided into an outer crust that is crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside). Cold, crispy salads and veggie plates—as well as microbrews and local wines—are also on the menu. 6405 S. Virginia St. (and two other Reno locations), Reno, NV, 775-351-2000, theblindonion.com. \$\$-\$\$

The Cheese Board Started in 1981 by Debbie Branby as a specialty cheese shop, The Cheese Board is now a popular lunch-only bistro (just down the street from the Nevada Museum of Art) and full-service catering business. Try the roasted turkey focaccia with basil pesto, roasted red peppers, lettuce and provolone; or the artisan cheese plate, which includes a wedge of English cotswold, creamy port salut toasted almonds, ancho chili jam, a baguette and crackers. 247 California Ave., Reno, NV, 775-323-3115, cheeseboardcatering.com. \$\$-\$\$

Campo Campo is often credited with bringing Reno's attention to the farm-to-fork movement. With two locations—Reno and Sparks—Campo continues to highlight local ingredients from farms and ranches across the region in its Neapolitan-style pizza fired in a wood-burning oven, farm-fresh produce, handcrafted pasta and house-made salumi. Choose between a wide selection of wines and creative cocktails (try the Tahoe Storm, with Tahoe Blue vodka, Ruffino prosciutto, honey syrup, lemon juice, brandied cherries and rosemary). 50 N. Sierra St., Reno, NV, 775-737-9555; 137 Los Altos Parkway, Sparks, NV, 775-501-8970, camporeno.com. \$\$

Great Basin Brewing Company Nevada's oldest brewery (established 1993) takes its name from the Great Basin region. The brewery produces Nevada Gold, Wild Horse Ale, Outlaw Milk Stout and a Seasonal Brewmaster's Special. Its two pubs—in Reno and Sparks—serve upscale fare that pairs well with the craft ale and lagers, like Brewery Chicken Wings or salmon tacos with fresh mango salsa. Also available at both locations is the famous Icky Bread, which uses left-over barley, pale ale and local honey, baked fresh daily. 5525 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775.284.7711; 846 Victorian Ave., Sparks, NV, 775-355-7711, greatbasinbrewingco.com. \$\$-\$\$

Great Full Gardens Opened in Reno's Midtown District in 2013 by Gino and Juli Scala, this trendy and healthy eatery emphasizes wholesome food. Plentiful menu options are offered for vegetarians, vegans, gluten-free or Paleo diners, as well as people just looking for a delicious alternative to processed food. Try the unique waffles, salads, soups, rice or veggie bowls, as well as entrees like the tri-tip tacos. 555 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-324-2013, greatfullgardens.com. \$



Two Chicks Burger
From Two Chicks

Two Chicks Committed to locally sourced, farm-fresh ingredients, these “two chicks”—Haley Wood and Jessie Watnes—formerly ran the popular Gour-Melt Food Truck (specializing in creative, high-end grilled cheese sandwiches). Now offering breakfast and lunch in a colorful, permanent Midtown location, the pair serves omelets, eggs Benedict, salads and sandwiches, using free-range eggs, fresh-baked bread, fire-roasted coffee and local brews. (A full list of their suppliers is on their website.) 752 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-323-0600, twochicksreno.com. \$

Wild River Grille Located on the RiverWalk in downtown Reno, in the Riverside Artist Lofts Building, this innovative restaurant is consistently voted one of the best in the area. It is known for its gorgeous patio, as well as handcrafted cocktails using fresh-squeezed juices and house-infused vodkas and brandies (like The Classic Razz). House specialties include pan-seared duck breast (with risotto cake and pinot noir strawberry demi-glace) and porcini truffle ravioli (garlic cream, roasted tomato, scallions, shaved Parmesan). Look for Monday night “Dinner With Your Dog” events (proceeds benefit the SPCA). 17 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-284-7455, bestrenorestaurant.com. \$\$\$

Yosemite Area

The Ahwahnee Hotel Inside the park, this visually stunning restaurant—with 34-foot ceilings and granite pillars, all lit by chandeliers—offers a seasonal menu with locally sourced ingredients. Look for the slow-cooked prime rib of beef, served with buttermilk mashed potatoes, broccolini and Yorkshire pudding; or Mary’s free range rotisserie chicken, served with cheddar polenta, roasted carrots, and grilled baby bok choy. A nice selection of after dinner brandies and ports is available. Yosemite National Park, Yosemite, CA, travelyosemite.com/dining/the-ahwahnee-dining-room. \$\$\$

The Mountain Room Restaurant This restaurant, inside the park, features amazing views of a nearly 2,500-foot waterfall, as well as a seasonal menu including items like onion soup gratinée, rainbow trout Amandine and Mary’s roast duck. Or choose the lounge instead, where you can kick back, sip a cocktail and roast a marshmallow in the Swedish-style fireplace. Yosemite National Park, 9006 Yosemite Lodge Dr. Yosemite, CA, travelyosemite.com/lodging/dining/yosemite-valley-lodge. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Wawona Hotel Located inside the park, this restaurant features a Victorian dining room with a roaring fireplace in cool weather, or a veranda and Adirondack chairs on the lawn in summer. It also offers healthy, seasonal options, like the cornmeal-crusted mountain trout served with quinoa pilaf and broccolini. There is an equally nutritious children’s menu, as well as craft beers, signature cocktails and local/European wines. Yosemite National Park, Yosemite, CA, travelyosemite.com/dining/wawona-hotel-dining-room. \$\$\$

Hub Coffee Roasters What started in 2009 as a coffee bar in a 400-square-foot Midtown garage has grown into a sophisticated craft roasting company. The current Riverside location overlooks the Truckee River and now includes the Tea Bar & Eatery, which offers local and seasonal small plates, desserts and Sunday brunch; the newest location—on UNR campus—is keeping the college crowd fueled. Choose between pour-overs, creamy espresso drinks, or coffee beans to take home. 727 Riverside Drive, Reno, NV, 775-453-1911, hubcoffeeroasters.com. \$

Liberty Food & Wine Exchange Opened by former Campo chef Mark Estee in summer 2016, Liberty serves a seasonal menu of shareable plates, like house-made pesto and hummus or cheese platters featuring house meats. There are also fresh salads, handmade pastas, sandwiches and burgers. Be sure to check out the on-site boutique market, as well as a 4,000-square-foot production kitchen, bakery and USDA-approved butcher shop. 100 N. Sierra St., Reno, NV, 775-336-1091, libertyfoodandwine.com. \$\$

Mario’s Portofino Ristorante Italiano Owned by husband and wife Roberto and Mindi Gulizia, this authentic Italian eatery uses only fresh, natural ingredients from local farmers in its handcrafted salads, soups, pastas, and meat or fish entrees. Try Chef Roberto’s Cannelloni Della Casa (homemade pasta filled with chicken, spinach and ricotta, baked in a creamy marinara sauce) and don’t forget to order their “almost famous limoncello” to sip on. 1505 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-825-7779, mariosportofino.com. \$\$\$

Noble Pie Parlor This cheeky pizza parlor is located in the art deco El Cortez Hotel. Noble uses only organic, locally sourced ingredients and its specialties include fresh salads, house-made meatballs and sausage, and made-from-scratch dough and salad dressings. Build your own pie from a fun selection of toppings, or try a specialty like the

PB&J (pineapple, sweet basil, jalapeno and roasted garlic). 239 W. Second St., Reno, NV, 775-622-9222, noblepieparlor.com \$\$

Squeeze In Proclaiming to offer the “best omelettes on the planet,” this family-owned breakfast and lunch restaurant began in 1974 as a tiny 10-foot-wide, 39-seat place in Truckee, where customers had to “squeeze in.” Today’s menu includes the Racy Tracy Omelette, which was featured on Food Network’s “Throwdown with Bobby Flay”: sauteed mushrooms, Jack cheese and bacon, topped with avocado. Pancakes, sandwiches and soups are also offered, as well as screwdrivers, mimosas and bloody marys. 5020 Las Brisas Blvd., Suite A5, Reno, NV, 775-787-2700 (other locations in South Reno, Sparks and Truckee), squeezein.com. \$

Súp Located in the Midtown District of Reno, this creative restaurant is owned by husband/wife team Christian and Kasey Christensen, who had a long-standing tradition of “Soup Sundays” for their friends and family. At these folks’ urging, they opened the restaurant in 2007, and say they’ve “had a line down the street at lunchtime” every day since. They work with several local farms, make everything from scratch (except their bread, which arrives each morning from House of Bread), and offer six seasonal daily soups (to eat there or take home). 669 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV, 775-324-4787, stockpotinc.com. \$

Tha Joint Sushi Grill Co-owners Chon Song and Executive Chef Tae Sung Lee opened this Asian fusion and sushi bar with a jail theme in 2015. The menu includes fresh, beautifully plated nigiri and maki sushi and hand rolls, as well as unique dishes like Yakiton (cream cheese wonton with seafood) and Angry Bird (fried chicken with a special sauce), and a good selection of sake and local wines. 222 Los Altos Parkway, Suite 112, Sparks, NV, (775) 626-8677 (location in Reno too), thajointsushi.com. \$\$

Sunset Chasers

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIAL JAMES

The days are getting shorter now, which means we see the Golden Hour as we are leaving the office, picking the kids up from practice, heading home for a warm dinner and a cozy night by the fire. Be sure to let your eyes drift to that horizon as the sun sets, even if you are busy with fall activities and not quite done with your day. Let it remind you what a beautiful place this is and how often we are surrounded by magic and wonder.

This issue: Golden Hour in the Gold Country may be the best place to see a sunset, fitting this issue's theme. Nestled in the foreground is Nevada City, an especially lovely place in autumn.

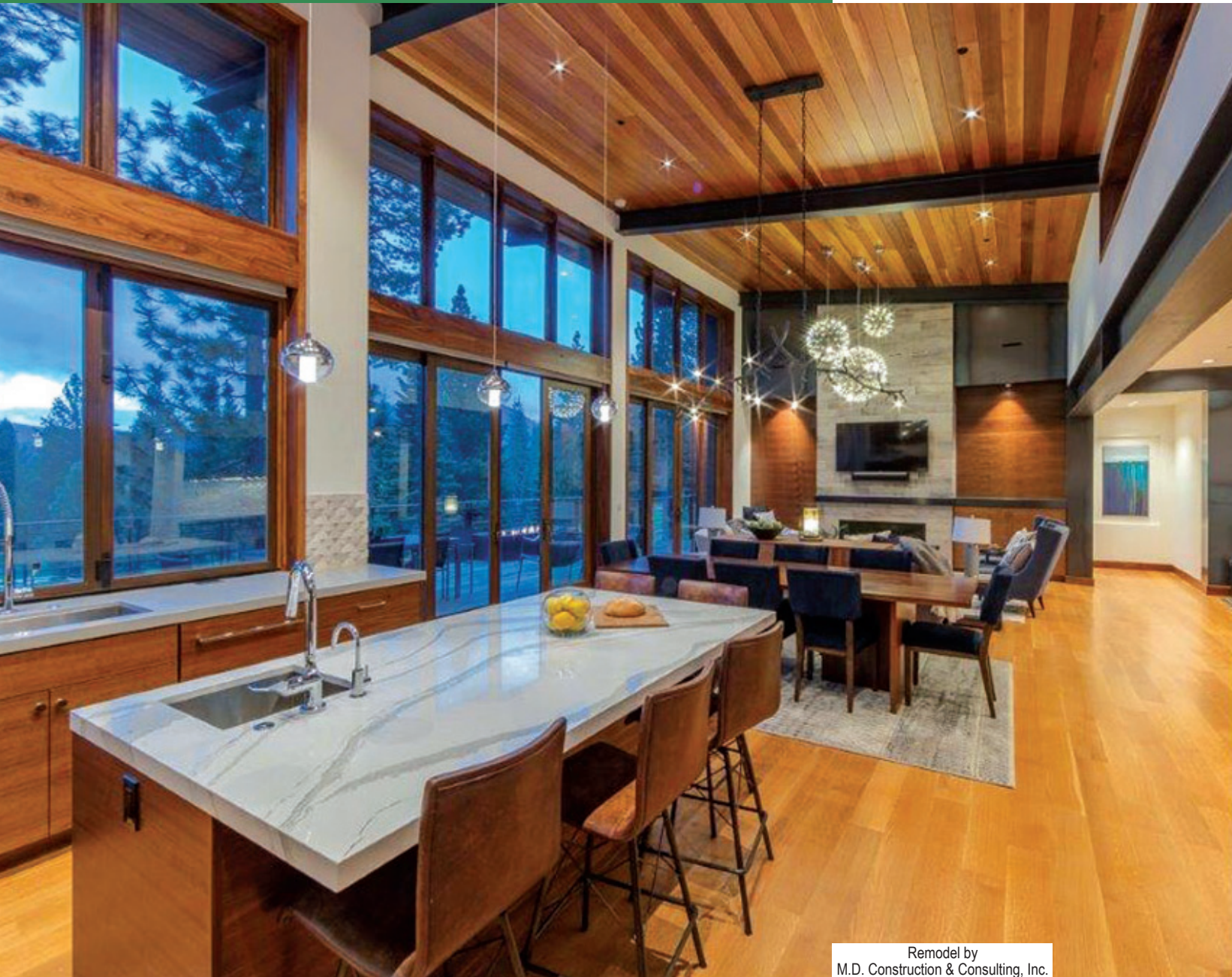


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