WE CONSIDER THE ANNUAL CENTRAL COAST WINE CLASSIC SIMPLY THE greatest way to enjoy fantastic wines of this region while having the time of your life. This year, August 10-14, will be the 31st time winentrepreneur Archie McLaren has organized this remarkable five-day extravaganza of barrel tastings, auctions, dinners, lunches, tours, and symposia that offer not only a rare opportunity to taste the very best California wines, with an emphasis on Central Coast wines, but also to rub shoulders with the talented men and women who craft them. Mr. McLaren has outdone himself this year at all price levels. Yes, there is still an exceptional, magical $1250 gourmet dinner at Hearst Castle in San Simeon. But there are impressive $115 to $150 dinners at countless wineries, resorts and homes of important patrons, too.

The events kick off Wednesday the 10th with a barrel tasting ($75), barrel auction ($75) and winery dinners ($115) at Dolphin Bay Resort & Spa in Shell Beach and an Arabian Horse Ranch in the Edna Valley. On Thursday the 11th there are vineyard tours and luncheons at exceptionally located Tablas Creek Vineyard & Winery ($75) and Daou Vineyards & Winery in Paso Robles, focused on California Rhone Varietals and Bordeaux Varietals respectively ($75), and the impressive Hearst Castle experience in the evening.
Friday’s offerings include Edna Valley and Arroyo Grande Valley tours and tastings ($75), a Santa Rita Hills Santa Barbara County tour and tasting with light luncheon ($75), a Santa Barbara Funk Zone Chardonnay and Pinot Noir symposium ($75), a Central Coast Pinot Noir symposium, featuring nine iconic producers, at the newly remodeled Santa Barbara Inn ($75), and two winemaker dinners, one with vintners Fred Brander (Brander) and Bob Lindquist (Qupé) in the historic Mural Room of the Santa Barbara Courthouse ($150), and the other, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., a very special winemaker dinner, featuring Vintners Bion Rice of Sunstone Vineyards & Winery and Artiste Winery & Bryan Babcock of Babcock Vineyards, with an array of fine wines from each property, on the exquisitely designed Channel Cat, the largest luxury sailing catamaran ship in Santa Barbara Harbor. ($150) There is also a very special Rare Wine Dinner in the private dining room of the exclusive Santa Barbara Club with exceptional, stratospherically-rated French, Spanish and Australian wines ($750).

Things really heat up on Saturday the 13th with a Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon symposium at the Summerland polo estate of Pat Nesbitt, Bella Vista, ($95), a Champagne Louis Roederer and Black Caviar symposium also at the polo estate ($95). There is a 10 AM to Noon auction preview with entertainment and exotic automobiles at Mr. Nesbitt’s Bella Vista followed by the Classic’s famous Rare and Fine Wine and Lifestyle Auction ($175 for all of the auction aforementioned). We have never seen such a bounty of cruises, travel, outstanding wines and experiences up for bidding like this event has always provided.

Sunday closes the events with an Australian wine symposium featuring Sparky Marquis of the renowned Mollydooker Winery ($75). The happy festivities close with a gala VIP Champagne Luncheon of Louis Roederer Champagne and Black River Caviar at Stella Mare adjacent to Santa Barbara’s beautiful Bird Refuge ($95). If you are interested in attending one of the events or more than one (There are attractively priced packages that include several activities at a price that is easier on the wallet), visit www.centralcoastwineclassic.org for details, and then contact Archie McLaren, archie.wineclassic@gmail.com or call (805) 878-3124 for reservations. This is an event not to be missed, a joyous celebration of wine, food, people and life’s finer things, organized by a dedicated gentleman whose sense of style is unmatched. While it is worth the price of admission just to spend some time with the delightful Mr. McLaren, the Central Coast Wine Classic opens the stunning world of Central Coast wines in all their glory to all.
Birthday is a time to celebrate birth itself, the joy of life. It is also an occasion to rethink a life: How great is the disparity between what someone has accomplished and what they can accomplish? We asked ourselves this question while raising a glass of chilled Bollinger to the Queen of England on her 90th. The answer is simply that she has performed superbly and honorably and accomplished a great deal with grace and intelligence. Not easy over a 64-year reign. This is an ideal time to visit England and London especially to join in the hoopla. Though her actual birth date is April 21, the city is celebrating with events that started in May. Most celebrations are in Windsor Castle and tickets are hard to come by but you could have caught a glimpse of her at the Birthday Parade June 11 with 1400 soldiers, 200 horses and 400 musicians. Through January 8, there’s an exhibit called Fashioning a Reign: 90 years of Style From the Queen’s Wardrobe rotating between the Palace of Holyrood-house in Edinburgh, Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. But rather than monkeying around with crowds to get into the royal birthday spirit, we suggest you head for Bellamy’s in Mayfair, the only public restaurant the Queen has dined at in the past ten years. And she has been here not once, but twice! And for good reason, too. Bellamy’s is a French brasserie of distinction that has achieved a grand reputation on word of mouth alone. Sure, its denizens include art dealers, nobs, business moneybags, writers, actors, models, toffs and the glossy Maybach crowd who respond with ecstasy to Bellamy’s club-like atmosphere, but we recommend it because of its excellent cuisine—unfussy and classic—and a wine list that is sensibly priced and as deep as the cellars of a Bordeaux first growth. Service is top notch, thanks the dashing owner, a gentleman of rare charm and wit, whose pedigree includes the posh Annabel’s. Try steak tartare or Dorset crab, terrine, oysters, caviar, grilled fish or lamb. Finish with heavenly chocolate cake. It will be perfectly cooked and effortlessly served. Order up glass of Chablis or Burgundy—no, make that a bottle—and toast the longest-reigning monarch in British history. She would certainly approve and surely clink glasses along with you if she were there. Bellamy’s is tucked away at 18 Bruton Place, phone: +44 20 7491 2727.
THERE IS A LOT GOING ON AT RED CARNACTION HOTELS IN LONDON this summer, as you can well imagine. They are after all, the most creative and guest-attentive hotel group we know. Red Carnation Hotels are a collection of family-run, award-winning boutique hotels in the UK, Ireland, South Africa, Switzerland and the USA. Each hotel is a landmark of history and tradition, with a peerless reputation for exquisite fine dining, leading spas and sumptuous surroundings. They pride themselves on delivering warm, thoughtful and highly personalized service. And deliver on this they do brilliantly, adhering faithfully and flawlessly to their corporate mantra of “No request is too large, no detail is too small.”

In honor of The Queen’s 90th birthday, The Rubens at the Palace, which is located a tiara’s toss from Buckingham Palace, has a wonderful Live Like Royalty package and inspired Royal afternoon tea, which has delicious and very well-researched items on it, connected to the Royal family over the years, including a chocolate biscuit cake inspired by the wedding cake of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and much more. www.rubenshotel.com

To give you an idea about how incredibly creative and talented the clever folks at the Rubens at the Palace truly are, here are some of the delightful and resourceful delicacies that will be part of their Royal Afternoon Tea this summer:

Chocolate biscuit cake: This is a twist on a firm favourite of Prince William and Prince Harry when they were very young. Prince William even chose to have chocolate biscuit cake wedding for the groom’s cake at his wedding to Catherine Middleton in 2011. The cake was designed, made and gifted to Prince William by biscuit manufacturers McVities and is said to have been made from 1,700 biscuits and 17kg of chocolate.

Jam Pennies: It is one of Queen Elizabeth’s favorite treats from childhood. A jam penny is a miniature raspberry jam sandwich cut into circles the size of an old English penny.

Coronation tart: Bakewell and Coronation tarts were made and eaten at the Coronation of King George V in 1911. Coronation tarts are very similar to Bakewell tarts but ground rice replaces ground almonds. The Rubens has adjusted the recipe to include delicious pistachios and raspberries.
Plum Posset: The Rubens Plum Posset blood orange caviar is derived from the Victoria plum, a type of English plum. The name “Victoria” comes from Queen Victoria (1819–1901).

Orange scented scones: These delicately scented scones are typically served at the Orangery at Kensington Palace. This elegant greenhouse at Kensington Palace was commissioned by Queen Anne in 1704 to protect her citrus trees from the cold winters.

Blood velvet cake (red velvet cupcake): This is in recognition of Colonel Thomas Blood who, along with his co-conspirators, attempted to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London on 9th May 1671. Blood was caught but released by King Charles II because he thought Blood would be a valuable spy. Blood velvet cake is still served at the Tower to this day.

Cherry éclair: Though éclairs are thought to have originated in France at the turn of the nineteenth century where they were created for French royalty, they now take pride of place on English Royal afternoon tea tables.

Sandwich fillings: Coronation chicken takes its name from a dish prepared for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 by two principals of the Cordon Bleu Cookery School in London, Constance Spry, an English food writer and flower arranger, and chef Rosemary Hume who were charged with preparing the banquet for this auspicious event. The recipe comprises cold chicken, curry cream sauce and dressing, and it was likely inspired by jubilee chicken, a dish prepared for the silver jubilee of George V in 1935 which mixed chicken with mayonnaise and curry.

Castle Mey fillet of beef: This features in honor of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother who had a long association with the Aberdeen Angus breed of cattle. In 1952 when she purchased Barrogill Castle in Scotland, she set about renovating and restoring both the castle and its gardens and parklands, the latter of which she then populated with cows. She also changed the castle's name back to its original name of The Castle of Mey. Along with her husband King George VI she became joint patron of the Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society in August 1937 and remained as patron until her death in 2002, having nearly 65 years of service to the breed.

*The Montague on the Gardens* set in a row of Georgian townhouse across the street from the British Museum in verdant Bloomsbury is launching a pop up Beach Bar this summer. [www.montaguehotel.com](http://www.montaguehotel.com)
By popular demand, the five-star stylish Milestone Hotel in Kensington is putting its famous Gentlemanly Afternoon Tea back on the menu in June, just in time for a Father’s Day surprise. Costing from $65 per person, it is the perfect afternoon tea for the discerning gent, including old English favorites such as mini beef wellingtons, wild boar scotch eggs, saffron and prawn pasties, rustic finger sandwiches and maple-cured bacon scones with truffle butter, along with traditional scones and tasty sweet treats. Served with unlimited tea, there is an option to add a flight of ale or whiskey, or to really indulge with a 50ml measure of the magnificent 1989 Dalmore Constellation whiskey. For The Gentlemanly Afternoon Tea at The Milestone Hotel, www.milestonehotel.com, booking is essential.

Guests inspired by the Olympics this summer might like to enjoy the Sports Buddies service at the Rubens at the Palace and Hotel 41. Red Carnation insists you needn’t skip your daily routines while travelling—the Sports Buddies’ program has your fitness regime covered. Equally fitness fanatical staff at these two adjacent hotels has picked their favorite sports and exercise regimes and are ready to offer themselves as running partners, team mates or sporting adversaries. Guests need simply contact the hotels’ concierges who will make the necessary arrangements.

Looking ahead to September, it’s the centenary of Roald Dahl’s birth (he was born on the 13th September 1916), and Mayfair’s very polished Chesterfield Hotel is proud of their afternoon tea—Charlie and The Chesterfield, a traditional afternoon tea with a Roald Dahl-inspired twist. In addition to a selection of gourmet, homemade sandwiches and traditional English scones, comes a fizzy, spirit-lifting drink, Oompa Loompa cupcake, Blueberry macaroon, creamy cheesecake, golden egg and chocolate Wonka bar. These delicacies come served with a choice of loose tea, flowering tea, coffee or hot chocolate. The extensive tea menu includes a specially blended “Willy Wonka Chocolate Tea”, created exclusively for The Chesterfield Mayfair. Prices start from $53.00 per person. For more information visit www.chesterfield-mayfair.com/afternoon-tea.

And of course, any of Red Carnation’s London hotels can prepare a bountiful picnic for you to frolic with in the park. We tried one last time we were in London and it was fit for a prince and princess: a smart hamper chock full of wine, sandwiches, salads, desserts, fruits and cheeses of the highest quality. www.redcarnationhotels.com
**Taj Campion Place** is one of San Francisco’s most prominent landmarks. The hotel was built over a century ago and is at the most prime location in San Francisco, along Stockton Street at Union Square. It is close to the city’s financial district, premier art galleries, museums, as well as dining, nightlife and shopping destinations. This iconic award-winning hotel has 110 guestrooms including nine suites. These are furnished in a style which is a mix of classical European and contemporary design. From the rooms on the higher floors and open-air fitness centre, you enjoy a bird’s eye view of the city’s hustle and dazzling nightscape. A meal at the two-Michelin-starred Taj Campion Place Restaurant, among the best fine-dining restaurants in California, is every gourmand’s delight. Chef Srijith’s signature Californian-Indian cuisine never ceases to amaze. His food, coupled with Master Sommelier Richard Dean’s wine cellar, gives you the ultimate fine-dining experience. While the hotel plays perfect host to those on leisure or romantic trips to Downtown San Francisco, the hotel’s venues and facilities for meetings and events make it the ideal spot for those who travel to this city for business. Taj signature hospitality infuses your time at this intimate hotel with warmth, and the utmost in personal care, service and exclusivity. We heartily recommend a stay at this iconic hotel at the heart of the City by the Bay. [www.tajcamptonplace.com](http://www.tajcamptonplace.com)

The best $99 any traveler can spend is to subscribe to JoeSentMe, launched in 2011 by the insightful writer Joe Brancatelli. Joe offers valuable news and witty commentary for business travelers unvarnished by advertising. He resolutely doesn’t accept ads, take commissions of any kind or do anything most of the other sites do. All of his funding, 100%, comes from subscribers. Brancatelli and his team work totally for them. All the writers and editors are volunteers and every dime they raise goes to maintaining the site and funding research for news and columns and such. Subscribers get a weekly informative, creative newsletter, full access to the site, breaking news and deals alerts direct to your inbox and, of course, a special package of discounts from airlines, travel agents, newsletter and travel equipment providers. Joe and his team negotiate those for the members’ benefit, and don’t have a financial interest in the discounts. [www.joiningjoe.com](http://www.joiningjoe.com)
SONOMA VALLEY, the 17-mile region north of San Francisco is a magical place well known for its wines. But Sonoma is much more than a destination for wine lovers—it is home to countless activities for families and friends. From wildflower hikes and bike tours to culinary classes and hands-on art lessons, Sonoma Valley is a destination for all travelers. We recently visited and spent the days hiking **Jack London State Historic Park, Annadel State Park, Sugarloaf Ridge State Park** and **Overlook Trail** with views of Sonoma Valley. Then we kicked back in Sonoma Plaza, whose vast green stretches of lawn and immense tree canopy create a lush setting for picnics, cultural activities and weekly farmers markets. Nature lovers can take a balloon tour for an aerial view of the hilltop vistas or rent bikes to explore the lush vineyards. We tasted through Sonoma Valley’s delectable restaurants with farm-to-table bites and handcrafted meals from the local harvest. We revered over country food with a French passion at **the girl & the fig** in the Sonoma Hotel, home to a wonderful antique bar with French aperitifs, unique and traditional cocktails, an award-winning Rhone-Alone wine list, a seasonal menu, cheese & charcuterie platters, and outdoor garden patio seating. You will be served inventive French country fare at this rustic lively bistro and be sure to ask for the charming Giorgio who will treat you like a king and queen. This is a spot filled with Sonoma insiders who want a quality menu that changes each week. We ate pan-seared game-hen morels, wild flounder meunière, duck confit, and Mt. Lassen trout, all cooked to perfection and washed down with fine Rhone wines. [www.thegirlandthefig.com](http://www.thegirlandthefig.com) When we wanted a break from eating, we took an entertaining epicurean class at **Ramekins Culinary School**. We marveled at modern and contemporary art at the Sonoma Valley Museum of Art, the work of the award-winning contemporary artist Sandy Young at **SYX Gallery**, and abstract art at Eminent Design. For those with a more hands-on approach to art, visitors can learn the ancient art of glassblowing from **Leaderglass**. Sonoma Valley even offers popular musicals in Jack London State Historic Park with **Transcendence Theatre Company—Broadway Under the Stars**. If this isn’t enough, visitors to Sonoma can watch a Sonoma Stompers baseball game for just $4 or learn to race go-karts at **Sonoma Raceway**. For a historic look at Sonoma Valley, visit the **Sonoma Barracks** on Sonoma Plaza, which was constructed in 1836 by General M.G. Vallejo. There’s a lot more than superb food and renowned wine in Sonoma, there’s history, nature, art and wonderful people to meet. [www.sonomacounty.com](http://www.sonomacounty.com)
OF THE LUXURY SONOMA HOTELS AND RESORTS, WE FAVOR FAIRMONT SONOMA MISSION INN & SPA. This is the ultimate Wine Country destination, a true treasure. Blessed by natural mineral hot springs and an idyllic, world-famous wine growing region abundant with local products, we always savor a visit to this unforgettable retreat. For hundreds of years, ancient thermal mineral waters have graced this oasis. Today, Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn is proud to be one of the only luxury spa resorts in the country with its own source of thermal mineral water. And with this unique feature, the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa hotel pays graceful homage to ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilizations who believed in the axiom Sanitas Per Aquas.

As one enters through beautifully manicured grounds, the result is an automatic sense of peace and harmony. Valet parkers offer a glass of cool sparkling wine.

A classic Spanish-Mission-style building painted a soft pink welcomes all with its high-ceilinged main lobby, giant fireplace, a fine dining restaurant and many of the guest rooms. Other rooms and suites are scattered about the property in small buildings, giving a true sense of privacy. Rooms are luxury all the way, beautifully appointed, many with fireplaces to set the mood at the end of a perfect day touring the local wineries or enjoying the spa. All lodging features flat screen TV, telephones with voice mail, a selection of Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa bathroom amenities, mini-bar refrigerator, terry cloth robes and air-conditioning.

At the heart of the property is the Inn’s world-class spa called Willow Stream Spa. Among all the wine country hotels and resorts in Sonoma County and neighboring Napa Valley, only Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa offers a luxury spa, championship golf course (at the nearby exclusive Sonoma Golf Club) and fine dining, all in one first-class destination.

The legendary spa has recently completed a sweeping renovation. Completely rebuilt for the new century, the spa’s inspiring new architecture reveals pools, baths, and treatment areas unique in the West. It is a true spa, created in the grand European tradition and designed on the benefits of the Inn’s thermal mineral springs. These springs, flowing from 1,100 feet (335 meters) below were histor-
ically revered by Native Americans for their healing power. The tranquility and beauty of this environment is echoed throughout the 40,000-square-foot (3,700-square-meter) spa, which offers endless opportunities to find your energy—whether it’s relaxing by the inviting fireplace, soaking in their mineral baths and Watsu pool, or indulging in one of their signature treatments.

The Inn’s signature restaurant, the Michelin award-winning Santé, serves extraordinary, fresh and innovative California cuisine. Santé has earned a national reputation for its outstanding food and is recipient of the AAA Four Diamond Award and Michelin designations. It is amongst the top-rated restaurants in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. 38°, a hot new lounge venue pours more than 50 wines by the glass from local and international wineries. A celebrated small plate “pairing” menu is offered here. The Water Tower is the outdoor poolside seasonal cafe. And the Sonoma Golf Club Grill set in the handsome Sonoma Golf Clubhouse features a wonderful selection of Wine Country Cuisine, the perfect choice for a meal or light snack after spending the day there, offering uninterrupted views of the golf course.

One never lacks for things to do at Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa: the resort will happily arrange bikes or hire a car for you to do wine tastings. All guests may partake in daily complimentary hike and fitness classes daily as well as congenial afternoon wine tastings. Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa lies at the heart of Sonoma wine country and is just a short drive from downtown Sonoma, a charming small village offering year ‘round outdoor activities, events, festivals, dining and fine shopping. Topping all of this off is a superb staff, eager to please with a smile. Extraordinary cuisine, a state-of-the-art spa, some of the world’s best wines, a true lifestyle to enjoy, all this and more await at Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa. Special packages make it even more special and go easy on the wallet. Visit www.fairmont.com/Sonoma.

The JCB Tasting Salon and adjacent Atelier by JCB gourmet food shop in Yountville is a must-see destination for any visitor to the Napa Valley...for many reasons. Set in the historic picture perfect Whistle Stop Center on the main street, there is little to signal what treasures lie within—an incredible cornucopia of excellent wines, luxury table furnishings, home décor, jewelry and delectable edibles. It’s all the creation of Jean-Charles Boisset, the dashing, charming, dynamic and glamorous young Frenchman whose family is
renowned in Burgundy, and who made his mark by purchasing (among others) Raymond Vineyards in St. Helena, Buena Vista Winery in Sonoma and DeLoach Vineyards in Santa Rosa. In doing so, Jean-Charles is elevating these well-known estates and the wines produced to even higher levels. Monsieur Boisset is a true bon vivant and in the creation of this new wine tasting and lifestyle destination in Yountville is unlike anything we have ever seen: leopard print banquettes, red velvet curtains, Baccarat crystal chandeliers, Bernardaud porcelain, Christofle silver, museum-worthy artwork, and more, it’s all about luxury and joie de vivre, the epitome of the true Boisset lifestyle and the love and reverence of only the best. When one steps into this world of JCB, inspired by Jean-Charles Boisset’s vision, they are embraced by a sensory assault that is a tad outrageous, a bit whimsical and very much a hedonistic dream, a lifestyle where fantasies become realities.

Ultimately, however, this is a very special place devoted to very special wine. Boisset’s signature label, JCB by Jean-Charles Boisset, are as charismatic as Boisset himself, and each wine is infused with his larger-than-life personality and style. Each JCB wine has a signature number rather than a name and those numbers have a personal meaning to Boisset. For example, the JCB No. 39, a sparkling Crémant du Bourgogne Brut, was named for the year his grandparents fell in love. The JCB No. 9, a rich and well-balanced Chardonnay, pays tribute to the year Boisset married Gina Gallo. The JCB No. 22, a delicate and intense Sonoma Pinot Noir represents Boisset’s favorite number...twice. There are 28 wines in the JCB Collection which includes; Chardonnays, Pinots, Cabernet Franc, red and white blends, long-lived Cabernet Sauvignons, all priced from $25 to $500.

These wines along with others from the Boisset Collection are available for purchase at the JCB Tasting Salon. If you’re interested in experiencing the wines before buying, the JCB Tasting Salon offers three distinctive flights of discovery, the Premium Collection ($30), the JCB Touch Interactive tasting at the digital touch table ($40), and The Surrealist flight ($50) served by some of the most talented wine curators in town. Surrounded by Boisset’s personally-designed jewelry collection, which is also available for purchase, one feels uniquely privileged to be indulged in this opulent, fantastical, surrealist world. Do not leave without visiting Atelier by JCB, a gourmet epicerie adjacent to the JCB Tasting Salon that offers a curated assortment of gourmet delicacies. These are an elegantly presented collection of products sourced locally in Napa and Sonoma alongside discoveries from the
best international producers from France, Italy, Spain and more. Atelier offers an artfully selected collection of salts, peppers and spices, mustards, honey, olive oil and vinegar from Boisset’s winery estates, smoked salmon, caviar, anchovies, truffles, foie gras, terrines, charcuterie, more than 120 cheeses, chocolate, specialty teas and coffees. **JCB Tasting Salon and Atelier by JCB, 6505 Washington Street, Yountville**, Open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., (707) 934-8237.

**Bardessono in Yountville** is a newly defined experience in hospitality that weds “deep green” with luxury, a subtle aesthetic, privacy and graciousness in the Napa Valley. This 62-room caravanserai with its restaurant, poolside bar and in-suite spa butler program models hospitality after the timeless expressions of land and family that fostered and sustained the original Bardessono family farmstead. More than simple warmth and welcome, Bardessono is built upon the possibility of an intelligent exchange between traveler and host. Service, surroundings and intention define an experience every guest will come to know as uniquely their own. Their **Lucy Restaurant & Bar** offers ingredient-driven, farm, ocean, field-to-fork cuisine that embodies the Bardessono modern aesthetic and eco-spirit. Leveraging the Bay Area’s legacy as the local food movement capital of the world, paired with the natural bounty of Napa Valley and a year-round growing climate, the team operates under a culinary philosophy ruled by the seasons, with an emphasis on local production and sourcing. Garden-fresh produce grown mere steps from Lucy’s kitchen in the onsite CCOF (California Certified Organic Farming) garden, and in partnership with several local farms, including a collaboration with **Jacobsen Family Orchards** owned by master gardener **Peter Jacobsen** whose farm has been the exclusive supplier of fruits, herbs, and vegetables to The French Laundry for the past decade. [www.bardessono.com](http://www.bardessono.com)

**The Restaurant at Meadowood** is an outstanding Michelin 3-star restaurant in Napa Valley that specializes in sensational local, sustainable California cuisine. The Restaurant at Meadowood is an elegant, but relaxed dining experience featuring the singular Napa Valley cuisine of gifted Chef **Christopher Kostow**. Forget The French Laundry, you will dine here just as well at a fraction of the cost and fanfare. For those who are not on a budget, The Restaurant features a three hundred thirty dollar
Tasting Menu in the dining room and a five hundred dollar Counter Menu enjoyed at the Chef’s Counter in the kitchen. Both menus are inclusive of service. A tailored wine and spirits pairing experience is also available to accompany the menus. In addition, The Restaurant offers a fixed three course menu for ninety dollars that can be enjoyed exclusively at the bar. The Restaurant Rotunda features a snack menu for forty dollars, intended to be enjoyed with the celebrated cocktails of bartender Sam Levy.

www.therestaurantatmeadowood.com

Ojai, California is the quintessential peaceful California town that time seems to have forgotten, a sleepy Bohemian village with a unique, artful flair. Ojai is home to world-class golf courses, art galleries, boutiques, fine restaurants and a variety of festivals and events for every season. On a recent visit we checked into The Emerald Iguana, a fanciful small inn that offers all the special amenities to make a restful escape or romantic getaway a perfectly memorable experience. You enter this magical place through hand-carved stone pillars, under a canopy of live oak, sycamore and pepper trees, into a peaceful green garden oasis that is meticulously manicured. A cascade of soothing water gurgles from the mouth of a magnificently-tiled Emerald Iguana fountain, welcoming visitors to Ojai’s most enchanting hotel hideaway. We were pampered in the cozy luxury of the light-filled Lilypad Suite, a spacious two bedroom, two story aerie with unique handcrafted furniture, cool tile floors, fireplace, full kitchen, fine linens and tranquil artistic surroundings. A thoughtful bottle of excellent local wine and a box of signature Iguana chocolates greeted us on arrival. We soaked up the fresh air and sunshine on our patio and refreshed in the crystalline pool. We pampered our body and soul with a relaxing in-room facial and massage. The Emerald Iguana offers accommodations unlike any other hotel. Just 13 rooms and suites in all, expect peaceful, artistic havens, filled with luxury amenities like plush bathrobes, hairdryers, coffee pots, complimentary wireless internet, and original artwork by Ojai artists, all of which are for sale. Owner Julia Whitman, obviously a woman of refined tastes, traveled to Europe and Asia to find the one-of-a kind pieces, rugs and exotic touches to create the inn’s exotic decor. Her husband, Marc, is the leading architect in the area, and can claim credit for enchanting craftsman/art nouveau-style architecture. Extensive stone and tile work are accented by dramatic archways, all influenced by Mr. Whitman’s fasci-
nation with Spanish surrealist Gaudí. Wonderful hideaway cottages are perfect for the extended stay traveler. These cottages offer one or two bedrooms with fully equipped kitchens. The goal here is to make your extended stay even more comfortable than home with added restfulness and service. A deluxe complimentary continental breakfast of orange juice, bagels, English muffins, cereals, hard-boiled eggs, yogurt, and fruit is served by the pool daily with a view of the towering Topa Topa mountain range and daily newspapers included. More than any other Ojai hotel, the Emerald Iguana Inn is a destination filled with romance that provides a tranquil retreat for the discriminating, a finely-tuned boutique hotel that offers relaxation, calm, privacy and the opportunity to rejuvenate your mind and spirit in luxury and comfort. If you are looking for a unique oasis with timeless, charming beauty, this is surely the heavenly hotel for you. The young staff is cheerful and efficient. Visit www.emeraldiguana.com. Rooms can start as low as $159 a night with a two-night minimum and guests with children under 14 are referred to their sister property, the nearby Blue Iguana. Beautiful downtown Ojai is an easy few minutes walk, where you will find art galleries, the Arcade specialty shops and boutiques, and fine gourmet dining. The outdoors is always beckoning with a delightful climate and Ojai as the starting point for miles of trails, parks and points of interest. Nestled in an idyllic valley approximately 45 minutes from Santa Barbara, Ojai is bordered by the spectacular Los Padres National forest. Close by Lake Casitas offers miles of magnificent shoreline teaming with wild bird-life and boasts excellent fishing. Abundant orange and avocado groves line the valley.

The Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur is an astonishing place, as beautiful as a small resort hotel can get with unparalleled style and personalized, peerless service to match. Dramatically perched on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, this is a getaway to rival the world’s best: rustic-chic rooms, suites and tree-houses feature private decks with mountain or ocean views, and wood-burning fireplaces. Rooms also include fully stocked free mini-bars (we loved the freshly-made hummus and exotic cheeses) and WiFi, plus iPod docking stations. Some have indoor and outdoor spa pools. Mercifully, the rooms do not have televisions (or alarm clocks) but the smashing views of the mountains and sea more than make up for this. Post Ranch Inn is a serene, Zen-like destination, perfect for relaxation. The carefully groomed grounds are filled with not only fragrant, flowering plants and trees, but fine pieces of sculpture that blend seamlessly with the natural foliage. A full daily gourmet breakfast is included in the rate, and it is quite a stunning display
THE PURSUIT OF AUTHENTIC EDOMAE SUSHI IN LOS ANGELES IS MUCH MORE THAN A DIVERTISSEMENT, LIKENED RATHER TO A PASSIONATE, SACRED AND RELENTLESS EXPLORATION FOR THE SUPREME AND SUBTLE MARRIAGE OF THE FRESHEST FISH WHICH HAS BEEN TENDERLY PICKLED, CURED AND AGED. ONLY THE PURIST WILL APPRECIATE Q SUSHI, WHERE SUSHI FOR TRUE CONNOISSEURS CAN BE FOUND. IT WON’T BE FLASHY AND NEITHER IS THE TINY, WOOD-PANELED RESTAURANT IN DOWNTOWN L.A. WHERE THE SHOWMANSHP IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM. BUT THE FISH IN THE HANDS OF HIROYUKI NARUKE FROM TOKYO IS SUBLIME AND INTENSE AND WELL WORTH THE EXPENSE ACCOUNT-BUSTING PRICE. WE SAT QUIETLY AT THE BAR AND ADMired THE DISPLAY OF ANTIQUE ABACUSES UNTIL A HOT, MOIST TOWEL WAS PLACED IN OUR HANDS. THE WAITER ELEGANTLY BROUGHT SANCERRE AND BEER AND WE AWAITED THE PARADE OF DISHES THAT WAS TO FOLLOW. THERE WAS NEEDLEFISH CURED WITH SOY, OYSTER WITH A TART PONZU, SLICED KOREAN SQUID WITH A PUREE OF FERMENTED BONITO INTESTINES, MONKFISH LIVER, CUBES OF FATTY TUNA CARAMELIZED WITH A BUTANE TORCH, MISO SOUP ENHANCED WITH KASU. AND WITH ALL THESE TASTE SENSATIONS DANCING ABOUT IN OUR MOUTH WE HADN’T EVEN BEGUN THE SUSHI PART OF THE DINNER. NO SOY SAUCE, NO WASABI—if you long for that, you are at the wrong restaurant. SUSHI AT Q IS INTENDED TO BE REVERENTLY PICKED UP WITH YOUR FINGERS AND Eaten IN ONE BITE. WHAT follows is the chef’s choice, his best, up to sixteen luscious
pieces at dinner. We were rapturous about the fluke marinated in seaweed, vinegared mackerel, grunt, octopus braised with sake and brown sugar, and Tasmanian sea trout, blue fin tuna and salmon. Many of these are fish seldom seen at sushi bars, demonstrating the chef’s expert way with sourcing. We were dazzled with the sushi which accentuated the flavor of each fish rather than rice or condiments. Sadly, it all came to an end with Hiro’s tamago, an omelet fortified with minced shrimp. This was a meal a Japanese Emperor of the 19th century would highly approve of. Expect to pay $75 for lunch (about eight pieces) at Q Sushi, $175 for dinner. 521 W. 7th Street, Los Angeles, (213) 225-6285, www.qsushila.com.

UP UNTIL EARLY 2011, THE 6.2-ACRE SPACE BETWEEN COLORADO Avenue, Main Street, Olympic Drive, and Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica was little more than an aging parking lot below the westernmost tip of Interstate 10. Yet here we are—roughly five years and $43.2 million later—recommending this exact spot for your next group outing from our two favorite luxury beach hotels, Shutter’s on the Beach and Hotel Casa del Mar. As you’d be right to assume, Tongva Park—as it’s now known—bears very little resemblance to that gray slab of asphalt from just a few short years ago. In fact, not only is the lot completely unrecognizable, it’s actually one of Santa Monica’s most colorful destinations—a contemporary urban oasis with lush rolling hills, braided paths, elevated observation decks, and picturesque views of the California coastline.

If you take our word for it, we suggest planning a group picnic and making the short, 10-minute stroll northwest along Ocean Ave (the two hotels are just a few blocks away). The park offers plenty of picnic tables, leaving just one item unchecked on your planning list: placing your picnic order from the kitchens of Shutters and Casa. Which shouldn’t be too difficult, considering their full menu with specific flavor options. A standard picnic lunch from Shutters on the Beach and Casa del Mar comes with a sandwich, piece of whole fruit, a bottle of water, and a cookie. Guests can select up to three sandwich types with the quantity of each type of sandwich to be prepared. Upon request, penne pasta salad may be substituted in place of the whole fruit. Our favorites: Roast Beef, Red Onion, Horseradish on Country White; Rotisserie Chicken Club on Country White; Smoked Albacore Tuna Salad on Wheat; Pastrami, Cole Slaw, Swiss, Thousand Island on Grilled Rye. Packed as a picnic lunch with whole fruit, bottled water, and cookie, $49. www.shuttersonthebeach.com and www.hotelcasadelmar.com
Some of our summer must-haves: After more than a decade of research, Silkriller’s has introduced their new, luxury skin care product to the United States. Using patented technologies, their scientists extracted silk fibroin (the rich protein nutrient from the silk’s core) and integrated it to create a revolutionary and effective skin care line. Our favorite products: Cleansing Milk, a makeup and oil remover ($67.50); Moisture Cream, a hydrating moisturizer ($160); 3D Silver Pure Gel, anti-aging serum ($125). Perfect to pack for travelers. www.silkriller.com

The TAP-EX3 from Amped Wireless HighPower AC1750 Wi-Fi Range Extender is the very best range extender we have tried, capable of increasing your signal up to 12,000 sq. ft. With dual band, 800mW capability and 5 Gigabit ports, this range extender receives the signal from your existing Wi-Fi router, then amplifies it and retransmits the signal in a new location for whole home coverage. It’s easy to install and works with the tap of your finger. Amped Wireless is the leader in high power wireless solutions. Visit www.ampedwireless.com

Carefully etched barware is the specialty of the UncommonGreen—neighborhood maps, islands, etc. on rocks glasses, pints, mason jars, mugs, wine glasses, and carafes. You can fill an entire bar with a whole set that features all the most important locales (where you grew up, went to college, got married, and more). www.theuncommongreen.com

There is no more beautiful iPhone case than the Ronin Bamboo from ElementCase. Inspired by the distinct lines of a Samurai’s Katana sword, the Ronin sets new standards in unsurpassed artistry and highly refined style. Every facet of this case from the highly polished alloy crowns and bamboo side rails to the white leather wrapped back exemplifies supreme quality. This is precision craftsmanship at its very best, masterful use of exotic materials and attention to the finest details. www.elementscase.com

As people start to learn about the benefits of green tea, they are looking for more ways the tea can help in their beauty regimes. Good Earth Beauty natural beauty and grooming line has a new Rose & Green Tea Moisturizer. Here’s more on the product from this unique natural and organic beauty shop, www.goodearthbeauty.com/facial-moisturizer-rose-green-tea-normal-skin
C

AMPO DE ENCANTO’S GRAND & NOBLE PISCO (ABV 40.5%, SRP $39.99) is a vibrant, pure grape spirit, vinted and distilled according to the strictest standards of Master Distiller Carlos Romero. A blend of many small-batch eau-de-vies produced from five different old-vine grapes—Quebranta, Moscatel, Torrontel, Italia and Mollar—rested and artfully blended to refine its smooth texture and bright aromas. You’ll taste plums and peaches, almonds and chocolate, with a hint of peppermint and honeysuckle.

B

LUFFWORKS ENABLES ADVENTURERS TO TAKE ON THE WORLD AND still look great. They make travel apparel that doesn’t look like typical ugly travel clothes. Their feature product is a pair of pants that look like nice dress slacks, but are comfortable, versatile and tough enough for city biking, country hiking or other outdoor adventures. They can withstand five days of wear including airplane flights without needing a wash. You can roll, fold or just stuff them in a bag with no need for ironing. Made in New York City and launched via Kickstarter, the pants feature a hidden pocket designed for smartphones and a zipper passport pocket. Check out more details at www.shop.bluffworks.com.

F

ULLY BOOKED FOR THE SUMMER? HERE ARE OUR TOP PICKS FOR NEW trending books to add to your shelf or lug along for a summer house present: ISRAEL EATS by Steven Rothfeld, Gibbs Smith publishers, with an introduction by Nancy Silverton is part travel guide and culinary tour of a fascinating country, part history lesson, and part recipe book. In between photographs of the sweeping landscape, portraits and bright dishes, Rothfeld takes readers through the diverse, vibrant and buzzing contemporary food scene in Israel along with his own poignant, heartfelt anecdotes.

Rebecca Blackburn’s GREEN IS GOOD, Smart Ways to Live Well and Help the Planet, HarperCollins, is a practical, straight-talking book in which this environmental scientist targets three main areas: home, food and transport, and shows how small changes of habit can have a large effect. It is an essential book for every modern household, and a perfect gift for anyone who cares about the future.

Dave Broom’s GIN: The Manual, 120 gins which Dave has tested four ways—with tonic, with lemonade, in a negroni and in a martini—and then scored. In addition, each gin is categorized according to an ingenious flavor camp system, which highlights its core properties and allows you to understand how you can best drink it, and therefore enjoy it.
Jessica Harlan’s THE SIMPLE ART OF SALT BLOCK COOKING, Ulysses Press, a full-color cookbook that shows how to use salt blocks on the stove, in the oven and even on the grill to create delicious, perfectly seasoned meals, a unique and fun way of cooking.

ARTICA: The Vanishing North by Sebastian Copeland, TeNeues, a dramatic book that shows how very few landscapes convey Nature in all of its untamed splendor like the Arctic. Fewer still conjure respect like the seldom traveled and ethereal North Pole. Yet, sadly, this largely pristine and mostly misconceived treasure is now in jeopardy. Sebastian Copeland’s noble goal in these pages is to pay homage to this wonderland, and, in turn, draw awareness to its perilous plight. Copeland’s multi-faceted background—not only as polar explorer and award-winning photographer, established author and journalist, but also as a dedicated environmental activist—offers us a unique vantage point from which to appreciate this lonely spot. Surely, this is the last true wilderness on the planet—and its demise should ring the alarm for lower latitudes. Copeland’s authority on the subject is unparalleled and, in this book, his passion for this place truly shines. Although the vision presented in these pages may be poetic, the book’s aims are pragmatic—to seduce and inspire the world in order to help foster a market transformation towards a sustainable future.

THE GEEKY CHEF COOKBOOK: Real-Life Recipes for Your Favorite Fantasy Foods—Unofficial Recipes from Doctor Who, Game of Thrones, Harry Potter, and more by Cassandra Reeder.

BRANCA: A Spirited Italian Icon edited by the Fernet-Branca Chairman and CEO Niccolò Branca di Romanico. This book from the geniuses at Rizzoli, is a richly illustrated history of the world-famous distillery and its legendary product filled. Including drink recipes, a gallery of the memorable ads illustrating the brilliant campaigns to promote Fernet-Branca, and a glimpse into the making of the liqueur, the book will be treasured by design aficionados and cocktail connoisseurs alike.

AMERICAN FOODIE, Taste, Art and the Cultural Revolution by Dwight Furrow, Rowman & Littlefield, is an illuminating and insightful book on the aesthetics of food and the role of taste in our lives. Today’s taste revolution has taken food to fine art status and this is a must-read for all foodies.

THE BON JOUR EFFECT by Julie Brown and Jean-Benoit Nadeau, St. Martin’s Press, the secret codes of French conversation revealed, a helpful resource for cracking the arcane cultural code of la langue francaise well-conceived with care and detail. An illuminating portrait of Gallic sensibility.
**David Noyes’** THE PHOTOGRAPHING TOURIST, is an inspiring storyteller’s guide to travel and photography, filled with beautiful photography, tips, techniques, advice and anecdotes from around the world that will help you develop a well-trained eye and deeper insights. Stories about isolated cultures, local life, and challenging personal adventures give new perspectives into imagination and the human condition.

THE WORLD, A Traveller’s Guide to the Planet published by Lonely Planet, is the ultimate A to Z book with every country detailed by maps, essential facts, inspirational images and must-see highlights. The pros at Lonely Planet have distilled 40 years of travel know-how into the first guidebook to our entire planet. From now on, every journey must start here.

GRAND BORDEAUX CHATEAUX, Inside the Fine Wine Estates of France, Flammarión, from Lafite Rothschild to Pichon Baron and from Cheval Blanc to Petrus, this handsome volume presents twelve of the region’s most prestigious chateaux featuring remarkable estates and state-of-the-art cellars. With a foreword and tasting notes by James Suckling, text by Philippe Chaix, and photography by Guillaume de Laubier, this is a surprising, spectacular, contemporary and valuable portrait of Bordeaux wine today.

BUILDING BACARDI: Architecture, Art & Identity by Allan T. Shulman, Rizzoli is richly illustrated with vintage, powerfully graphic, and often glamorous imagery. BUILDING BACARDI tells the story of the iconic brand’s love affair with high design. Bacardi has built its corporate identity through buildings designed by a potent mix of modern architects with varying, sometimes radically different approaches. The famed spirits company has also been a force in the development of avant-garde art and architecture. Corporate headquarters, distilleries, bottling plants, and executives’ private homes have shaped and reflected Bacardi’s position as a regional upstart, a national icon, and a global corporation with outposts in such places as Bermuda, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and the United States. Building Bacardi is the first book to explore the twentieth-century architectural legacy of the company.

GARLIC, over 65 deliciously different ways to enjoy cooking with garlic by Jenny Lindford, published by Ryland Peters & Small, a celebration of the stinking rose from festivals to folklore plus a stunning collection of recipes from around the world.
THE CARDAMOM TRAIL, Chetna Bakes with Flavours of the East, by Chetna Makan, Mitchell Beazley publishers. Unique recipes—cakes, pies and tarts, savory small bites, breads and other sweet things—which introduce colorful spices, aromatic herbs and other Indian ingredients into traditional Western baked favorites by the talented chef from Jabalpur, India who was semi-finalist in The Great British Bake Off of 2014.

FLAVORS FROM THE FRENCH MEDITERRANEAN, Flammarion, Rizzoli, by Gerald Passedat, who earned Michelin’s highest three-star rating, pays homage to this magical region of France and all of the remarkable food it has to offer. Drawing inspiration from local seafood, sun-ripened vegetables, fragrant herbs and sumptuous wines from the Mediterranean coast to share more than 60 generous and easy-to-prepare recipes that celebrate fresh produce and an overall healthy lifestyle. Photographs by Richard Haughton of his beautifully prepared dishes are complemented by picturesque images of land and seascapes from the South of France as well as the chef at work in his kitchen.

Over hundreds of years, various ethnic groups have passed through this city, sharing and influencing each other’s cuisine and leaving their culinary stamp. SAMARKAND: Recipes & Stories from Central Asia & the Caucasus by Caroline Eden and Eleanor Ford, Kyle Books is a love letter to Central Asia and the Caucasus, containing travel essays, beautiful photography and recipes that are little known in the West that have been expertly adapted for the home cook. There is an introduction to the region (explaining the ethnic groups—Uzbeks, Tajiks, Russian, Turkis, Koryo-Saram, Jewish, Caucasus, Afghan) with a useful pantry of essential ingredients, followed by an array of delicious dishes. These include Lamb Kebabs with Cinnamon, Cloves & Hot Hummus, Pumpkin Stuffed with Spiced Chickpeas, Sour Cherries & Rice, Pomegranate & Vodka Sorbet and the all-important breads of the region—naan, flatbreads and pides. With evocative travel features like “On the Road to Samarkand,” “A Banquet on the Caspian Sea,” “Shopping for Spices under Solomon’s Throne,” and a detailed introduction to the Silk Road, you will be charmed and enticed by this little known region and its cuisine, which has remained relatively untouched in centuries.

Matt Wagner’s THE TALL TREES OF PARIS, Overcup Press, is an inspiring book, 300 pages of beautiful images and handwritten artists interviews, an intimate, exceptional portrait of everyday life for 42 contemporary Parisian artists. Refreshingly authentic, this is an atypical look at this beloved and celebrated city, a fresh take, stunning in the way it captures the Paris you won’t find in any travel guide.
Deborah N. Mancoff’s MONET’S GARDEN IN ART explores the relationship between the famous impressionist’s garden and some of his most famous paintings, the evolution of the vistas he constructed, and his favorite flowers and flower-inspired techniques. It offers a vital portrait of the artist and his enduring vision of nature’s beauty.

In GARDENS OF THE ITALIAN LAKES, authors Stephen Desmond and Marianna Majerus explore the gardens of the Italian Lakes, a favorite destination for garden lovers and travelers seeking beauty and calm. The gardens around Lake Como and Lake Maggiore, in the far north of Italy, are admired throughout the world for their beauty and variety in a magnificent natural location. This book sets out to become the standard work on these gardens as there is nothing of this kind on the market at the moment. It will appeal both to the specialist and enthusiast preparing for a visit.

THE WINE BIBLE, Workman, by “America’s Missionary of the Vine” and James Beard Award winner Karen MacNeil is most informative and entertaining. Whether you’re hosting a party, going to one and not sure what bottle to bring, or looking for the perfect gift for any wine lover in your life, THE WINE BIBLE is here to help! Filled with extensive tried and true food pairings, tips on how to choose great glassware at any price point, and fun explorations of topics such as why Champagne has bubbles. Long thought of as the most compelling, entertaining, and comprehensive book on wine, MacNeil traveled the globe for this revision, tasting over 10,000 wines in five years. Transporting you from the cool, forbidding landscape of China’s Sichuan Province to the warm shores of the Sicilian Mediterranean, MacNeil delves into the history, food, wines and wineries of each region. At over 1,000 pages, chapters deliver: the top regions of the world, including the well known areas such as Bordeaux, Burgundy and Tuscany, as well as up and coming producers like Japan, India, Mexico, China, and the Republic of Georgia; a helpful “Wines to Know” list for each region; history, geography, grape varieties, and how they profoundly affect a wine’s character; how to taste with focus and build a wine-tasting memory; fun and informative explorations: how many bubbles are in Champagne and why; the intricacies of Port and Sherry; what makes a great wine great?; why dogs are important in the vineyard; are women better wine tasters than men?; the myth of cabernet and chocolate; how to read a label, the way to store wine to keep it sound, plus a descriptive taste glossary of hundreds of important wine varieties throughout the world; extensive sections on the traditional, tried-and-true food pairings for the wines of every major wine region and more. THE
WINE BIBLE offers the ultimate education in wine from one of the most renowned experts of our time. It will inspire and educate every reader, be they new to wine or a longtime enthusiast.

LIMA Cookbook by Virgilio Martinez and Luciana Bianchi, published by Mitchell Beazley. The growing popularity of Peruvian cuisine throughout the world has made Lima, the capital of Peru, a destination city for food lovers. Virgilio Martinez is the most famous young chef in Peru. His restaurant Central, in Lima, is among the best in the world and he has opened two LIMA restaurants in the heart of London. With this collection of more than 100 of Virgilio’s fuss-free, contemporary recipes you can cook this fresh, vibrant, healthy food at home using your local fish, meat and vegetables—plus the superfoods for which Peruvian food is renowned.

Susan Branch, author of the Heart of the Home series of books, has written a true-life fairy tale, an illustrated memoir filled with her watercolors and hundreds of photographs. Based on the diaries Susan has kept since she was in her 20s, THE FAIRY TAKE GIRL, Spring Street Publishing, reads like a novel and takes us back in time, from the 1950s through the 1980s. It’s the inspirational and revealing story of surviving a broken heart and running away from home in California, “accidentally” buying a tiny one-bedroom cottage on Martha’s Vineyard and starting over from scratch. It’s a charming story of miracles and dreams come true; and an unconventional look at the times that were a ‘changin’...love, feminism, growing up, best friends, and rock and roll. No matter what anyone says, life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale of all.

MY FAT DAD by Dawn Lerman, a memoir of growing up with her Mad Men-era advertising father who was always on a diet. The recipes she shares in the book came from her beloved grandmother, Beauty, many of which Dawn made healthier versions of. You’ll laugh, cry and get hungry while reading this courageous life story.

FEATURED WINE OF THE MONTH: ANY WINE FROM JCB, A COLLECTION of rare numbered wines passionately composed by Jean-Charles Boisset. Uniting centuries of Burgundian family tradition combined with the graceful exploration of sophisticated terroir. We especially can sing the praises of their graceful Pinot Noirs, opulent Cabernet Sauvignons, and smooth, round Chardonnays. www.jcbcollection.com
AN EXCEPTIONAL NEW RAIL EXPERIENCE IS TAKING SHAPE IN IRELAND. Launching in August 2016, the Belmond family will offer the first ever luxury touring train in the Emerald Isle, lifting travel there to dazzling new heights. The magnificent yet intimate Belmond Grand Hibernian will feature just 20 en-suite cabins, with design inspired by Dublin’s classic Georgian architecture, evoking the golden age of travel in the style of its legendary sisters, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and the Belmond Royal Scotsman. Taking its name from the classical Latin word for Ireland—Hibernia—the Belmond Grand Hibernian recalls the ancient isle’s romance and culture.

Itinerary options include two-, four-, and six-night journeys from Dublin, encompassing both the Republic of Ireland as well as Northern Ireland. The two-night Realm of Giants itinerary will head north from Dublin to Belfast where guests will take in the Titanic Experience, Old Bushmills Distillery and the awe-inspiring Giant’s Causeway. The four-night journey, Legends and Loughs, heads west towards Cork and Blarney Castle before continuing on to the spectacular Lakes of Killarney, Connemara National Park, and the charming city of Galway. Or combine the two journeys for an exciting six-night Grand Tour of Ireland.

Be whisked away to remote areas, traversing the breathtaking scenery that is Ireland—the unspoiled, verdant landscapes, stunning vistas, and dramatic coastline that define this captivating land. Enhance your adventure with exclusive attractions—explore ancient castles, spot rare wildlife, sample famous whiskies and visit vibrant cities. Three fascinating journeys await that will capture both the enriching heritage and vibrant modernity of Ireland.

For more information on this or other Belmond Trains and Tours, contact Robertson International Travel Consultants, (805)-969-3221 or info@robertsontravel.com.
The decision to use a travel agent is an easy one when it comes to wanting that extra level of expertise, protection and guidance. Using a talented agent can make the overall trip experience much better and provide you with considerable value while helping you avoid mistakes. At this point, travelers have tried it all—booked online, gone direct, and used an agent. We want to dispel the myth once and for all that booking direct with suppliers or spending hours online yourself gets you a better deal or gives you a happier travel experience. In short, if you want the best travel experience, use an agent. The bottom line is they know more than you do, they are better connected and they have access to benefits you can’t get otherwise. They also provide a safety net during your trip you simply won’t get by booking yourself or buying insurance.

That is why we so strongly recommend Robertson International Travel in Santa Barbara. Calling them is the most important decision you can make to get started on the right travel foot. They are highly trusted and look after their clients in a long-term fashion...and their reputation is impeccable among those they serve. Small by design, the agency is led by three very capable people—founder Brian Robertson, his Managing Partner Heather Schuyler and Travel Consultant Jessica Fisher. At Robertson you deal with these principals only. They are there to craft your itinerary, seek out the best values, and deliver creative ideas. They are clever, always friendly and they know the world. They work easily with discerning clients all over the globe. ENTREE is proud to endorse Robertson International Travel. Through their association with Virtuoso they have some very special insider contacts to enhance your next trip with added insights and perks. Call them at (805) 969-3221 and check out their website, www.robertsontravel.com, e-mail info@robertsontravel.com.