



# SLOW FOOD SONOMA COUNTY :: NORTH ::

## OCTOBER 2018 NEWSLETTER



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## PRESIDIUM: A New, Heroic Title for Our Chapter's Lively Potato Project



***Presidium (plural presidia): A protective fortress. A garrison, as in the San Francisco Presidio. From the Latin presidare, to guard.***

In the fall of 2017, Slow Food launched the sixth Presidium in the USA: the **Bodega Red Potato**. Before Slow Food Sonoma County North intervened in 2006, the Bodega Red was on the brink of extinction. Now there are 13 local farms growing the potato. In March 2018 we distributed 2000 pounds of virus-free Bodega Red seed potatoes to local growers. Beginning with the first harvest in June, the potatoes have been available at Farmers' Markets in Healdsburg, Santa Rosa, Sonoma Valley, and Cloverdale. These restaurants and others have served Bodega Reds: Brass Rabbit, Diavola, SHED, and Trading Post.

Grower Zureal Bernier says, "These potatoes have gathered a very strong following, and we have no trouble selling out at premium prices. The quality is always great!"

Slow Food around the world champions endangered traditional foods through its Ark of Taste and Presidia. The Ark of Taste is a list of fruits, vegetables, animal breeds, cheeses, breads, sweets, and cured meats at imminent risk of extinction. A Presidium takes this one step further by focusing

on a single Ark product and working with producers to bring it into high-quality local production.

Presidia are awarded by Slow Food International's Foundation for Biodiversity through an application process. Our Bodega Red Presidium aims to return the potato to prominence in the region by (1) continuing to raise awareness of this variety and its cultural and social connection with the local area and (2) encouraging more farmers to grow it. We hope to increase restaurant and consumer sales, promote public appreciation of our area's agriculture history, and obtain premium pricing for the potato.

For information about the Bodega Red Potato, contact [Slow Food Sonoma County North](#). Also go to [The Foundation for Biodiversity](#)

### **Farms that are currently growing the Bodega Red are:**

**Bernier Farms**

**Blue Leg Farm**

**Delicious Produce**

**First Light Farm**

**Front Porch Farm**

**HomeFarm**

**Lantern Farm**

**Oak Hill Farm**

**Nancy Prepilich**

**Preston Farm and Winery**

**Russian River Produce**

**Tierra Vegetables**

**Wild Garden**

## **Sonoma County North Events**



60 people attended this year's annual meeting on August 26. We suspect the popularity was partly due to the Bodega Red Potato Feast that accompanied the meeting! Guests brought an array of delicious appetizers and desserts, and several people new to Slow Food signed up on the spot.

### Upcoming Events

Detailed invitations will be sent approximately 4 weeks before each event.

#### OCTOBER

9 Slow Books: Jacques Pepin, *The Apprentice: My Life in the Kitchen*, Cloverdale. [Sign up here.](#)

14 An Afternoon of Reading and Discussion with Lia Huber and her latest book, *Nourished: A Memoir of Food, Faith and Enduring Love*, Healdsburg. [Get your ticket here.](#)

#### DECEMBER

1 Slow Food booth at the North Bay Italian Cultural Foundation's (NBICF's) *Mercatino* holiday fair, Santa Rosa

10 Terra Madre Day Dinner, Healdsburg

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## Spotlight on Sonoma County North Member/Producer: Gradek Family Farm



Our chapter currently has 17 members who are producers and are listed on our [website](#). Each newsletter highlights one of these producers.

When you know what you're doing, 10 acres can produce a lot of fruit. Just ask Ken Gradek. After 50 years, he and his brother, Dave, are experts at getting the most out of their land. Gradek Family Farm has earned a reputation for growing high-quality apples, Asian pears (12 varieties!), peaches, nectarines, figs, persimmons, and ornamental pumpkins. Roses, dahlias, and thousands of sunflowers frame the farm's beautiful vistas of the Dry Creek Valley.

This year, Ken says their apple crop was sparser. "And peaches and nectarines were lousy," he adds. "Mother Nature hit us with some weather during bloom time. All the commercial farmers in the area suffered the same fate."

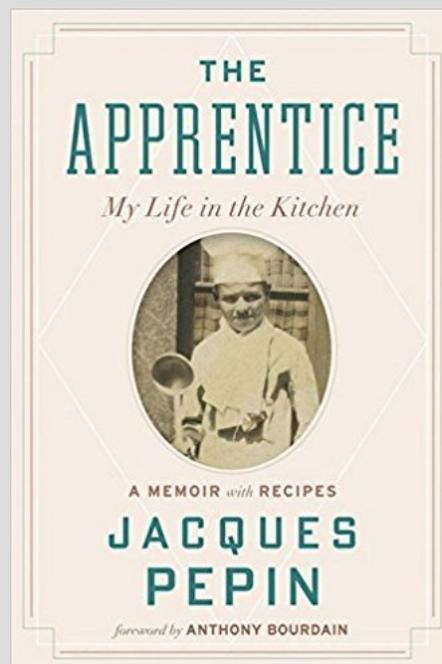
You can find Gradek fruit in local markets such as Shelton's Natural Food Market and Oakville Grocery in Healdsburg and on most menus at Healdsburg restaurants. If you miss the fresh-fruit season, you can find their dried fruits at the SHED in Healdsburg.

While harvesting starts with peaches in June and ends with the Asian pears from now into December, the brothers find they work year round. "We'll spend the rest of the winter pruning," Ken explains. "We pretty much never get a break out of the field. Maybe a 30-day stretch depending how hard you want to work. There are always cover crops, and fertilizing, and ..." His voice trails off, thinking of all the fields and all the years he's tended them. With a hard-earned wisdom, he adds, "We all point our future in different directions and then make the best of it."

Gradek Family Farm

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## Slow Books: "The Apprentice: My Life in the Kitchen"



On Tuesday, October 9, Slow Books will discuss *The Apprentice: My Life in the Kitchen* by Jacques Pepin. We'll meet at 6 pm at Valerie Pallatroni's home in Cloverdale.

*In this captivating memoir, the man whom Julia Child has called “the best chef in America” tells the story of his rise from a frightened apprentice in an exacting Old World kitchen to an Emmy Award-winning superstar who taught millions of Americans how to cook and shaped the nation’s tastes in the bargain.*

*We see young Jacques as a homesick six-year-old boy in war-ravaged France, working on a farm in exchange for food, dodging bombs, and bearing witness as German soldiers capture his father, a fighter in the Resistance. Soon Jacques is caught up in the hurly-burly action of his mother’s café, where he proves a natural. He endures a literal trial by fire and works his way up the ladder in the feudal system of France’s most famous restaurant, finally becoming Charles de Gaulle’s personal chef, watching the world being refashioned from the other side of the kitchen door.*

*When he comes to America, Jacques immediately falls in with a small group of as-yet-unknown food lovers, including Craig Claiborne, James Beard, and Julia Child, whose adventures redefine American food.*

*“The Apprentice” is the poignant and sometimes funny tale of a boy’s coming of age. Beyond that, it is the story of America’s culinary awakening and the transformation of food from an afterthought to a national preoccupation.*

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## Snail of Approval





### **Congratulations to Lowell's, our newest Snail of Approval awardee.**

We honor Lowell's for their support of the Slow Food tenets of Good, Clean, and Fair. They are a West Sonoma County organic eatery that specializes in local, sustainably-produced ingredients. Lowell's menu is Italian-inspired, fresh California cuisine that meanders naturally with the seasons, bringing the best flavors that Sonoma County and Northern California have to offer during each unique time of year. You can find them at 7385 Healdsburg Avenue in Sebastopol.

**We are looking for restaurants to honor, promote, and include in our Snail of Approval listing. We want to recognize their commitment, passion, and practicality. And we want to hear from you!**

Do you have a favorite restaurant that is passionate about the food they prepare? Email us at **Snail of Approval Sonoma County**.

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## **Welcome New Members!**

**Welcome to members who joined Sonoma County North since August 2018.**

**Jessica Ascoop**

**Sandra Beddow**

**Heidi Blumenthal**

**Bret Hardesty**

**Jack Herron**

**MacGarret Osman**

**Wyatt Stringfellow**

**David Taber**

**Jennifer Weiss**

**Our apologies if you are a new member and not on this list—and please let us know!**

**Email us at [Slow Food Sonoma County North](#)**

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Join or renew your membership [online](#) and list Sonoma County North-CA as your chapter. If you

prefer to renew locally by check, please download our [membership form](#) and follow the instructions.



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