



# SLOW FOOD SONOMA COUNTY :: NORTH ::

## **JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER**



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## **Eat Really Local and Seasonal**

### **Eat Local**

Eating seasonally and locally is one of the major tenets of Slow Food. This practice saves shipping fuels and supports local farmers and producers. It guarantees the freshest, cleanest, and most flavorful food.

Several years ago, our chapter decided to highlight “eat local.” The event was a potluck dinner where every ingredient had to be sourced within 100 miles of Healdsburg. Conversation around the meal was lively as everyone shared their difficulties in finding a few components that were vital to their recipes.

This potluck morphed into the 100-mile dinners that we occasionally put up for auction: a dinner prepared especially for the group with the high bid and served in their home.

### **Source Within 100 Miles**

On its face, sourcing ingredients from a 100-mile radius doesn't sound that difficult, especially in Sonoma County with our plentiful fruits, vegetables, cheeses, oils, and meats. Salad, bread and butter, grilled salmon, potatoes. Dessert and wine. Simple.

Salmon from Bodega Bay--but is it in season? Local Bodega Red potatoes—but it's spring and they won't be harvested until summer. Greens and olive oil, no problem. And we can get bread from Red Bird or Costeaux or Quail and Condor, all local businesses. But wait! Are the bread's ingredients from Sonoma County? Is the wheat grown and ground into flour here? If not, we can't serve that bread. After some research we learn that Lou Preston makes bread from his own grains which he grinds.

And dessert? What can we create without sugar?

Cheese might be made in Valley Ford or Sebastopol, but where do these cheese-makers source their dairy?

### **Meet the Challenge!**

We have to think about every component of our meal and do a fair amount of research for each. If we can source something locally, is it in season? We've found local bread and salt harvested from Salt Point, and learn which fish are caught when our meal is being held. But we have to go without coffee, pepper, chocolate, and sugar.

Meet the challenge and create a 100-mile meal. You will enjoy the planning and the research, and appreciate the barriers and pleasure of truly eating local.

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## **Slow Food Events**

**Look for an invitation with details about a month before each event.**

### **June**

**5** Slow Books, 6 pm, Healdsburg: *Tanya Holland's California Soul: Recipes from a Culinary Journey West*, by Tanya Holland

**8** Farm Tour: Noble Goat, 10 am, Healdsburg

## July

15 Summer Picnic at Gradek Ranch, 5 pm, Healdsburg

29 Summer 100-Mile Dinner in the Alexander Valley. SOLD OUT

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## Spotlight on Sheana Davis, The Epicurean Connection



*Sheana Davis and Ben Sessions of The Epicurean Connection*

Sheana Davis and her husband, Ben Sessions, owners of [The Epicurean Connection](#) catering company and retail shop in Sonoma, bring the best of butters, cheeses, and more to the local table. The Epicurean Connection offers cheese-making and buttermongering classes, as well as to-go retail of locally-sourced delights that change weekly to match what is in season.

Sheana receives produce from local farms on Wednesdays and then she plans accordingly. She says, "I like relying on my farmers. We design our menus around what farmers bring to us. Bring me your best, and I will make a

menu. It is definitely the Slow Food model." Just last week, The Epicurean Connection offered beans and rice, spring pasta with fava leaf and Meyer lemon pesto. There is always an assortment of pestos, tapenades, jams, and marmalades made with produce from local farms such as [Seven Moons Farm](#) and [Little Paradise](#), both Slow Food Snail of Approval recipients.

### Mentored Locally by M.F.K. Fisher

Sheana was born and raised in the town of Sonoma. She loved to cook alongside her grandad who was a chef. Every Saturday he worked at a resort/dance hall, and he always donated leftover dishes to the food insecure. The value of giving the gift of food was instilled in young Sheana.

In 7th and 8th grade, as part of the school curriculum, Sheana received an enormous gift. She says, "[M.F.K. Fisher](#) was my mentor. I worked with her from 1983-1984. She taught me about mirepoix, bouquet garni, bain marie, terms that were so foreign to Sonoma. I cooked for her, and she took me out to Bouverie Preserve and we would pick parsley, sorrel, mushrooms, lemons, and make pesto. She had me put ice cubes in the tree trunk where she would serve her Champagne and caviar."

With that magical experience under her belt, Sheana attended and graduated from SRJC Culinary Academy and did her thesis on compound butters. Sheana traveled

internationally to Dubai, Singapore, and Germany to promote sustainable agriculture and dairy products from the US.

Back home in Sonoma, in 1988, Sheana started her own catering and retail company called The Epicurean Connection, then located on Broadway in Sonoma. The original business was almost a carbon copy of what she is doing now.

## Green Business of the Year

Just this year, Sheana and The Epicurean Connection received the City of Sonoma's award for Green Business of the Year. Sheana says, "We are zero waste. We have no food left over, and everything goes to a local pig named Petunia and the sheep at the Montessori school. We don't even have garbage bins anymore. Everything is recycled, and all food waste goes to the animals. We are pretty excited about it."

Additionally, they just installed solar panels so guests may enjoy lights outside in the evenings. What truly clinched the Green Award was the way in which The Epicurean Connection gives back to the community. Each week, they donate their extra prepared retail food to [Farm to Pantry](#). And every Saturday, they give a minimum of 25 meals to food-insecure seniors in Sonoma Valley. Sheana's grandad would be proud.

In addition, Sheana is an award-winning cheesemaker. In 2010 her Delice de la Vallee won first place at the American Cheese Society's Judging & Competition Award. Sheana's original cheese blend is an ode to Sonoma Valley.

## Buttermonger

To top off her list of accomplishments, Sheana and her daughter, Katrina, authored [\\_Buttermonger\\_](#), a cookbook that includes over 40 recipes that come from over 30 years of experience. The book includes sweet, savory, vegan, and cocktail compound butters and is a loving creative collaboration between mother and daughter.

For more information about culinary classes or to receive their newsletter, visit [The Epicurean Connection](#).

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## Snail of Approval

Congratulations! to our newest Snail of Approval recipient, [Wise Acre Farm](#) in Windsor. Eggs from a vending machine? Yes, that is what you will find at Wise Acre Farm: drive right up and get your eggs!



Farmher Tiffany raises poultry that live the life they deserve, pasture-raised, using organic feed and rotating the birds around a 15-acre property. She is community-minded and shares her time, knowledge, and eggs! You

can find her eggs in the vending machine on the farm and at [Tierra Vegetables](#), also a Snail of Approval recipient.

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## Recipe of the Month: Sorrel and Meyer Lemon Pesto

*Slow Seed is an initiative of Slow Food USA that includes seed saving, seed exchanges, and "toolkits" from a variety of organizations. Every year, Slow Seed promotes a Plant-a-Seed campaign to encourage growers to focus on a particular seed. In 2022, beans were featured. 2023 highlights the big groups of greens — brassicas, mustards, lettuces, chicories and amaranths — and the communities who celebrate them. Our 2023 recipes will use greens as a major ingredient.*

### Sorrel and Meyer Lemon Pesto

*Created by Sheana Davis and Ben Sessions, The Epicurean Connection*

Yields 1-1/2 cups

#### Ingredients

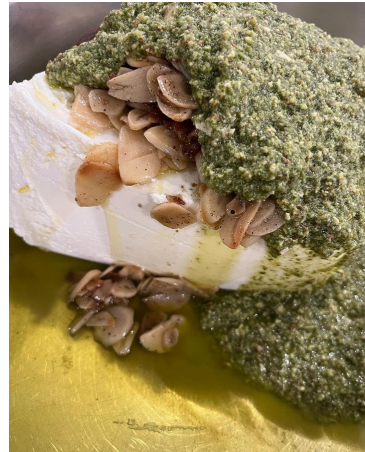
1 cup Sorrel leaves, stems removed  
1 tablespoon Sonoma-grown garlic, minced  
1/4 cup Sonoma Meyer Lemon juice  
1 teaspoon Sonoma Meyer Lemon zest  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

#### Procedure

Place ingredients in food processor and blend until smooth. Taste and adjust flavors. Serve over *Delice de la Vallee* or fresh cheese of your choice.

Visit our [website](#) for a printable copy of this recipe.

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## Bodega Red Potato Presidium

We are taking new signups for next year's spring distribution. Go to our website for information about the [Bodega Red Potato Presidium](#).

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# Membership

## Welcome New Chapter Members!

Jim DeMartini

Brian Denn

Laura Goldman

Janet Horton

Connor Murphy

Aleta Pierce

Barbara Rosen

## And Welcome Back!

Ridgely Evers

Ann Hines

Colleen McGlynn

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. Several times a year, Slow Food USA promotes **Pay What You Can Day** where you can join or renew for any amount on one day only. Watch your email for these promotions.

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