



PALMAZ  
VINEYARDS  
AT THE TABLE &  
AROUND THE FIRE

FOR





PALMAZ  
VINEYARDS  
AT THE TABLE &  
AROUND THE FIRE

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## II

### INTRODUCTION

#### *A Mini-Memoir of a Charmed Life of Food and Wine*

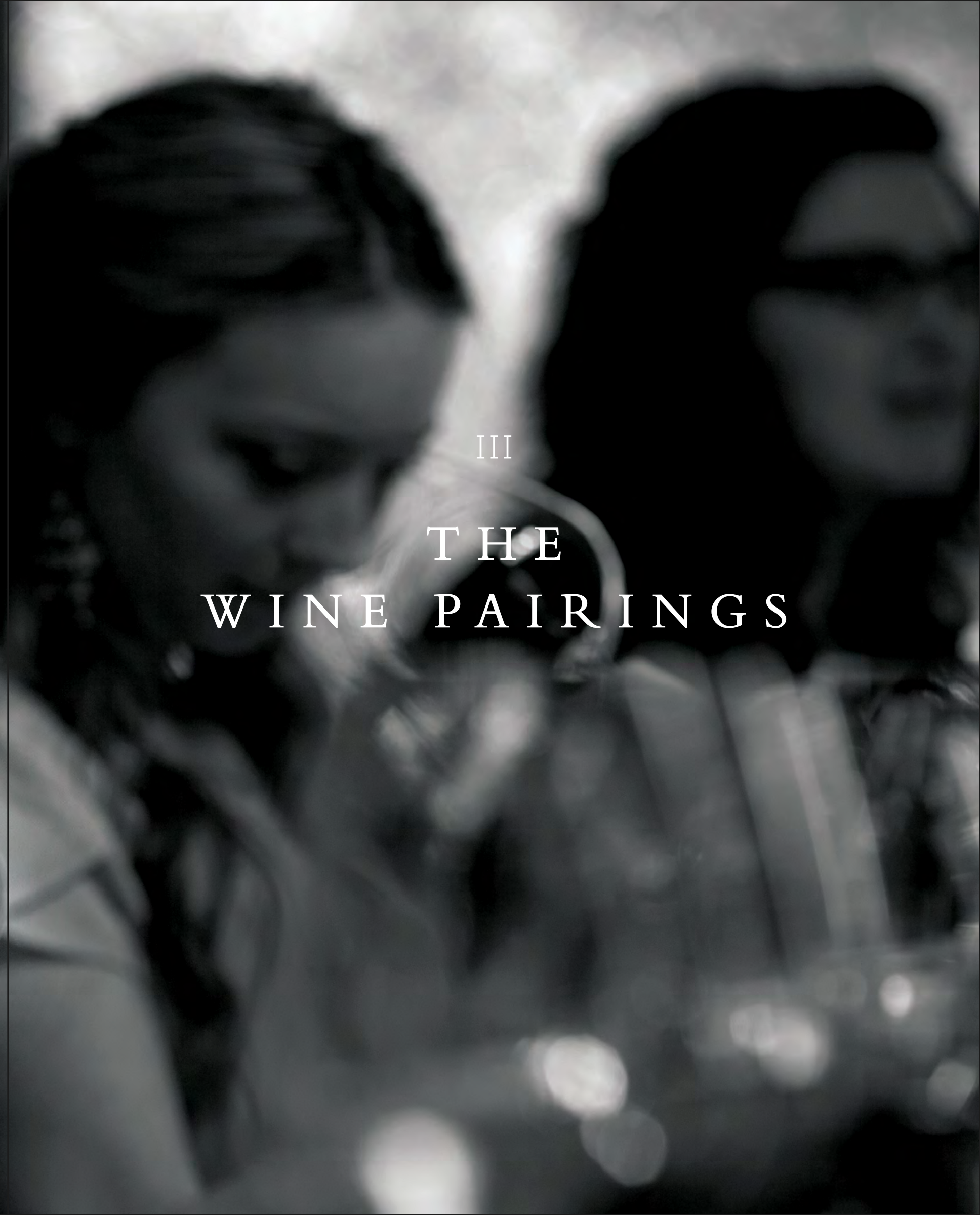
I have to confess one thing right off the bat: I am not a foodie. While I am a passionate scholar of food and wine, neither drives me nor nourishes my soul. My singular passion is the magic that happens around a festive table. Some chefs are driven to capture flavors, and sommeliers seek the perfect food-and-wine pairing. I'm a party junkie — always seeking the next festive gathering, relishing the banter and laughs that emanate from the dining table.

Just out of college I had the extraordinary opportunity to start a specialty food-service business with my mother. That company, GoodHeart Brand Specialty Foods, has evolved many times in the past 20 years and has given us an incredible perspective into the delicious world of gourmet foods. We have done it all, from delivering decadent jewels such as Kobe beef and foie gras to chefs all over the country to operating our own catering and gourmet-foods catalog. All the while, I quietly learned how to produce great food. Eventually, through countless hours on my feet in a loud and windowless kitchen, I became a good cook. I learned the craft of flavor balancing, and how to draw out the most from every ingredient for the broadest appeal. Some who know me would call me a chef, but I reserve that title for my food-service customers — ultimately, they worked harder to earn it than I did.

In 2003, I was given the opportunity to take a hiatus from our windowless commercial kitchen to help launch Palmaz Vineyards. It was then I became intimately knowledgeable about producing fine wine. I worked in all aspects of the operation, from harvest to blending, and after a decade, some called me a winemaker — but that is not accurate either. A winemaker is also a title earned after much more toil and study than I have completed.

However, the vineyard enabled me to cook for the joy of sharing and not just for the production of food. As a vintner wishing to connect to people in the wine industry, I began cooking and entertaining — from small working lunches to large festive gatherings. While the rest of the family played hosts at the table, I was joyously relegated to the kitchen.

At the end of the day, I am neither chef nor winemaker. I fancy myself some species of pixie that flits about gathering great food, delicious wine and fascinating people, bringing them all together to relish the combined effect. My biggest joy is to witness friends and family sharing a moment together, whether at the table or around the fire. The finest euphoria on offer around



III  
THE  
WINE PAIRINGS



## LOUISE RIESLING

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Sommeliers and winemakers adore Riesling. I consider it the palate's reset button. Its high acidity and exotic aromas are a welcome departure when you've had your nose deep in Cabernet Sauvignon barrels all day. We love making this wine specifically for its food-pairing versatility. Riesling allows us to play with a whole range of foods that would not be appropriate with any other wine in our portfolio. Living in the Bay Area, we have access to some of the best Pan-Asian/Fusion cuisine in the country — and yet the Napa Valley's mainstay wines do not pair well with them. This wine lets us explore dishes with some heat and strong flavors like curry and garlic. But in the tasting room I have to be careful with strong aromas interfering with the other wines. For this reason you won't see any Thai or curry dishes in this chapter. But at home I adore this wine with such flavors.

SPICY MELON  
SHOOTERS WITH  
PROSCIUTTO  
STRAWS

ASIAN PEAR  
AND HUMBOLDT  
FOG GOAT CHEESE  
CANAPÉS

SMOKED TROUT  
LOLLIPOPS

SOUTHWEST  
CHICKEN SALAD  
ON APPLE SLICES



## EMPANADAS

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Empanadas are ubiquitous in Argentina. There are stalls in every town, delivery services and takeout menus stuffed in mailboxes daily. Movie night at home with friends always includes a steaming-hot tray of empanadas of various flavors. From children's birthday parties to late-night snacks, you'll find a gathering of people surrounding a pile of empanadas.

Some shops vary the braid atop each empanada, then include a paper key that describes each braid and the corresponding flavor. But my mother always kept the flavors a mystery, leaving the braid the same on all of them. Eating empanadas at home was a bit like eating a box of chocolates: You never knew what you were going to get. But rest assured each was delicious.

BEEF  
EMPANADAS

HAM AND  
GRUYÈRE  
EMPANADAS

*HUMITA* EMPANADAS  
(ROASTED  
VEGETABLE)

CHICKEN  
EMPANADAS



## THE FILLINGS

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There are many types of fillings for empanadas. After living in the U.S. for more than 30 years, we have adapted to the brighter flavors and more liberal use of spices than what is found in Argentina, and we have settled on these four flavors as our house fillings. We consider them spiced-up versions of more traditional Argentinian fillings.



## FOLDING EMPANADAS — REPULGUE

In Spanish, the braid design that seals the empanada's edge is called the *repulgue*. It is important that you do not overfill your empanadas; otherwise you won't have enough edge to work with. Generally speaking, you want about a 3/4-inch lip.

1. Take a premade pastry dough round and brush the edges with water. Add a spoonful of mixture into the center of the circle. Fold the circle in half and press the edges together.
2. Once the empanada is sealed, start at one corner and fold a portion of the edge into a small triangle. Press down to seal, and create a second triangle next to it. Continue to do this twist-and-press motion with your index finger and thumb the entire way across the edge until you have a braided top.
3. Place the completed empanadas on a baking sheet. Freeze them on the sheet. I find the texture of the dough to be much better when it's baked from frozen. It's worth the additional step, and more convenient to make these ahead of time and simply pull them out as you need them. Once frozen, they can be stored in a zip-top bag for up to 3 months.

### PREPARE FOR A PARTY

I find that guests tend to consume empanadas in equal ratios if the group is large enough. I typically assume that guests will generally eat 3 or 4 of these in a cocktail hour, so I bake accordingly.

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the frozen empanadas on a baking sheet, taking care that they're well-spaced and not touching each other. Brush the empanadas with an egg wash (1 large egg mixed with a touch of water). Place them in the oven and bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve warm.



## ALMOND TUILES WITH YOGURT AND SEASONAL BERRIES

PAIRING: FLORENCIA MUSCAT

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SERVES 8 TO 10

2 cups seasonal fruit,  
cut into similar-sized pieces

Granulated sugar,  
for sprinkling

Dash of rum

16 to 20 Almond Tuiles  
(page 234)

Vanilla or plain European-style  
whole milk yogurt

I always thought that my European friends' reminiscing about their hometowns' yogurt was just silly snobbery — until I found Straus Family Farms' creamy vanilla yogurt, made right here in the Bay Area. Given the growing popularity of artisanal yogurts, I encourage you to seek out your local favorite. Look for European-style (thin and creamy) yogurt, but avoid Greek yogurt, as its high acidity fights the wine.

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### DIRECTIONS

1. This salad can vary depending on the season. For the spring, you can use Bing cherries, plums and apricots; in the summer, try peaches, kiwis and mangos; in the fall, turn to pomegranates and berries. Whatever the mix, cut all the fruit in a uniform size. Toss in a bowl with a sprinkling of sugar and a dash of rum.
2. Place a tuile in the center of a dessert plate. Top with a mound of fruit salad and a scoop of yogurt. Place another tuile on top and repeat for the second layer. Top with a third tuile and a slice of fruit.





## ROASTING A WHOLE COW

PAIRING: BRASAS CABERNET SAUVIGNON

SERVES 60 TO 70

Whole (about 250 pounds)  
young cow

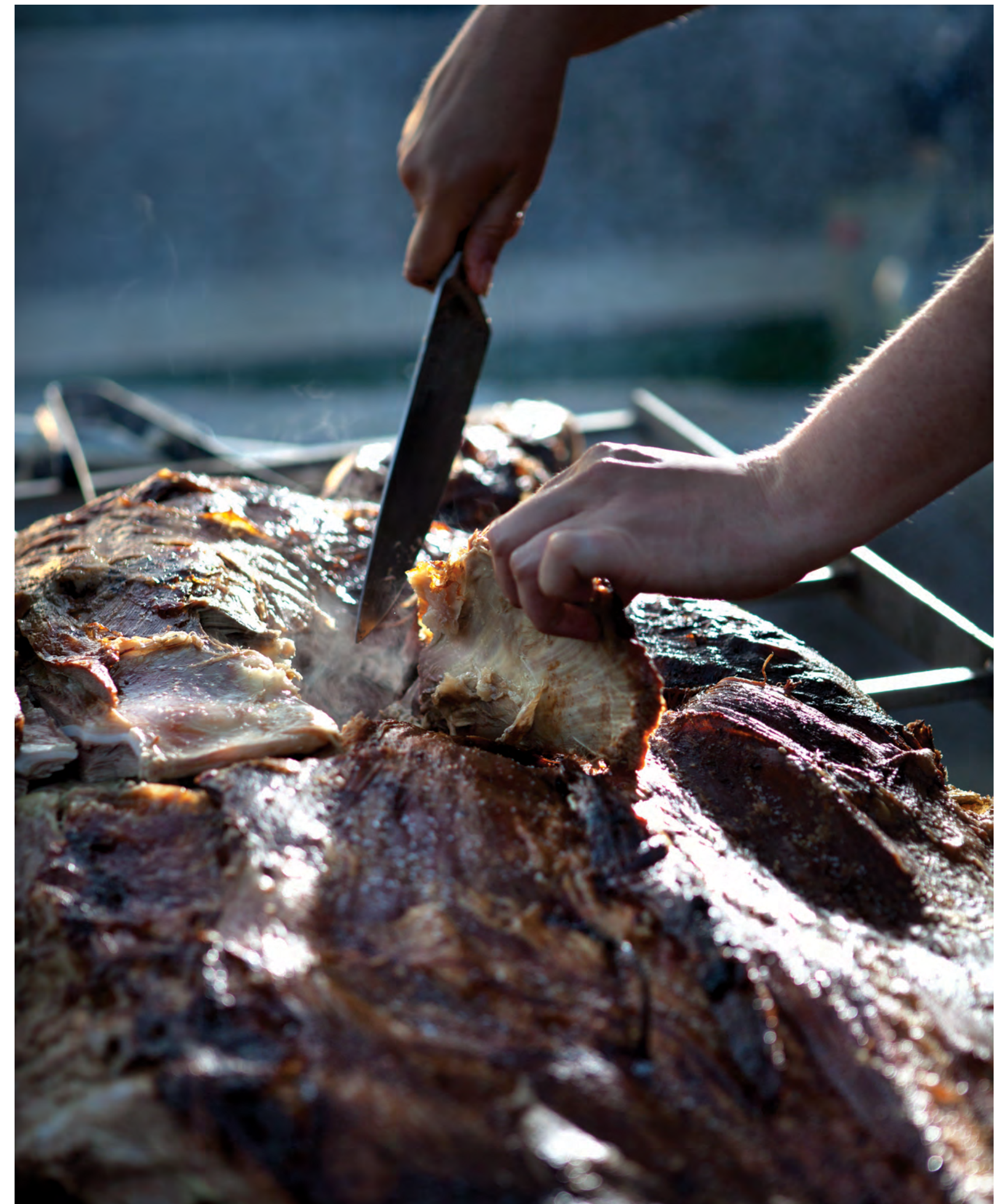
2 liters extra-virgin olive oil

4 cups kosher salt

1 cord split oak

DIRECTIONS

1. About 10 hours from fire to table, build the fire explained on page 156 for roasting a whole animal. The desired temperature range for beef is 140°F in the loins to 165°F in the shoulders and legs. Once the beef is cooked, portion out the different cuts and serve with the accompanying side dishes.
2. Slice the beef shoulders into single-serving portions and shred the more tender sections. Serve with the Heirloom Tomato Salad and Gorgonzola Cream Dressing (page 171).
3. Portion the legs into steaks and serve with Wild Rice Salad (page 171).
4. Slice medallions of the loins and portion the ribs and brisket before serving with Roasted Ginger Carrot Salad (page 171).





## MAIN COURSE

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Palmaz Vineyards is best known for Cabernet Sauvignons, so the main course becomes the most important course in the Library Dinner. It is here we will serve the evening's featured Cabernet Sauvignon. Depending on the night, we might serve a treasured older vintage of wine or premiere a new release. Either way, the wine is the main attraction. The meal around it is the chorus. You will see that all our main courses are fairly simple in composition and execution. I do not want to overwhelm the palate with too many flavors and detract from the elegance of the wine. The resulting food is elegant, fresh and not too fussy — a trifecta I try to live by.

BISON TENDERLOIN  
WITH SWEET  
CORN FLAN,  
ZUCCHINI RIBBONS  
AND MADEIRA  
DEMI-GLACE

LAMB LOIN  
TOWERS WITH  
WHITE BEAN  
PUREE, BELL  
PEPPER CONFIT  
AND SAUTÉED  
SPINACH

SEARED VENISON  
RACKS WITH  
SWEET POTATO  
PAVÉ, RASPBERRY  
CHIPOTLE  
DEMI-GLACE AND  
HARICOTS VERTS

SQUAB  
WITH MORELS,  
MOREL CREAM  
AND ROASTED  
GARLIC RISOTTO

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