

The natural, seasonal way of eating at this Northern California winery proves there is something very good about the simple life. Our menu gives you a taste.

FROM FIELD to TABLE

WRITTEN BY KATHLEEN DOLAN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES CARRIÈRE
PRODUCED BY LISA HOLDERNESS
FOOD STYLING BY SUSAN DRAUDT
PROP STYLING BY AARON HOM



OPPOSITE Ceago Winery winemaker Javier Meza cultivates four varieties of grapes in small, biodynamic batches: cabernet sauvignon (shown), syrah, sauvignon blanc, and chardonnay. **THIS PAGE** At a Fetzer family gathering, fresh-picked olive branches are used as napkin rings atop plates made by a local potter.



Life is good here. As a matter of fact, it's downright delicious.

It's nearly sunset at Ceago Winery, and the unmistakable smell of owner Jim Fetzer's roasted leg of lamb is wafting its way out to the vineyards. Winemaker Javier Meza raises his head in acknowledgment of the aromatic cue. "This is often how we know it's time to eat," he says, as he waves in fellow field workers and his young daughters, who love to play among the vines and with the farm animals. As they make their way across the fields, they pluck the occasional handful of walnuts, mums, or olive branches for the evening's table settings. Reaching the property's indoor-outdoor kitchen and surrounding courtyard, they're greeted by the familiar sight of the Fetzer family readying a table full of seasonal offerings: beet salad, wild mushroom polenta, and, of course, abundant homegrown wine. Javier's wife, Claudia, is there, and she has brought with her one of his favorite dishes, Chilean empanadas.

Known foremost for the namesake wine empire created by his parents and siblings, Jim Fetzer decided 10 years ago to trade in the large-scale wine production he knew in favor of smaller, biodynamic production. The result is Ceago Winery—220 acres of vineyards, gardens, and walnut trees set against the banks of Northern California's Clear Lake—which he runs with his three children, using only the purest, most earth-friendly practices. For the Fetzers themselves, it means a lifestyle in which work, play, food, family, and the land are interwoven as one.

"I never think of my days as work versus not working," says Katrina, the middle of the Fetzer children, who oversees the marketing. "It's just a lifestyle that we've chosen—to enjoy your life, the earth, and what the earth gives us."

Not everyone can live out their days among acres of organic wine grapes, sheep, chickens, and olive trees as do the Fetzers, but everyone can certainly be inspired by their way of living—and particularly their food choices. The family's preferred foods are what Jim refers to as "early California," meaning seasonal, regional foods at their simplest and purest. Olive oil, tortillas, vegetables, and grilled meats are staples. "We try to have lunch or dinner together as a family and with friends at least three times a week," Jim says. "And we always anchor it outdoors. It's so great to be able to cook and eat right in the middle of where everything's growing."

Gather your family and create your own piece of the Ceago lifestyle tonight. Start with what's freshest at your local fall farmers market or in your garden, and use the Fetzer family recipes as a guide for creating a simple, fresh, and flavorful outdoor meal. "I'm so lucky to be living this life," Jim says. "All I want now is to share it with other people."

LEFT Owner Jim Fetzer started working at his parents' winery at age 7. He knows grape vines best, but he enjoys picking olives for making Ceago olive oil as well. **OPPOSITE** 1) Javier and Claudia Meza's youngest daughter, Barbara, feeds the Rhode Island Reds. "She and her sister know every animal on the property by name," Javier says. 2) Locally baked bread is a staple with Ceago olive oil. 3) Katrina Fetzer holds a batch of Claudia's empanadas. 4) Andraya and Barney Fetzer talk with their dad while serving his lamb.



WILD MUSHROOM POLENTA
WITH GOAT CHEESE



ROASTED BEET AND KUMQUAT SALAD
WITH WHITE WINE VINAIGRETTE



1



2



MARINATED LEG OF LAMB WITH ROASTED
CAULIFLOWER, BRAISED SWISS CHARD



MENU

- Chilean Empanadas
- Marinated Leg of Lamb with
Roasted Cauliflower
- Roasted Beet and Kumquat
Salad with
White Wine Vinaigrette
- Braised Swiss Chard
- Wild Mushroom Polenta
with Goat Cheese
- Pumpkin Spice Cake
with Sautéed Apples and
Nutmeg Cream



3



CHILEAN
EMPANADAS



4





PUMPKIN SPICE CAKE WITH SAUTÉED APPLES AND NUTMEG CREAM

WHAT IS BIODYNAMIC FARMING?

Biodynamic farming is a complex agro-science involving, among other things, plant diversity, crop rotation, composting, and seasonal rotations. Its purpose is for every farm to serve as its own entity, meaning that all of the plants, animals, and practices on the farm serve to sustain one another. At Ceago Winery, for example, the resident sheep and chickens not only provide meat and eggs for people to eat, but also control the farm's weed and pest population during their free-roaming days. Sprinkler systems irrigate crops and provide summertime cooling and wintertime frost protection as well. "It's about bringing the farm into balance and healing the earth," says owner Jim Fetzer.

TURN TO PAGE 170 FOR RECIPES. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, ADDRESS, AND TASTING ROOM HOURS, VISIT CEAGO.COM OR CALL 707/274-1462.



Winemaker Javier Meza surveys the vineyards. Because he and his family live on the property, he is able to keep watch at all times.