



You Asked For It: Gift Guide

 ruthreichl.substack.com/p/you-asked-for-it-gift-guide

Ruth Reichl

This is the one-year anniversary of La Briffe, and so many people have reached out asking me to remind them of past gift suggestions that I'm devoting this issue to a few favorites. (These are all items I have purchased myself; I make no money from any of the sellers.)

I begin with a few new discoveries.

I really love the story behind Small Axe Peppers. Their motto is “heat that helps.” They buy chilis from community gardens across the country to create a variety of hot sauces. There are dozens of different flavors, and while I haven't begun to try them all, I love the ones I've tasted. I'm particularly partial to The Bronx, with its clean heat, and the Habanero-Mango which has a slightly sweet sizzle.





I haven't encountered many American olive oils that knocked me out, but this one from Goldridge Organic Farms in Sebastapol is exceptionally good. You can preorder their Olio Nuovo now - it will be available next month - and if you have never tasted just-pressed olive oil you're in for a treat. (Also, that little stainless steel pour spout comes in extremely handy and would make a great stocking stuffer.)

I no longer have pierced ears, but if I did I'd want these adorable little cracked egg earrings; the studs are made of polished white gold.



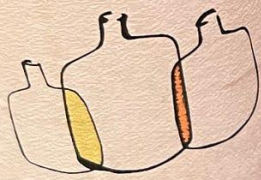
This isn't exactly new, but Ma La Market, one of my favorite on-line sources, has been out of these deliciously spicy preserved Sichuan vegetables for the past year. They are

finally back in stock, and I immediately ordered a giant supply. If you have any desire to cook Chinese food at home, you need to know about this great online source for all things Sichuan; Ma La Market has improved my life immensely.

CONDIMENTS



Gotham Grove is another great source for high-end hard to find Asian ingredients. I especially like their dried seaweeds, strawberry gochujang and sesame oil.



Celery Leaf Vinegar

All fresh ingredients brought directly from the farm.
No added sulfites. No added sugar. No added preservatives.
Shelf life: 12 months. Refrigerate after opening.
4% ACIDITY | 375 mL / 12.68 FL OZ



Honey Vinegar 2015

Lindera Farms

TART



KOMBU VINEGAR
375 ml (12.7 FL OZ)

I love vinegar, have dozens of different bottles, and have written about a number of favorite sources. One is Lindera Farms, which I discovered at the Dupont Circle Farmers Market in Washington DC. I love the deliciously quirky vinegars from Tart too; I'm especially fond of their Kombu Vinegar. And I could no longer live without the celery vinegar from Keepwell; if you have any desire to make celery soda, this is a great place to start.



Extra Vecchio
"CESARE"

EXTRA VECCHIO



Pedroni
dal 1862
Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale
di Modena D.O.P.

And then there is Balsamic vinegar... The real stuff is aged and extremely expensive. If you have someone you really want to treat well, order the extra vecchio Cesare from Pedroni; aged for almost a hundred years it has developed into something really special. You dole it out one delicious drop at a time, so this is a gift that will go on giving. I wrote about it here.



Speaking of Italy... Gustiamo is another on-line source that has made my life happier. I am never without their capers packed in salt, their canned tomatoes, their flours, their great apricot jam...

Another staple in my house? Cantabrian anchovies from Don Bocarte. I wrote about my love affair with these addictive little fish [here](#).

REPRISE: PRODUCE



The Chef's Garden in Huron Ohio grows some of the world's most wonderful (and nutritious) vegetables; instead of flowers, I often send a bouquet of their beautiful produce. And I consider their new book, *The Chef's Garden Cookbook* absolutely indispensable for anyone who wants to know about cooking or growing vegetables. Why it's not on everyone's list of best food books of the year is a mystery to me.

About twenty years ago Alice Waters sent me a box of sweet Kishu Tangerines from Churchill Orchards. I've been addicted ever since. These tiny, juicy, seedless little mandarin oranges bring sunshine to even the darkest February day. I wrote about them here.

Modern peaches are a pretty dispiriting lot. They're so hard that an entire generation thinks peaches are a crisp and crunchy fruit. And so lacking in fragrance that the seductive perfume of a peach had become an extremely rare experience. But real peaches still exist. The best I've found come from Frog Hollow Farm. They're seasonal, of course, so you'll have to wait until summer. But right now you can send the promise of peaches to your favorite friends. Worth the wait; I can't think of a better present.



When I ordered this indoor orange tree last year I expected it to blossom once and then slump into sadness, dispirited at being stuck indoors. But here it is, more than a year later, still bearing fruit. The fruit is pleasantly puckery, and when the tree is in blossom the fragrance could not be sweeter.

FISH



Live Santa Barbara spot prawns! Live abalone! Gooseneck barnacles! I find the e-fish site absolutely dangerous because I invariably want every single item they sell. Their ensui uni, which comes packed in saltwater is spectacular. The spot prawns arrived live and kicking, and when simply steamed were the best meal I've had all year. (They are, sadly, not in season at the moment.)

Browne Trading Company is the go-to fish site for many chefs (think Eric Ripert and Thomas Keller), and their products are always superb. During the height of Covid when I started craving sushi, I ordered toro, hamachi and hiramasa and learned how to cut the fish myself. Also a great source for Dover sole (wild or farmed), and excellent caviar.

While on the subject of sushi... Regalis trades in all manner of specialty foods, but I know them primarily as a place to go for great (and easy to slice) hamachi and kampachi, and excellent broiled eel (all you have to do is put it in the oven). Not to mention fresh wasabi root. They also have caviar, wild mushrooms and occasionally really arcane wild game.

Yakobi Fisheries. People always ask me where to buy wild salmon; this is my answer. Traceable, sustainable, caught by real people.

And speaking of salmon.... when I'm in the mood for lox, I go to Russ and Daughters. I have literally been going there all my life. Great caviar too - and the best Turkish pistachios.

MEAT



Nick Kokonas of Alinea once said to me, “When I’m in a bad mood I call Will Harris at White Oak Pastures and he always makes me feel better.” I know what he means. White Oak Pastures, a regenerative farm in Bluffton Georgia is one of the most inspirational places on earth. Their animals - they raise just about every kind you can think of - spend their lives outdoors in fields, woods and pastures; ordering this meat always gives me enormous pleasure.

Flannery Beef is a family-owned butcher in San Francisco that deals primarily in Holstein cattle. I wrote about them here. The meat is prime, beautifully aged and quite different than Angus. I love their Jorge cut: I just ordered a couple for a holiday feast.

Debragga has long been my go-to source for prime aged beef. I think their dry-aged hamburger is the best you can buy (and yes I’ve compared it to just about every other high-end blend on the market). Hamburgers are Michael’s favorite food, and I always have a few packages in my freezer.

PREPARED FOODS



Nobody on earth is more obsessive than Roy Shvartzapel, which is why Roy's Panettone is the best I've ever eaten. Crazy expensive, it's dangerous; once you've tried it you'll want it again. I wrote about it [here](#).

Umami Cart has a huge array of prepared Asian dishes. Some are better than others; I've tried all their bao and not one impressed me. But there are a couple of products I really love. Their sticky rice wrapped in lotus leaves is a standard lunch at my house, and these scallion pancakes are delicious.

Sadly Ugly Drum, which I considered the greatest pastrami on the planet, is no longer in business. Happily, you can still order great smoked brisket from Franklin Barbecue in Austin, Texas. Be sure to include the sausages; they are, hands down, the most delicious I've ever been lucky enough to eat.

I was planning to include kitchenwares, plates, glasses and so forth, but this list is becoming too long. Look for more next week. Today, just for the fun of it, I'll close with a vintage menu from Tadich Grill, the oldest continuously-run restaurant in California. Next week we'll end with a vintage review of the restaurant.

Old Menus

Tadich Grill

THE ORIGINAL COLD DAY RESTAURANT

1849 OUR 132nd YEAR 1981

BUICH BROTHERS

OPEN MONDAY through SATURDAY, 11:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M.



HISTORY OF TADICH GRILL

ESTABLISHED after the discovery of gold in 1849, on a location just off Portsmouth Plaza, the Tadich Grill has been an integral part of San Francisco history.

Here, men of power and influence gathered to socialize and discuss the future of the city. Out of one such meeting came the moniker "Cold Day Restaurant," which was attributed to local politician Alexander Badlam. In 1882 after an exciting political battle in which Badlam was victorious, he remarked: "It's a cold day when I get left." So firmly did the name become fixed that everybody spoke of it as the "Cold Day Restaurant."

The earthquake of 1906 forced John Tadich to set up temporary operation at the corner of Commercial and Leidesdorff Streets. In 1912, a "permanent" location was established at Clay and Leidesdorff Streets until 1967.

In times past Tadich Grill was acclaimed "the best mercantile lunch counter in the wholesale district," continuing today as a favorite lunch and dinner house in the financial district.

The senior Buich Brothers came to work for John Tadich in 1918 and later bought the business. Now the sons of Louie Buich cordially invite you to come in and be a part of our history.

May 21, 1981

FISH — SHELLFISH

All fresh Seafood subject to season, weather and fishing conditions

CHARCOAL	Fresh Water Baby Salmon	10.50
BROILED	Broiled Lobster Tail (14 oz.) with Butter Sauce	18.50
	Petrale, Butter Sauce	8.95
	Halibut Steak, Butter Sauce	9.50
	Sea Bass, Butter Sauce	9.75
	Salmon Steak, Butter Sauce	10.50
	Rex Sole or Sandabs, Butter Sauce	8.25
	Mountain Brook Trout Meunière	8.25
	Swordfish	11.75
BAKED, EN	Oyster Rockefeller	7.95
CASSEROLE	Baked Halibut Florentine, en Casserole	8.35
	Sea Bass, Rice, Créole Sauce	6.95
	Sea Bass and Crab Meat, Créole Sauce	7.95
	Salmon and Shrimp with Rice Créole	8.95
	Shrimp Curry and Rice	8.95
	Shrimp and Oysters Créole	8.95
	Stuffed Turbot with Crab & Shrimp á la Newburg	9.95
	Salmon and Crab á la Newburg	9.95
	Deviled Crab	9.95
	Crabmeat and Prawns á la Monza	9.95
	Combination Crabmeat & Lobster Thermidor	14.75
STEAMED	Kippered Alaska Cod, Butter Sce., Boiled Potato	8.25
PAN FRIED	Hangtown Fry (Oyster, Bacon & Eggs)	8.25
	Filet of English Sole, Tartar Sauce	7.65
	Pacific Red Snapper with Sauté Crab or Shrimp	9.25
	Filet of Petrale, Tartar Sauce	8.95
	Rex Sole or Sandabs	8.25
DEEP FRIED	Eastern Oysters with Bacon	8.95
	Calamari (Squid), Tartar Sauce	7.10
	Scallops, Tartar Sauce	9.25
	Jumbo Prawns, Tartar Sauce	9.75
	Crab Legs, Tartar Sauce	10.95
SAUTE	Crab Legs Sauté, Fresh Mushrooms, Sherry Wine	11.75
	Prawns Sauté, Fresh Mushrooms, Sauterne Wine	11.25
	Scallops Sauté, Fresh Mushrooms, Sauterne Wine	10.95
	Combination Seafood Sauté	13.75

NO
AL CHECKS
OR
T CARDS
CEPTED

(Scallops, Prawns, Crab Legs)

TADICH SPECIALS

Baked Avocado with Shrimp Diablo	7.50
Fried Calamari <i>Steak</i> (Squid), Bordelaise	7.95
Tadich Special Seafood Cioppino	9.25
Combination Deep Fried Seafood Plate	9.50
Oysters, Crab Legs Scallops, Prawns and Calamari	
Combination Sea Food Curry en Casserole	9.50
Crab Meat, Shrimps and Prawns with Rice	
Lobster Thermidor Baked in Shell	14.75

VEGETABLES and POTATOES

Hot or Cold Fresh Asparagus, Mayonnaise	3.00		
String Beans 1.50	Green Peas 1.50	Risotto 1.95	
Fresh Spinach	1.75	Shoestring Potatoes	1.50
Hash Browned Potatoes	1.75	French Fried Potatoes	1.30
Side Order of Pasta	Plain 1.50; with Meat Sauce	1.95	
Steamed Rice	Plain 1.25; with Mushroom Sauce	1.50	

DESSERT and CHEESE

Fresh Strawberries in Cream 2.50, Cheese Cake 2.25, Rice Custard Pudding 2.10	
Ice Cream or Sherbet 1.75 Choc. Sundae 2.25 Choc. Mousse Torte 2.25	
Camembert or Monterey Jack	1.95

BEVERAGES

Coffee .55	Pot of Tea .55	Milk .55	Sanka .55
Iced Tea or Iced Coffee55	All Soft Drinks75
Tomato or Orange Juice	1.00	Calistoga Water	1.00
		Schweppes	1.00

Prices will be
at prices of all
average items.

BEER and WINE

Schlitz Light	1.25	Heineken	1.25
Coors (Draft)75	Heineken, Dark	1.25

Cinzano 1.50 Dubonnet 1.25

APPETIZERS

Crab Cocktail 5.75 Prawn Cocktail 6.55
 Crab Leg Cocktail 6.55 Shrimp Cocktail 5.10
 Seafood Cocktail 5.85
 ½ Doz. Eastern Oysters, Half Shell 5.85 Oysters Rockefeller 7.95
 Hot or Cold Fresh Asparagus, Mayonnaise 3.00

A LA CARTE SALADS

Cosmopolitan Salad (Vegetables, Crab, Prawns, Shrimp) . . 8.45
 Mixed Seafood 8.45
 Shrimp, Prawn or Crab Louie . 8.45 Crab Leg Salad . . . 9.95
 Whole Avocado Salad 4.95 Avocado with Crab or Shrimp 8.25
 Sliced Tomato with Crab, Shrimp or Prawns 8.25
 Vegetable Combination 4.75

PERSON
 CREDI
 ACC

Tadich Old Fashioned Blue Cheese Dressing 95¢ Extra with All Salads

SMALL SALADS

Served without Entrée 95¢ Extra

Crab 6.45 . . . Prawn 6.85 . . . Shrimp . . . 5.45
 Heart of Lettuce or Romaine 2.75
 Small Vegetable Combination 2.95; with Seafood . 6.35
 Sliced Tomato Salad with Crab 6.95; with Shrimp 6.45
 Mixed Seafood Salad . 7.10 Lettuce and Tomato 2.95
 Sliced Tomato . . . 3.20 Mixed Green . . . 2.10
 Half Avocado, French Dressing 3.25
 TADICH SPECIAL DINNER SALAD 2.60

— Soup without Entrée \$3.50 —

SOUPS

Split Pea Soup cup 1.00; bowl 1.15
 Chicken with Noodle cup 1.00; bowl 1.20
 Fresh Coney Island Clam Chowder . . . cup 1.65; bowl 2.10
 Clam Broth cup 1.35; bowl 1.60

TODAY'S SPECIAL

ASPARAGUS OMELETTE 5.75
 BROILED OR FRIED FRESH FLOUNDER 8.95
 BROILED FRESH THRESHER SHARK, Mushroom Sce. 7.95
 BROILED FRESH STURGEON, MUSHROOM SAUCE . 9.95
 FRIED CALAMARI *Steak* (Squid), BORDELAISE . . 7.95
 BREADED VEAL CUTLET WITH PASTA 8.25
 BROILED or FRIED FRESH PACIFIC RED SNAPPER 7.95
 CHICKEN FRICASSEE 5.95
 CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE, BOILED POTATOES . 6.95
Baked Shoulder of Lamb, Rice, Vegetable (After 5 p.m.) . 8.50
 TADICH SPECIAL MEAT LOAF WITH RAVIOLI . . . 4.95
 TADICH SPECIAL SEAFOOD CIOPPINO 9.25
 SEAFOOD CANNELLONI FLORENTINE, Cheese Sauce 5.50
 Eastern Oyster Stew in Milk or Half & Half . . . 6.95
 Fresh Broiled Calves' Liver with Onions or Bacon . 7.95
 Broiled Salisbury Steak, Fresh Mushroom Sauce . . 6.95
 Homemade Ravioli with Meat Sauce 4.95
 Bacon and Eggs . . . 4.95 Ham and Eggs . . . 5.10
 Broiled Hamburger Steak with Pasta or Fried Onion . . 6.95

FROM THE CHARCOAL BROILER

Top Sirloin Steak with Fresh Mushroom Sauce 10.95
 New York Cut Steak, Shoestring Potatoes 11.50
 Filet Tips or Filet Mignon, Fresh Mushroom Sauce . . 11.75
 Half Spring Chicken, Shoestring Potatoes 6.95
 Double Lamb Chops 9.75 Skirt Steak 8.35
 Pork Chops with Applesauce 8.25

Sales tax
 added to the
 food and be

— Minimum Food Charge \$3.50 Per Person —

Dry Martini	1.25	Cuba Libre	1.50
Manhattan	1.25	Screwdriver	1.50
Gimlet	1.50	Bloody Mary	1.50
Bourbon Highball	1.25	Dubonnet Cocktail	1.25
Scotch Highball	1.25	Campari	1.50
Brandy Highball	1.25	Americano or Negroni	1.50
Rum (Bacardi)	1.50	Amer Picon Punch	1.50

BLENDED COCKTAILS

Whiskey Sour	1.75	Margarita	1.75
Bacardi	1.75	Gin Fizz	1.75
Daiquiri	1.75	Ramos Fizz	2.25

PREFERRED DRINKS

Old Grand Dad (Bonded)	1.50	Jim Beam	1.50
Old Fitzgerald (Bonded)	1.50	Early Times	1.50
J. W. Harper (Bonded)	1.50	Seagram's 7 Crown	1.50
Jack Daniels	1.50	Beefeater Gin	1.50
Southern Comfort	1.50	Bombay Gin	1.50
Seagram's V. O.	1.50	Myers's Rum	1.50
Canadian Club	1.50	Plymouth Gin	1.50
Old Overholt Rye	1.50	Tanqueray Gin	1.50
Wild Turkey	1.50	Seagram's Crown Royal	1.75
Irish Whiskey	1.50	Jameson Irish	1.75

SCOTCH WHISKEY

Ballantine's	1.50	J & B (Rare)	1.50
Dewar's White Label	1.50	Johnnie Walker (Red)	1.50
Cutty Sark	1.50	Johnnie Walker (Black)	1.75
Grant's (8 yrs. old)	1.50	Glenfiddich	1.75
		Chivas Regal (12 yrs. old)	1.75

CORDIALS

Christian Bros. Brandy	1.50	Cognac	2.00
Galliano	2.00	Apricot Brandy	2.00
Crème de Menthe or Cacao	2.00	Blackberry Brandy	2.00
Kahlua	2.00	Orange Curaçao	2.00
B & B	2.00	Cointreau	2.00
Bénédictine	2.00	Curaçao Triple Sec	2.00
Drambuie	2.00	Grand Marnier	3.00
Metaxa	2.00	Tuaca Demi Sec	2.00
Spanish Brandy	2.00	Cognac VSOP	3.00
Irish Mist	2.00	Chartreuse (Green)	2.00
		Amaretto	2.00

WINE LIST

CALIFORNIA WHITE WINE

CONCANNON—Johannisberg Riesling (V)	3.75	7.50
Moselle (V)		5.50
WENTE BROS.—Chablis		5.50
Grey Riesling	3.25	6.50
Dry Semillon (V)		6.75
Sauvignon Blanc (V)		7.75
Pinot Chardonnay (V)	4.50	8.75
LOUIS MARTINI—Dry Chenin Blanc (V)		6.00
Gewurztraminer (V)		7.00
RUTHERFORD VINTNERS—Johannisberg Riesling (V)		9.75
BEAULIEU (B.V.)—Dry Sauvignon Blanc (V)		9.50
ROBERT MONDAVI — Fumé Blanc (V)		12.00
ROBERT MONDAVI — White Table Wine		5.00
J. LOHR—Chardonnay (V)		13.00
BUENA VISTA — Chardonnay (Heritage)		14.50
KORNELL—Brut Champagne	6.25	12.50

CALIFORNIA RED WINE

CONCANNON—Petite Sirah (V)	3.25	6.25
BEAULIEU (B.V.)—Gamay Beaujolais (V)	2.75	5.50
LOUIS MARTINI—Burgundy	2.75	5.50
Cabernet Sauvignon (V)	4.00	8.00
Pinot Noir (V)	3.50	7.00
WENTE—Rosé	2.75	5.50

Wine