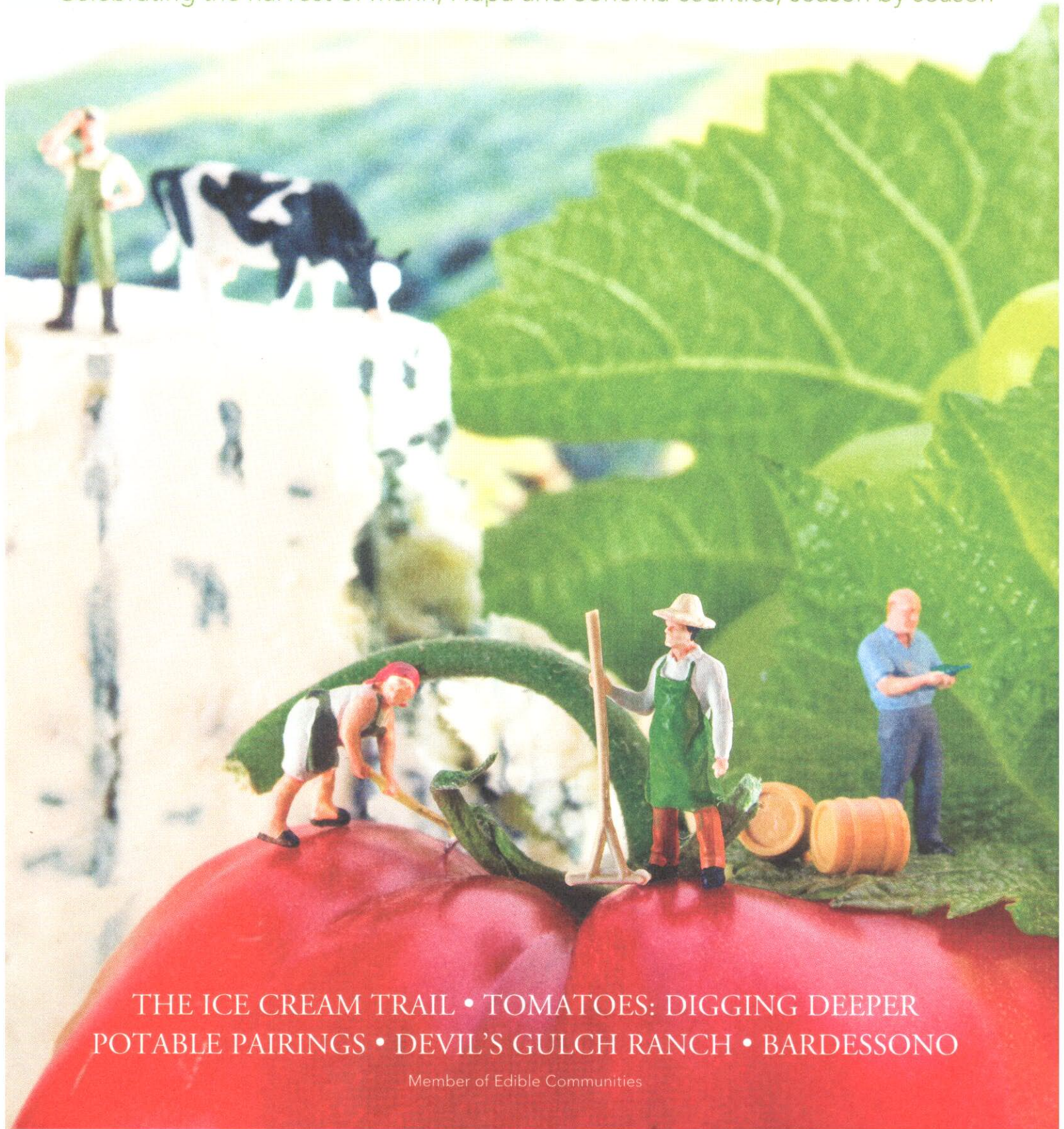


# *edible* MARIN & WINE COUNTRY

Premiere Issue  
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Celebrating the harvest of Marin, Napa and Sonoma counties, season by season



THE ICE CREAM TRAIL • TOMATOES: DIGGING DEEPER  
POTABLE PAIRINGS • DEVIL'S GULCH RANCH • BARDESSONO

Member of Edible Communities



## SWEET TALES FROM THE **ICE CREAM TRAIL**

BY MARIA HELM SINSKEY

**N**orth of San Francisco, just over the Golden Gate Bridge, life becomes slower and less condensed as the city feathers into the suburbs and farmlands of Marin, Sonoma and Napa. Cows replace cars and the jolting noise of urban living softens into birdsong. Here is where you'll find a plethora of local gelato and ice cream producers that inspire devotion and sometimes cult-like followings. From Cici Gelateria in Mill Valley to Downtown Creamery and Bakery in Healdsburg, ice cream and gelato makers are spinning the abundance of Northern California's dairy and egg farms into local, sustainable and, in many instances, certified organic treats. You will find them in innovative flavors like Rose and Lavender Honey, as well as the classic best sellers Chocolate and Vanilla.

I set out one weekend to discover what makes this group of scoop shop owners, pint producers and pastry chefs tick. The ice cream trail led me down picturesque, rural back roads I never knew existed. I returned home with a full belly and my vision of one of the most beautiful regions of California restored. Every ice cream maker I visited or spoke with made products of exceptional quality. All spoke about the happiness and peace they found in their craft. All actively sought ways to give back to the community and support the environment. At the end of this assignment, I felt warm, fuzzy and stuffed, and my daughters who had accompanied me on portions of this quest had had enough ice cream to last a good long while. It was nice to tuck them into bed with the feeling that, in this world of constant change, happiness can be found in a cone or a cup.

### Chapter 1—The Producers

#### LALOO'S GOAT'S MILK ICE CREAM

Laura Howard went from successful Hollywood producer to a big-time producer of another sort: making goat's milk ice cream. She started in her home kitchen in 2004 and by

2005 was selling Laloo's at farmers' markets as well as small specialty markets. As demand grew, she and her husband, photographer Douglas Gayeton, increased their production so consumers across the United States would have access to their ice cream. As Laura puts it, "I wanted to spend my life working with my hands and meeting people with the same values." If taste is any indicator, she's succeeded.

One bite of Laloo's and I was hooked. Smooth, luscious and packed with intense flavor—I was hard-pressed to tell it was made with goat's milk and contained only around 7 percent fat. Strawberry Darling, a swirl of strawberries and balsamic vinegar, is creamy, tangy and not too sweet. Deep Chocolate is rich in chocolaty flavor. Delicate Vanilla Snowflake gently lifts and the vanilla does not mask the light goaty tang of the milk. Other ingenious flavors include Ruplemint, Capracino, and Black Mission Fig. Flavors such as Lemon Chiffon and Pumpkin Spice rotate seasonally. Next on their dance card is the Bambino, a four-bite ice cream sandwich that's perfect for little hands or to take the edge off a sweet tooth.

**Get some:** Whole Foods, Mollie Stone's and other specialty grocery stores. [www.laloo.com](http://www.laloo.com)

#### STRAUS FAMILY CREAMERY

It seems natural that Albert Straus, a revered member of the Cal Poly dairy products judging team, would become the godfather of organic ice cream in the Bay Area. This first certified organic dairy west of the Mississippi River, now also a certified organic creamery, turns out some of the tastiest milk and milk products in the region, all while remaining on the forefront of sustainable and environmentally sound practices in farming, food production and rural community planning.

Why did Albert choose ice cream? Plain and simple, he loves it. "I converted the dairy to organic just for the purpose of making ice cream," he jokes.