



Earthy Eats: Napa Truffle Festival

Seminars, lunches, and a “Wild Mushroom Foray” brighten the January weekend.

By Alysia Gray Painter



BITE INTO ANY RICH DISH, whether it is pasta or pizza or a burger or an omelet, and you'll likely make an observation about what strikes you first (that is, if you're dining with someone who might want to know such an observation). The pizza's chewy crust might be the first sensation the pie provides, while the most outstanding feature of a pasta could be its tangy sauce. As for the burger or omelet? A piquancy might stand out or a cheesy element, if cheese is present. But try any entrée that has the merest hint of a truffle, be it a slice or a shaving, and that's probably the part you'll talk about first (again, if someone is dining with you and has an ear to lend on such matters). Truffles are so distinctive, and so stand-out-y, that they'll be the first ingredient out of the gourmet-grand gate when it comes to greeting your senses. So what's it like to be at an all-truffle gathering, where the straight-from-underground wonders are fragranting-up foodstuffs aplenty? It's delicious, but you can see so for yourself at the...

NAPA TRUFFLE FESTIVAL: The mid-January jubilation is back, with three days packed with seminars, lunches, a “Wild Mushroom Foray,” area vinos, vendors purveying in yummy tidbits, and a tour/dog-training demo (since our pup pals play a vital role in truffle-based discoveries). The 2017 dates are Jan. 13 through 16, and locations include Nickel & Nickel as well as Davis Estates. How does a sip of merlot enhance a truffle's salty I'm-here-ness? How do the fungi stars make a bread or quiche more itself? For sure, a truffle can be the most prominent of flavors, but it has a way of lifting the dish as a whole to something superb. Maybe even something that transcends the original idea of what the dish could be. (Plan on expressing such flights of fancy if you're eating truffles with someone who won't mind listening to such things.)