



SUMMER

Produce from
Amy's Garden



BOUNTY

It's an annual extravaganza: From May to August, area produce is poppin'. While the warmer months mean river days and beach vacations, farmers market fans and diners know they also signify a feast of locally grown food, from succulent berries to sumptuous tomatoes and all the plump peaches in between.

We get the dirt on how it all happens, talking with migrant workers who are the backbone of a longstanding organic farm, showcasing the juiciest bites of the season, discovering the power of seed saving, peeking inside marketgoers' totes, and exploring the bond between chef and farmer.

*By Bird Cox, Stephanie Ganz,
Eileen Mellon and Genevelyn Steele*

OUTSTANDING IN THE FIELD

Temporary agricultural workers are
the roots of a local organic farm

By Eileen Mellon

AT AMY'S GARDEN, an idyllic 70-acre property in Charles City County, veteran farmer Amy Hicks is barely visible among the rambling rows of Swiss chard, sunflowers and strawberries. Joining her in the fields are employees Karim Edgar Barraza Morales and brothers Cirillo and Elfego Perez Merin, holding baskets brimming with squash blossoms and greens.

While the crew seems small, the trio — Mexican migrants employed through the federal H-2A visa program for temporary agricultural workers — are the backbone of the 25-year-old operation. “This is who runs the farm, along with [my husband] George [Ferguson] and I,” Hicks says.

From Cuernavaca, Mexico, Elfego has been employed at Amy's

for a decade. This marks his brother Cirillo's second season; both previously worked on tobacco farms in Texas and Virginia. A Mexico City native, Morales has been returning to Amy's for nine years.

The group works from about 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Each day, Hicks prepares a task list that can include assisting in the greenhouse, washing and packing produce, preparing bouquets for farmers markets, or picking strawberries. Arriving at the farm in April, they will remain until early October, getting paid \$14.91 an hour and living in a two-bedroom brick house on the property (the accommodations are included with their pay).

Hicks and Ferguson founded the farm in 1998 after she had quit her job in the restaurant industry to commit to farming full time. In 2003, the couple moved from their property in New Kent County to the historic farm they currently operate. It was during those scrappy early years, as they were trying to lay a secure foundation for a successful agricultural venture, that the duo began to explore hiring H-2A workers.

“Labor is honestly one of the most important pieces of the farm business,” says Hicks, who has nearly 200 farm share subscriptions and attends the Birdhouse and Williamsburg farmers markets weekly.



[From left]: Elfego
Perez Merin, Karim
Edgar Barraza
Morales and Cirillo
Perez Merin



Unlike farms that operate all year, Amy's Garden has adopted a six-months-on, six-months-off method, making it even more difficult to establish a steady crew of workers who want to come back each growing season.

"It is a seasonal job ... it's hard to get a good returning work force, so that was the goal [with using H-2A workers], to have a trained, returning workforce, and it's been amazing," Hicks says. "It's completely changed the trajectory of the farm; it's made it so much better."

In the United States, employers can hire migrants to fill temporary agricultural jobs for up to 10 months of the year. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, immigrant farmworkers make up an estimated 74% of agriculture workers. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that there were nearly 370,000 temporary jobs filled under the program.

But while the workers at Amy's Garden, all in their early 30s, initially came to the United States with hopes of establishing economic security and a better future for themselves and their families, the decision to repeatedly relocate to a different country for work has also had its drawbacks.

Being separated from their families takes a toll, and all three express that they deeply miss their partners, children and/or Mexico. When asked how often they talk to their loved ones, they all respond, "Every day."

"It's really hard, and there's a lot of things you're losing out on because you're here and not there," says Morales in Spanish. Married for 16 years, he is currently in the process of separating from his wife. He says the distance has been incredibly taxing on their relationship, especially after his wife had a miscarriage. Unable to devote the time and space to fully process the separation, he says he feels as if everything he has established by coming to the U.S., from making money to buying a house, has been destroyed.

Playing an integral part in the farm's success and growth over the past decade, Morales made the difficult decision to head



Amy's Garden founder Amy Hicks

back to Mexico one week after my initial visit this spring. He says that while financial stability is what originally brought him to America, he is now in search of emotional stability and healing.

Hicks, who has been employing H-2A visa workers since 2007, is familiar with the emotions that can arise when working a seasonal job. While Morales' departure will undoubtedly make for a tough transition on the farm, especially during peak produce season, Cirillo and Elfego have recommended a friend who will arrive in a month to fill his position, and Hicks says she understands and respects his choice.

"This happens, he's been here 10 years almost; it's hard being away from their families, so we experience that throughout the years, and we talk about it," she says. "The thing is, you have to be happy here, and if you're not, we do something else ... but that's OK, you want your workforce to be happy, that's the most important thing."

Cirillo has four kids ranging in age from 2 to 11. He says that he enjoys farming and that when he's outside with his hands in the dirt his worries seem to dissipate. After working on a tobacco farm in Texas and clocking 18-hour days, he prefers the environment at Amy's Garden, describing it as much more peaceful.

Although Cirillo longs for his family, he says working alongside his brother has provided them both with a support system and helps them feel less disconnected from their life in Mexico. "We're here for each other," he says in Spanish.

One of Hicks' longest-tenured workers to date, Elfego says he returns to the farm because he likes being there, feels appropriately compensated and, compared to other jobs he's held, it's not as physically grueling. He adds that he would encourage others who are looking for similar opportunities to apply.

With a 6-month-old at home, however, Elfego's absence affects his partner even more. "She feels lonely because, obviously, I'm here," he says in Spanish.

Locally, Amy's Garden is one of the only organic produce farms that relies on H-2A workers, Hicks says. She shares that she has connected online with other agricultural businesses that use H-2A to gain insight, ask questions and share experiences.

"A lot of times I'll reach out, because it is a unique program with unique situations and predicaments," she says. "It's hard; it's not for everyone to be away from their family. The upside is that hopefully they're earning a wage here that is not attainable in Mexico and hopefully it's helping them to at least build their life there in a way they wouldn't be able to. ... In a way, it's a sucky situation, but it is a good opportunity for them. It's a complicated issue, but it's a great program for farmers, I think, and it's really made us grow the business." ■

THE FAMILY JEWELS

Heirloom crops boast stories
and superior flavor

By Bird Cox

THE TERM “HEIRLOOM” elicits multiple reactions in contemporary food culture: curiosity about a historical food experience, excitement about depth of flavor, relief that varieties are being saved from extinction, confusion about what “heirloom” even means. The term can even be slammed as a fad — especially when it comes to tomatoes. The appeal of heirloom tomatoes, with their brief natural season, short shelf life, and outsized quality and range of flavors, blazed the trail for the heirloom movement, but a good look at the importance of (mostly) lesser-known heirloom crops should inspire hope that they too will find increasing enthusiasm on menus across the country.

To claim the title of heirloom, a crop must be open-pollinated, which means the breeze and the bugs do the work naturally and spontaneously. The cultivars cannot be genetically modified or bred with others, and they must have been in existence for 50 years. Or 100 years. Or since 1945, when the widespread introduction of hybrid varieties hit the



Brandon Bundy and his wife, Latoya Bundy, at the Farmers Market at St. Stephen's

marketplace. The timeline is a hotly debated topic in production circles. Heirlooms also have ties to the area in which they're first grown, though they can be grown anywhere once they're established and still be considered an heirloom. Eating one feels like a connection with history, the savoring of a flavor as it was experienced generations ago.

In Virginia, finding heirloom seeds from which to grow your own potent bites of food history is a bit easier than finding heirloom produce to buy and cook at home. If gardening is your thing, Virginia Free Farm in Kents Store and the Southern Exposure Seed Exchange in Mineral are excellent resources. To purchase heirloom produce, farmers markets, small organic-focused markets, farm stands and CSA shares are your best bets, although it's important to inquire about specific varieties because not every farmer highlights a crop's heirloom status.

Locally, Bundy Heirloom Farm can be found each Saturday at the Farmers Market at St. Stephen's. This year, the crop list from the purveyor, which operates about an hour and a half outside the

city, includes thick Bloomsdale spinach, Bradford and Georgia Rattlesnake watermelons, Burghundy and Clemson Spineless okra, Black Beauty zucchini, Honeyrock muskmelon, Silver Queen corn and more. At the same market, Broadfork Farm's much-loved deep-orange heirloom Danvers carrots can be spotted.

“Heirlooms can be tricky to grow,” Brandon Bundy says as he recounts starting his farm. “They're not as high yield, not as disease resistant. But the flavors are much more bold.”

A former chef who spent 10 years working in restaurants from Julep's to the shuttered SaltBox Oyster Company, Bundy favors prominent flavors, so they're a strong priority for the farmer. “The Bradford watermelons — people love those. They're giant, solid-dark-green melons with white seeds, and the taste is outstanding, sweet as can be.” The Honeyrock melons, which are similar enough to cantaloupe to be called such, are also prized for their intense floral sweetness and firm texture.

Another Virginia farm, Delli Carpini in Beaverdam, began with founder Dominic



Heirloom tomatoes

Carpin's intention to grow Italian heirloom crops on a small scale, plant by the moon and almanac, and follow biodynamic practices. He had been a serious heirloom hobbyist grower prior to starting his commercial venture.

"Heirlooms resonate with people," Carpin says. "Some people say hybrids are better, or stronger, but that isn't always the case. A lot of F1 hybrids [plants with two distinct parents] are taken off the market; they might look better and last longer, but they don't taste as good."

Hybrid varieties have largely been chosen by industrial growers for hardiness. Controlled pollination results in massive crop yields all at once, rather than gradually over a season. They're uniform and predictable, and consumers have developed an aesthetic preference for them over time.

The California Wonder green pepper is an heirloom, and there's a high likelihood that it's stashed in your veggie drawer right now, as it's the commercial standard for peppers. Hybrid development and production can be means to address changing weather patterns, soil conditions and human needs. Human-kind has reaped massive benefits from

hybrids, but they have come at the cost of retaining biodiversity. Carpin protects Italian varieties such as the pleasantly sweet and aromatic Tropea onion and the treasured, spherical Borettana Cipollini.

At The Roosevelt in Church Hill, Executive Chef Leah Branch often works with heirlooms, especially during the summer. "I love the stories behind heirloom produce," she says.

Admitting to a soft spot for fruit-forward Jimmy Nardello peppers, Branch has showcased the heirloom in several dishes, blistering them over stracciatella and serving it with chili crisp and confit bacon or pairing them with seared scallops, bok choy, lemon jam and emmer wheat berries. And while they are great frying peppers, exuding a creamy texture that chefs are drawn to, Branch says that, above all, it's the lineage of the heirlooms that is captivating.

"When Jimmy Nardello peppers are happening, the kitchen gets very excited," she says. "The idea of an immigrant family with 11 kids settling in Connecticut, then passing the Nardello [seeds] over to Seed Savers almost 100 years later. ... There is a rich history behind the sharing of seeds; it's nice to be a part of keeping that alive." ■



Seen cutting garlic scapes, Chef Leah Branch works with heirlooms often

JAY PAUL

GROUNDSORES

Easily foraged summer edibles

by Bird Cox

There's quite a bit of food out there in your yard or a nearby park if you're industrious about gathering it. Here are a few specimens to get you started this summer.

Dandelion

This childhood friend reduces inflammation; is packed with calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium, vitamin A and more; and the entire plant, root to flower, is edible. While summer dandelion is a bit more spicy and bitter than spring growth, you'll likely appreciate its flavor if you're a fan of arugula. Pull the whole plant up by the root, then triple-wash all parts before consumption.



Wood Sorrel

Often mistaken for clover (which is nontoxic, *whew!*), tender-petaled wood sorrel is distinguishable by its triad of heart-shaped leaves. The leaves, stems, and small, yellow flowers are edible, and their oxalic acid content gives them a lightly sour flavor profile – if you're prone to kidney issues, oxalic acid can be tough on your system. Wood sorrel is full of vitamin C and is best eaten raw in salads or herb-loving recipes.

Japanese Knotweed

Lemony, juicy knotweed stalks are a delight, and they can be found along the James River. Young stalks look a bit like red-green asparagus. Just peel and eat them, or make into pickles! Or sorbet! Two important notes about knotweed: It has a toxic semi-lookalike, pokeweed. Knotweed leaves are heart-shaped and the stems are splotched green and purple, while pokeweed's leaves are oval and the stems are solid purple. Don't throw knotweed scraps in your compost unless you want a yard full of knotweed next season.



Spinach orecchiette with peas, broccolini and Parmesan from the Old Tavern Farm dinner held in the spring

SOWING SEEDS

The connection between a Richmond chef and area farmer relies on communication

By Stephanie Ganz

CHEF DONNIE GLASS squints at a picture on his cell phone. In the photo, a tangle of pea shoots sits atop a bed of rich soil, the bright, cheerful green a striking contrast to the dark brown dirt. There among the leaves is the telltale detail that will shape Glass' menus for the coming weeks — small white and purple flowers, a sign that the peas themselves are just two weeks away from harvest.

"Asparagus are the first to come, but, for me, peas are the star of the show in the spring," says Glass, co-owner of the French-inspired Church Hill restaurant *Grisette* and the Fan wine bar *Jardin*. "They're here, and then they're gone."

The text message came from Glass' inside source and produce connect, Zach West, a former cook who worked under Glass and for James Beard Award-winning chef Mashama Bailey at *The Grey* in Savannah, Georgia, before joining Old Tavern Farm in 2022 as its full-time farm manager. Combining his knowledge of professional kitchens with experience tending the field, West serves as a liaison between chefs and farmers, including Old Tavern Farm owner John Bryant. Each day, West sends daily harvest lists to Glass and other chefs in the area to let them know

what's available and what's to come, an essential part of menu planning for restaurants that are committed to using local produce.

Over the past eight years, Bryant has cultivated not just high-quality produce for markets and retail stores, but also a reputation for being a chef's farmer — a grower who plans for the specific needs of a particularly demanding clientele. From his 400-acre property in Quinton (just 15 miles door to door from *Grisette*), Bryant grows dozens of crops: lettuce and asparagus in the spring, tomatoes and melons in the summer, and potatoes and brassicas throughout the fall. He's methodical and meticulous about crop rotation, using cover crops such as clover and vetch to replenish the soil between harvests, and relying on a system of plastic mulch and underground irrigation to maintain consistent moisture and nutrient levels in the soil.

If a backyard garden is a game of checkers, Old Tavern Farm is 3D chess. Bryant knows each move he plans to make months, if not years, in advance, thanks to a well-kept spreadsheet that details every row of his farm

down to the day each seed should be sown. But, he admits, all the planning in the world is no match for Mother Nature, and it's important to work with chefs who understand that.

"We work with folks who are open and willing to adapt their menus, which is hard to do," Bryant says. "Anytime you deal with a customer, it's their expectations you're trying to meet. If your menu is truly seasonal, you're going to have to tell people, 'No, you can't get that.'"

Bryant says that the sheer size of his 30-acre farming operation affords him the space to plant certain crops specifically for restaurants. "When we talk to a restaurant and they say, 'We want the red torpedo tropea onions,' we're like, 'All right, how many do you think you're going to want?'" and we plant them because we have enough space to do that."

Born to a farming family, Bryant learned the ropes from his grandfather and great uncle before trying his hand at row farming early in his career. When that didn't pan out, he transitioned to a very different profession, swapping his overalls for a suit and tie and joining the banking world, but the fields never stopped calling his name. In 2015, he came back to them.

Nowadays, Bryant leans on the skills he developed in his professional career to create a farm that runs like a business, which is extremely helpful for chefs like Glass, who require interactions that are efficient and simple. “John’s approach to the business of farming is smooth,” Glass explains. “He keeps everyone informed. The way you order is easy, the way you pay is easy. You get this updated spreadsheet of what’s available and what’s coming.”

Bryant remembers the first time Glass acknowledged Old Tavern Farm publicly a couple years ago: “I literally cried when I was reading his Instagram post,” Bryant confides. “He was talking about the communication, saying he’d never had communications with a farm like what he has here.” He adds that, although it’s hard to give someone bad news — if there’s not enough of a certain crop to fill a restaurant’s order, for example — doing so allows chefs to react and come up with another solution.

“We never ask him to grow things with the expectations of it being a smashing success from the beginning,” Glass notes. Instead, they start with an initial conversation in January — around the time Bryant purchases his seeds for the year ahead — about what and how much to grow, and then remain in contact throughout the year to see how those plans are unfolding. For Glass, it’s essential to be able to choose specific varieties of each fruit and vegetable for taste, texture and appearance.

Old Tavern Farm grows pointed or “sweetheart” cabbage with Grisette in mind. Bryant says they started growing the hefty 1 1/2-pound cabbage that is celebrated for its sweet and nutty flavors for their CSA subscribers — it’s more manageable for the home cook — but it also appealed to chefs who value the humble cabbage for its outstanding flavor and prominent appearance on the plate. Old Tavern planted a total of 3,600 heads in three stages this spring, and they plan to double that in the fall.

When working with such a special product, Glass, a French chef at heart, says he doesn’t need to add much. Instead, he confits the cabbage until it’s practically falling apart like tender meat. “The long and slow confit process brings out all the sugary sweetness in the cabbage, much like slowly caramelizing an onion,” Glass says. He finishes the dish with a tart gastrique for balance, breadcrumbs for texture and a big pinch of herbs for freshness. It’s a dish Grisette presented at one of its seasonal farm dinners at Old Tavern, where a barn full of guests relished the cabbage prepared over live fire, just a few feet away from where it was grown.

“Cooking at the farm has become an experience that transcends simply eating an al fresco dinner for everyone involved,” Glass says. “It’s an emotionally stirring affair each time. Our guests get an opportunity to see the dirt, feel the weather and chat with the farmers. By the end of the effort, our team is wiped, but also immensely proud to share the depth of our partnership with Old Tavern and our commitment to sourcing the food that we cook at the restaurant every day.” ■

JAY PAUL



From top: John Bryant, Donnie Glass and Zach West; dishes from the spring farm dinner; the Old Tavern Farm stand is open every day except Tuesdays and Sundays; the spring farm dinner had over 100 guests.



SEASON'S EATINGS

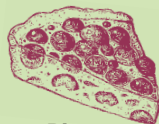
Summer produce shines in these very local dishes

By Genevelyn Steele

Soft-shell Crab

Heritage

Saltwater courses through Chef Joe Sparatta's veins and, like a tsunami, the soft-shell crab plates at Heritage are mighty. Softie season is long, running May through September, but it never seems long enough to properly cycle through each of Sparatta's paper-skinned crab presentations, served pan-fried or sauteed. Crispy crab served atop heirloom grits and joined by Hon Shimeji mushrooms, confit red onion, Shalom Farms kale and a Marcona almond romesco is truly a Poseidon adventure.



Very Berry Pie

River City Bakery

River City Bakery holds court in my kitchen. Very Berry Pie, a double-crust beauty filled with Agriberry Farms fruit (the farm is owned by River City Bakery owner Colleen Geyer's parents) showcases drippy berries in a minuet with a flaky pie crust. Leftovers – if there are any – go in the fridge to be transformed into a chilled, gooeey breakfast bite. While every RCB pie is notable, from tomato to July's limited-edition raspberry cream with its tangy-sweet center, the triple-berry creation is a Birdhouse Farmers Market mainstay.

Seasonal Pasta

Oro

Celery root linguine and tomato vine campanelle – hello, bronze-extruded pasta from Oro. Chef Laine Myer describes Oro's pasta CSA as "one of the most fun and creative options we offer," presenting biweekly offerings with recipes and pairing suggestions. The handmade pasta packages range from stuffed options to hand-rolled and intricate egg doughs such as tortellini, garganelli and culurgiones. Summer selections roll out July 1 and are available until mid-September.

Squash Blossoms

Revel

Ephemeral squash blossoms stretch their green and gold blooms from zucchini vines all summer, but once picked they should be eaten quickly. Chef Corey Chaney makes fast work of them at Lakeside's Revel, first stuffing the delicacies with whipped ricotta, then battering and frying the buds. Their crisp outer petals are topped with a sweet corn relish made from summer corn harvested by Bow Tide Farms, founded by former Julep's bartender Joe Jenkins.



Homemade Salsa

Rosa's Garden

It could be said that outstanding food comes from two wellsprings: the quality of the ingredients or Mama. For Rosa Nunez, salsa maestro at Rosa's Garden, it's both. She started selling her chunky garden-fresh tomato salsa three years ago, before quickly adding a tomatillo-based salsa verde and fruit varieties spiked with mangoes or local peaches. This season, snag a roasted, pan-fried option featuring both tomatoes and tomatillos that's spicy enough to make you slap your granny.

Country Greek Salad

Joe's Inn

Start counting down the days to "Country Greek season." That's when the lettuce disappears from Joe's Inn's formidable Greek salad, transforming the Fan District staple into a rustic Greek affair. This slimmed-down but ingredient-upped veggie plate is the official start to summer. Made with Hanover tomatoes, the salads overfill dishes with cucumbers, onions, peppers, feta, Romano cheese and black olives swimming in an herby vinaigrette and accompanied by thick slices of homemade bread.

Ice Cream Flight

Ruby Scoops

National Ice Cream Day is July 16, and Ruby Scoops' summer ice cream flights and flavors will keep you partying all month long. Annual standouts include a Duke's Hot Tomato Summer-inspired mayo ice cream – yep, that's right – along with fruit-forward selections such as a tomato-watermelon sorbet using tomatoes from Village Garden and a peach-centric dairy-free option. Check the Brookland Park Boulevard shop's Instagram for updates on all their cool, creative combinations.

Peach Pizza

Fine Creek Brewing Co.

At first glance, the peach pizza from Fine Creek Brewing Co. looks to be a sculptural homage to Van Gogh's sunflowers: a thick, blistered crust painted with sunny peach slices, whipped citrus ricotta, mozzarella, piquant honey and verdant garden basil over shimmering tiger stripes from a hot grill. This limited-edition favorite debuts in late July and slices through August, with toppings that vary according to which ingredients are on the artist's palette that day.



MARKET HAUL

A peek at what ends up in people's baskets *By Eileen Mellon*



Name: Jennifer
Location: Birdhouse Farmers Market
Occupation: Stay-at-home mom. "We have a lot of allergies, so we do a lot of cooking."
Market frequency: Every Tuesday
On the list: Greens, onions and squash. "We just buy all the veggies we see. We spread the love; we have four or five farmers that we always go to."
Impulse purchase: Basil
Most excited about: Squash from Tomten Farm and cauliflower from Shine Farms



Names: Jessica and Scott
Location: Birdhouse Farmers Market
Occupation: Jessica is in regulatory affairs and drug development; Scott is a software developer for a startup.
Market frequency: Weekly, after moving here a year and a half ago from Northern Virginia. "People always think I'm joking when I say I moved here for the farmers markets, but that's why I came here," Jessica says.
On the list: Berries from AgriBerry Farms, Olde Salt Rappahannock Oysters, knife sharpening.
Impulse purchase: A hot dog from The Mayor



Name: Joe
Location: Birdhouse Farmers Market
Occupation: Chef and co-owner of Heritage and Southbound
Market frequency: Weekly
On the list: "I come here with little to no direction, but I know what's growing. I grabbed greens, scallions, carrots, radishes, zucchini, squash, cucumber, garlic, kohlrabi, and honey from One Hive Farm. This is a moderate haul; I have to invest in a really nice cart."
Impulse purchase: Flowers from Amy's Garden for his wife



Names: Julietta (with Nathan and Isadora)
Location: Farmers Market at St. Stephen's
Occupation: Faculty at the University of Richmond; Isadora is an up-and-coming middle schooler.
Market frequency: "We used to be on and off, and now we're kind of back into the groove. This is our supplementary market; we go to the Tuesday market as our religious practice."
On the list: Nothing in particular
Impulse purchases: A half-and-half pint of blueberry and cherry gelato from Daverro Gelato, seed bread from Broad Fork Farm



TO-MAY-TO, TO-MAH-TO

How these local dining pros enjoy the quintessential sandwich of summer

As told to Eileen Mellon

"I have two. The first is my archetype: lightly toasted white bread with Duke's mayo and gratuitous salt and pepper. The other is the first tomato sandwich that I remember my grandmother insisting that I try as a kid, which was simply a slab of tomato on a biscuit with a bunch of salt and pepper. The butteriness and texture of the biscuit is a perfect canvas for the juiciness of a ripe summer tomato."

—Willoughby Obenchain, *Secret Squares*

"Fresh tomatoes in season, with a good pinch of salt, will always be great. For tomato sandwiches, adding a cooked element like tomato jam rounds things out for me. If I've got cracklings on hand, those are definitely getting layered on. Toasted brioche and ranch would make this perfect ... and a total mess to eat."

—Leah Branch, executive chef at *The Roosevelt*

"Tomato sandwiches to me are a canvas to use different types of breads, flavors, fillings, but two things remain constant: a juicy tomato and mayo. Lately, my favorite has been a toastie, made with a thickly sliced brioche, slathered in mayo, spicy green chutney, white Amul cheese and chaat masala, Bombay style. It then gets pressed with ghee to golden brown perfection."

—Keya Wingfield, baker and owner of *Keya & Co.*

TOP: EILEEN MELLON; BOTTOM: GETTY IMAGES