

HOME DINING RECREATION TRAVEL COMMUNITY HEALTH STYLE

805 LIVING

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Make the Most of
SUMMER





This Is How We Do Summer

We do summer by having writer Joan Tapper give readers a first look and walk-through of Breezehouse, a green, prefab house in Agoura Hills from Blu Homes (page 62), which is a progressive, elegant approach to the future of housing right in our neighborhood.

We do summer with a trio of simple but totally refreshing ideas for preparing watermelon (page 78) with recipes from Rock Chef Rolls' chef Alberto Vazquez and scrumptious photos from Gary Moss.

And we do summer by providing a guide to un-oaked chardonnay for warm-weather enjoyment (page 82), and we also do it with a roundup of fitness opportunities and beauty treatments from local spas and fitness studios (page 46). There's a great story on Girls Rock Camp in Santa Barbara, which empowers young women to find their voices (and the beat) through musicianship (page 48). And don't miss reading about Ember restaurant (page 86), where an open flame is chef Brian Collins' culinary muse.

You might have seen photographer Seth Casteel's images in mid-June of babies underwater in *The New York Times Magazine* story on self-rescue swim techniques; this month, we do summer with a story on dog shelters and pet rescues in the area (page 70), which features some of Casteel's wonderful, hilarious, heartwarming images of dogs—both chillin' in the pool and patiently waiting for someone to become a new best friend.

We also do summer by holding a giveaway for a weekend at the new Delano Las Vegas (delanolasvegas.com), an all-suite boutique hotel opening soon on the Strip. For more details, turn to page 26—and don't let this incredible chance slip through your fingers.

Of course, there's much more to discover between the covers this month, and it's certainly a lot for just one issue. So it should hold everyone over until September and—boy oh boy—there are even more reasons to check us out then. It's our annual Food & Wine celebration, which is always so popular because local chefs, winemakers, farmers, brewers, home cooks, and spirits distillers have made our region of California utterly delicious. It's one of our favorite issues!

For now, though, I invite you to flip through this issue and pick up a few tips for doing summer your way. Make sure to visit our Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram pages for more happenings and inspiration. And feel free to drop us a line about how your summer is going.

Until September,

Lynne Andujar
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BEHIND THE SCENES

As the song goes, “Summer’s here and the time is right for dancing in the streets.” They may not be dancing, but here’s what our featured contributors just can’t wait to do this summer.



“Summer is my time of year!” says chef **ALBERTO VAZQUEZ** (*Taste/Food*, page 78), who provided the cool recipes using watermelon. “I love to cook everything outside on the grill. The fresh produce and fruits are exploding with flavor and rich in color. Summer inspires me to eat lighter and create amazing dishes that are

not only beautiful and healthy but also full of flavor and easy on the calories. The kids are out of school, summer vacations, outdoor parties—basically anything outside in the sun is like medicine to me.” Vazquez is the chef and owner of Rock Chef Rolls catering, based in Westlake Village. Visit rockchefrolls.com.

WATERMELON THREE WAYS

The chef and owner of Rock Chef Rolls transforms our favorite summer fruit in a trio of simple recipes.

BY ALBERTO VAZQUEZ PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY MOSS

There's a short window to the watermelon season, and I like to make the most of it. I also like to keep things simple and fresh. These recipes take advantage of summer's favorite fruit, and they each have a twist that'll make you look like a rock star in the kitchen.

WATERMELON AND OPAL BASIL LEMONADE

This is one of the most popular lemonades that we make at Rock Chef Rolls. The opal basil is what gives it the twist. It complements so many summer favorites like grilled foods, salads, and tacos.

- Flesh of 1 watermelon, seeds removed, cubed, plus balls for garnish
- 1½ cups fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup Simple Syrup (adjust to taste; recipe below)
- 1 bunch opal basil leaves, coarsely chopped (can substitute regular basil)
- 6 slices of lemon
- 6 slices of lime, plus wedges for garnish
- 1 cup water
- Ice

In a large pitcher or bowl, liquefy cubed watermelon with an immersion blender to yield about a gallon of liquid. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Serve over ice and garnish with skewered watermelon balls and lime wedges. *Makes eight 8-ounce servings.*

Simple Syrup

Extra will keep in the fridge for up to 2 months.

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water

In a medium saucepan, add water and sugar. Simmer, stirring, until sugar has dissolved. Cool. *Makes about 2 cups.*

CHEF'S NOTE: Add a little vodka or silver tequila and have yourselves a party ... no kids invited!



REFRESHING WATERMELON TAJÍN LIME BITES

This is a traditional Mexican snack. I add the twist by making them into pretty hors d'oeuvres—perfect for a summer cocktail party by the pool. Tajín is a seasoning mix of Mexican chiles, lime, and salt that's available at most supermarkets and Latin markets.

- 1 watermelon, seeds removed
- Tajín Clásico Seasoning
- 1 lime
- Skewers

Cut watermelon crosswise into 1-inch slices. Using a 1½- to 2-inch round cookie cutter, cut out about 20 discs from the flesh. Squeeze lime juice over discs, sprinkle with Tajín, and insert skewers. *Makes about 20.*



CHEF'S NOTE: For a more kid-friendly treat, cut watermelon into wedges and insert a Popsicle stick into the rind. Squeeze lime juice over wedges and sprinkle with Tajín. Tajín is also great on mangos, cucumbers, and avocados, or on the rim of a margarita glass. It's high in sodium, so don't overdo it.

WATERMELON FORK AND KNIFE SALAD

This is a great, healthy starter to a light summer dinner, but I like to serve it as an entrée salad for lunch. Whatever the occasion, it'll blow people's minds. Instead of adding chunks of watermelon to the salad, I change it up by piling the greens high atop a watermelon "steak."

- 1 cup mixed greens
- ½ cup cilantro leaves
- ½ cup arugula
- ¼ cup sliced Easter radishes (regular radishes can be substituted)
- 1 tablespoon shallots or red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 tablespoons Shallot Vinaigrette (see recipe)
- 6 1½-inch round watermelon slices, seeds and rinds removed
- 2 tablespoons Feta or Cotija cheese, crumbled

Combine greens, cilantro, arugula, radishes, and shallots and toss with vinaigrette. Serve over watermelon slices and sprinkle with cheese. Drizzle any remaining vinaigrette around plate.

Serves 6.

Shallot Vinaigrette

- 4 tablespoons shallots, chopped
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 4 tablespoons grape-seed oil
- 2 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- Salt and fresh cracked black pepper to taste

Add all ingredients in a bowl and whisk until well blended.

Makes about ¾ cup.

CHEF'S NOTE: I suggest serving sauvignon blanc or a light pinot noir to complement this salad.

For more watermelon recipes, check out our Pinterest board at pinterest.com/805living. ♦



Chef Alberto Vazquez is known for his badass gourmet food truck, Rock Chef Rolls. His menu constantly changes to suit whatever tickles his fancy. He also does catering from his mobile kitchen as well as teaches private culinary lessons. For more information, visit rockchefrolls.com.