

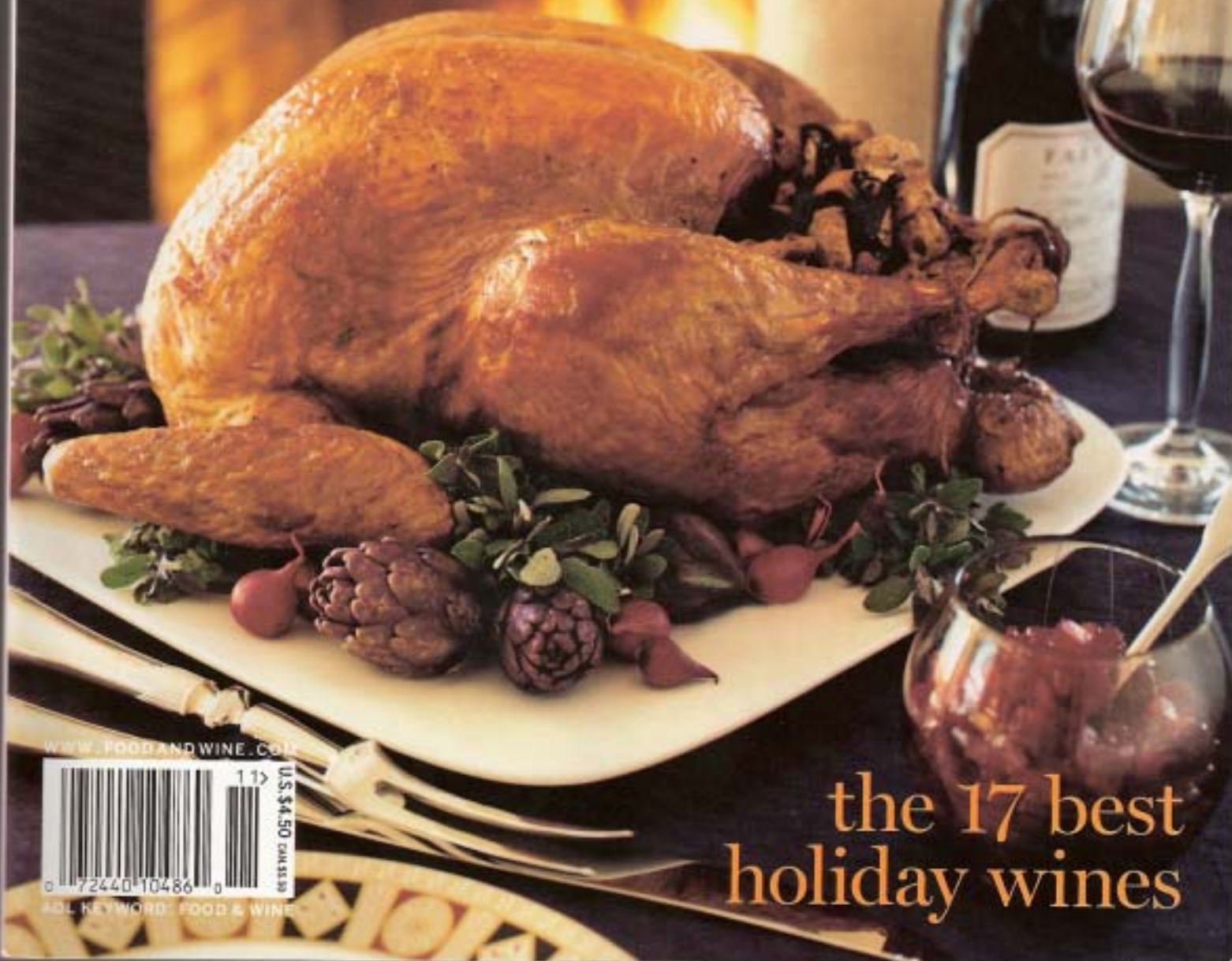
FOOD & WINE

NOVEMBER 2006

thanksgiving

A COMPLETE GUIDE

over 50 stellar recipes
for turkey, gravy, soups,
sides and desserts



the 17 best
holiday wines

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Jean-Georges Vongerichten searches out the main ingredient for his pheasant rubbed with herb butter.



Hunter's Guide to Cooking

Chefs Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Bryan Caswell share their best recipes for birds.

BY JANE SIGAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY QUENTIN BACON

SUPERSTAR CHEF JEAN-GEORGES VONGERICHTEN WILL NEVER FORGET HIS days hunting for boar with his father in the forests of northeastern Alsace, where he grew up. On these hunting expeditions, two lines of men converged on a wild pig, closing in on the animal and each other. One day Vongerichten watched as his father was shot in the arm. He was eight years old.

As shocking as the accident must have been, Vongerichten was not put off hunting. He continued to hunt with his father; his mother gave him lessons in cooking game. When he took a job at the Michelin three-starred Auberge de l'Ill in Alsace in 1973, at the age of 16, one of his first chores was to pluck and skin the quail, partridge, rabbit and venison that local hunters brought to the kitchen.



SUMATRA BLEND
PARIS FRENCH VANILLA
CAPPUCCINO



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- 2 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon each of chopped thyme, rosemary and sage

Freshly ground pepper
Two 3-pound pheasants

1 lemon, quartered
Caramelized Endives with Apples
(recipe follows), for serving

1. In a covered medium saucepan, simmer the horseradish with 2 cups of the water, the sugar and a large pinch of salt until the horseradish is tender, 30 minutes; drain well. In a food processor, puree the horseradish with the crème fraîche. Scrape the puree into a small bowl and season with salt.

2. Preheat the oven to 400°. In a small bowl, blend the butter with the thyme, rosemary and sage and season with salt and pepper. Rub 1½ tablespoons of the herb butter under the skin of each pheasant. Rub the remaining 1 tablespoon of herb butter all over the outside of the birds and season with salt and pepper. Tuck 2 lemon quarters into each cavity and tie the legs with string.

3. Set the pheasants on an oiled rack in a roasting pan on their sides, and roast for 30 minutes. Carefully turn the birds to the other side and roast for 30 minutes. Turn the pheasants breast side up and roast for 10 minutes. Pour the cavity juices into the roasting pan, pressing lightly on the lemon to release the juice. Transfer the pheasants to a carving board and let rest for 10 minutes.

4. Set the roasting pan over 2 burners. Add the remaining 1 cup of water and simmer, scraping up the brown bits, until reduced to ¾ cup, about 3 minutes. Pour the juices into a small saucepan and season with salt and pepper. Keep warm.

5. Carve the pheasants and arrange on plates. Using 2 soup spoons, scoop the horseradish puree into neat ovals and set them beside the pheasant. Pour the pan juices over the pheasant and serve with the Caramelized Endives with Apples.

WINE A slightly sweet white wine, like Vouvray, helps balance the heat of the horseradish. Pour the honeysuckle-scented

2005 Domaine Pichot Domaine Le Peu de la Moriette or the 2005 Domaine Champalou, which recalls quince and apricots.

Caramelized Endives with Apples

ACTIVE: 20 MIN; TOTAL: 40 MIN
4 SERVINGS

- 1 Granny Smith apple—peeled, halved, cored and sliced ¼ inch thick on a mandoline
- 4 Belgian endives, halved lengthwise
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper
½ cup water

Carefully tuck 6 apple slices between the leaves in each endive half. In a large skillet, melt the butter in the oil over high heat. Add the endives, cut sides down, and cook over moderate heat until nicely browned, about 6 minutes. Carefully turn the endives. Season with salt and pepper and add the water to the skillet. Cover and simmer over low heat until the endives are tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Uncover and cook until the liquid has evaporated. Serve hot.

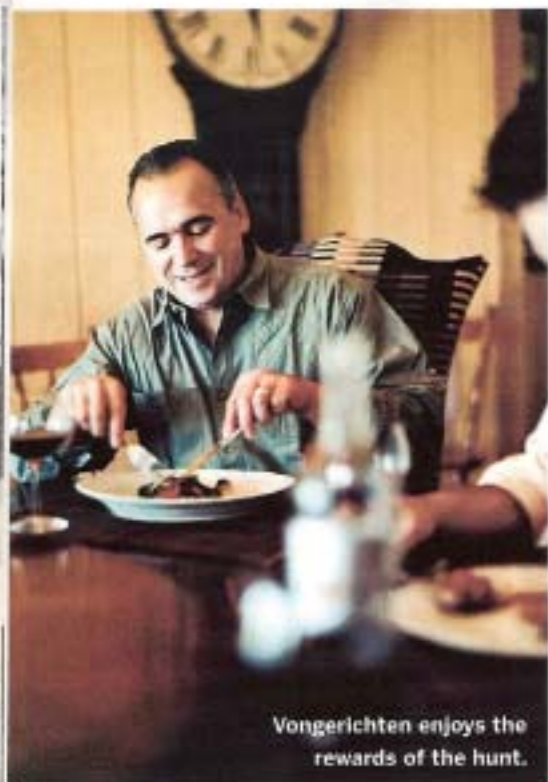
Buckshot Gumbo

ACTIVE: 35 MIN; TOTAL: 2 HR 10 MIN
6 SERVINGS

Caswell describes his Cajun grandmother, Ma Daigle, as French, Catholic and four feet tall—five feet with the bun. She taught him to cook gumbo without the usual okra or filé and absolutely no tomato. Caswell thinks slow-cooked dishes like this deliciously spicy, meaty stew may be the best way to cook wild fowl. “They’re never going to get tender otherwise,” he says. “They’ve been flying south for 1,000 miles.”

- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- Two 1½-pound boneless goose breast halves with skin, skin scored in a crosshatch pattern (see Note)
- Two 1½-pound goose legs (see Note)
- 7 ounces diced andouille sausage
- 4 garlic cloves, minced

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Vongerichten enjoys the rewards of the hunt.

6. Heat 2 large skillets until very hot. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil to each skillet. Drain the quails and pat dry; add to the skillets, breasts down, and brown over high heat, turning once, until crisp, about 6 minutes.

7. Mound the salad on plates. Top with the quails and drizzle with the remaining dressing. Serve the chile jam on the side.

NOTE Tamarind paste is available at specialty food shops and Asian markets.

WINE The Asian spices and chile jam suggest a white with sweet fruit flavor. Try an Oregon Pinot Gris from the superb 2005 vintage, such as the melony, rich WillaKenzie or the lychee-scented Raptor Ridge.

Crunchy Almond-Crusted Duck Breasts with Chanterelle Salad

TOTAL: 1 HR

4 SERVINGS

Duck is often paired with something sweet, as in *canard à l'orange*. Jean-Georges Vongerichten tops it here with chopped sugar-coated almonds. The sugar burns slightly as the meat is broiled to form a bittersweet crust that pairs beautifully with the juicy richness of the duck.

- 3/4 cup honey wine (see Note) or white port
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons white port
- 3 tablespoons duck or veal demi-glace (see Note)
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon chestnut honey
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 magret duck breasts (about 11 ounces each)
- 1/4 cup Jordan almonds or white dragées, finely chopped
- 1/2 pound chanterelle mushrooms, thickly sliced if large
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 1/2 tablespoons walnut oil
- 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil
- 1/2 tablespoon hazelnut oil
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1/2 pound frisée, pale green and white leaves only, torn into pieces

Cayenne pepper

1. In a small saucepan, combine the honey wine with 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon of the white port, the demi-glace and the lemon juice and bring to a boil. Simmer over moderate heat until reduced to 1/2 cup, about 10 minutes. Whisk in 1 tablespoon of the butter and the chestnut honey and season with salt and black pepper.

2. Preheat the broiler. Heat a large skillet. Add the duck, skin side down, and cook over moderate heat until the skin is golden and crisp, 15 minutes; spoon off the fat as it accumulates in the skillet. Season the duck, then turn the breasts skin side up and cook for 7 minutes longer for medium-rare. Transfer the duck to a rimmed baking sheet, skin side up, and sprinkle with the chopped Jordan almonds, pressing to adhere.

3. Transfer the duck to the center of the oven and broil for about 2 minutes, or until the sugar is caramelized; turn the baking sheet as necessary for even browning. Let the duck breasts rest before slicing.

4. In a medium skillet, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Add the chanterelles and cook over moderately high heat,

stirring occasionally, until their liquid has evaporated and they are lightly browned, about 8 minutes. Season the chanterelles with salt and black pepper, add the shallot and cook for 1 minute longer.

5. In a large bowl, whisk the walnut, grapeseed and hazelnut oils with the vinegar and the remaining 1 tablespoon of white port. Stir in the parsley. Add the frisée and chanterelles, season with salt and cayenne pepper and toss to coat. Mound the salad on plates. Reheat the honey wine sauce. Cut the duck breasts crosswise into 1/2-inch slices and arrange them next to the salad. Drizzle the sauce all around and serve.

SERVE WITH Boiled baby turnips or radishes sautéed in butter.

NOTE Honey wine, also called mead, is available at most liquor stores. Duck-and-veal demi-glace and veal demi-glace are available at specialty food shops and from D'Artagnan (800-327-8246 or dartagnan.com).

MAKE AHEAD The honey wine sauce can be refrigerated overnight.

WINE Pinot Noirs from California's Russian River Valley typically have a sweet silkiness that complements the flavors of both the crust and the meat in this sweet, gamey duck recipe. The 2004 Red Car Boxcar is packed with ripe red cherry flavor; the 2004 MacMurray Ranch has darker cherry flavors and a touch of peppery spice.

Herb-Roasted Pheasants with Endives and Horseradish Puree

ACTIVE: 45 MIN; TOTAL: 1 HR 45 MIN

4 SERVINGS

Lean pheasant roasted with an herb butter spread under the skin is delicious all by itself, but Vongerichten makes it even better by serving it with a fiery condiment of pureed fresh horseradish. He places caramelized endives on the plate too, hiding thin slices of apple between the leaves like sweet and tangy petals.

1/2 pound fresh horseradish, peeled and sliced crosswise 1/4 inch thick

3 cups water

1 tablespoon sugar

Salt



For dozens of recipes from Jean-Georges Vongerichten, go to foodandwine.com/vongerichten.

a liver-colored pudelpointer, who sleeps in bed with him and his wife. "The conversation was all about the dogs and the scenery. No restaurant stuff," he said. "It's so serene out there. The only time I don't think about work is when I'm fishing or hunting."

Vongerichten couldn't stop talking about the dogs: "Without them you'd never see the birds on the ground. The dogs do all the work." They hunted with three: The Dude, to "point" the birds (indicate their presence), and two of Young's dogs as retrievers.

After three hours of hunting, the dogs were exhausted because there were so many birds. As part of a \$395 hunting package, Rio Brazos's staff release 20 quails, four chuckars (a kind of partridge) and four pheasants—some raised at the preserve, some wild—per person. The chefs had walked 20 miles by Vongerichten's reckoning—five or six by Caswell's—and were ready to start thinking about cooking the birds. Caswell wanted to marinate the quails in a mix of garlic, ginger, soy sauce and rice vinegar, then skillet-fry them until crispy and medium-rare. "You don't want to cook them until they're well-done," he explained, because there's no fat on wild birds to keep them juicy. Vongerichten was talking about roasting pheasant with herbs and making pan-roasted endives, the leaves layered with thin apple slices. For a condiment, he imagined pungent dollops of fresh horseradish.

After the hunt, the Rio Brazos staff usually plucks and cleans the birds. But back at the preserve's clubhouse, Vongerichten did it himself. He had a record to beat, his own, as a 16-year-old cook, when he could pluck a bird in 10 minutes. Some things Vongerichten will never forget.

Crispy Quails with Chile Jam and Three-Bean Salad

ACTIVE: 1 HR 5 MIN; TOTAL: 1 HR 5 MIN PLUS 2 HR MARINATING

4 SERVINGS

Bryan Caswell left Texas for nine years, but there are some things he couldn't shake, like three-bean salad. It gives a Southern touch to his Asian-accented quail, which marinates in ginger, garlic and soy sauce. Caswell learned to make chile jam in Bangkok, but he says Texans love the heat.

QUAILS

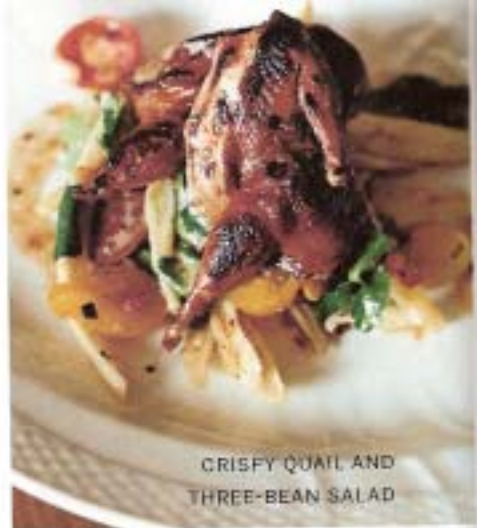
- ¼ cup thinly sliced peeled ginger
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 3 shallots, quartered
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon five-spice powder
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 8 semiboneless quails

CHILE JAM

- ¾ cup water
- 2 ounces tamarind paste (see Note)
- 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- 2 large jalapeños, preferably red, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1½ tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 1½ tablespoons Asian fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon ground dried shrimp (optional)
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

SALAD

- 4 ounces yellow wax beans
- 1 cup frozen butter beans, thawed
- 1 cup frozen black-eyed peas, thawed
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- ¼ teaspoon pure ancho chile powder
- ¼ cup grapeseed oil



CRISPY QUAIL AND THREE-BEAN SALAD

1. PREPARE THE QUAILS: In a blender, puree the ginger with the garlic, shallots, soy sauce, sugar, rice vinegar, five-spice powder and pepper. Transfer the marinade to a resealable plastic bag, add the quails and seal, pressing out the air. Let marinate in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

2. MEANWHILE, MAKE THE CHILE JAM: In a small saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Add the tamarind paste and simmer for 2 minutes, mashing with a wooden spoon to dissolve the paste. Strain the tamarind puree through a coarse sieve into a small bowl, pressing on the solids.

3. In a medium saucepan, heat the grapeseed oil until shimmering. Add the garlic, shallots and jalapeños and cook over moderately high heat, stirring, until the garlic is lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Add the granulated sugar and brown sugar and cook until melted. Stir in the tamarind puree and simmer until thickened, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the fish sauce and dried shrimp.

4. In a small bowl, whisk 3 tablespoons of the chile jam with the soy sauce and lime juice to make a dressing.

5. MAKE THE SALAD: In a saucepan of boiling salted water, cook the wax beans until crisp-tender, 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the beans to a colander and rinse under cold water. Pat dry and cut into 1-inch pieces, then transfer to a bowl. Boil the butter beans and black-eyed peas for 1 minute, then drain. Add the butter beans, peas, tomatoes, shallot, cilantro and chile powder to the wax beans. Add three-fourths of the dressing and toss.



After the hunt, chefs Bryan Caswell (BELOW RIGHT) and Daniel Del Vecchio get busy in the kitchen.

Today, Vongerichten doesn't have much time to hunt, as he's kept busy managing his growing empire of 18 restaurants. Recently, however, he took a rare mini-vacation in Texas with his right-hand man, Daniel Del Vecchio, and business partner Phil Suarez to brush up on his shooting skills. His hunting buddy was Bryan Caswell, chef de cuisine at three-year-old Bank Jean-Georges in Houston.

It was clear and sunny when the men arrived at the Rio Brazos Hunting Preserve, about 40 minutes southwest of Houston, toting provisions for the meal they'd prepare after the hunt. They had 600 acres of grassland, hills and woods filled with pine oak to themselves. In this setting of immense beauty, their guide, Robert Young, reminded the chefs of the seriousness of the sport: Keep your gun "open"



CRUNCHY ALMOND-CRUSTED DUCK BREAST

unless you're preparing to shoot. (Make sure the shell chamber is disengaged, so you can't accidentally fire the gun.) Never shoot a bird on the ground; shoot when it's above the horizon. (It's hard to shoot another hunter when you're aiming up in the air.) Wear an orange vest. Don't shoot the dogs. Don't shoot the guide.

"I was nervous," Vongerichten admitted. "I only touch a gun every five years."

Caswell was more confident. Like Vongerichten, the 33-year-old chef had grown up hunting. Born in Lafayette, Louisiana, to Cajun parents, he went on his first hunt at age five and got his own shotgun at eight.

From his father and his father's friends, all hunters, Caswell learned butchering. "I could work a knife before the age of eight," he said. This skill helped him get into restaurant kitchens and move up quickly through the ranks. Soon he was cooking around the world. A veteran of Jean Georges in New York and Dune, Vongerichten's restaurant at the Ocean Club in the Bahamas, Caswell arrived at Bank in 2004, where he began to do "Gulf Coast Jean-Georges," he says. His slightly smoky grilled oysters with crispy greens and roasted jalapeño vinaigrette, served on a plate rimmed with salt and brown sugar, is a good example. The pairing of sweetness and heat reflects Vongerichten's love of Asian flavor combinations.

For Caswell, the day at Rio Brazos was really about hanging out with his mentor and showing off Texas. He also enjoyed the companionship of his dog, The Dude,