

# lunch by the links

Jeff Jackson creates a farm-fresh feast, starting with his favorite course—the one at Torrey Pines.



when he needs to unwind, California chef Jeff Jackson trades his toque for a golfer's cap and hits the links. Luckily, La Jolla's top-rated municipal course (the venue for next year's U.S. Open) lies a chip shot away from the kitchen he directs inside The Lodge at Torrey Pines. Lining up a putt and preparing a fine meal might seem like vastly different skills, but Jeff doesn't think so. "Golf is like food," he says. "You have to take enough time to get it right."

This afternoon he demonstrates that philosophy with an "artisan-table lunch" for a group of friends. The meal highlights the best foods produced by local, small-scale suppliers, and encourages diners to savor each bite. A surefire hit, Luca's Eggplant Parmesan includes tomatoes slow-cooked for extra flavor. Braised Veal Cheeks are an intensely savory main dish. And for dessert there's a bourbon-infused cake that the chef calls "a chocolate bomb."

At today's lunch—as at the artisan-table dinners served each Thursday at The Lodge—a shared sense of discovery makes the experience convivial and relaxed. "The foodstuffs are the stars," Jeff says. "The idea is to

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Executive Chef  
Jeff Jackson

## Jeff's cuisine highlights the finest and freshest

treat each ingredient with respect and maintain its integrity." This generally means a "less is more" approach, with each dish limited to three or four distinct flavors.

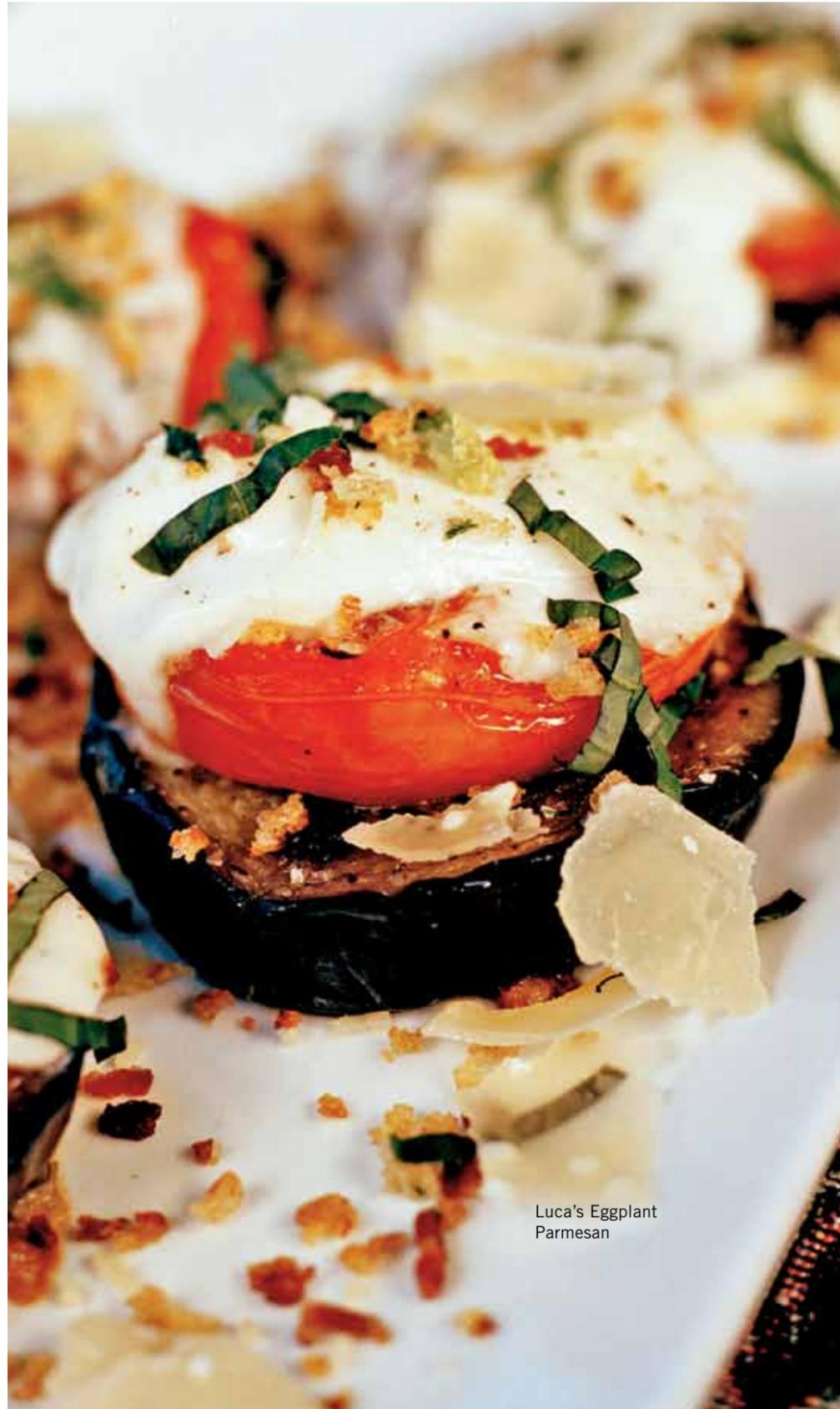
Jeff is able to prepare this feast because farmers and high-quality suppliers in the area provide an amazing range of fresh foods. "They allow us to do menus based on what comes in the door fresh that day, and support from chefs allows them to thrive," Jeff explains. "We all benefit."

Last year, Jeff traveled to Italy as an American delegate to Terra Madre, the biennial meeting of the Slow Food movement. Founded in 1986, Slow Food has become a global force for traditional farming methods and biodiversity. "It's like the past, when farms used organic fertilizer and raised a variety of crops and livestock," Jeff says. Ironically, the mild weather that lets Southern California suppliers grow year-round increases pressures on the land. "One of my favorite farms is now a polo field surrounded by million-dollar houses," he laments. "If we don't support the farms, they won't survive."

Happily, even this stretch of coastal California has pockets of arable land. "Oh yeah," Jeff says, eyeing the course as he tees up for a long drive. "If they'd let us, we'd plant corn in the rough!"

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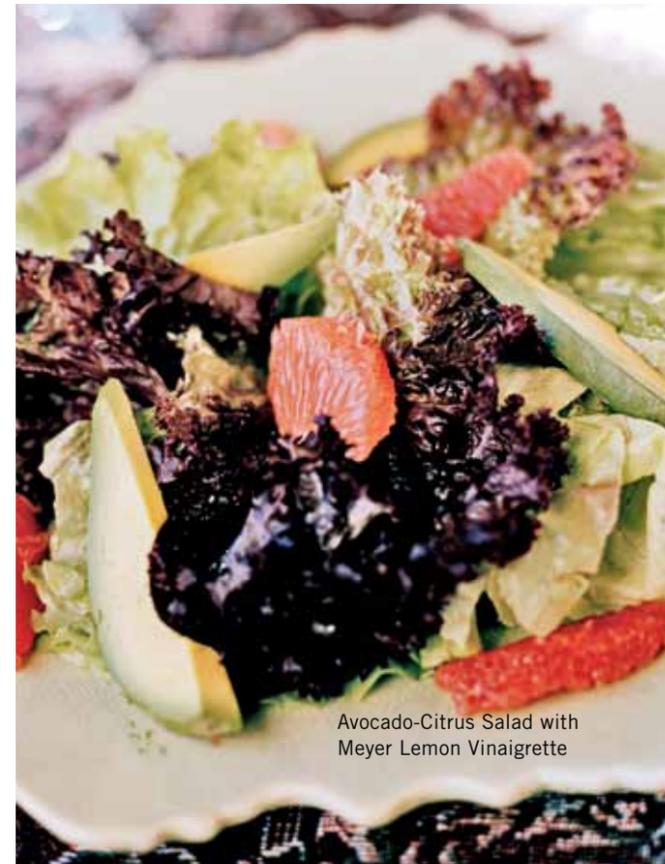


Luca's Eggplant  
Parmesan

## ingredients from Southern California.



Chocolate-Bourbon Cake



Avocado-Citrus Salad with  
Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette





Executive Chef  
Jeff Jackson

FRANK GEALER

# lunch by the links

Dishes from chef Jeff Jackson's "artisan table" (page 134) can add seasonal elegance to any autumn dinner party. Think of them as refined comfort food, a welcome complement to shorter, cooler days.

## Avocado-Citrus Salad with Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette

- 2 Ruby Red grapefruit
  - 2 navel oranges
  - 9 cups baby greens
  - 2 avocados, cut into 1/4-inch wedges
- Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette

Peel and section the grapefruit and oranges.

Divide greens evenly among 6 chilled salad plates. Arrange citrus sections and avocado over greens; drizzle with vinaigrette. Makes 6 servings.

### Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette

- 1 Meyer lemon
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons Champagne vinegar
- 1/4 cup grapeseed oil
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh chervil
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Grate zest from lemon to equal 1 tablespoon; squeeze juice to equal 2 teaspoons. Combine lemon juice, zest, shallot, salt, and vinegar. Let stand 15 minutes. Slowly whisk in remaining ingredients. Makes 1 cup.

## Luca's Eggplant Parmesan

The test kitchen and Coastal Living staff agree that this is one of the best eggplant dishes we've eaten. The tomatoes can roast while you prepare the rest of this dish.

- 6 slices Melted Eggplant
- Slow-roasted Tomatoes

- 6 (2-ounce) pieces burrata or buffalo mozzarella cheese
- 1 1/2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
- 2 ounces freshly shaved Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup Pangrattato

Preheat oven to 375°. Place eggplant slices on a jelly-roll pan. Top each with tomato half and 1 piece burrata or mozzarella. Bake at 375° for 7 minutes or until thoroughly heated and cheese starts to melt. Place on a platter, and drizzle oil over cheese. Top evenly with basil and Parmesan. Sprinkle with Pangrattato. Makes 6 servings.

### Melted Eggplant

- 1 (1-pound) eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1 3/4 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Season both sides of eggplant slices with 1 1/4 teaspoons salt; let stand at least one hour. Pat eggplant dry with paper towels, and sprinkle with pepper and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add eggplant slices; cook 3 minutes or until browned. Turn slices over. Cover, reduce heat to medium, and cook 25 minutes or until eggplant is soft.

### Slow-roasted Tomatoes

- 3 medium tomatoes, cut in half
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 fresh oregano sprig
- 1 fresh thyme sprig
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 225°. Sprinkle cut side of tomatoes with salt and pepper. Place tomatoes, cut-side down, in bottom of a 13- x 9-inch baking dish. Top with oregano and remaining ingredients. Cover with foil; bake at 225° for 2 hours. Remove from oven, and cut slits in top of foil, allowing steam to escape. Makes 6 servings.

### Pangrattato

- 1/2 cup pancetta, cut into 1/8-inch cubes
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup artisan bread, cut into 1/8-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Heat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add pancetta; cook 6 minutes or until crisp. Add garlic, and cook 1 minute. Remove from pan.

Heat oil in pan over medium-high heat. Add bread; sauté 5 minutes or until toasted. Remove from pan, and add to pancetta mixture. Cool to room temperature. Toss with parsley, Parmesan, and pepper. Makes 1 1/4 cups.

### Braised Veal Cheeks

If you can't find veal cheeks, use about 3 pounds of short ribs instead. For fall-off-the-bone tenderness, add 1 hour to the braising time.

- 3/4 cup fresh breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chervil
- 10 veal cheeks, trimmed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1/2 carrot, chopped
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 1 fresh thyme sprig
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 black peppercorns
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 2 cups veal stock
- 4 tablespoons Dijon mustard

Preheat oven to 325°. Combine breadcrumbs and next 3 ingredients. Set aside.

Sprinkle veal cheeks with salt and pepper. Heat oil in an ovenproof Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Cook veal cheeks, in two batches, 3 to 4 minutes on each side or until browned. Remove from pan.

Reduce heat to medium, and add onion and next 3 ingredients. Cook vegetables 5 minutes or until browned. Add thyme, bay leaf, and peppercorns. Add white wine, stirring to loosen particles from bottom of pan, and cook 2 minutes. Add veal stock, and bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Return veal cheeks to pan.

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## entertaining recipes

Bake, covered, at 325° for 1¼ hours. (Veal cheeks are done when a small knife inserted in the middle slides out with no resistance.) Remove veal cheeks from pan; keep warm. Strain braising liquid, return liquid to pan, and reduce over medium-high heat to about ⅔ cup.

Place veal cheeks on a roasting pan, and brush with mustard; sprinkle with herbed breadcrumbs. Broil 1 to 2 minutes or until golden brown. Serve with reduced braising liquid. Makes 5 servings.

### Soft Polenta with Wild Mushrooms and Parsley

- 12 ounces wild mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 2 shallots, chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs
- 1½ cups loosely packed fresh Italian parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

#### Soft Polenta

Sauté mushrooms in hot grapeseed oil over high heat until lightly caramelized. Reduce heat to medium-high; add shallots, garlic, and thyme. Cook 3 minutes or until shallots are translucent. Stir in parsley and next 3 ingredients. Serve over Soft Polenta. Makes 4 servings.

#### Soft Polenta

*Slow-cooking the polenta in a double boiler gives it a light but creamy texture without needing to stir or whisk. If using instant polenta or grits, decrease cooking time and follow package directions.*

- 4 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon grated or ground nutmeg
- 1 cup polenta or whole-grain grits
- 6 tablespoons butter
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Heat 1½ inches water in a large saucepan until simmering. Combine milk, salt, and nutmeg in a large metal mixing bowl, and place over simmering water until mixture is hot.

Stir polenta into hot milk mixture, whisking until blended. Cover with foil, and cook over medium-low heat 1½ hours. Uncover and stir in butter and Parmesan cheese. Makes 4 servings.

### Chocolate-Bourbon Cake

- ½ cup bourbon
- 1⅓ cups sugar
- 12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup (8 ounces) butter, cut into pieces
- 5 large eggs
- 1½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2½ tablespoons cocoa powder, divided
- Hot water
- Coffee-Bourbon Syrup
- Hazelnuts

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease a 9- x 2-inch cake pan, line the bottom with parchment paper, and set aside.

Combine bourbon and sugar in a large saucepan; bring mixture to a boil. Remove from heat, and add chocolate and butter, stirring until smooth. Set aside, and let cool to room temperature.

Beat in eggs, one at a time, until very well blended. Fold in flour and 1½ tablespoons cocoa powder. Pour batter into prepared cake pan. Set pan in a large roasting pan filled to depth of 1 inch with hot water.

Bake at 375° for 1 hour and 15 minutes, basting with Coffee-Bourbon Syrup every 15 minutes after a crust has developed on cake's surface.

Cool cake; cover and refrigerate 6 hours or overnight. Transfer cake onto a serving plate, and dust with remaining 1 tablespoon cocoa powder. Top with hazelnuts. Makes 16 servings.

#### Coffee-Bourbon Syrup

- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup strong brewed coffee
- 1 tablespoon bourbon

Bring sugar, water, and coffee to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in bourbon. Makes about ¾ cup. 🌿