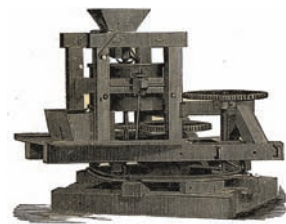


GRIST FOR THE MILL



When the first killing frost settled on Sag Harbor a month or so ago, it caught many of us off guard. Gardeners hadn't gathered green tomatoes or small eggplants. They hadn't dug up precious bulbs or wrapped sensitive trees. In nearby fields, pumpkins melted and ears of corn turned black.

It's a senseless form of killing. If you had hoped to pickle green tomatoes and roast pumpkin seeds, but were too busy attending to other matters to watch the weather, the waste can turn your stomach.

We feel a similar gut-churning when we begin to see deer carcasses pile up on the side of the road. Notwithstanding the growing potential for fatal car accidents and the disrespectful and gruesome end for the deer, the rotting of nutritious meat in broad daylight insults the logic of eating local.

This issue of *Edible East End* confronts the topic of hunting head-on. We propose the formation of a Hamptons Venison Company (p. 14) that would use creative accounting to get around the legal barriers to selling game in New York State.

(These laws, created a century ago to save assorted wildlife from being hunted into extinction, fade from relevance as the populations of deer, hedgehogs, crows, and other "pests" explode.)

And venison isn't the only option. A friend recently gave me the *Wild Game Cookbook*, published by Remington Sportsmen's Library, that includes seemingly delicious recipes for possum, squirrel, raccoon, fox, and an endless list of winged and land-roaming game that now inhabit our area. Miloski's Poultry Farm in Calverton, which specializes in raising turkeys, also offers a selection of carnivore's delights, from elk and boar jerky to alligator (p. 54).

Making venison and other local game a bigger part of our diets enjoys the support of farmers, vintners, chefs and wildlife specialists, not to mention connoisseurs interested in the unrivaled flavors of well-prepared wild meat. Both of the vineyards we profile in this issue—Palmer Vineyards in Jamesport (p. 22) and Cornell Cooperative Extension's research vineyard (p. 31)—struggle with the painful calculus of erecting costly deer fencing and bird netting in a sometimes futile attempt to prevent the loss of pricey grapes. "For people who live off the land, the land will also live off you," is the way columnist Marilee Foster describes why hunting is part of farming (p. 13).

Fish remain the most common form of wild foods in our diets, whether sedentary oysters or grazing striped bass. Revisiting the argument from Peter Matthiessen's classic *Men's Lives*, we explore why one of the most ancient and effective forms of fishing—dragging a net through the water to encircle a school of fish—remains banned on the East End, despite new evidence that it harms many fewer fish than widespread surfcasting (p. 36). Less dramatic forms of winter hunting include exploring the culinary delights of Polish Town U.S.A. in Riverhead (p. 48) and the East End's bed and breakfasts (p. 27).

Not every community enjoys as much to graze on as the East End. In fact, to help spread our bounty, *Edible East End* is teaming up with our sister magazine, *Edible Brooklyn*, and the Long Island Wine Council to launch the first annual Brooklyn Uncorked next spring. The event will marry New York's hottest wine region with its most appetizing borough, and we hope it will help gain new support—and customers—for New York City's nearest wine country. The event is open to the public, so we encourage you to stay tuned for more details and consider exploring the gastronomic delights at the other end of the L.I.E.

**"For people who live
off the land, the land
will also live off you."**

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EDIBLE EAST END

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