

Mark Kurlansky Peels Back History's Layers in 'The Core of an Onion'

Wine organized by texture at Community Wine & Spirits, a talk at 92NY with the chef Massimo Bottura and Lara Gilmore, and more food news.



By Florence Fabricant

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"The Core of an Onion," Mark Kurlansky's latest single-subject food book, made me think of Thanksgiving. He devotes an entire chapter to creamed onions, essential at Thanksgiving dinner when I was growing up. His book has recipes for them dated to 1665 and a reference to the 1941 film "They Died With Their Boots On," in which the onions play a role alongside Errol Flynn. Other discussions of onion cookery — as in soup, stuffed, fried, breads, pickled, with eggs, in sandwiches (famously by James Beard) and more, with recipe histories — follow an unraveling of the onion botanically, historically, medicinally, literally, economically and gastronomically around the world. Despite relevant but overlong digressions on the origins of the Gibson and of the bagel, it's a lively read. On the culinary side he might have touched on the Spanish tortilla when discussing eggs and onions; he makes an interesting point about swapping cream for milk when using older recipes.

"The Core of an Onion: Peeling the Rarest Common Food — Featuring More Than 100 Historical Recipes" (Bloomsbury, \$28).

A Wine Store Where Texture Counts



Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times

Wines displayed in a store are sorted by color, to be sure, but they can be organized according to region, varietal or price. Not at the new Community Wine in Chelsea. In his spacious, sparsely decorated new store, David Weitzenhoffer, a former sommelier and winemaker, arrays them by body, from light to medium to heavy. Other characteristics are mixed within those groupings, so a hefty \$144 Biondi-Santi Brunello di Montalcino from Tuscany is shown close by a sturdy \$26 Kanonkop

Kadette from South Africa, and an \$18 Corbières shares a shelf with a \$117 Vosne-Romanée. “That way if someone wants a pinot grigio they’ll see some other wines with similar characteristics, like verdicchio, at different price points and regions,” he said. “They can compare and maybe discover.” It’s an interesting way to explore the myriad choices on the market. The store also has spirits, often locally produced; canned cocktails; an immersive curved 16-foot screen than can take you into vineyards; and classes on occasional Fridays at 7 p.m. On Nov. 30 Mr. Weitzenhoffer will talk about how to order wine in a restaurant, including navigating a wine list, speaking to a sommelier and more (\$100).

Community Wine & Spirits, 140 10th Avenue (19th Street), 646-905-8000, communitywineandspirits.com.

Talking the Future of Food With Massimo Bottura and Lara Gilmore



Casa Maria Luigia. Michael Gardenia/Fusillo Lab

The chef Massimo Bottura and his wife, Lara Gilmore — who own Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy, the restaurant with three Michelin stars, where reservations are as scarce as ivory billed woodpeckers — also own a guesthouse, Casa Maria Luigia, just outside Modena. They’ll discuss it, the Emilia-Romagna region and their new book, “Slow Food, Fast Cars: Casa Maria Luigia — Stories and Recipes,” next month at 92NY with Ruth Reichl. The future of food will be part of the conversation: The couple runs many nonprofits for feeding the needy around the world, including in Harlem, and support Food for Soul to combat food waste and hunger.

“Slow Food, Fast Cars”: Massimo Bottura and Lara Gilmore in Conversation With Ruth Reichl, Dec. 11; tickets are \$15 to watch online, \$38 to \$48 live; 92ny.org/event/massimo-bottura-and-lara-gilmore.

Zesty Guanciale From Berkeley



Price Eberts

After decades of producing first-rate charcuterie, Paul Bertolli of Fra' Mani in Berkeley, Calif., has finally turned his attention to guanciale, the Italian uncured pork jowl bacon that's as essential to pasta all'Amatriciana as olives are to puttanesca. Unable to find American-made guanciale that he liked, Mr. Bertolli decided to make his own. What sets his apart is its zesty spice rub. He says he uses meat from smaller, younger hogs, making it somewhat more delicate, and ages it for 30 days. Use it for pasta sauces; slice it thin and sear the strips to elevate a sandwich.

Fra' Mani guanciale, \$25 for 1.25 pounds, framani.com.

Red Ice Wine From Niagara-on-the-Lake



Let late harvest grapes freeze on the vine and you can make ice wine, sweet nectar from concentrated juices. They're the signature of Inniskillin, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, across the lake from Toronto, a winery established nearly 50 years ago. "But climate change has made ice wine more challenging as much for growing the grapes as for the freezing," said Nicholas Gizuk, the winemaker. Usually the grapes are white, including riesling and vidal, a hybrid, which he says is more reliable, but he also makes an uncommon cabernet franc red ice wine, which has become easier to find in the United States. The bright ruby wine, all candied ripe berries with a veil of bitterness, is a fine complement for holiday desserts, including chocolate pecan pie or a bûche de Noël swathed in chocolate. The alcohol is a modest 9.5 percent.

Inniskillin Niagara Estate Cabernet Franc Ice Wine, 2002, \$109.99, inniskillin.com.

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Florence Fabricant is a food and wine writer. She writes the weekly Front Burner and Off the Menu columns, as well as the Pairings column, which appears alongside the monthly wine reviews. She has also written 12 cookbooks. More about Florence Fabricant