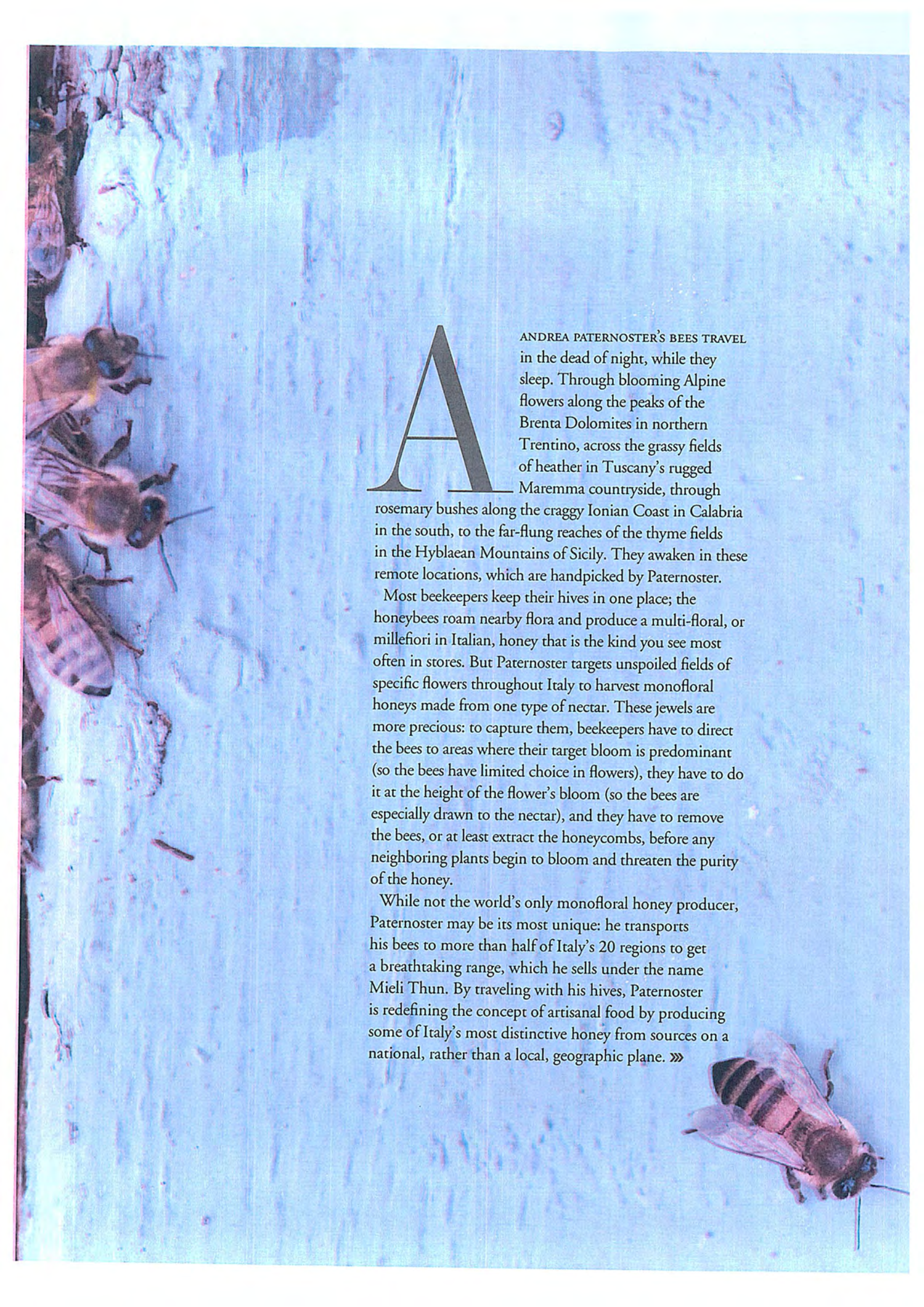



the
traveling
Andrea Paternoster shepherds
bee
his colonies of nomadic bees,
charmer
by land and by sea,
& his
to extraordinary locations
magical
in order to capture Italy's finest nectar.
honey
BY CORINA QUINN



ANDREA PATERNOSTER'S BEES TRAVEL in the dead of night, while they sleep. Through blooming Alpine flowers along the peaks of the Brenta Dolomites in northern Trentino, across the grassy fields of heather in Tuscany's rugged Maremma countryside, through rosemary bushes along the craggy Ionian Coast in Calabria in the south, to the far-flung reaches of the thyme fields in the Hyblaean Mountains of Sicily. They awaken in these remote locations, which are handpicked by Paternoster.

Most beekeepers keep their hives in one place; the honeybees roam nearby flora and produce a multi-floral, or millefiori in Italian, honey that is the kind you see most often in stores. But Paternoster targets unspoiled fields of specific flowers throughout Italy to harvest monofloral honeys made from one type of nectar. These jewels are more precious: to capture them, beekeepers have to direct the bees to areas where their target bloom is predominant (so the bees have limited choice in flowers), they have to do it at the height of the flower's bloom (so the bees are especially drawn to the nectar), and they have to remove the bees, or at least extract the honeycombs, before any neighboring plants begin to bloom and threaten the purity of the honey.

While not the world's only monofloral honey producer, Paternoster may be its most unique: he transports his bees to more than half of Italy's 20 regions to get a breathtaking range, which he sells under the name Mieli Thun. By traveling with his hives, Paternoster is redefining the concept of artisanal food by producing some of Italy's most distinctive honey from sources on a national, rather than a local, geographic plane. »





Clockwise, from top left: Driving the hives into the Brenta Dolomites' rhododendron fields; Paternoster with honeycombs; the smoker that helps keep the bees calm; setting up the hives with an electric fence to keep out bears.



“I’m a shepherd. ...
I’m always looking
for the best flowers
for the bees,
just like a shepherd
looks for the best
grass for his animals.”

—Andrea Paternoster

“I’m a shepherd,” he says of his work. “I move swarms of bees like a flock of sheep. I’m always looking for the best flowers for the bees, just like a shepherd looks for the best grass for his animals.”

The results are singular in every way. While the most common monofloral honeys on the market are acacia, lavender and orange blossom, Mieli Thun tackles herbs such as rosemary and thyme, traditional flowers such as rhododendron and sunflower, and non-traditional varieties such as linden tree, eucalyptus and ivy in its line of roughly 24 flavors. Just as a superior wine reflects terroir—the soil, atmosphere and climate that characterize its place of origin—the Mieli Thun honeys express their parent flower in color, aroma, viscosity and flavor. The sunflower honey is the same blazing hot yellow, the aroma pungently grassy, as its source; the chestnut honey has a rich wood color, and is nutty and sap-like in smell and thickness.

While you may not recognize the name, you might have tasted Mieli Thun honeys without realizing it—they’re creatively put to use in some of the best restaurants in the world. Paternoster’s ambassador-like zeal, and his ability to promote the ingredient’s extensive culinary uses, has won over some of the world’s most respected chefs. After meeting him, you won’t think of honey the same way again. “His honey gave me a new playground for ingredients,” says Sarah Grueneberg, head chef at the award-winning Spiaggia restaurant in Chicago, and a close friend of his. “In cooking, everything’s already been done once, or at least it feels that way sometimes. When you discover a new ingredient, that’s when you’re creating new food.”

ON A CRISP AND CLOUDY DAY IN JUNE, Paternoster is moving his bees in the pre-dawn light high into the Brenta Dolomites in the Alps of Trentino, a region that shares its northern border with Switzerland. Grueneberg has traveled to

the area to shadow him, to learn more about his work. Paternoster and a team from Mieli Thun meet at the company’s headquarters in the village of Vigo di Ton at 5:30 a.m. sharp. They load a truck with 24 hives (large gray boxes that hold the bees and honeycombs inside) before taking them into the mountains to capture rhododendron nectar. It’s been a late growing season—it’s about 50 degrees outside, cool for mid-June, even for this high altitude. But the plants have started to flower and will reach their peak soon.

For Paternoster, blooming season is hectic and tiring, and his success hinges on timing. With about 1,500 hives (a sizeable amount for a small producer who manages a team), his honeys are harvested from 12 different regions, and he and his team work 14-hour days during the prime blooming season (mostly between March and September, though some honeys are harvested in colder months).

They divide site visits among each other, but it’s not uncommon to drive 2,500 miles in a single month. He must follow the flowering of the plants and adjust, to the day, to seasonal and climactic changes before dropping his bees in a new location. Bees can’t fly without daylight, so the hives are moved at jaw-aching hours—sometime after 9 p.m.—and fully set up before the bees wake and leave the hive—ideally by 5 a.m.

Though he puts in the legwork, Paternoster credits Italy’s diverse terrain for his ability to capture such a broad variety. “It’s the most important country for

capturing monofloral honey,” he says. When you consider the complex eco-diversity that fills the land between the northern Alps and the southern base of Sicily, as well as Italy’s respect for agriculture, it allows for a diverse range of blossoms.

According to the National Honey Board, a single hive is about 60,000 bees, and Andrea Piccoli, Paternoster’s second in command at Mieli Thun, estimates it can range from 50,000 to 70,000 during peak blooming season. Today, the team is preparing an apiary with about 1 million to 1.5 million bees among the rhododendron. They don’t want to disturb the bees, so noise and sudden movements are verboten—they all move quietly, and quickly.

After the hives are loaded onto a small flatbed truck—smaller trucks can access hard-to-reach areas—the team makes its way north, passing the city of Merano, heading into the Val Nambrone as the gravel road gets steeper, flanked by cows. They drive slow—they’re carrying precious cargo, and bees are sensitive to the atmosphere, Paternoster explains. Moving them without anxiety or chaos is critical to their stability. At 2,000 meters, they reach hilly fields of rhododendron bushes owned by a local shepherd and cheesemaker.

Clad in white and yellow protective suits and head screens—bright colors relax bees and evoke floral colors—the beekeepers get to work. To prepare the apiary, the set of 24 hives, they put down metal bases in a half-moon shape, and place the hives on top. As they lift and set the hives on the bases, they continuously blow smoke at the bees through a canister, which helps keep them calm. Once the hives are set up, they ring them with an electric fence—a precaution that keeps out the local brown bears.

With any expedition, they’re careful to set fresh hives (filled with bees but empty honeycombs) near the target plant as it begins flowering. “The best areas for

collecting honey are the ones with no other blossoms around," Piccoli says. Bees are faithful to the most prevalent bloom that is producing the most nectar, and the colony will work the source until it wanes. The entire set-up takes a few hours, and when complete, they leave the bees to do their part.

At 46 years old, Paternoster is clear-eyed and energetic, quick to instruct how to avoid upsetting bees (avoid dark colors, which mimic the look of predators, and most importantly, stay calm), helping everyone relax despite the prevalence of stingers. His relationship with his bees is so special that he plays games with them the way most people play fetch with their dogs. There's a video of it. He's standing in front of a hive, blocking the bees' entrance. They fly around him, coming in close, then backing away; he swipes at the air and moves from side to side in response.

Just two days after setting up the apiaries in the rhododendron bushes, the Mieli Thun team is loaded up and on the road by 2 a.m., heading to Venice, several hours away, for an experimental nectar expedition. They're piloting a boat to the nearby island of Sant'Erasmus, famous for the vegetables that grow there—it's known as Venice's market garden—to partner with the Consorzio del Carciofo Violetto di Sant'Erasmus, a consortium of about 20 producers who farm the island's renowned violet artichoke, in order to capture the flower's nectar from almost 100 acres of plants.

Paternoster and his team stand out in the early morning hour on Venice's Tronchetto, a dock on the city's far eastern edge, just off the Via Libertà, the long narrow road that connects the island to the mainland. Grizzled workers stare as the beekeepers, in their protective head screens, stealthily load eight hives onto a small boat, while everyone else fills pallets with soda, water and alcohol destined for gigantic cruise ships.

As the boat makes its way through Venice's famed Grand Canal, Paternoster perches on top of it, blowing smoke at the bees during the hour-long ride to

Sant'Erasmus. The island is beautiful, if a little desolate. Amid its marshy farmland, there is a small main village and stone farmhouses, many empty and scattered throughout the island.

When they reach the dock nearest the artichoke farm, Paternoster, Piccoli, and several members of the artichoke consortium lift each hive out of the boat and carry them to the nearby fields. The hives themselves are manmade, and hold the nest in the lower half, while the honey is collected in honeycombs in the upper half, called the super. The gray hives are spray-painted with different colored dots, slashes and other symbols, to help the bees recognize their own. Bees are loyal, and a family, so they don't intermingle. They'll bar bees from other hives who try to enter.

Every day, the bees fly out of the hives to collect nectar, which is made up of water and sugar, and carry it back to their home. They fill the honeycombs with nectar they've digested, then fan it with their wings to reduce its moisture, transforming it into honey. "There's no ingredient list for honey," Paternoster says. "It's sugar and water. If you add anything else to it, it's not honey." When the nectar nears 18 percent water, the bees cover it with a tiny film of wax that worker bees produce from special glands in their abdomens, and it's ready for harvesting.

Depending on the season and strength of the blossoms, they can fill one honeycomb in two days. Each super holds nine combs; when full, they hold about three pounds of honey. When the super reaches capacity, it's removed and

“Paternoster’s honey gave me a new playground for ingredients. ... When you discover a new ingredient, that’s when you’re creating new food.”

—Sarah Grueneberg

returned to Mieli Thun in Trentino. Paternoster takes about 10 percent of honey, from each batch and leaves the rest because it's necessary for the bees' livelihood. "A good beekeeper thinks of what the hive needs," he says. "He's not a honey producer; his job is caring for his bees."

THE HONEY IS TAKEN FROM THE COMBS

in the extraction room, called a smielatura, at Mieli Thun headquarters. Bees fill the open space, buzzing and landing on stacks of honeycomb frames that fill it. In the height of summer, when the windows are open and production is high, the building is surrounded by bees. "They want to come in and get their honey back," Piccoli explains.

Paternoster pulls out a honeycomb, made of wax. It's a natural substance that is water-resistant, and the cells are angled upward to help hold the nectar. He slices off the protective cap by hand, then puts the combs in an extractor, which uses centrifugal force to draw the honey out. It exits through a pipe and collects in tanks that sit on the floor below.

Once in the tanks, the honey is filtered and preserved, then jarred. Though annual production fluctuates, based on climate, rainfall and the bees themselves, Paternoster considers 66 pounds per hive a good annual production. Frequently, he gives the freshest honey to chefs.

"People are forgetting to use honey [in food] in favor of sugar. Sugar doesn't have flavor—it's banal, without personality, and it's cheaper," he says. Paternoster enjoys hosting tastings, because it gives him an opportunity to educate, adding that people regularly ask him which honey to pair with cheese. "Honey doesn't end there. That's too short on imagination." His suggestions for using honey range from sauces and glazes to flavoring dough and risotto, or creating mousses (see sidebar p. 58).

Explains Chef Grueneberg, "Sugar only attracts the sweet part of your taste buds. Honey gives you sour and salt in addition to sweet, as well as the notes from its



Clockwise, from top left:
Transferring the hives from the Mieli Thun truck to a boat at the Tronchetto docks in Venice; making the trip via the Grand Canal to Sant'Erasmus; violet artichokes in full bloom; hives set up on a farm on the island.



flower." When asked if she often uses honey when cooking, she replies, "I do now."

Mieli Thun inspired her to create several new dishes that she's served at Spiaggia, from lacquered duck to a range of desserts that includes a panna cotta with either cardoon (cardo in Italian) or thyme honey, and, coming soon, a wild carrot honey sorbetto with a Pecorino cheesecake (try recipes inspired by her visit to Mieli Thun on p. 60). Not every honey is available each year, so the list changes (see map at right for the most recent varieties), but Paternoster has promised her a jar of his new artichoke honey soon. "I get chills, the honey is so good," she says.

Mieli Thun headquarters is a bee-lover's paradise. At the top of a hill in the Val di Non, its clean, monastery-like exterior is surrounded by green rolling hills of open land, with the Brenta Dolomites rising in the distance. Inside, former hives have been built into cabinets and desks. Aside from the employee offices, there is the extraction room on the top floor, which is next to a large room for hosting visitors, as well as the large, high-ceilinged spaces where honey is harvested, extracted, filtered and packaged for sale.

Also on-site is a boutique of artisanal products—the full Mieli Thun line, plus a

special limited run of "Quintessenza" honeys, especially concentrated varieties pulled from the hives at the highest point of the season that Paternoster likens to a winemaker's cru. He also sells pollen and royal jelly, as well as printed materials he's written, including a *Dictionary of Honey from Nomadic Bees* that he wrote with three other apiary experts, and a booklet titled *Mielicromia*, modeled after the Pantone color guide that illustrates the breadth and range, in color, flavor and use, of each of his honeys.

As he explains it, the colors reflect the landscape of their origins. It's important to examine each one's color and texture. "Quality honey gives you the nectar of the flower," Paternoster says, while the hue indicates taste—the darker the honey, the stronger the flavor. You can't make rhododendron honey in Naples or Sicily, and you can't capture the radiant sunflower anywhere but in the dry, seaside heat of the south.

"It's different from most artisanal products I work with, where you have a producer who's hyper-local, and focused only on what's nearby," Grueneberg says. "He's an artisan investing in each region of the country, embracing what it offers throughout." □

sweeter than honey

ANDREA PATERNOSTER believes that honey is more than a simple sweetener for tea. Here, a few of his most widely available honeys and his suggestions for using them, from his *Mielicromia*, a booklet modeled after the Pantone color guide that illustrates the versatility of his honeys. For more information on Mieli Thun, go to mielithun.it, and for finding it in the U.S., violaimports.com.



ACACIA

Clear, with a slightly warm ivory hue, its bourbon vanilla aromas and flavors are excellent for making candied fruits, to glaze tarts and pies, and to balance the acidity in tomato sauce.

ARANCIO (ORANGE BLOSSOM)

Though defined by notes of orange citrus, it also carries elements of honeysuckle and ripe melon, and Paternoster suggests using it in pastries, or spring vegetables with fish.

MELATA D'ABETE (FIR HONEYDEW)

With aromas reminiscent of pine resin and a medium-sweet palate with touches of malt and caramel, it works well served with bacon and cold cuts on sourdough bread, or mixed with lemon juice and drizzled on fruit salad.

SULLA (FRENCH HONEYSUCKLE)

Softly floral with herbal notes, Paternoster says this honey is great in dough for bread, or to make nougat.

TARASSACO (DANDELION)

With a milky, hay-like aroma and palate of vanilla and chamomile, this pairs with endive and escarole, egg noodle pasta, or on a glaze for grilled or roast pork.

honey locations

Mieli Thun captures its goods throughout Italy all year.

FEBRUARY & MARCH

Rosemary: Rocca Imperiale, Ionian Coast of Calabria

MARCH AND APRIL

Rapeseed: Near Mantova, in the Morenic Hills of Lombardy

APRIL

Orange Blossom: Pianura Metapontino, in Matera, Basilicata

MAY

Acacia: Levico Terme, in Trentino

Acacia: Montello, in Treviso, Veneto

Apple Blossom: Tres, near Trento, in Trentino

Clover: Lake Bolsena, in Viterbo, Lazio

Dandelion: Lavarone, near Trento, Trentino

Dandelion: Asiago, in Vicenza, Veneto

Heather: Parco dell'Uccellina, near Grosseto, in the Maremma region of Tuscany

JUNE

Linden, or Linetree: Valsugana, near Trento, Trentino

JUNE AND JULY

Cardoon: Madonie Mountains, in Palermo, Sicily

Chestnut: Novaldo, in Borgo Valsugana, Trentino

Ivy: Lake Garda, in the Province of Verona, Veneto

Rhododendron: Val Nambrone, Trentino

Sunflower: Rotello Molisano, near Ururi, in the Campobasso province of Molise

Thyme: Hyblaean Mountains, Sicily

JULY

Eucalyptus: Policoro, near Metaponto, in the Matera area of Basilicata

JULY AND AUGUST

Alfalfa: Porto Tolle, near Polesine, in the Province of Rovigo, Veneto

Alpine Flower: Brenta Dolomites, Trentino

Fir Honeydew: Vigo di Ton, Trentino

Forest Honeydew: Talmassons, Friuli-Venezia Giulia

French Honeysuckle: Nocera, Calabria

OCTOBER — DECEMBER

'Strawberry' Tree: Parco Nazionale del Gennargentu, Sardinia

Pasta secret: #2 origin.



Delverde pasta is crafted
in the mountain village
of Fara San Martino, Italy.



DELVERDE
ABRUZZO - ITALIA

EDITOR'S LETTER

»»» "TODAY WE ARE OFFERING a double-cut pork chop from a heritage pig with a graduate degree from Yale. It was raised in upstate New York on a bespoke diet of grains and nuts." You might hear something close to this aggrandized description from a waiter at dozens of restaurants near my apartment in New York City. Many of these chefs describe their cooking as an "approach," which can sound as much like a political platform as a style of cuisine. This city boasts a large concentration of restaurants that share a reinvigorated philosophy toward high-quality, artisanal ingredients and farm-to-table eating that reflects a major shift in urban dining in America. While the obsessiveness of the language used to describe where something comes from or the mission statement of a restaurant can seem like dialogue from the Theater of the Absurd, this is the right way to eat and the Italian way—seasonal, local and responsible.

I was having lunch in Brooklyn at one of my favorite restaurants while working on Corina Quinn's story in this issue, "The Traveling Bee Charmer and His Magical Honey" (p. 52). The story is a fascinating account of how Andrea Paternoster, an artisanal honey producer, goes through great effort to schlep his bees all over Italy—to spectacular locations at very specific times of the year—so that he can make monofloral honey from the country's diverse array of flowers.

At lunch, my conversation with the waiter was peppered with the word artisanal, which is so common now, appearing on almost every shopping label, menu or storefront, that its definition seems watered down. It's supposed to denote that something is handmade with a unique understanding of the materials and techniques. It also connotes a level of locality as well, which is to say that the producer has a true connection to the place where, for instance, their cheese or salume is made. But as Corina's story will show you, Paternoster's vision of local is spread across 12 regions of Italy, making honey from ivy near Lake Garda and from cardoons near Palermo. He possesses an astounding knowledge of where the best flowers are in Italy, exactly when they are in bloom and how to get access to them for his bees.

Over my salad of "community-responsible" Brooklyn kale, it dawned on me that the Paternoster story is about a different kind of artisan—one who doesn't talk about local but instead talks locations, many of them. He is a nomadic craftsman, scouting where he will work. Through a complicated orchestration of timing, travel and weather comes this highly specialized honey that expresses the Italian approach to quality. Not only can you read all about this in Corina's story, but you can purchase his honey stateside—I am shocked to say—for under \$15 a jar, less than the price of my kale salad on Flatbush Avenue.



Above: Corina Quinn on the road with nomadic bees; Andrea Paternoster and Chef Sarah Grueneberg in Trentino **P.52**.

Michael Wilson
EDITOR IN CHIEF



features

VOL. 40

P.64
honey lacquered
roast duck
with roast
potatoes and
shallots



40 NATURAL SELECTION

As the sun warms our gardens, herbs are first to bloom. We bring them into the kitchen, harvesting their aromatics for an earthy frittata, rosemary chicken skewers, tarragon gelato and more.

52 THE TRAVELING BEE CHARMER AND HIS MAGICAL HONEY

Andrea Paternoster shepherds his colonies of nomadic bees, by land and by sea, to extraordinary locations in order to capture Italy's finest nectar.

60 HONEY DISPOSITION

Making the most of the sweet and the savory sides of honey, Chef Sarah Grueneberg concocts six dishes with her distinctive play on tradition.

66 LIGHT, BRIGHT, SPRING GREEN

Verdant color returns to the kitchen as fresh fava beans, peas and asparagus reappear with warmer days. We welcome their arrival, along with spinach and artichokes.

honey disposition

Discovering Andrea Paternoster's artisanal honey, from his Mieli Thun label, was a revelation for SARAH GRUENEBERG, executive chef at Spiaggia restaurant in Chicago. "[His] bees produce amazing honeys," she says. "He moves the hives to different Italian landscapes that yield truly unique flavors." Always on the hunt for new products, Grueneberg created these recipes after traveling with the Mieli Thun team. Above all, she emphasizes the versatility of these honeys as an ingredient. "I can use them in a wide range of recipes because they offer many flavor profiles, such as savory, bitter, sweet, acidity and herbal."

RECIPES BY SARAH GRUENEBERG

honeysuckle honey pinzimonio

20 minutes | Serves 4

- ½ cup peppery extra-virgin olive oil, such as Tuscan
 - ½ cup honeysuckle honey
 - 1½ tablespoons sherry vinegar
- Assorted vegetables such as peeled baby carrots, cored and sliced fennel, cauliflower florets, and boiled fingerling potatoes
- Flaky coarse sea salt

In a large bowl, vigorously whisk together oil, honey, vinegar and ½ tablespoon tepid water until smooth. Arrange vegetables on a platter; sprinkle with sea salt. Serve with honey sauce for dipping.

swiss chard and ricotta tortelli with sage, chestnut honey and aged balsamic

1 hour, 30 minutes | Serves 4 to 6

PASTA

- 1½ cups plus 1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt

FILLING

- Fine sea salt
 - 1 pound Swiss chard
 - ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons fresh ricotta cheese
 - ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, plus more for serving
 - ½ teaspoon finely chopped garlic
 - ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
 - 24 small sage leaves
- Aged balsamic vinegar for drizzling
Chestnut honey for drizzling

FOR PASTA: In a large bowl, mound flour, then form a well in center. Add eggs, egg yolks and salt to the well. Using a fork, gently break up yolks and slowly incorporate flour from the inside rim of the well. Continue until liquid is absorbed (about half of the flour will be incorporated), then knead in bowl until dough forms a mostly complete mass.

Transfer dough and any flour in bowl to a clean work surface to knead together 5 minutes more to form a moderately smooth dough. Wrap dough tightly in plastic wrap and let rest at room temperature 30 minutes. While pasta is resting, prepare filling.

FOR FILLING: Bring a large saucepan of

generously salted water to a boil.

Cut leaves from tough parts of stems and center ribs of chard; rinse leaves (reserve stems and ribs to make a broth, or for another use). Add chard to boiling water; simmer until tender, about 4 minutes. Drain in a colander, then run under cold water to cool. Using your hands, squeeze out all excess liquid from greens, then finely chop.

In a bowl, stir together chard, ricotta, Parmigiano-Reggiano, garlic, ¼ teaspoon salt, and pepper. (Filling keeps, in an airtight container and refrigerated, for up to 1 day.)

Divide dough into 4 pieces. Rewrap 3 pieces in plastic wrap. Flatten unwrapped dough so that it will fit through the rollers of the pasta machine. Set rollers of pasta machine at the widest setting, then feed dough through rollers 3 or 4 times, folding and turning dough until it is smooth and the width of the machine.

Feed pasta through machine, decreasing the setting one notch at a time (do not fold or turn pasta), to thin sheets, ½ to 1 millimeter thick. Dust pasta sheet with flour and transfer to a lightly floured work surface; cover with clean dishtowel (not terry cloth). Repeat with remaining pasta pieces, keeping pieces and sheets covered as you go.

Lay 1 pasta sheet on a lightly floured work surface with the long side facing you. Starting from the left end of the dough, about 1 inch from the top and ½ inch from the edge, put a generous teaspoon filling onto dough. Continue putting dots of filling onto dough, each about 1 inch apart, to form 1 row of 7 dots, until you reach end of pasta sheet. Use finger to lightly dab spaces between filling with water. Fold bottom half of pasta sheet over top, then, using your



“The floral
white blossom
flavor of the
honeysuckle honey
goes best with
a peppery olive
oil and sherry
vinegar. This ‘dip’
pairs with the
crispness of raw
vegetables
beautifully.”

—S.G.

HONEYSUCKLE
HONEY
PINZIMONIO



“The balsamic vinegar brings sweetness and acid to this dish, while the chestnut honey’s savory-sweet flavor balances it out and carries a touch of bitterness.”

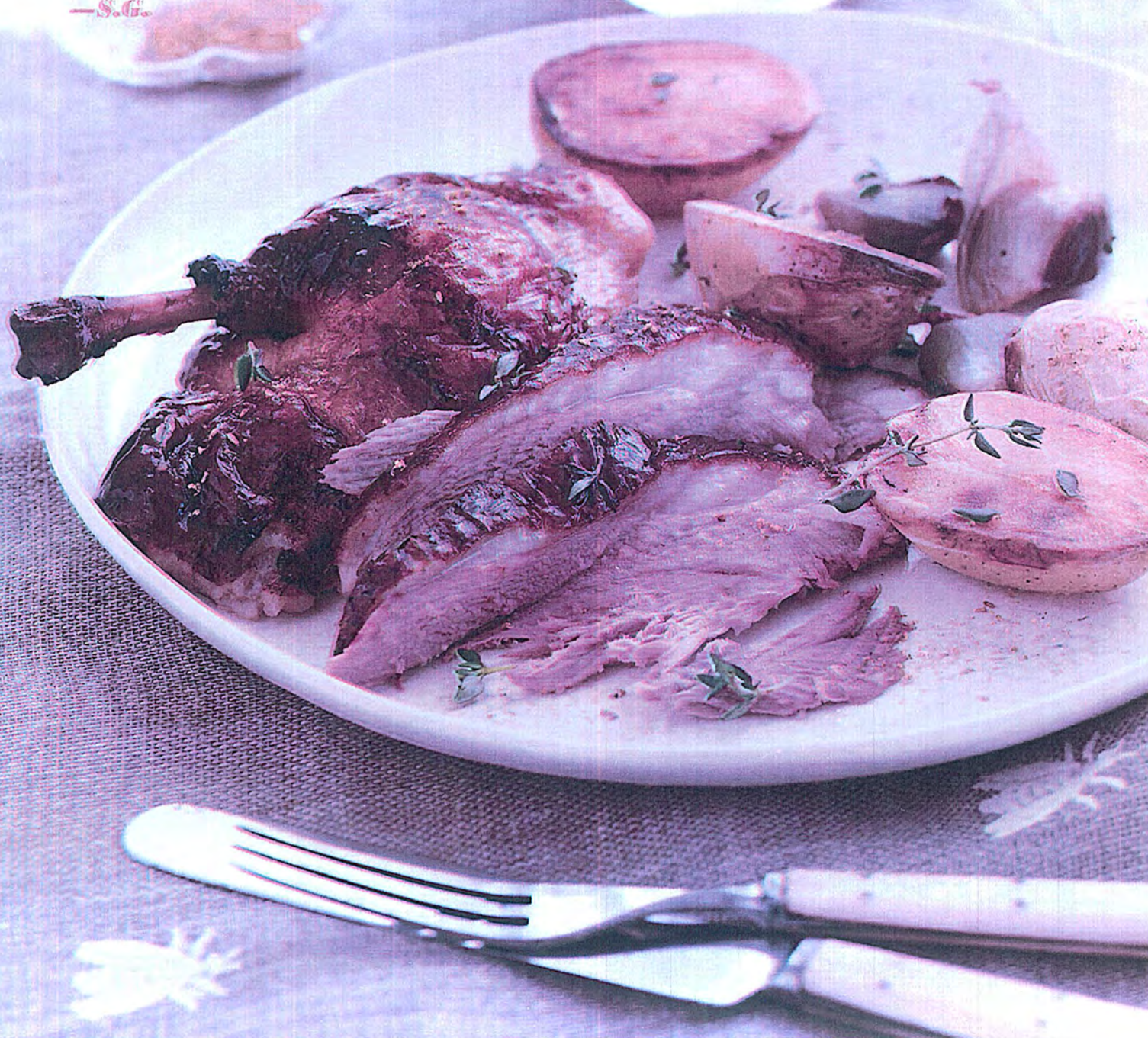
—S.G.

SWISS CHARD
AND RICOTTA
TORTELLI WITH SAGE,
CHESTNUT HONEY
AND AGED BALSAMIC

“Acacia is one of the mildest honeys. It has a slight lemony flavor that cuts the fattiness of the roasted duck and glazes the potatoes and shallots in the pan drippings.”

—S.G.

HONEY
LACQUERED
ROAST DUCK
WITH ROAST
POTATOES AND
SHALLOTS



fingers, gently but firmly press spaces around each mound to eliminate any air pockets. Using a pasta cutter, cut between mounds, then trim bottom and top to form tortelli, each about a 2-inch square.

Transfer tortelli to a lightly floured baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough and filling.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Gently drop tortelli into the boiling water. Allow water to return to an active simmer (not a full boil), and cook tortelli until edges are tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine butter and pinch salt; melt over medium heat, stirring, until butter foams. Continue to heat until butter just begins to turn a pale golden color, then add sage and cook 1 minute. Add 2 tablespoons pasta cooking liquid; let cook 1 minute more. Remove from heat.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer tortelli to a large serving bowl. Drizzle sage butter over the top, then gently toss to coat. Arrange tortelli on serving plates. Drizzle with any remaining butter in bowl, then drizzle with vinegar and honey. Sprinkle with Parmigiano-Reggiano. Serve immediately.

honey lacquered roast duck with roast potatoes and shallots

3 hours plus chilling || 4 servings

- 1 whole (5- to 5½-pound)
Pekin duck
- ½ cup kosher salt
- 1¼ cups acacia honey
- 6 medium Yukon gold potatoes
(about 2 pounds), halved
lengthwise
- 10 medium shallots, peeled
- Flaky coarse sea salt
- 1½ teaspoons fennel pollen (see note)
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
- Freshly ground black pepper

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: tweezers;
kitchen twine

A day or two before roasting, remove the giblets and neck from the cavity of the bird; discard or save for another use. Using tweezers, pluck any stray pinfeathers from

duck. Trim the neck flap and excess fat from around the cavity. Rinse and dry duck well. Set duck on a rack on a rimmed baking sheet, breast-side up; rub outside all over with ¼ cup kosher salt; pat remaining salt over the top. Refrigerate, uncovered, overnight or up to 2 days.

Heat oven to 425°. In an 8- to 10-quart wide heavy pot, combine 4 quarts water and 1 cup honey; bring to a boil. Run duck under cold running water to rinse off salt, then place in pot of boiling water; begin timing immediately. After 5 minutes, drain duck, then pat dry well.

Pierce duck skin all over, every ½ inch, with a skewer or paring knife; tie together legs with kitchen twine. Arrange potatoes and shallots in a roasting pan. Set duck on top of vegetables, breast-side up. Roast 30 minutes, then reduce oven temperature to 325°. Continue roasting 1 hour and 45 minutes more.

Transfer duck to a cutting board; brush with 1 tablespoon remaining honey. Let rest 15 to 20 minutes, brushing with about 1 tablespoon remaining honey every 5 minutes. Meanwhile, season potatoes and shallots with generous pinch flaky coarse sea salt; return vegetables to oven with heat off to keep warm.

Carve duck, removing legs first, then breasts. Cut breasts in half crosswise. Arrange potatoes, shallots and duck pieces on a serving platter. Sprinkle with fennel pollen, thyme and pepper.

NOTE: Look for fennel pollen at gourmet shops, or mail order from Kalustyan's, kalustyans.com; (212) 685-3451.

sunflower honey panna cotta with salted honey caramel

45 minutes plus chilling || 4 servings

CARAMEL

- 1 lemon
- ¼ cup fir or forest honeydew honey
- ½ tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2½ tablespoons heavy cream
- ½ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

PANNA COTTA

- ¾ teaspoon powdered gelatin
- ¾ cup whole milk
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup sunflower or cardoon honey
- ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise,
seeds scraped
- ½ cup fresh ricotta cheese
- 1 tablespoon pine nuts
- ½ cup finely diced fresh pineapple

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 4 (6- to 8-ounce)
ramekins or heatproof dessert glasses

FOR CARAMEL: Finely grate zest from half of the lemon; set aside (reserve lemon for panna cotta). In a small skillet or saucepan, heat honey over very low heat until bubbling and color deepens to dark brown, about 6 minutes; remove from heat. Whisk in butter, then return to very low heat. Whisking, slowly add cream. Cook until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Stir in zest, thyme and salt. Divide caramel among 4 (6- to 8-ounce) ramekins or heatproof dessert glasses; set aside.


FOR PANNA COTTA: Juice enough of the lemon to make 2 tablespoons. In a small bowl, sprinkle gelatin over the lemon juice; let stand 5 minutes.

In a medium saucepan, heat milk, cream, honey, and vanilla seeds and pod, stirring occasionally, until bubbles appear around edge of pan; remove from heat. Remove and discard vanilla pod, then add gelatin mixture, stirring until dissolved. In a blender, combine milk mixture and cheese; purée until smooth. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, then add to prepared ramekins. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set, 3 to 4 hours.

In a small saucepan, heat pine nuts over medium-low heat, shaking pan back and forth over heat until nuts are lightly toasted, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate to cool.

Serve panna cottas in the ramekins, topped with pineapple and nuts.

NOTE: Panna cottas (without fruit and nuts) can be refrigerated, covered, up to 2 days. Top with fruit and nuts just before serving.



“Sunflower honey
has a richer
texture and pairs
perfectly with
this dish. I
love high acid
and savory-
sweet desserts,
because all
the flavors
balance into a
perfect bite.”

—S.G.

Chef Graeneberg created these recipes with Miell Thun's monofloral honeys, which are available at specialty grocers, and also through amazon.com, igourmet.com and jggraziano.com. You can easily substitute with monofloral honeys from other producers.

SUNFLOWER HONEY
PANNA COTTA
WITH SALTED
HONEY CARAMEL