

**THE
HOT
LIST**

100 top foods to eat, places to visit, things to do P.15

Sunset

LIVING IN THE WEST

**37
best
towns*
to live
your
dream**

***From Salt Spring Island
to San Diego**

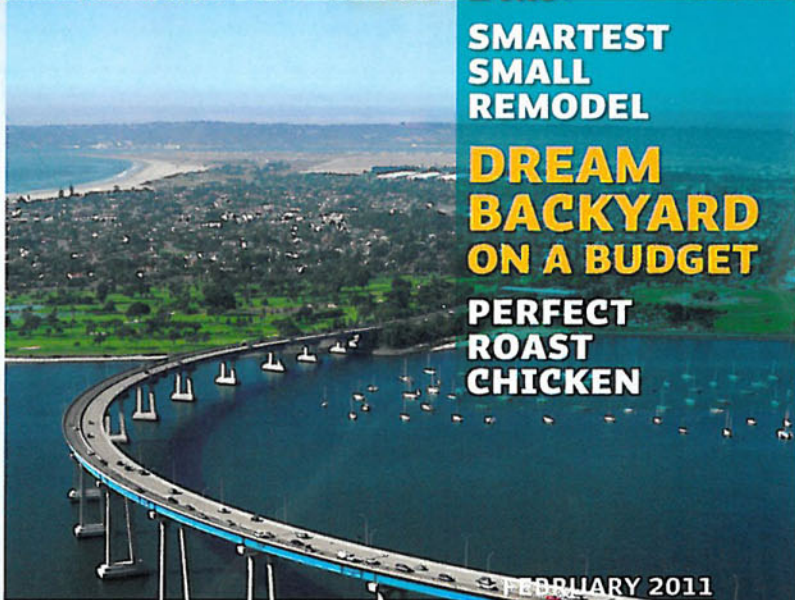


Plus:

**SMARTEST
SMALL
REMODEL**

**DREAM
BACKYARD
ON A BUDGET**

**PERFECT
ROAST
CHICKEN**



FEBRUARY 2011

Sunset.com



63-65

Locally sourced beauty lines

A crop of women-run, hand-made skin-care lines take a good-for-you/good-for-the-planet approach to beauty, each tied to its own corner of the West. The Phoenix-based Lotus Wei line (pictured; lotuswei.com) is the brainchild of organic alchemist Katie Hess, who infuses flower essences from local blooms for her skin tone-boosting elixirs. At her cult San Francisco spa, Gunilla Eisenberg blends essential oils and herbs, mostly from Northern California, for her Gunilla Skin Alchemy line (gunillaskinbutik.com). And Bunnie Gulick, founder of Isun Skincare (isunskincare.com), brings a touch of the mountains to her organic line, with wild herbs foraged near her lab in Colorado's San Juan Range. Although packaged in glass and sustainably sourced, these aren't the hippie tonics sold on card tables at your local farmers' market—they're used in some of the best spas in the West.

66 Dinner at the bar

At fancy restaurants, we're starting to think the hottest seat is at the bar—the menu is often less pricey, the wines by the glass tantalizing and unusual, and, thanks to the bartender banter (and eavesdropping), it's entertaining to boot. Plus, a pile of Monterey sardines or a tall craft beer just tastes better at the bar, where food tends to come out faster. Dig in.



The dinner rush at Redd in Yountville, CA

67-70

Everyone can be a cheesemaker here The DIY food obsession has led to classes in everything from canning to kombucha fermenting (really). For our money, the biggest payoff comes from learning to make cheese—totally doable, yet utterly impressive.

THE CHEESE SCHOOL OF SAN FRANCISCO
Learn the ABCs of making fresh cheeses (think fromage blanc), and leave with a chèvre you've flavored yourself. \$65; cheeseschoolsf.com

KOOKOOLAN FARMS, YAMHILL, OR First, watch the brie, gouda, or cheddar demo. Then buy the supplies here to make your own. From \$65; kookoolanfarms.com

OLD WINDMILL DAIRY, ESTANCIA, NM Hands-on intros walk you through the mozzarella process. A spring-time bonus: bottle-feeding the farm's baby goats. From \$38; theoldwindmilledairy.com

RIVER VALLEY CHEESE, FALL CITY, WA Tackle a different cheese every month, from blue to havarti to manchego, and age it yourself. From \$125; rivervalleycheese.com