

# cultivate

Quarterly Inspiration from Vesta Foodservice



**Winter Color Theory**  
Hello, California Chicories

**Gooey Goodness**  
Explore Melting Cheeses

**Crafted in Ecuador**  
República del Cacao



## Where Winter turns Vibrant

# Bring on California Chicories

When the weather cools and markets shift from tomatoes and stone fruit to roots, brassicas, and squash, a certain color palette often takes over the plate; warm, earthy, comforting. But winter also brings another kind of beauty: chicories. Ruffled, ribbed, speckled, and brilliantly colored in shades of ruby, garnet, coral, ivory, and emerald, chicories are the most expressive families of winter greens and the best are grown right here in California.

Chicories offer chefs three invaluable tools in one ingredient: color, structure, and contrast. Their crisp leaves bring freshness to heavier dishes; their natural bitterness builds flavor complexity; and when paired with winter citrus, pears, apples, or creamy cheeses, they create salads and sides that feel bright, unexpected, and undeniably seasonal.

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California's growing regions allow us to celebrate a season that blends depth with brightness; stews and citrus groves and hearth and orchard. Chicories sit exactly in that intersection: hearty enough for cold days, vibrant enough to keep the plate awake.

This winter, when menus lean warm and comforting, let chicories lift the table with color, contrast, and culinary intention.

# *Celebrating the growers who have elevated chicories from specialty crops to menu staples.*



## J. Marchini Farms

In the heart of the Central Valley, the Marchini family has been quietly shaping California's chicory landscape for over four decades. What began with Treviso and radicchio has grown into a full range of Italian chicories that now rival their European counterparts in both flavor and beauty.

Today, J. Marchini Farms cultivates:

- Radicchio – tight, jewel-toned heads with a clean, pleasantly bitter snap
- Treviso – elongated, architectural leaves perfect for plating
- Castelfranco – softly speckled cream and rose petals that open like flowers
- Rosa Pink Radicchio – vibrant blush heads with a delicate bitterness and stunning visual appeal

Their approach marries Italian seed genetics with California growing conditions, producing chicories with vivid color and reliable flavor structure. The result is produce that stands up to both high-heat roasting and delicate salads and visually transforms a winter plate.

## California Endive Co.

On the other end of the chicory family tree lies a crop grown almost like magic, the endive (on deev). California Endive Co. is one of the only producers in the United States growing true Belgian-style endive, a process that requires patience, precision, and a bit of mystery. Chicory roots are first grown in the fields under open sky. Then, after harvest, they are placed in a controlled dark environment, no sunlight, where the iconic pale heads slowly form.

The result is smooth, tightly layered leaves with a clean, gentle bitterness and satisfying crunch. Available in both classic white and deep red, endive adds color and refinement to winter menus and is an elegant vehicle for cheese, nuts, citrus, cured seafood, or vinaigrettes that sing with acidity.

Chefs love it because it performs equally well raw (as cups or ribbons), grilled, or roasted (where sugars deepen and edges caramelize)



# SEASON OF SWEET

The holidays call for desserts that look beautiful, taste impressive, and come together fast. These ready-to-serve pieces bring handcrafted style to any menu without the prep. Colorful bites, crisp shells, rich chocolate, and elegant minis turn even the busiest service into something festive. Just thaw, fill, plate, and go.



## Handcrafted Macarons

La Rose Noire's macarons bring instant pâtisserie elegance to any holiday spread. The shells are crisp, the centers are soft, and the flavors hit all the classics: vanilla, raspberry, chocolate, lemon, Earl Grey, salted caramel, and passion fruit. They add color, polish, and an effortless finishing touch to dessert boards and coffee service.



## Ready-to-Fill Tart Shells

These tart shells from La Rose Noire are a dependable base for fast, customizable desserts. Buttery, crisp, and consistently crafted, they hold their structure beautifully and come in multiple sizes, including chocolate. Fill them with curd, cream, fruit, or ganache for a clean, house-made look with minimal labor.



## Mini Cheesecakes

La Rose Noire's mini cheesecakes deliver classic, creamy richness in a ready-to-serve format. Each piece sits on a crisp base and arrives perfectly portioned, making them ideal for large displays, banquets, or plated desserts. Add fruit, chocolate décor, or a seasonal sauce for an easy, elevated finish.



## Assorted Deluxe Mini Pastries

The Pastry Assortment from Gourmet Foods offers a curated mix of bite-size pastries, each with its own texture and flavor profile. Bright citrus, berry accents, nutty layers, and creamy elements create a visually dynamic spread. These minis hold well, plate cleanly, and bring instant variety to holiday dessert offerings.



## Assorted Chocolate Pastries

Gourmet Foods' chocolate-forward Pastry Assortment brings depth and indulgence to dessert tables with pieces like red velvet, chocolate cheesecake, brownie, berry tartlet, white chocolate raspberry, and a petite opera cake. The mix is rich, refined, and reliably consistent, making it an effortless way to present a striking chocolate-centric display.

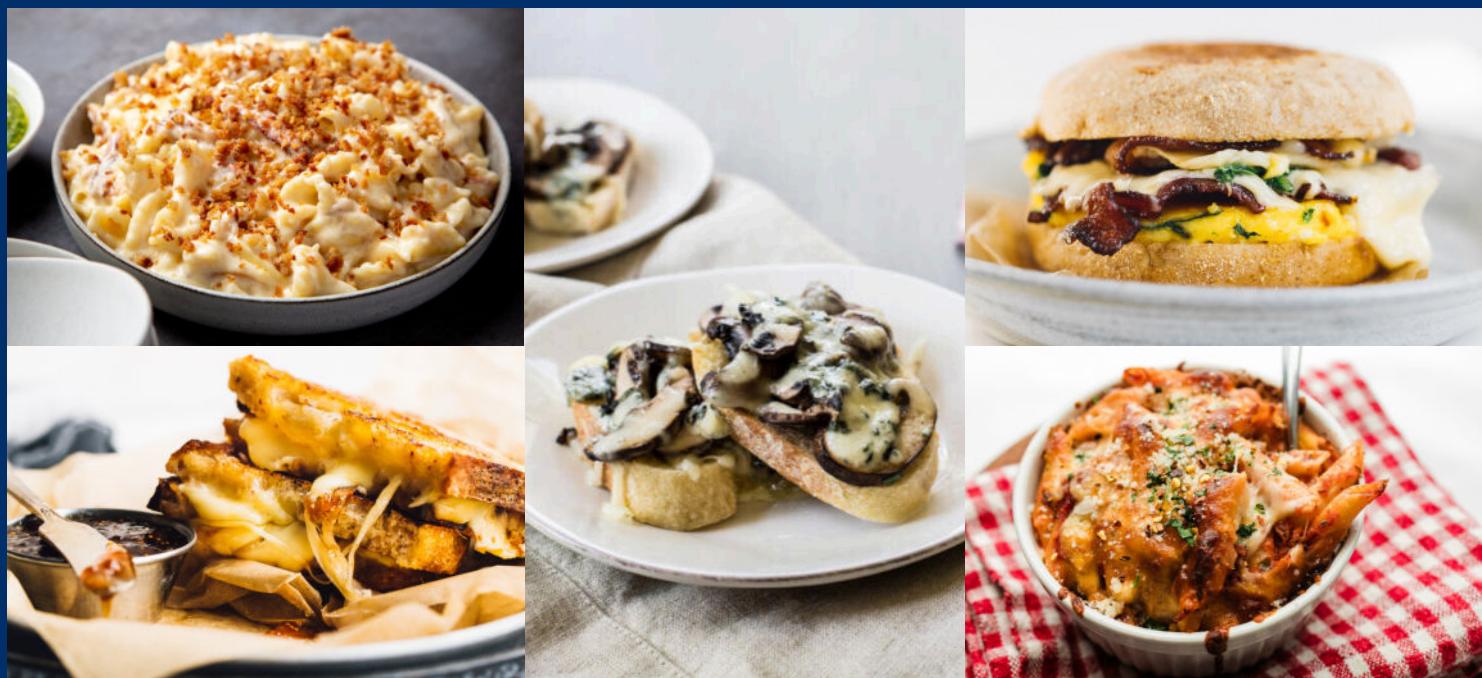
# Emmi Roth Alpine Style Cheeses For Your Winter Melts

As the season turns crisp and the appetite leans toward comfort, the kitchen becomes a haven for warmth — and few ingredients embody that better than Alpine cheese. Crafted by Emmi Roth, these melting cheeses carry the essence of the Swiss Alps in every creamy, nutty bite. They glide seamlessly into winter menus, transforming familiar dishes into refined expressions of coziness. From bubbling fondues and rustic gratins to inventive winter plates and shareable bites, these cheeses invite you to craft moments of comfort and flavor that linger long after the last bite.

## CHEESES WORTH MELTING FOR

### Swedish Fontina

Inspired by traditional Swedish Fontina, this Wisconsin-made cheese delivers a mild, buttery flavor with an irresistibly creamy melt. Its silky texture makes it a staple for sandwiches, pizzas, and comforting baked dishes. Versatile and approachable, it's the ultimate all-purpose Fontina for any kitchen.



### Italian Fontina

Crafted in Wisconsin with true Italian influence, this Fontina offers a richer, more full-bodied flavor with a hint of nuttiness. It melts beautifully into pasta and risotto, adding depth and luxurious texture. On a cheese board, it stands out with warm, savory character and elegant complexity.

### De Comte Gruyere

From France's Jura region, this Comté delivers deep, savory complexity developed through extended aging. Its layers of roasted nuttiness and browned-butter richness make it a standout for premium culinary applications. Ideal for foodservice, it serves as both a showpiece cheese and a flavor-forward finishing touch.

### Austria Gruyere

This Austrian Alpine cheese brings a firm texture with classic notes of nuttiness and gentle sweetness. It shines in fondues, gratins, and French onion soup, where its smooth melt adds richness and depth. Refined yet comforting, it elevates both rustic and upscale dishes with ease.

### King Cut Gruyere

Swiss-made and pre-cut from traditional wheels, this Gruyère showcases the benchmark balance of nuttiness, earthiness, and clean, lingering flavor. Its smooth melt and premium character make it perfect for refined Alpine dishes or elevated everyday use. Convenient and refined, it brings true Swiss craftsmanship directly to the kitchen.

# 40 Vesta FOODSERVICE CULTIVATING OUR COMMUNITY LA 2025

Cultivating Our Community Los Angeles at Vibiana in DTLA was the perfect way to celebrate Vesta's 40th anniversary. The main hall was filled with more than 85 vendors and a steady stream of culinary professionals who came ready to taste, explore, and reconnect. The energy in the room felt warm and genuine as people revisited the partnerships that have supported us through four decades.

The main hall showcased the growers, producers, and makers who represent the heart of what we do. Small family farms, passionate artisans, and longtime partners filled the space with beautiful produce, specialty grocery items, breads, cheeses, charcuterie, beverages, and the fruits and vegetables that inspire chefs every day. The room felt alive with the people who grow it, craft it, and proudly stand behind it. We are so grateful for this community and the relationships that make our work meaningful year after year.

In the courtyard, the CA Milk Advisory Board created one of the most memorable experiences of the day. Their display featured tasty dishes using cheese from CA cheesemakers along with the tiny cheese cows that quickly became a crowd favorite. The live cheesemaker demos drew a full audience, and a highlight was the moment when a guest helped Stefano from Di Stefano Cheese make nodini and mozzarella. The pumpkin wall was another favorite, and many guests happily carried pumpkins home after the event.

The Chef Challenge brought a real sense of purpose as each chef cooked for a charity close to them. Eric Klein prepared a lamb dish for Chefs to End Hunger. Thomas and Vanessa Tilaka Kalb offered a corn panzanella for Friends in Deed. Jordan Pilarski created a rosemary olive oil cake for the Ojai Food Bank. Juan Robles served his Roman style pizza for CHIRLA. Guests tasted and voted throughout the afternoon and the top honor went to Chef Juan Robles with an award of five thousand dollars made to CHIRLA: an organization that helps protect and empower immigrant families through advocacy, legal services, and community support

As the courtyard filled for the after party the mood remained warm and full of appreciation. It was a day that honored our partnerships, celebrated our shared work, and reflected the community that has supported Vesta for 40 years. We are grateful for everyone who joined us and we look forward to carrying this legacy into the next forty.



# ROOTED IN ECUADOR

Chocolate with a true sense of place

**República del Cacao** keeps the entire craft where the cacao grows, allowing every flavor to reflect the land and the people who shape it. In a world where most cacao leaves its origin early in the process, this brand chooses to stay grounded in Ecuador, honoring the communities who have tended these landscapes for generations.

Ecuador's diverse regions give fine aroma cacao its distinct character, from the lush Amazon to the coastal lowlands and the high Andean foothills. But it is the farming families who define the soul of **República del Cacao**. The brand works directly with small producers, many of whom have passed down their expertise for decades. These long-term partnerships provide stable pricing, training, and investment in local cooperatives, creating resilience and opportunity at the source.

The same commitment extends to every ingredient. High altitude Andean milk comes from family-run mountain dairies, where traditional grazing practices shape its creamy profile. Panela sugar is produced by rural communities who preserve slow, time-honored methods. By keeping all sourcing and production at origin, **República del Cacao** strengthens local economies and preserves the craftsmanship that makes Ecuador's ingredients so exceptional.

Crafted entirely at origin, the chocolate preserves freshness and expresses Ecuador's natural terroir with clarity. Every ingredient is traceable, every partnership intentional, and the performance in pastry, confection, and baking is consistently excellent.

For chefs, **República del Cacao** offers chocolate with flavor, integrity, and origin. It brings a meaningful story to the plate and a sense of purpose to every dessert.

## NOW FEATURING

### 31% White Ecuador

Made with creamy high-altitude Andean milk for a clean, elegant finish.

### 33% White Roasted Corn

Inspired by Andean tostado with warm, caramelized corn notes.

### 55% Enrobing Ecuador

Balanced cacao flavor with excellent fluidity for coating and ganache.

### 56% Dark Ecuador

Bold roasted profile that anchors pastry and baking applications.

### 65% Dark Ecuador

Rich depth and warmth from unrefined panela sugar.



# INDEX

## COVER

PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK WITH YOUR SALES REPRESENTATIVE OR CUSTOMER SERVICE ABOUT PRODUCT AVAILABILITY IN YOUR MARKET.

## 1-2 IN SEASON

00755	TREVIS0 9/12CT
22083	PINK ROSA RADICCHIO
00558	RADICCHIO 9/12CT
01671	CASTELFRANCO
10843	PUNTARELLE 10LB
27186	RED BELGIAN ENDIVE CALIFORNIA
27187	WHITE BELGIAN ENDIVE CALIFORNIA

## 3 EDITOR'S PICKS

24639	FZN-CHEESECAKE MINI ASSORTED 96 CT	23770	TART-SHELL ROUND MINI CHOC LRN 210 CT
24623	FZN-COOKIE MACARON ASSORTED 96 CT	23771	TART-SHELL ROUND MINI VAN LRN 210 CT
25761	FZN-DESSERT MINI DELX ASTD GFI 40 CT	22637	TART-SHELL ROUND MED VANILLA 120 CT
25286	FZN-PAstry ASSORT 7 CHOC GFI 40 CT	22576	TART-SHELL ROUND VANILLA SMALL 125 CT

## 4 CURD NERD

02304	CHEESE FONTINA SWEDISH ~10 LB
72304	CHEESE FONTINA ITALIAN ~7 LB
17702	CHEESE GRUYERE AUSTRIA ~6 LB
04410	CHEESE GRUYERE DE COMTE ~20 LB
01327	CHEESE GRUYERE KING CUT ~6 LB

## 5 COMMUNITY MATTERS

Look for the Real California Milk Seal on cheeses from our vendor partners:

BELLWETHER FARMS	MARIN FRENCH CHEESE COMPANY
COWGIRL CREAMERY	PACIFIC CHEESE
DI STEFANO CHEESE	POINT REYES FARMSTEAD CHEESE CO.
FISCALINI FARMSTEAD CHEESE	ROGUE CREAMERY *ON SELECT/SEASONAL RUNS.
KAROUN DAIRIES	SIERRA NEVADA CHEESE CO.
LOS ALTOS	VINTAGE CHEESE COMPANY

## 6 TRAVELOG

28854	CHOCOLATE RDC 31% WHITE ECUADOR	5.5 LB
28855	CHOCOLATE RDC 33% WHITE RST CORN	5.5 LB
28852	CHOCOLATE RDC 55% ENROB ECUADOR	33 LB
28851	CHOCOLATE RDC 56% DARK ECUADOR	5.5 LB
28853	CHOCOLATE RDC 65% DARK ECUADOR	33 LB