

Mini Marvels

Small farmers and local chefs sow our souls – plus secret dinner and the 49ers.

By [Mark C. Anderson](#)

Truly eating locally is neither easy or cheap or simple, but it can be immensely satisfying and flavorful, as I learned when I did it for 15 days. (But man I missed **Tapatío**, tortillas, bread and beer.)

Thing is, on the advice of super sourcing chefs like **Dory Ford**, I gave myself a 150-mile range. The benefit for big-dreams, small-means **Agricultural and Land-based Training Association** at the sparkling **Monterey Peninsula Country Club** in Pebble Beach Sunday, Aug. 22, is permitting just a 40-mile perimeter for the meats and veggies going into a menu assembled by MPCC's **Colin Moody**, Corral de Tierra Country Club's **William Bennett**, Aquaterra's **Esteban Jimenez** and the aforementioned Ford. Do-gooding donors can await chilled tomato and watermelon gazpacho consommé; braised leek, walnut and bleu cheese canapé; **Grey Goose** – and **Grand Marnier**-compressed ALBA strawberries; and line caught Pacific tuna in ALBA avocado tartar.

And that's just the appetizers. This thing's five courses, with wine pairings.

ALBA might be best described as an inspired small farm incubator – in a scary big ag world – whose largely Latino alums include local standbys **Organic Farm**, **La Milpa** and **Tastes Like Chicken Ranch**. (BTW: I lived for TLC bacon while local dieting; they are currently selling heritage whole and half pigs. Log deposits at the TLC website.)

“We subsidize in the beginning and that decreases over time,” ALBA Deputy Director **Gary Peterson** says. “That's the point of the incubation. To generate a viable local small farm economy.” ALBA's chef pals rallied for what represents a coming-out of sorts for this nonprofit. “While we will uphold the dress code [at MPCC],” Peterson says, “It will be a little bit different crowd for them... we want to introduce ALBA to the community in a way we haven't before.”

Cost is \$125 per person, a portion of which is tax-deductible. If you can't swing that, seek out ALBA alumni at local farmers markets – and the other local providers listed below in bold. If these chefs are using them, you want to be using them. Call 758-1469 for tickets.

Oh yeah – the entrees: Line caught fennel-dusted Pacific halibut, pan-roasted **Hain Ranch** chicken breast, and farmstead **Paicines Ranch** beef.

Small is beautiful. And thanks to ALBA and chefs like these, it's getting easier.

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