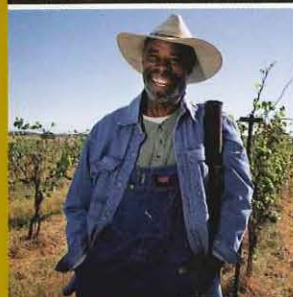
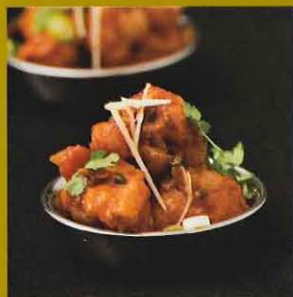


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100

Our favorite foods, restaurants,
drinks, people, places, and things



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The SAVEUR

100

Our favorite foods, restaurants, drinks, people, places, and things

Our tenth annual 100 list offers a vivid snapshot of the wide—very, very wide—world of food, zipping from the Ramadan markets of Kuala Lumpur to the kitchens of Montreal’s vanguard chefs and a rustic Galician tavern that serves some of the finest octopus we’ve ever tasted. And yet, this year’s 100 is also about celebrating the fresh and wild bounty—edible weeds, anyone?—found right in our own backyards. So, join us. The feast is about to begin. —*THE EDITORS*

Most Beloved National Pastime

1 The frenzied grilling, the enormous barrel smokers, the piles of tender ribs—is it any wonder that **COMPETITION BARBECUE** is our favorite sport? Pluck, hubris, and good humor are on display in equal measure at these open-to-the-public, juried events, as backyard hobbyists, brandishing team names like Partners in Swine and Dr. Porkenstein, vie for glory against barbecue-circuit legends like Paul Kirk, of Manhattan’s RUB restaurant. We’re not alone in our predilections: over the past five years, the number of official barbecue contests around the country has grown from about 200 to more than 600, says Carolyn Wells, cofounder of the Kansas City Barbeque Society, competitive barbecue’s main governing body, which sets contest guidelines and trains and accredits judges (there are now more than 8,000 of them). The best part about the sport: the fans are as generously compensated as the players. Attendees get to eat to their hearts’ content and bond with fellow ‘cue fanatics amid a haze of fragrant wood smoke. ★

A barbecue feast at the New York City restaurant RUB, whose pit master, Paul Kirk, is an acknowledged king of ‘cue.

Outstanding in His Field

Ten years ago, when ALPHONSE DOTSON, a former defensive lineman for the Oakland Raiders, began planting grapes on the 22-acre spread he'd bought in the Texas Hill Country, northwest of Austin, locals thought he was loco. Though winemaking was beginning to take off in other parts of the state, this sun-baked corner of Texas wasn't considered wine country, and Dotson wasn't considered the agricultural type. Undaunted, he studied viticulture and dedicated himself to his vines, and within a year his property's sandy soil was yielding cabernet, merlot, and chardonnay grapes of such impeccable quality that producers from all over Texas were competing to buy Dotson's crop. Today, wineries are popping up in and around Mason, the nearby county seat, and Dotson is the president of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association. "He's a big man with big dreams and a big heart," says Ed Auler, owner of Fall Creek Vineyards, a local producer that buys from Dotson. "He seems to be able to find solutions to problems no one else even knew existed." Dotson also presents proof positive that new farmers and those intent on transitioning from traditional commodity crops like corn and tobacco can make a living growing grapes in places where upstart wine industries are desperate for local fruit. Still, a willingness to take risks helps. "When I told my mom what I was doing," says Dotson, "she told me, 'You're about to become the damnedest biggest gambler of all—a farmer!'" —Wes Marshall ★

