Notes from the Field by Katrina Siladi, First Year Apprentice

“The growth of the exploiters’ revolution on this continent has been accompanied by the growth of the idea that work is beneath human dignity, particularly any form of hand work. We have made it our overriding ambition to escape work, and as a consequence have debased work until it is only fit to escape from. We have debased the products of work, and have been, in turn, debased by them.” - Wendell Berry

I often look to Wendell Berry’s instrumental writing on the American landscape to understand where we’ve been and where we’re going next. He continually gives me an appreciation of the love and resistance of ecological food production.

The Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture at CASFS is a meditation on this sentiment – as farmers we unite the heart and the hand. We take each day to study the farm – the plants, the insects, the soil, the elements, the pests and diseases – and from there use our bodies to do the work – plant, water, pick, clean and pack to make the whole production happen. We also carve out time to study ourselves – our roles in the complex social and political economies. We extend ourselves spiritually and physically so that as the land is at the height of its potential bearing, we inch our way closer to our own.

In recent weeks, many conversations in the fields and around the tables have been about love. Apprentices tell each other how much we love each other’s cooking, we discuss our heartaches, we shout out appreciations for the flowers, and we are touched by each other’s powerful farm dreams. We connect around love both casual and deep.

When we commit to the convivial nature of the growing community, we begin to heal collective heartache. Food produced in this way is medicine for the producer and the consumer. When we commit to both traditional and creative solutions to the problems that modern agriculture creates, we say yes to love – yes to a commitment to growth. Yes to self-care through nourishing foods, yes to indigenous ways of knowing, yes to intuition, yes to science, yes to the sweetness in everyday.

Your fruits and vegetables are a result of this convivial resistance. The food is a tasty outcome of our learning and our work. My hope for your food is that it will provide the nourishment needed to do the oft-difficult task of choosing love and resistance.
Heirloom Tomato Tart

**Black pepper parmesan pastry:**

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
3/4 stick (6 T) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes  
2 T cold vegetable shortening  
2 T freshly grated parmesan  
1/2 tsp. black pepper  
1/4 tsp. salt  
2 to 4 T ice water

**Filling:**

3/4 lb. fresh mozzarella (not unsalted), very thinly sliced  
1/2 cup pesto  
2 lb. mixed heirloom tomatoes, sliced 3/4 inch thick

**Special equipment:** pie weights or raw rice

*Make pastry:* Blend together flour, butter, shortening, parmesan, pepper, and salt in a bowl with your fingertips or a pastry blender (or pulse in a food processor) until mixture resembles coarse meal with some roughly pea-size lumps. Drizzle 2 T ice water over and gently stir with a fork (or pulse in food processor) until incorporated. Gently squeeze a small handful: If it doesn't hold together without falling apart, add more water, one tablespoon at a time, stirring (or pulsing) after each addition until incorporated, continuing to test. (Do not overwork dough, or it will become tough.)

Turn out dough onto a work surface and divide into 2 portions. With heel of your hand, smear each portion once in a forward motion to help distribute fat. Gather both portions of dough into 1 ball, then pat into a disk. Chill, wrapped in plastic wrap, until firm, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface into a 12-inch round and fit into a 9-inch round tart pan with a removable rim. Roll rolling pin over top of pan to trim dough flush with rim. Lightly prick tart shell all over with a fork.

Line shell with foil and fill with pie weights or rice. Bake in middle of oven 20 minutes. Carefully remove foil and weights and bake until golden, about 15 minutes more. Cool in pan on a rack.

*Fill tart shell:* Remove side of pan and slide shell onto a platter. Arrange one third of mozzarella in bottom of shell and drizzle with one third of pesto. Arrange one third of tomato slices, overlapping, on top of cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Repeat layering twice.

Note: Tart shell can be made 1 day ahead and kept, covered, at room temperature.

Waldorf Salad {California Pizza Kitchen Copycat}

**Dressing:** 2/3 to 1 C olive oil (depending on desired tartness)  
1/2 C balsamic vinegar  
2 T Dijon mustard  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1/2 tsp. granulated sugar  
1/2 tsp. fresh ground black pepper  
1/4 tsp. salt

**Salad:** 3 C chopped chicken, chilled  
1 C diced apple  
2/3 C seedless red grapes, quartered  
1/2 C diced celery  
6 to 7 C mixed salad greens  
1/3 C glazed walnuts  
1/4 C crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

**Special equipment:** pie weights or raw rice

*Make the dressing:* Whisk oil and vinegar together. Add remaining ingredients, and whisk until combined. Cover, and refrigerate until ready to use.

*Make the salad:* Gently toss chicken, grapes, apple, celery, and walnuts together. Toss in salad greens and dressing (or if you prefer, you can serve the chicken salad mixture over the greens and then drizzle the dressing over the top). Sprinkle with Gorgonzola, and serve.

Delicata Squash & Roasted Mushrooms w-Thyme

6 T olive oil  
1 T chopped fresh thyme  
3/4 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. black pepper  
2 lb. delicata squash (3 medium), halved lengthwise, seeded, and cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-wide slices  
2 lb. mixed fresh mushrooms such as cremini, shiitake, and oyster, trimmed (stems discarded if using shitakes) and halved (quartered if large)

Stir together oil, thyme, salt, and pepper. Toss squash with 2 T thyme oil in a shallow baking pan (1/2- to 1-inch deep) and arrange in one layer. Toss mushrooms with remaining 1/4 cup thyme oil in another shallow baking pan (1/2- to 1-inch deep) and arrange in one layer. Roast squash and mushrooms, stirring occasionally and switching position of pans halfway through roasting, until vegetables are tender and liquid mushrooms give off is evaporated, 25 to 30 minutes.

*Note:* Squash can be sliced one day ahead and chilled in a sealed plastic bag.