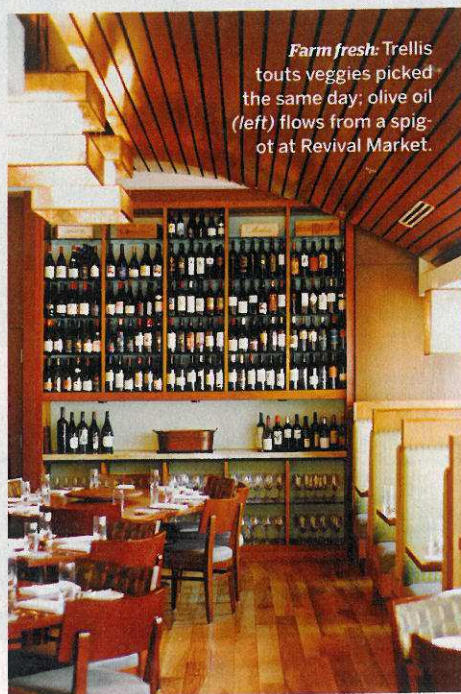




Farm fresh: Trellis touts veggies picked the same day; olive oil (left) flows from a spigot at Revival Market.



TASTE OF TRAVEL

Trading Places

Farmers put on toques while chefs work the farm and travelers enjoy the fruits of their labor | **By ANDREA COOPER**

EVERYBODY KNOWS about the farm-to-fork movement. But what about restaurants where farmers do the cooking? Farmers turned chefs (and chefs turned farmers) are hoeing, harvesting, and sautéing across the United States. For a new generation of independent farmers who sell their goods directly to chefs, the move to cooking can be an unexpectedly natural progression. As for chefs, farming offers the joy of raising their own ingredients. Some restaurants open their companion farms for spring tours, giving “back to the land” a new meaning for diners.

A 19th-century brick building once home to a ship chandlery is now **Cinque Terre** and **Vignola**, two Italian restaurants in Portland, Maine, bound by their common

kitchen. Co-owner and chef Lee Skawinski selects varieties for the farm discovered on trips to Italy, and the kitchen crew helps harvest everything from tomatoes to 3,000 heads of garlic per season. Cinque Terre crafts traditional, multicourse meals inspired by the cuisine of Liguria in northwest Italy. Expect comforting dishes such as *zuppa di pesce* (fish soup) with potato and fennel, and ravioli with kale and braised lamb. Vignola is its breezy little sister, serving tavern fare: Terrines of Maine rabbit are a specialty. To catch a breeze yourself, take a stroll by the ocean across the street from the restaurants.

“It’s my wife’s fault,” says chef/farmer Kent Peters. “Since we’ve been married, we’ve filled the yard with stuff we can

eat.” That impulse led to creating the Black Creek Heritage Farm in Canal Winchester, Ohio, and later the **Black Creek Bistro**, nearby in Columbus. The bistro’s “eclectic American” menu features one of the farm’s heritage poultry breeds in a duck gnocchi and its produce made into a grilled zucchini soup served in a roasted baby pumpkin.

Farmers Natalie Veres and Cassie Parsons transported themselves into the restaurant business by way of a food truck. They fed bankers in downtown Charlotte, North Carolina, before opening **Harvest Moon Grille** next to the Dunhill Hotel. Parsons, a former corporate chef, oversees the kitchen but also helps feed and bring the hogs from their farm to the slaughterhouse. Veres manages the herd of pigs and bakes the restaurant’s bread. Of note: Almost all the ingredients served here come from

small farms within 100 miles of Charlotte. Try Harvest Moon’s pork chops served with a local moonshine sauce. Step outside the restaurant and you’re in shouting distance of the city’s history and art museums.

Revival Market in Houston is a grocery and café that features food grown in southeast Texas. Run by Morgan Weber and Ryan Pera, who also own Revival Farms in Yoakum, the market aims to infuse Texas with a little bit of Europe. “We wanted to do charcuterie as an Italian might, and smoke a brisket as a Texan,” Pera says, but don’t think that means high-fat food. One of the best-selling dishes: the hot dog, a combination of pork, beef, and chicken from the farm.

In the kitchen until 9 p.m. most nights, Brian Scheehser starts his day on his farm near Kirkland, Washington, with a list for **Trellis** in the Heathman Hotel, where he’s executive chef. Scheehser has become famous for his Two Hour Salad made with seasonal produce and harvested just two hours before serving. See where the salad starts by calling the restaurant to arrange a tour of the farm eight miles away. ■

EXTREME LOCAVORE

Dine on food grown and gathered on-site

Farms are opening restaurants within yards of the green fields. Here are a few to sample dishes served fresh from the garden. **The Farm at South Mountain** in Phoenix, Arizona, has

a ten-acre pecan grove and three restaurants with outdoor seating. At **Quiessence**, try the truffled spring vegetables *al cartoccio*, a mix of carrots, turnips, radishes, and sugar snap peas cooked in

parchment with sorrel aioli. Or go for comfort food finished off with pecan pie at the Farm Kitchen.

At **Elderberry Pond** in Auburn, New York, the hemlock board-and-batten dining room overlooks the 100-acre organic farm’s orchard. Open April to December, the Finger Lakes area restaurant

features the farm’s pasture-raised pork and heritage chicken served with newly dug fingerling potatoes. Not near those places? **Outstanding in the Field** sets up tables at farms around the country and invites celebrated chefs to prepare meals using the farms’ bounty. —A.C.