

VOGUE

SEP

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"THIS FEELS LIKE A NEW BEGINNING"

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GREENER PASTURES
 CARMEL VALLEY RANCH IS ONE OF SEVERAL RESORTS EMBRACING AGRO-TOURISM

Milking It

Two destination resorts open up creameries.

TRAVEL “The enamel melted off my bathtubs,” says Charlie Cascio, the resident cheesemaker at Carmel Valley Ranch. The artisan is describing the wildfires that tore through his Big Sur ranch three years ago, burning up 40 acres and decimating the habitat his Swiss goats (“the ones with the beards”) relied on. Enter Tim Wood, the ranch’s head chef, who invited Cascio, a French-trained former chef at the Esalen Institute, and his tribe of four-footed friends onto the resort’s property, located two hours south of San Francisco. Now Cascio’s creamery is one of the newest attractions, offering an udder-to-urn exploration of what it takes to get his chèvre to the ranch’s kitchens.

The California resort isn’t the only hotel taking agro-tourism into the creamery realm. Wyoming’s Brush Creek Ranch is preparing for its own tribe of goats (and, potentially,

sheep) to arrive this fall, while currently making cheese from imported milk. Guests, says Sean FitzGerald, the RISD-educated creamery manager, who’s been busy boning up on a “700-page pasteurized-milk ordinance” and researching the genetic makeup of various goat lineages, will be exposed to “what goes into the care of the animals, and how a holistic approach is really good for the environment and for the cheese.” A goat that rambles is a goat that makes flavorful milk, he explains: “If your tribe gets into an onion patch, you will taste it.” As of-the-moment as this barn-to-table trend may seem, Cascio points out that it’s an ancient tradition—and he’s more than happy to facilitate the time-traveling. “We can build the guests a shepherd’s crook,” he says. “They can be with the herd like they would have been 8,000 years ago.” —CHLOE SCHAMA

PLATE: BRIAN MCCORMICK, TRAVEL: COURTESY OF CARMEL VALLEY RANCH, ALL OTHERS: COURTESY OF CHRISTIE'S IMAGES.