

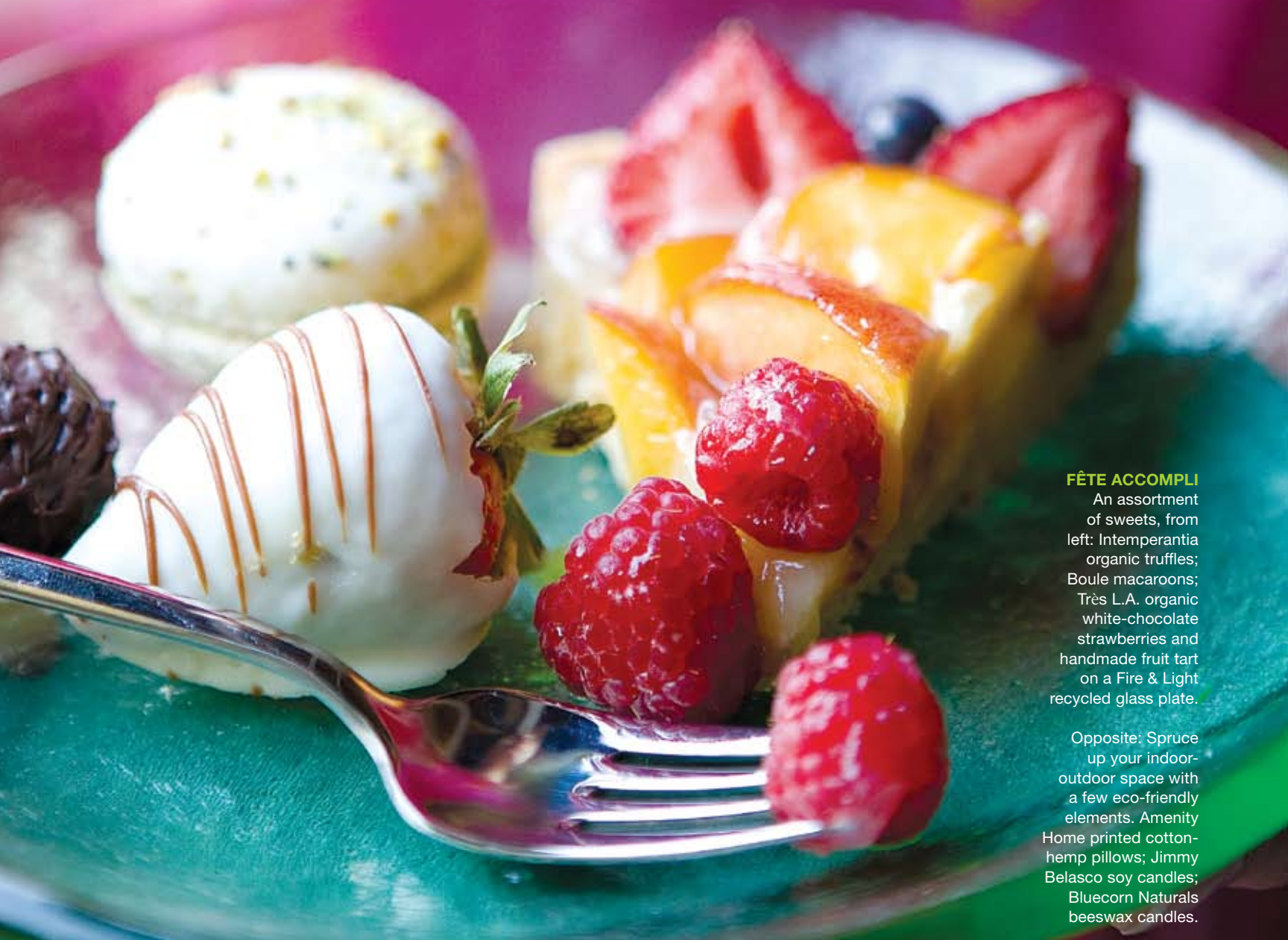
# FRESH FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Celebrate the season with delicious, eco-friendly dishes that ease the guilt of piling it on.

WRITTEN BY / ELIZABETH KHURI CHANDLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY / RAY KACHATORIAN

STYLED BY / AMY PALIWODA



## FÊTE ACCOMPLI

An assortment of sweets, from left: Intemperantia organic truffles; Boule macaroons; Très L.A. organic white-chocolate strawberries and handmade fruit tart on a Fire & Light recycled glass plate.

Opposite: Spruce up your indoor-outdoor space with a few eco-friendly elements. Amenity Home printed cotton-hemp pillows; Jimmy Belasco soy candles; Bluecorn Naturals beeswax candles.





**ALL NATURAL**

Guests mingle as they serve themselves from the buffet table.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Smith & Hawken hanging lanterns can be used again and again; raw kale salad in a Marc Digeros ceramic bowl, with Bambu serving utensils; The Green Glass Company goblets made from recycled wine bottles, with certified organic Argentine and California vintages.



**'TIS THE SEASON OF DECADENCE:** GOOSE-liver pâté with whole peppercorns; tender slices of pink ham; crunchy pecan pie; half-melted vanilla bean ice cream. Holiday fare can be mouthwatering but also slightly depraved. Why not create a party feast that's delicious and guilt-free? The secret is to buy locally, shop organic and add decorating accents made from sustainable materials. Not only will your fête look fabulous, but the food will taste fresh.

If you choose to have your party catered, call up a company like Très L.A. (green-friendly businesses are published in the *Green Life Los Angeles* directory) and ask for the organic or farmers' market menu. "We actually teach our clients ways

to be green," says Très L.A. owner Alan Dunn. Along with organic ingredients and produce harvested in and around L.A., the eco-friendly caterer uses recycled-paper and vegetable-based disposable products, brings in recycling bins and contributes leftovers to food banks.

If you decide to cook the meal yourself, select seasonal ingredients. For the holidays, hearty cold-weather vegetables like kale and beets are a bold, delicious addition to any menu. Apples and squash are good winter choices too, with their sweet, nutty flavors. Area farmers are usually happy to discuss their agricultural methods, such as multiple cropping, a technique that reduces the need for

pesticides. Plucked at peak maturation, local produce is rarely slathered with chemical preservatives or irradiated to lengthen shelf life, so it's at the height of quality and flavor when you find it at your neighborhood farmers' market.

As you select your proteins, steer clear of factory-farmed beef. The cattle may have been held in unsanitary conditions or fed contaminated animal remains. Instead, look for meat like the Kobe beef from Snake River Farms, where the cattle dine on barley, golden wheat straw, alfalfa hay and Idaho potatoes. For poultry, try free-range chickens and turkeys raised on organic feed without antibiotics.

A signature cocktail, like a peppermint ▶



**Healthy Holiday Menu**

- Poached farmers' market pear on crostini*
- Baked Brie and brandied apples*
- Ahi tuna tartare in wonton cones*

---

- Raw kale salad with aged balsamic vinaigrette*
- Red and golden beet salad*

---

- Grilled wild salmon*
- Apricot-glazed grass-fed turkey*
- Roasted baby potatoes*
- Grilled organic vegetables*

---

- Mini farmers' market fruit tart*
- Organic strawberries dipped in chocolate*



**A VERDANT AFFAIR**

Locally grown beets in a salad with crumbled feta and peppers. Opposite, clockwise from top left: mint pomegranate martini on a Bambu bar tray; wild salmon, which has far fewer PCBs and dioxins than farmed salmon; bite-size portions of bigeye tuna served in a Norpro bamboo dim sum steamer; roasted organic baby potatoes seasoned with parsley and salt.

pomegranate martini made with fruit and organic vodka, puts guests in a party frame of mind. “With vodka, you can manipulate the flavor however you want,” says Trèss L.A.’s Dunn. “It’s fun. And when you use a fresh ingredient, you can really get people talking.”

Organic and locally made wines and spirits can be found at wine shops and smaller grocery stores, but the key to being “green” is knowing your labels. It’s not easy for a vintner to secure an “organic” certification. Every ingredient must be organic and the winemaking process cannot incorporate any synthetic agents (like nitrates). Another term to know is

“biodynamic,” which indicates that the winemaker takes a holistic approach to farming and restricts the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

The simplest method is to buy wines from your area, which will give guests a chance to enjoy California’s terroir while keeping their carbon footprint small. According to the American Association of Wine Economists, it takes more than a gallon of gasoline to get a single bottle of wine to its final destination.

When it comes to decorating for your event, mix and match. Nothing puts guests in a better mood than dining alfresco, so incorporate an indoor-outdoor setting, like

this David Ming-Li Lowe-designed space. Set the tone with some mood lighting. Throw some tea lights in kooky dishware on the table, burn candles made from sustainable materials like soy or beeswax, and string garlands of reusable lights. For your centerpiece, abandon the traditional cut-flower motif and try potted succulents like agaves or cacti. If you need to expand your tableware array, consider the gem of an antique mart Wertz Brothers, or head to stores like Livingreen or The Green Life to purchase pieces made from recycled glass or bamboo. Most importantly, be sure to recycle when you’re done. Being green is about always thinking ahead.



**LIGHT OF THE PARTY**

Part of the “Other People’s Rubbish” collection, South African artist Heath Nash’s Flower Ball lamp is made of recycled milk cartons.



**ALAN DUNN’S GREEN ENTERTAINING TIPS**

The owner of catering company Très L.A. and the former food and beverage director for Chateau Marmont knows exactly how to make your party eco-friendly.

**BUY SMART:** Use organic and locally grown products whenever possible. “We get everything from within a 200-mile radius. It makes a difference. Not only are products environmentally responsible, they taste fresher.”

**REUSE:** Set up recycling bins at your party. “It’s simple, but having a designated recycling bin is something that people will abide by.”

**DRINK LOCAL:** Use filtered tap water instead of bottled water. “We often provide glass bottles, like ones used for Italian olive oil,

and fill them with fresh filtered water. That’s one way to avoid contributing to your local landfill.”

**GIVE BACK:** Make sure to contact a nonprofit organization such as Angel Harvest to collect the extra food. “They will find people who will make use of leftovers.”

**CHITCHAT:** Tell guests about your green endeavors. “If you get people talking about the stuff they can do at the party, that’s one step closer to making it a part of their life!”

