

# GRAND TOUR

*Traveling Gourmet*

## SIDEWAYS in Santa Barbara

By Diana von Welanetz Wentworth

IT'S A VINTAGE YEAR FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, as the Fox Searchlight film *Sideways* is the surprise hit of the year. Filmed on location in California's beautiful Santa Ynez Valley, Alexander Payne's *Sideways* is the story of two friends, Miles and Jack (Paul Giamatti and Thomas Haden Church), who set out to spend a celebratory weekend together saluting Jack's final days as a bachelor. The unlikely pair share a heady blend of failed potential, fading youth and a nose for drowning in wine and women—most prominently Maya, played by Virginia Madsen, and Stephanie, played by Sandra Oh.

"The surge in tourism to the region has been phenomenal," says Kathy Janega-Dykes, President and CEO of the Santa Barbara Convention and Visitors Bureau and Film Commission, which produced *Sideways, The Map*.

Film buffs who revel in reliving key scenes might snag table 11 at the Hitching Post II, where Miles and Jack share a meal and a romantic meeting with Maya. Their new Savor *Sideways* menu features three courses paired to local wine, including the sultry Hitching Post Highliner Pinot Noir, the varietal now nosing out merlot in popularity thanks to the film.

Café Los Olivos, the set for the film's surreal double-date, features a four-course menu with the Café Salmon (fresh wild salmon fillet on a warm spinach, fennel and tomato salad with crispy new potatoes and citrus beurre blanc) served in the film. The restaurant is part of the Los Olivos Wine Merchant at 2879 Grand Avenue in Los Olivos, featuring one of the largest selections of Central Coast wines available anywhere.

Just down the road in Buellton at AJ Spurs (where the hilarity of the film breaks into a full gallop) the menu now sports a new *Sideways* Special, with four savory courses paired to Lafond Winery Syrah (Santa Rita Hills). This winery notes that California sales of pinot noir wines have increased 25% due to *Sideways*, and that visitors include those inspired by the stunning beauty of the countryside evident in many of the film's scenes.

Ted and I agree the very best time to visit the rolling hills of Santa Ynez is on the weekends of the exclusive Peppertree Art Show (this year on May 21 and 22, and November 12 and 13) at Bob Eubank's ranch in Los Olivos. We've attended for years, and have bought much of our treasured collection of western art there. You'll enjoy meeting the top western artists and viewing their 400 paintings in Eubank's magnificent barn on a working horse ranch. Go to [www.peppertreeartshow.com](http://www.peppertreeartshow.com) for details and an invitation, or call 805-688-6205.

Our secret, snuggly little place to stay is at the Petersen Inn in the heart of nearby Solvang, where the canopy beds are so high you may need the steps provided to climb into them. (800-321-8985 or [www.peterscinn.com](http://www.peterscinn.com))



Tell Bob Eubanks and the folks at the Petersen that the Wentworths sent you! Nat Ely, executive chef at Los Olivos Café (805-688-7265 or [www.losolivoscfe.com](http://www.losolivoscfe.com)) provided us with the recipe for the delicious salmon entree served in Sideways:

#### LOS OLIVOS CAFÉ CAFÉ SALMON (MAKES FOUR SERVINGS)

##### FOR THE POTATOES:

1 pound red creamer potatoes  
6 cups canola oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

Place potatoes in a pot of salted water and cook until tender. Remove from water and cool. Heat oil to 350 degrees, lightly break potatoes in half and place in oil. Fry until crispy and light brown. Set aside.

##### FOR THE SAUCE:

2 cups white wine	1 cup heavy cream
1 shallot	16 oz. cold butter, cut into slices
1 bay leaf	Salt to taste
8 whole black peppercorns	
1 lemon whole, sliced	

In a medium pot, place wine, shallot, bay leaf, peppercorns and lemon. Reduce to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup liquid. Add cream and reduce by half. Remove from heat and strain. Gradually whisk in butter until completely incorporated.

##### FOR THE FISH:

4 (6 ounce) portions wild king salmon  
Salt and pepper to taste

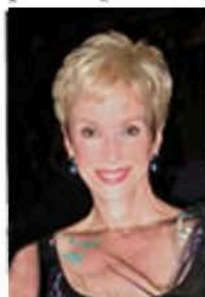
In a hot pan, lightly caramelize or brown the salmon face down. Turn over with a spatula, cook for 2-3 minutes on medium low heat, remove pan from heat. Leave fillets in pan and let heat transfer through fillet.

##### FOR THE SALAD:

2 small bulbs of fennel	6 cloves of garlic
1 medium red onion	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup white wine
1 lb. vine ripened tomatoes	Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups baby spinach	

Trim stalks and root mass from fennel bulb and discard. Shave bulb thinly with a mandolin or knife. Peel the red onion and cut into julienne strips. Dice tomatoes and slice the garlic. In a warm pan, cook garlic until just beginning to color, add fennel, red onion and cook until beginning to soften. Deglaze with white wine, letting it reduce slightly. Add tomatoes, wilt spinach and season to taste.

To serve, arrange crispy potatoes in the center of a large soup plate. Spoon fennel and tomato salad on top of potatoes. Place fish on top of salad. Ladle sauce to coat fish. Garnish with snipped chives. **GT**



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