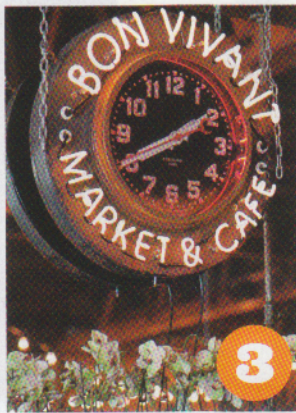
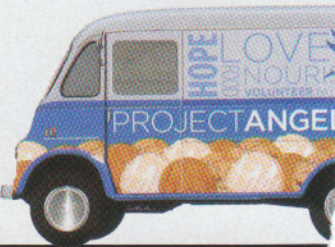


FOR 25 YEARS, PROJECT ANGEL FOOD has been known for its commendable outreach to the LGBT community, primarily by acting as a 'meals on wheels' service for individuals debilitated by critical illnesses. If you've stopped into a local Pavilions grocery store lately, you might have also come across the organization's three cookie flavors, sold there and online at angelfood.org. Come June 14, the morning of the L.A. Pride Parade, the organization takes its cookies on the road, debuting a refurbished 1943 International Harvester as its brand-new cookie truck! Look for the truck around town and at fairs, festivals and private events, where it will sell two- and three-packs of those bite-size treats. We hear that cookies for a good cause are even devoid of calories! —S.H.



Constructing a Proper Picnic

As you plan your summer Hollywood Bowl itinerary, it's best to leave the provisions to the professionals

By Patrick Rosenquist

Summer is here, the sky's bright and beautiful, and for most Angelenos, that means it's time to hit up the Hollywood Bowl. Now that one of the world's most famous venues is in season, with opening night's famous fireworks display taking place June 20, one question facing anyone hankering for a night of music and entertainment is fairly simple: *What do I bring to eat?*

The Bowl, of course, is L.A.'s premier picnicking spot. From the bleachers to box seats, every part of our city's renowned amphitheater is prime for a good Pinot and stellar charcuterie plates. You could throw together a decent basket by running into Gelson's, but many local spots have done the dirty work for you, offering excellent packages for the Bowl expert.

Joan's on Third [1] (8350 W. 3rd St., with another location in Studio City, joansonthird.com) is renowned for its Bowl Baskets, which include offerings like fried chicken platters and grilled artichokes. The menu is taste-tested and tweaked to please you and your Bowl buddies. Most offerings include a salad, as well as recommended wine or beer pairings. Baskets come with plates, disposable flatware and cups—including plastic goblets for wine and red solo cups for beer. Prices range from \$25-35 per head for a full meal, and a 24-hour lead time is required to order picnic baskets.

Looking to spice up the June 28 **Basement Jaxx** concert or 4th of July spectacular? **GC Market [2]** (3315 Cahuenga Blvd. W., gcmarketplace.com) now offers Bowl Bento Boxes, with SoCal staples like tuna rolls, pizza and crab cakes anchoring menus replete with sides—the cold Asian noodle being our favorite—and everything else you'll need to munch on throughout a show. GC also offers a charcuterie plate with chicken liver mousse, pâté and one of the city's best cheese selections.

Looking to customize your experience? **Jason Louis Velasquez**, the cheese monger at Atwater Village's **Bon Vivant Market & Cafe [3]** (3155 Glendale Blvd., bonvivantmarketcafe.com) has a few guidelines for any upscale al fresco dinner. First, the budget should stay within the \$12-25 range. A good picnic should be filling, but it should also be upscale—a well-done spread of meats and cheeses will get you through a performance and shouldn't empty your wallet.

"A great mix of cheeses and meats is important," he says, recommending vintage goat cheese and venison pâté as a few satisfying and unique options. Bon Vivant will work with anyone planning a Bowl outing, steering concertgoers toward fascinating offerings while sticking to the recommended budget. Those prices are, as any Angeleno knows, a bargain compared to the Bowl's own options.

And let's not forget libations while living it up at the Bowl. "Make sure your wine is the right temperature," recommends Velasquez. An ice pack for white should do the trick, while keeping the red away from the sun will keep it drinkable.

As far as Velasquez's most anticipated Bowl show this summer? "Grace Jones, without a doubt," he says, and with a good pâté, acorn-fed jamón and a crusty baguette in his Hollywood Bowl basket, it should be an unforgettable night. ■

URBAN OASIS

Beverly Hills' new tea bar is a sanctuary for the city's stressed and health-obsessed

BETWEEN THE BUSTLE of shoppers lapping in luxury and shiny Maseratis zipping through Beverly Hills sits a new, unlikely sanctuary. Basanti Tea Bar (9465 S. Santa Monica Blvd., basantiusa.com) is a one-of-a-kind tea boutique that brings heart and soul to the neighborhood.

Whether you're stopping in for a quick drink brewed to perfection by their state-of-the-art tea espresso machine or sampling any one of 50 organic, loose-leaf tea varieties at the "Touch and Feel" station, owners **Marcela Garcia** and **Rodrigo de la Maza** (below) welcome you to relax and stay a while. "We love diversity. Everyone is welcome here," Garcia says. "We love nature, we love people."

The husband and wife team believe tea is meant to be sipped and enjoyed, as they've had the opportunity to do on their world travels. "We lived in Dallas, Venezuela, Brazil," she says. "We wanted to bring a little bit of that multicultural, beautiful, colorful world outside of our own city. We wanted to establish a little space where you can feel amazing, no matter who you are, what problems you're carrying. We wanted to build that sanctuary, and we found that with teas."

Unlike other tea rooms and sanctuaries that can be intimidating and stuffy, Basanti is warm, inviting, and true to its name (which means *spring* in Sanskrit). With the success of a first shop at home in Monterrey, Mexico, the couple chose Los Angeles for their first U.S. location. "We had the opportunity to travel to L.A. and it was just like a reflection of our culture," she says. "There are people from all over the world; it's extremely international. There's a tendency to take care of yourself—going back to basics, eating better, people are doing yoga. People are free. Nobody judges. We love that."

"Love" is a term you'll hear a lot at Basanti, between Garcia's passion for her work and regulars raving about their favorite drinks, like the yogumatcha, a bestselling smoothie made of nonfat yogurt, matcha and fruit.

Garcia came up with the recipes in her own kitchen. She says she's no chef, but with a good palate and enthusiasm for her ingredients, she's created a menu full of delightful concoctions. "I'm in love with each different kind of tea," she says. "Each tea is like a person; it's very different. Every leaf has its own shape and flavors, like us, so I respect them." —L.S.

