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Eat Local

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Issue 417 • Always Free
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ABOUT THE COVER: For our September *Eat Local* issue, photographer Jackelin Slack pairs fresh fungi with foraging forest creatures! Find more of her delicious, vibrant images on Instagram @jackelinslack and eat up our feature on *Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms* on page 8.

Addison Austin-Lou

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Food Writer



As a Sushi Chef at *Kyoto Japanese Restaurant* and a Cheesemonger at *Liberty Heights Fresh*, Addison Austin-Lou knows her way around a kitchen. She puts her refined palette to use as a food writer at *SLUG*, covering a diverse array of cuisines—from Afghan to Chilean and everything in between—since December 2022. Read her review of some of the best dumplings SLC has to offer on page 18!

John Taylor

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Photographer



John Taylor joined *SLUG*'s contributing photographer team in March 2022 and has since captivated readers with his striking images of local fashion innovators in our monthly *SLUG Style* column. He's been an integral part of *SLUG* events, memorializing iconic moments at our 34th Anniversary Party and the 2022 SLC Pride Parade. We're so grateful to have John, whose creativity knows no bounds!

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SOURCING & EATING LOCALLY WITH CHEF BLEU ADAMS

By SLUG Staff • info@slugmag.com

Chef Bleu Adams, a renowned local chef and Director of *IndigeHub*—an organization that seeks to empower Indigenous communities through sustainable food and business solutions—believes in the importance of supporting Utah agriculture by sourcing everyday household ingredients from neighborhood farms and markets. As part of *SLUG*'s September *Eat Local* issue, Chef Bleu has curated a list of a few of her favorite farms and shops that prioritize sustainability, community and ethical practices. Check out the list below for inspiration on how to begin your journey into eating locally and sourcing from top-quality suppliers.



Chef Bleu Adams believes in the importance of supporting Utah agriculture by sourcing from neighborhood farms and markets.

ASPEN MILLS BREAD

3457 Wall Ave., Ogden, UT

Aspen Mills Bread is a family-owned bakery that claims to be “nature’s whole grain bakery” since their products are made without any additives or preservatives. With stone-ground wheat and honey as a natural sweetener, Chef Bleu holds *Aspen Mills Bread* in high regard. She says, “If I’m not eating *Aspen Mills* and I’m eating other breads, I can feel it. It’s weird, and I almost feel hungover because of [the other bread’s] preservatives.” With products such as Cinnamon Chip, Honey White and Jalapeno Cheddar, *Aspen Mills Bread* is a great option that is accessible—found through grocery chains such as *Sprouts* and *Macey’s*—and tastes better than national, processed bread options.

HEBER VALLEY MEAT

2198 S 390 W Suite 3, Heber City, UT

Beyond their humane treatment of animals and ethical harvesting practices, Chef Bleu recommends *Heber Valley Meat* because “they provide a service for small farmers who can’t afford to go to huge processing facilities.” *Heber Valley Meat* has a mobile food processing truck and butcher station that they take to farmers, ranchers and hunters to help harvest and butcher the animal while offering cold storage to maintain freshness. “It’s a way for small producers to get their meat to a market locally and available to the community,” she says. Through their share program, *Heber Valley Meat* offers beef, pork, lamb and wild game, all of which they say is “raised, slaughtered and processed in Utah.”

TWO CROWS CULTIVATION

twocrowscultivation.com

Two Crows Cultivation is described on their website as “a small, independent nursery and micro-farm specializing in sustainability and healthy soils.” Chef Bleu recommends their microgreens as an eco-friendly, local selection for growing your own greens. She says “we have a garden at our house, and most of our starts come from [Two Crows].” Two Crows aims to increase accessibility for Utahns to grow high-quality food at home through kits with supplies and instructions on how to get started. From microgreens, herbs and garnishes, Two Crows offers solutions for those looking to sustainably source and grow their own healthy plants. You can email them at max@twocrowscultivation.com to request your specific green and get started!

Chef Bleu also recommends *Beehive Cheese* in Ogden for a local cheese option, *Slide Ridge Honey* in Mendon for honey products and *Mountain Valley Trout Farm* in Smithfield for fish. There are dozens of local suppliers in Utah offering quality products that often rival what you can find on grocery shelves—all it takes to find them is a desire to eat locally and the effort to visit their websites, farms or markets. Chef Bleu emphasizes that the significance of eating locally goes beyond supporting neighborhood farms and shops. “We’re losing a lot of local food processors ... and that’s really concerning for Utah,” she says. “We need to provide more support for growers and farmers.” To find out more information on *IndigeHub* and Chef Bleu, check out indigehub.org, and be sure to stop by your local markets to show support!

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INTERMOUNTAIN **GOURMET**
SPECIALTY MUSHROOMS

FARMING THE **SUPERFOOD** YOU NEED

By Olivia Watts · oj.watts5@gmail.com · Photos by Dominic Jordan

In case you haven't heard, the shroom boom is not only alive and well but continuing to grow. From appearing in the latest fashion and design trends to slipping their way into your dietary supplements, mushrooms are becoming notable in many aspects of modern life—especially the food world! *Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms* is one local farm that has capitalized on this movement, farming fungi in Ogden since 2015. **Adam Wong**, the man behind the magic and owner and operator of the farm, was welcomed into the world of fungi by a few close friends and he hasn't looked back since.

Without many other local fungi farms to look to, Wong took matters into his own hands and opened the warehouse in Ogden with the assistance and support of his friends, acknowledging his longest employee, **Yasmeen Ireifej**, who has helped grow the business where it is today. Using a controlled climate agriculture system, all farming is carefully managed every step of the way. "Mushroom cultivation is like a mix between science and farming. We are doing a lot of farming, but it is all indoors," he says. Without many other resources or infor-

mation readily available on cultivating your own fungi farm, Wong notes that there is room for trial and error. He explains that even now, after farming for over nine years, there is still a lot to learn to better understand the craft. He says, "Since I started, we have gone through three to four different growing processes. We definitely have dialed things in over the years." Each mushroom species is different and grows at different rates, and the quickest growth rate is about a month long whereas the longest is up to six months.

Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms adds their own value to local restaurants by bringing in the freshest produce possible. Wong describes mushrooms as a short shelf-life product, explaining that they do not travel well. By distributing their mushrooms to local businesses, *Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms* is able to provide a wide variety that you cannot find from large commercial wholesalers. In addition to sourcing to local restaurants in the area, *Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms* products can also be found in all *Harmans Grocery* locations, *The Market* grocery store in Park City as well as a number of local farmers markets throughout the year. Farmers markets are the best way for them to connect with consumers and the local community since they're able to explain their products in-person and outline the difference and benefits between each mushroom variety.

So, what is the benefit of buying mushrooms? Wong says, "When I first began this journey, no one really knew much about mushrooms but it seems that mushrooms are the next superfood." With a range of different flavors, textures and tastes, mushrooms are a



Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms grows eight species of mushroom including Oyster, Shiitake, Lion's Mane, King Trumpet, Pioppino, Chestnut, Beech and Maitake.

great substitute for all kinds of items, providing flavors that can even closely resemble bacon or lobster. He says, "I love to eat mushrooms and cook with them, usually eating them up to a few times a week. My personal favorite is the Shiitake mushroom." *Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms* grows seven to eight species of mushroom, depending on the season. They currently produce Oyster, Shiitake, Lion's Mane, King Trumpet, Pioppino, Chestnut, Beech and Maitake mushrooms at their farm. Wong and his employees have been able to catch onto their amazing health benefits and the value of bringing something new to the community. He says, "They are a great source of protein or can even act as meat substitutes. In past years there was a lot of mycophobia, but with recent findings, there is so much more that goes beyond the basic store-bought button mushroom."

Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms plans to move to a new warehouse in Henefer, Utah at the end of this year. You can locate where to buy their produce through their website, igmushrooms.com and learn more about the farm through their Instagram [@intermountaingourmetmushrooms](https://www.instagram.com/intermountaingourmetmushrooms).



Adam Wong is the owner and operator of *Intermountain Gourmet Mushrooms*, an Ogden mushroom farm that sources produce to local restaurants, markets and grocers.



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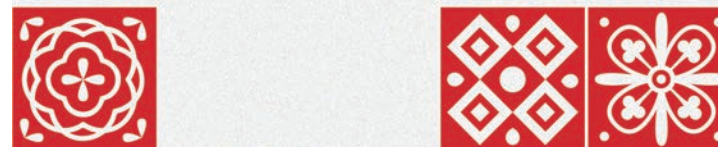


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Sowing Seeds of Stability with New Roots SLC

By Asha Pruitt • asha@slugmag.com

When a refugee first arrives in America, they often struggle to obtain housing, health-care, education and other basic needs. But what happens after the resettlement journey is complete? New Roots SLC, a food and land access program within the *International Rescue Committee (IRC)* in Utah, steps in to help refugees at least one year after their arrival in the United States to foster long-term economic stability and community involvement through farming.

"We have clients who've been here for 15 years, 20 years—there's really no time limit," says **Sierra Govett**, acting New Roots Program Manager. "Our program is open to any refugee or new American." In addition to 13 community gardens used by 140 families, New Roots operates two full-scale farms and two farmers markets in the Salt Lake Valley that serve a total of 50 farmers. The newest youth program aims to educate high school-aged refugees about food justice and agriculture.

"A lot of [the farmers] come in with very extensive farming and gardening backgrounds," Govett says. New Roots also provides education about more unfamiliar topics such as seasonality of crops in Utah, drip irrigation systems and effective small business practices. "We order a lot of specialty seeds for our families that are not readily available in the US," she says.

New Roots provides the seeds and starters, and the farmers do all the rest. "Farmers



Photo: Katarina Duerr

Harka Mangar, a farmer at New Roots for the past eight years, collects seeds from mustard greens to plant next year.

are growing culturally specific varieties that they are familiar with and want to sell back into their communities," says **Sarah Adams**, acting Entrepreneurship and Economic Wellbeing Director. At the *New Roots Redwood Farm* in West Valley City, she points out unconventional greens such as amaranth and solanum, regional varieties of Thai pumpkin and African corn and other vegetables I never heard of such as bitter melon and bottle gourds.

The bitter melons are "good for lowering blood pressure," Adams says, "so a lot of folks will eat it for nutritional value." They hang from a trellis made by one of the farmers, curving into spiky, oblong shapes. "I tried a bottle gourd for the first time last year," Govett adds. "It's sort of like a summer squash. The farmer told me how to eat it, so I made it into a curry, and it was amazing."

As we tour the farm, one farmer sits under a shade structure, collecting seeds from mustard greens so that he can plant more next year. Originally from Nepal, **Harka Mangar** has been cultivating crops at *Redwood Farm* since 2015. He sells mustard greens,

daikon, turnips, corn, potatoes and onions at the *Sunnyvale Farmers Market* every Saturday in the summer. "Business is going back and forth between not so good and not so bad," Mangar says, communicating through a translator over the phone.

New Roots farmers sell their vegetables at farmers markets, to local *Whole Foods*, to a few local restaurants and the larger community through community-supported agriculture boxes. Still, farming in the Utah desert isn't easy, from managing soil health to deterring pests. "Climate mitigation strategies are at the forefront of some of the training that we're doing," Adams says. "Last year it got hot really fast, and that put a really large dent in our tomato crop," Govett adds.

In order to extend the harvest season through late fall and start planting crops as early as April, New Roots is currently working on setting up high tunnels at *Wheaton Farm Park*, their 13-acre farm site in Draper. Other upcoming projects include collaborating with the *Spice Kitchen Incubator*—another program of the *IRC* that supports refugees in kickstarting their own restaurants—to source locally grown vegetables for their kitchens. For refugees like Mangar, this kind of community support can be life-changing.

New Roots is always accepting volunteers to help with farm beautification and bigger infrastructure projects such as building fences around the farm plots. Learn more about volunteer opportunities, farmers markets and other ways to get involved at newrootssl.org.

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Dana Williamson is founder and president of Waste Less Solutions, a local nonprofit dedicated to food waste reduction in Utah.

By Elizabeth Leach • elianlea@gmail.com

Heatwaves are hurting humanity, oceans are beginning to simmer coral reefs and extreme weather leaves behind destruction that can feel overwhelming. Alongside a global climate crisis, those in need struggle for food and housing. While these are complex and daunting challenges, the good news is that setting small and reasonable goals helps to achieve larger ones. “Reducing food waste is one of the best ways to reduce greenhouse gasses,” says Dana Williamson, founder and president of Waste Less Solutions, a local nonprofit dedicated to food waste reduction in Utah.

“Food waste emits methane gas as it rots in landfills,” explains Williamson. “Methane gas is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, meaning food waste can be worse than car emissions.” This is not to mention the climate costs of transportation to distribute food, water used to prepare the food and soil degradation that occurs when growing crops. All of this food waste is piling up while others remain unfed—throwing out last night’s Pad Thai means tossing aside a lot more than just leftovers.

“We have around 400,000 people in Utah going hungry. We can feed people and help the environment,” says Williamson. “[Our] mission is to educate, prevent and divert food waste in Utah.” One of the ways they do this is by rescuing food that would normally go to waste. “We use a smartphone app that can be found at foodrescue.us. We ask for foods we need and map their drop-off locations on the app.

We also pick up from caterers, cafeterias, small grocers, restaurants, food distributors and backyard gardens,” Williamson says. Waste Less Solutions then takes that rescued food to various programs and folks in need, sometimes getting creative by using surplus for catering gigs.

Waste Less Solutions also works to distribute fresh food by using high-quality produce and rescued food. Shelf-stable foods are often donated to feed our neighbors in need, but these are high in sodium and processed ingredients. “There’s food insecurity but also nutrition insecurity,” Williamson says. “We can get people healthy food on top of feeding them,” while also helping our environment. Waste Less Solutions doesn’t just rescue food; they also educate people to prevent food waste.

Learning how to stop wasting food is crucial. There are two important ways to do this: “Shop from your fridge and pantry—use those things first,” Williamson says. “Plan your meals for the week that way. That will be the most effective and easiest tool to reduce food waste.” Secondly, when you eat out, “take and eat your leftovers. Be mindful of what’s in the fridge,” she says. It’s easy to forget that many of the solutions for climate change can be privileged choices to make such as paying for recy-

Tossing Out Hunger with Waste Less Solutions

cling, affording a vegan diet, buying an electric car or having excess funds to donate. “Reducing food waste is listed in the top three ways of reducing global warming,” she says. Not only are these two easy rules of thumb highly effective, they are accessible for everyone. We can’t un-bake a cake, but together we may be able to un-bake the planet.

Feed people and help the environment by reducing your own food waste, donating excess food or getting involved with your community. “If you have a favorite restaurant, ask them what they do with their food surplus. If they say, ‘Throw it out,’ have them sign up as a food donor,” says Williamson. Waste Less Solutions also rescues from backyard gardens, and folks can “host a cooler on their front porch and register it on the app as a food drop-off [location].”

To get involved with Waste Less Solutions, find them on Facebook or on Instagram @waste_less_solutions. Go to foodrescue.us to download the app.



Photo: Ashley Christenson



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CENTRAL 9TH MARKET
A Stone Fruit Salad
for the End of Summer



Stone Fruit Salad Recipe

- 3 ripe nectarines
- 1 large handful of cherries
- 2 medium beets
- 1 English cucumber
- 1 bunch of breakfast radishes
- 12 brussels sprouts
- 4 oz fresh basil
- 4 oz champagne vinegar
- 4 oz chili oil

Roast the beets until tender. When cool, peel and cut them into six equal chunks and give them a quick pickle. Pit your nectarines and cut them into eight equal chunks. Cut the radishes in half. Chop your cucumber into random-ass-shaped chunks all close to the same size. Cut the brussel sprouts in half (I don't take the core out, it's a waste of time) and sear them cut-side down in a smokin' hot pan. Roll the basil up like a blunt and coarsely chiffonade it. Put everything into a big bowl and give it a good mix until it's all incorporated. Throw in the cherries, too. Top with vinegar and chili oil, then mix it up again until all of the ingredients are covered. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve it up by itself or as a side dish to whatever you're grilling, and enjoy!
—Chef Max Nelson

By Kara Dempsey
kara@lovedraftpublishing.com

There's something to be said for small shops in small neighborhoods where the staff knows your name—and your love of their Sloppy Joes. *Central 9th Market* is a passionate, up-and-coming community of people who love food. Reminiscent of a New York City bodega, this convenience store is affectionately referred to as “the most problematic corner store in Utah” by staff.

Opening their doors near the tail end of 2020, *Central 9th Market* is a combination of handmade food, local produce offerings and imported delights. They prioritize high-quality ingredients and freshness. “We legitimately care about our community,” says Owner **Noah Kuhns**. “The wood we use in our oven is from the trees that grew the apples on the shelf. You don't get that kind of connection anywhere else,” he says. They offer a large selection of fresh produce and sundries available daily in combination with their menu that's both comfortable and creative. “At first we would hit farmers markets, as we built relationships,” says Chef **Max Nelson**. “It's just better local.” Nelson entered the culinary industry over 15 years ago when he realized that he could get paid to eat and you can make anything yourself. “I wanted to try everything and eat a bunch of shit, so I made my own recipes,” he says.

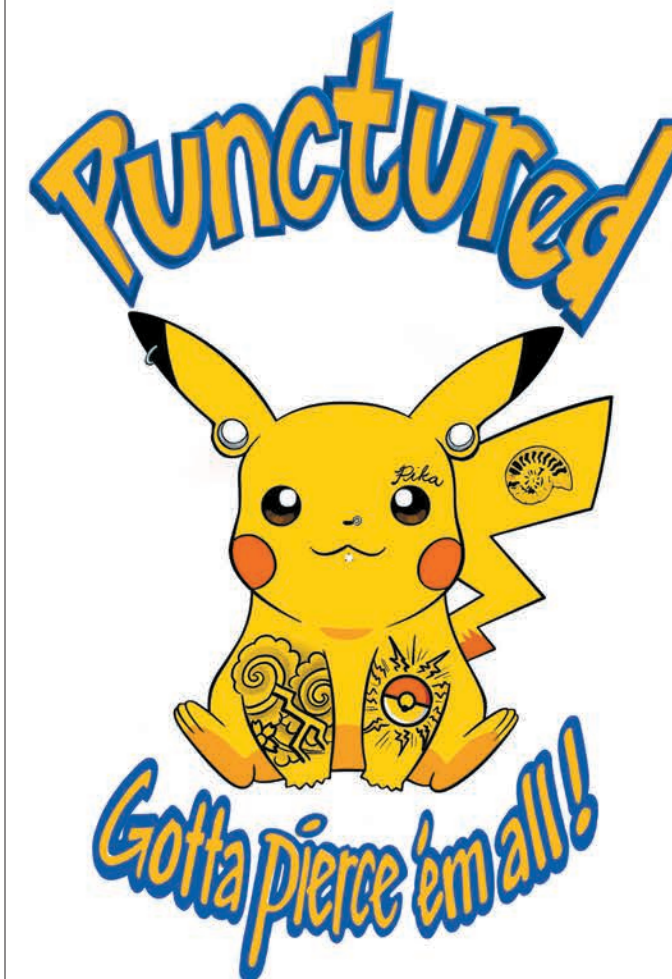
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Chefs Max Nelson and Eric Anderson at Central 9th Market prepare ingredients for the salad.

Nelson feels strongly that the best produce is available in the summer, which inspired his Stone Fruit Salad recipe. “Things taste best right now,” he says. “Let the vegetables shine.” The ingredients were chopped in advance and waited on the prep table for him to work his magic. The day before, he buried the beets in hot ashes for two hours then peeled and pickled them overnight. This created a deeply tender and full-flavored beet that left me craving more. After a quick pan sear, he combined the roughly chopped brussels sprouts with the cold beets, nectarines, cucumbers and breakfast radishes. “It's only good with a fuck-ton of basil,” says Nelson, as he added sliced basil to the mix. After a generous splash of Chili Champagne Vinaigrette, he seasoned the salad with coarse Maldon salt. He advised that the dish should rest for 30 minutes to allow the flavors to fully bloom, but that it should be consumed within 2–3 days for best texture and quality. The result tasted like the end of summer—a little heat from the dressing, rich earthy flavor from the root vegetables and a crisp sweetness from the nectarines.

Central 9th Market has grown a reputation for well-made food. Lines wrap the building on Mondays for their Classic Smash Burger starting at 6 p.m. and on Fridays for their Fish Fry starting at 8 p.m. Follow them on Instagram @central9thmarket to stay up to date on Nelson's latest creations and other *Central 9th Market* events.



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SWEET HAZEL AND CO.'S COMMUNITY-ORIENTED APPROACH TO VEGAN CREATIONS



Felicia Hanson, owner and chef at Sweet Hazel and Co. Bakeshop and Bistro, strives to create an inclusive environment that is welcome to all.

By Olivia Greene • [greeneocg@gmail.com](mailto:greenecg@gmail.com)

Photo: @saltskatecity

Felicia Hanson was working a full-time job when she first began recreating vegan versions of classic candy bars. As someone who worked in restaurants most of her life and attended culinary school, Hanson understands food. In 2020, Hanson created a Snickers bar rendition made with vegan caramel and chocolate with peanuts. The “Snix” bar, as well as “Crunchies”—a vegan “Twix” alternative—and other candies took off after being introduced to a Utah Vegan community page on Facebook. From there, Hanson was selling candies and desserts from her vehicle and driving to different businesses to sell to eager patrons. What started as a full-time job operating from her home then became a stand-alone business in 2023—*Sweet Hazel and Co. Bakeshop and Bistro*.

With the goal of expanding the business beyond just desserts, *Sweet Hazel and Co.* prioritizes diet-inclusive options with an assortment of keto, sugar-free and gluten-free treats. This mantra of supporting all diets extends to every facet of *Sweet Hazel*. Hanson says, “I try to be all-inclusive in every single thing I do, it’s my whole thing. I want everyone to be able to come here and feel welcome.”

Hanson wanted to create vegan baked goods that were not only recognizable but nostalgic. “I wanted the [desserts] to be what people remember ... so they don’t feel like they’re missing out on anything,” she says. This idea inspired Hanson to create *Sweet Hazel’s* vegan twist on the recognizable Samoas Girl

Scout cookie. Originally made with butter, eggs, milk and caramel—all non-vegan components—Hanson recreated the instantly recognizable flavors with plant-based ingredients. “Some creations are harder than others,” she says, “but a lot of it comes naturally to me ... luckily, my brain works like that.”

Within the bistro and bakeshop lies a mini-mart filled to the brim with vegan goodies from a variety of local businesses. Park City-based *Drool Dog Treats* creates vegan dog treats made from spinach, heirloom fruits and vegetables. *BE-HIVE* offers plant-based meats such as pepperoni, deli slices and marinated filets all made from seitan. *Sweet Hazel’s* selection of meat, cheese and dairy alternatives is vast, and the menu also features to-go deli items such as the chickpea “chicken” salad with vegan pita bread.

Hanson’s decision to include so many other vegan businesses besides her own was a conscious choice of inclusion and support. “We are in this together ... trying to save as many animals as possible,” she says. While Hanson creates and sells desserts and bistro-style food, other vegan and plant-based businesses provide her with the ingredients to make her menu items such as with local business *Vegan Daddy Meats* who supplies artisanal meat for *Sweet Hazel’s* reuben sandwiches. Many of the plant-based restaurants in Utah have supportive ties to one another.

The robustness of the vegan scene in the valley is due in part to those who are vegan or interested in plant-based eating but also to the business owners who provide such a high-quality array of vegan cuisine. *Sweet Hazel* is a cornerstone for community care beyond the actual food itself. Hanson is driven by the desire to provide a safe space for anyone who walks through the door. She reminds herself that “we are out here doing our best every single day for our community. I wouldn’t be anywhere without them. Being a part of this—a part of something—whether that’s a church or gardening community, is good for you, and it’s good for the soul.”

Sweet Hazel’s candy bars can be found all over Utah including but not limited to: *Hello! Bulk Markets*, *Sugar House Coffee* and *Vegan Daddy Meats* in Salt Lake City as well as *Copper Moose Farmstand* and *Daily Rise* in Park City. You can also show support for the business by checking out their storefront, located at 282 W 7200 S in Midvale or placing an order through their website sweethazelandco.com.

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SALT LAKE COUNTY'S DUMPLING DESTINATIONS

By Addison Austin-Lou • addiesan.sl@gmail.com | Photos by Talyn Behzad

Dumplings occupy a broad definition in the culinary world. A dough ball, boiled, fried or steamed, with or without a filling are the basics. Everything else is subject to regional and personal preference. No matter the cooking method or filling, these delightful dough balls connect cultures, incite warmth and allow for breadth of flavorful creativity. Salt Lake has a surprising array of dumpling options—below are a few local, Asian-style dumpling spots that can likely satisfy any craving from savory to spicy.

Bhutan House Restaurant in Sandy is the product of immense courage and effort from a family that spent over two decades in a Nepali refugee camp. *Bhutan House* opened its doors in 2017 as a standout graduate of *Spice Kitchen Incubator*, an offshoot program of the *International Rescue Committee* that assists refugees in creating their own food businesses. Their most popular appetizer is the Chili Momo Dumplings (\$12.99–\$14.99). Momos are a dumpling style native to Tibet that has taken on various forms throughout Nepal, Bhutan and India. Made with a water-and-flour dough, the traditional fillings are yak or water buffalo meat. Most often steamed and occasionally followed by a quick pan

fry, momos are generally served with either a tomato-based chutney or sesame-based sauce called achar. *Bhutan House* opts for a spicier take, dousing their momos in a vibrant, red chili sauce alongside green peppers and onions, though you can choose your spice level from one to eight. For fillings, I went with chicken, but you also have the option of vegetables. I found that most of the flavor came not from the densely packed dumplings but from the sauce itself. The dough was thick and had a pleasant snap on the palate while the chili tingle kept you coming back for more. Their steamed vegetable momos served with achar (\$11.95) are an equally flavorful option for those less spice-inclined.

Bhutan House Restaurant



1241 E 8600 S, Sandy, UT | Tues.–Sat. 4–9:30 p.m. • Sun. 4–9 p.m.
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Foodie & Sweetie DMarket



Foodie and Sweetie DMarket, located on an unassuming corner in the Avenues, serves a straightforward array of Chinese-style dumplings. Named for its Sichuan province-born owner and self-proclaimed “Foodie,” along with his wife “Sweetie,” the market was opened to satisfy a craving for flavors of home. This spot is the epitome of “hole-in-the-wall,” one you’ll want to keep to yourself once you sample what’s inside. Laidback energy with casual decor and simple table setting keeps the focus wholeheartedly on the food. The clear menu standout is their selection of wonton soups. While they offer a Szechuan Soup, my palate was a little shy that day,

so I opted for their milder Bone Soup Wonton (\$13.95). Wontons are made with a simple egg and flour-based dough and commonly boiled. The ones found in soup are smaller, with just a “dab” of filling as opposed to those made for dipping, which hold about a tablespoon. The silken soup with an ample portion of handmade pork wontons pleasantly contrasted with the crisp crunch from the bok choy and made for a filling lunch. If you have the time and appetite, I’d also suggest their five-piece Dim Sum (\$10.99) with a Taro Milk Tea to wash it all down (\$6.75). *Foodie and Sweetie DMarket* is a hidden gem and comfort food staple with delicious dumpling options that you’ll want to return to time and again.

89 D St, Salt Lake City, UT | Wed.–Mon. 11 a.m.–9 p.m. | 385.528.3823
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A venerable establishment stationed on a Sugarhouse intersection, *Kyoto Japanese Restaurant* [Ed. note: Addison Austin-Lou is a Sushi Chef at *Kyoto*] has been serving house-made gyoza with the same recipe since its inception in 1984. Opened by *Kyoto* transplant **Sam Tada** and his wife **Yoshiko**, the restaurant brought Japanese comfort food classics to the Salt Lake culinary scene. After selling the business in 2015, Chef **Peggi Ince-Whiting**, a Utah-born, master sushi chef trained in Tokyo, was brought on to champion the restaurant. Gyoza is an iteration of Chinese jiaozi, though it differs with its use of thinner circular wrappers and heavy garlic seasoning. *Kyoto* uses beef in lieu of a more common pork filling, as well as Asian cabbage, ginger and

green onions. The gyoza are steamed, meaning a crispy edge is achieved with oil on the dumpling’s flat side in a cast iron pan, then water is added, and the pan is sealed to steam the interior. A dipping sauce made from ponzu, sesame oil and shichimi is served on the side. *Kyoto*’s gyoza can be enjoyed as an appetizer with eight pieces (\$12) or a meal of 12 pieces with the addition of onion and carrot tempura (\$22). These dumplings are a near-perfect bite—savory and succulent with an herbaceous finish. Tang from the sauce balances the fatty beef filling while tiny textural differences from the hand-made pleats keep the palate intrigued. They are addicting, filling and may end up being your go-to on this menu of powerhouse umami-bombs.

KYOTO Japanese Restaurant



Photos by Talyn Behzad

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Cultivating Community with SNUCK FARM

By Jamie Christensen jamie@slugmag.com

Nestled within the neighborhoods of small-town Pleasant Grove, Utah sits *Snuck Farm*, a family-operated farm that was first settled in the 1800s. Since then, it has grown into a larger, local-centric organization that promotes food-based education, sustainability and community. Fronted by a quaint farmshop and a fenced-off plot of land housing chickens, alpacas and *Moby* the Great Pyrenees farm dog, *Snuck Farm* is easy-to-miss, and yet, once you've experienced their hospitality and delicious mixed greens, you'll find yourself returning again and again.

Page Westover is the Chief Cultivation Officer at *Snuck Farm*, a self-given title she feels is fitting because she's in the business of both cultivating produce and cultivating an experience for *Snuck* team members to want to continue to be a part of. "My grandpa had passed away ... and I was interested in doing something with this piece of land," Westover says. "I was attached to it, and Utah County doesn't have a lot of these kinds of places. It was all ready for quarter-acre home sites, but we decided to build this community farm instead."

Though its roots as a family farm carry back to Westover's grandfather—whose nickname was "Snuck" due to his prankster tendencies—*Snuck Farm* opened for business in 2015 with an emphasis on community growth and partnership. Due to *Snuck's* location, smaller acreage size and Utah's drought-prone climate, the farm uses both hydroponic (a system that continuously recycles nutrient-dense water) and soil-grown methods. With a desire to create a sustainable business—one that is focused on people and the planet as well as profit—Westover notes that the choice for hydroponic growing made sense for their economic and community-minded goals considering the process is water efficient and allows for more growth per square footage than soil would offer. "We wanted to feed as many people as we could on this little piece of land," she says. "All of our greens, kale, arugula and basil are grown hydroponically."

Snuck's two main greenhouses hold their produce year-round. One is home to the hydroponically-grown items, such as all of their greens and



Photo: @Bonneville_Jones

Page Westover is the Chief Cultivation Officer at *Snuck Farm*, a local-centric farm with a focus on sustainability and community.

raw produce, while the other contains their soil-grown produce such as tomatoes, cucumbers, beets and radishes. From December to May, *Snuck* also uses their greenhouse to produce flower plugs for local flower farms. While their flower starts are just one of the ways *Snuck* focuses on prospering community and relationships between local farms and businesses, *Snuck* is also a part of a Farmyard Share program that partners with surrounding farms such as **Carter's Family Farm** and **Quail Creek Farm** to bring locals a robust variety of fruits and vegetables through their farmshop and local markets.

Beyond buying delicious, raw produce through *Snuck's* farmshop, you can also pick up bottles of housemade vinaigrette, vibrant green jars of pesto or energizing pressed juices among other items that are crafted in the *Snuck Kitchen*. The *Kitchen's* in-house chef **Bri Sykes** helps to create a rotating menu of filling salads, sandwiches and wraps that can be purchased through their shop as well. While browsing the shop, you can

also pick up crafts and goods from local artisans and produce from other farms. "Rather than being the authority and the person that's doing everything, we see the value in spreading out our sources," Westover says. "Our mission is to elevate the health of our community ... farm-to-table means knowing what's available and showing up and making the effort to source and visit from a farm. It's very intentional, and that's where the magic happens."

While *Snuck* specializes in sustainability and nutrition, they also believe in meeting people where they're at, which is why they offer a number of farm-related classes and workshops for all skill levels. Whether it's planting and growing your own row of flowers, learning from their in-house chefs about seasonal eating or taking a class on Italian breads, tea-blending or crafting a charcuterie board, *Snuck Farm* is prioritizing community connection and development.

You can buy from *Snuck Farm* through the *Snuck Share* subscription program on their website snuckfarm.com or stop by the farm and experience their farmshop in person.



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By Kirby Dorsey
misskirbydorsey@gmail.com

Several popular Las Vegas eateries have expanded to Salt Lake City and Park City in recent years, bringing a touch of Vegas flair to Utah's capital. Drawn in by Utah's growing population and vibrant dining scene, restaurants such as *Carson Kitchen*, *Chop Shop Park City*, *HallPass*, *Flanker* and more have found immense success in their new home.

So, what's behind this Vegas-to-Utah restaurant trend? Proximity plays a role, as Salt Lake City is an easy, one-hour flight from Vegas. Several restaurateurs said they can manage their Vegas operations while living in Utah. Beyond convenience, these businesses also saw genuine opportunity in northern Utah.

Carson Kitchen's owner **Cory Harwell** noted SLC's "up-and-coming food and beverage scene" while *Chop Shop's* owners **John** and **Paige Courtney** say the appeal derives from "... growing and getting away from being a tourist spot. Locals and the like have pushed to receive more than mountain ski-breaks or Après." In other words, as Utah's population and tastes grow more cosmopolitan, successful out-of-state restaurants believe they can flourish here. Locals are hungry for diverse, high-quality dining options in their backyards rather than looking to other cities.

One of the most high-profile moves was made by entrepreneur **Reed Allen Slobusky**, who opened his 11,000-square-foot-innovative food hall *HallPass* at *The Gateway* in 2019. *HallPass* houses six of Slobusky's successful Vegas restaurants all under one roof, including tacos, pizza, barbecue, burgers, salads and Asian fusion. Slobusky was drawn to SLC's potential, explaining, "We heard good things and wanted to get out of Vegas." He saw an opportunity in *The Gateway*, noting "Everyone loves a good comeback story, and *The Gateway* has lots of love and people rooting for it."

Indeed, *Hallpass* has helped spearhead a *The Gateway* renaissance. The open-air shopping and dining complex fell on hard times. According to *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *The Gateway's* occupancy rate dropped from 96% in 2010 to 78% in 2015. But luckily, *The Gateway* is now experiencing a rebirth as new tenants revive the space. *HallPass* brings consistent crowds with its diversity of dining options, benefiting nearby businesses. Upscale fitness studio *TruFu-*

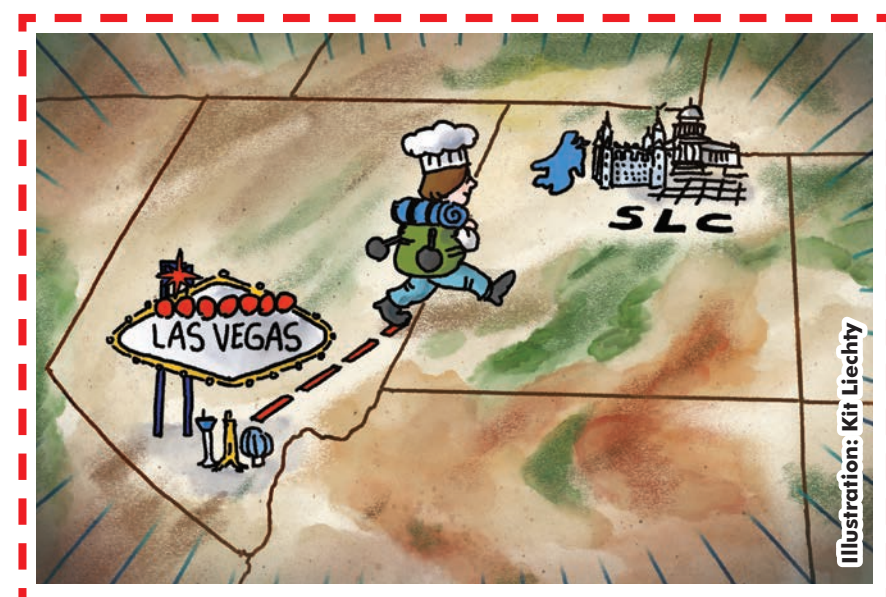
sion, LLC is one of the latest additions, joining long-standing favorites such as *Wiseguys Comedy Club*. Developer *Vestar* recently acquired *The Gateway*, and, according to an interview with *City Weekly*, has big plans to transform it into a community hub. The arrival of *HallPass* kickstarted that renewal, putting *The Gateway* back on locals' radars. Slobusky credits his success to the mall's heavy foot traffic and SLC's welcoming locals.

Other Vegas-based restaurants have also expanded to Utah. *Carson Kitchen*, known for its farm-to-table gastropub fare in downtown Vegas, opened in Park City in 2018. Harwell was drawn to the "diversity of the customer base" in the area and wanted to capitalize on tourists and locals alike. **Bryan Bass**, Chief Marketing Officer for **Carver Road Hospitality** of *Flanker* at *The Gateway*, says the food scene in Utah is ever improving, adding that Utah's "... most impressive surprise has been the excellent craft beer scene."

Chop Shop Park City, a butcher shop and eatery, moved from Vegas to Park City in 2020. John Courtney cites Park City's outdoor recreation, schools and sense of community as reasons for relocating. He says locals helped his business thrive even during the busy ski season tourist influx.

The rise of new eateries has created a virtuous cycle where more variety attracts more patrons, which in turn draws more restaurants. Slobusky encourages other businesses to join the mix, remarking, "The more the merrier." Bass notes that being able to fine tune *Flanker* in Utah has allowed it to expand back to Vegas, with its third location having just opened in *Mandalay Bay*.

With its confluence of homegrown talent and ambitious out-of-state imports, Salt Lake City's restaurant scene has nowhere to go but up. The Las Vegas transplants doubling down on SLC prove the city has arrived as a true culinary contender.



As several high-profile hospitality businesses have expanded from Las Vegas to Utah in recent years, business owners weigh in on the growing trend.

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Illustration by @cherrydumdums

TABLE X BREAD

● By Austin Doty
● rdotytwo@gmail.com

Building the Bakery

● 1457 East 3350 South Millcreek, UT
● Tuesday-Saturday 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Table X first opened its doors just seven years ago. Chefs and co-founders **Mike Blocher** and **Nick Fahs** needed a home to exhibit the culinary rapport they had earned through years of working at traditional fine dining restaurants. In the short amount of time it has been open, *Table X*—located in Millcreek—has become one of Utah’s most renowned and refined restaurants. They serve familiar yet innovative American cuisine made with fresh ingredients from local farms and their own in-house garden. The two collaborators have always baked their own bread and in more recent years, have expanded their baking operation altogether to include an entirely new business: *Table X Bread*.

The idea for *Table X Bread* stemmed from the need for a wholesale supplier of fresh-made bread for other local restaurants. In 2020, Blocher and Fahs made the most of the pandemic and shutdowns, taking the time to expand their restaurant and build a bakery on the lower floor of their building. Before opening their bakery, *Table X* mainly served their house sourdough made from Blocher’s own original recipe. Fahs eventually took over the bakery and began experimenting with different recipes and techniques for baking new kinds of bread. Today, *Table X Bread* offers nearly a dozen different types of loaves and has sold bread to businesses around SLC including *Caputo’s Market & Deli*, *Manoli’s* and *Pago*.

The specialty bread offered depends on the day you walk into *Table X Bread*. On Saturday, an oatmeal-treacle sourdough is available. Wednesday, they have a Pullman loaf and an Einkorn Pain de Mie. Thursday it’s focaccia, and on Friday—the day I visited the bakery—they have their ciabatta bread. The crumb of the

ciabatta is soft and moist, and its crust is just crisp enough to make it the ideal foundation for an Italian sandwich. I make sure to try the bread with the bakery’s house-made butter. Its moistness works with the smooth, creamy texture of the butter for a winning combination. I also enjoy that the ciabatta lasts for days after I buy it. It keeps its moist texture and crisp crust unlike many other ciabattas that can falter after a day or two.

Aside from their specialty breads, the bakery offers a selection of loaves made fresh each day including their original house sourdough and a French baguette. For me, the true test for a sourdough is how well it works with an egg. *Table X Bread’s* sourdough passes with flying colors. Its sour, tangy taste sits well with the salt and butter from my fried egg while soaking up the yolk with a firm yet soft density. The level of chewiness is also ideal, allowing for a satisfying bite without turning into a workout. It isn’t as aerated or crisp as I usually expect from a more traditional San Francisco sourdough, but its punchy

taste and fluffier crumb give it a world of its own.

During the visit I was lucky enough to catch the French baguettes as soon as they hit the shelves. Before I can even take a bite of the bread, I am arrested by its fresh-out-the-oven aroma, offering hints of milk and butter. When I finally do dive in, the warmth of the bread pervades my senses and caters to a perfect blend of crisp crust and fluffy crumb. The baguette has a nutty, savory taste with sweet and sour tones. It also works well with the bakery’s in-house butter as it melts deep into the cell walls of the bread, adding a sweeter blend to the flavor. The French baguette is probably my favorite of the three loaves I am able to try. However, if I had caught the ciabatta or sourdough fresh out of the oven, there’s a good chance my opinion might have differed.

Make sure to stop by *Table X Bread* as the bakery continues to build and expand. Their bread is made fresh daily and is available until they sell out or close. You can also keep up with the bakery by following them on Instagram [@table.x.bread](https://www.instagram.com/table.x.bread).

Table X Bread’s house-made sourdough loaves sit on a cooling rack, ready to serve at the bakery.



(L-R) *Table X* co-owner Nick Tramp, head of fermentation Neil Hopkins and bakery manager Elyse Smith knead dough together.

Photos by Justin Lagman

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THE ART OF BELONGING:

How food transcends cultures to create identity

By Grace Simpson • simpson.ograce@gmail.com



Photo courtesy of UVU Museum of Art

Comprising symbols from Mesoamerican and Indigenous cultures, *Corn Mandala: Belonging* is Jorge Rojas' seventh installation of ephemeral mandalas constructed out of corn kernels.

UVU Museum of Art is currently hosting *The Art of Belonging*, an exhibition curated by and showcasing artist Jorge Rojas. Included in *The Art of Belonging* is a juried exhibition, **Maruch Santíz Gómez's** *Beliefs of our Forebears* and Jorge Rojas' *Material Meditations*, which is where you will find the site-specific installation *Corn Mandala: Belonging*.

Rojas is an artist, curator and educator. *Corn Mandala: Belonging* is his seventh installation of ephemeral mandalas constructed of corn kernels. These mandalas remain in their respective exhibition for a short time before the kernels are recycled for a future mandala or given away by Rojas to be planted by patrons of his art.

The use of corn kernels as Rojas' chosen medium comes with deep thought and a rich history. "I started doing this very deep-dive research into corn, and I didn't know the significance or the importance of it," Rojas explains. "When I started to understand what it meant to Mexican and Indigenous cultures, I started realizing that it was incredibly spiritual and charged with meaning."

The mandala itself is composed of different symbols from Mesoamerican and Indigenous cultures. "I really wanted to honor native and migrant cultures that inhabit and contribute to the richness of [Utah]," says Rojas. In the mandala's center is the flower of life, immediately followed by the chakana cross, then a

symbol from Aztec and Mayan cultures as seen in art and architecture. Finally, a wave pattern borrowed from Pacific Islander cultures surrounds the mandala.

When you walk into the room, ambient music plays overhead, creating a reverent atmosphere. The mandala is centered on a platform, and the overhead light showcases the vibrance of the kernels, which are tightly and intricately packed together—every line is crisp. *Corn Mandala: Belonging* should be visually consumed in person to fully comprehend its power.

Maruch Santíz Gómez is the second solo artist featured in *The Art of Belonging*. Her installation features a series of photographs depicting myths of the Tzotzil Maya culture, an Indigenous ethnic group with which she identifies. The myths are written in Mayan, Spanish and English and accompanying each one is a black-and-white photograph depicting the essence of the myth. Incidentally, many of the myths concern food, showing the importance of food in Tzotzil Mayan culture and how it extends beyond consumption.

One photograph titled *Unin Ixim*, or *Corn Cob*, shows a woven basket filled with half-eaten cobs of corn. The myth states, "If you leave half an ear of corn with kernels, a caterpillar will appear in your clothes later on." These lighthearted superstitions evince a playfulness that surrounds food in Indigenous cultures and the long-lasting traditions that come from engaging with food mythology.

Rojas was eager to share pieces chosen for the juried show that depict food in some way. Charcoal drawing *Food as a Love Language* by **Anisa Al-Nasser** and *Dumplings*, a glazed porcelain display by **Shiya Zeng** are two pieces featuring food. Culturally significant food, ranging from tortillas to fortune cookies, are present throughout the show despite not being part of Rojas' call for submissions. "I think it points to how much food plays a role in how we think about belonging in our homes, in our culture, with our friends," Rojas says.

The overall exhibit feels like a sacred place where one can ruminate on the richness of culture and think deeply about identity. Rojas' curation and artwork are stunning examples of belonging in cultures you may have been born a member of or come to be a part of later on. You can visit *The Art of Belonging* until Sept. 16 at the UVU Museum of Art, and follow Rojas on Instagram @keoqui.

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Crafting Beer + Food Pairings at Silver Reef Brewing Co.'s: Craft & Kitchen

By Jacqueline Read • jacqueline@read.com

As the self-proclaimed largest brewery in Southern Utah, *Silver Reef Brewery Co.*—named after the mining ghost town just north of St. George—opened their doors in 2018. *Silver Reef* is a must-visit for those traveling through Southern Utah looking to enjoy great brews and, as of July, delicious food from their brand-new craft kitchen. Each dish on the craft kitchen menu is specially curated to be the perfect complement to any of *Silver Reef's* unique beers or house-made liquors, which are available on-site and for retail purchase.

Silver Reef Brewing Co. is locally recognized for its unique dining experience and creative brews, served both on draft and in artistically illustrated cans. Director of Brewing Operations **Michael Key** works closely with the *Silver Reef* kitchen to curate dishes that both incorporate and pair well with their beer. Key has been in the brewing business for over 25 years with a background in traditional German lager brewing. That experience, as well as his time spent in culinary school, helps create symbiotic relationships within *Silver Reef's* beer and food pairings. Key, as well as the rest of the *Silver Reef* team, is always experimenting with new ways to intertwine the two, such as infusing beer in their fish batter or adding it to their housemade salad dressing recipes. Dishes from their menu include crowd favorite items such as the Beer Battered Fish and Chips, which are hand battered with *Silver Reef* beer and served classically with fries, tartar sauce and malt vinegar. Key suggests enjoying this restaurant staple with their Agua Del Diablo, a Mexican-style lager described as having “smooth and refreshing sweet corn and malt flavors with just a touch of hoppy bitterness.”

Key notes that both draft and retail beer options rotate seasonally. “It’s honestly more based on the weather than seasonality, though,” he says. “Or, it’s based on demand.” Some



Silver Reef Brewing Co.'s new craft kitchen menu perfectly complements their house made brews.

Silver Reef Brewing Co. is a must-visit for those traveling through Southern Utah looking to enjoy great brews and delicious food.



Photos by @randyphoto

seasonal rotations become so popular that they may soon make their way to the permanent menu, including *Silver Reef's* Java Madre Imperial Milk Stout, which is made with cold brew, Ecuadorian cacao nibs and a hint of vanilla. Other favorites are soon to be available as well, such as their Oktoberfest selection, a Märzen lager which is expected to return at the beginning of September, as well as their well-known Spaghetti Western, an Italian-style pilsner. Plan to keep an eye out for the new Schwarz Bier that is currently in the works, which Key describes as a “lager with a smokey malt flavor that smells almost exactly like barbecue.”

If you’re in southern Utah looking to celebrate Oktoberfest but aren’t able to travel to Snowbird to enjoy the larger festival, consider heading to *Silver Reef* to get in the spirit of the fall festivities. Their draft beer list isn’t *Silver Reef's* only menu getting warmed up for the fall season—be sure to also check out the craft kitchen’s upcoming menu items including some Oktoberfest-inspired specials such as the Cheddar Bratwurst, served on a hoagie roll with grilled peppers, onions and *Silver Reef* Beer Cheese. Or, to start off your dining experience the right way, order the new Pretzel Bites also served with Beer Cheese—an appetizer the whole table will love. If beer isn’t your thing, *Silver Reef* also offers handcrafted specialty cocktails such as their Blackberry Smash cocktail which features their own house-made whiskey, blackberries, fresh lemon and mint.

This fall and winter, *Silver Reef* will also be introducing a new barbecue trailer available each weekend which will offer weekly brisket specials. Keep an eye on their Instagram @silverreefbeer for updates on new seasonal menu items, events and more. Stop by soon to check out *Silver Reef Brewing Company's* Craft & Kitchen and their Oktoberfest brews and food specials!



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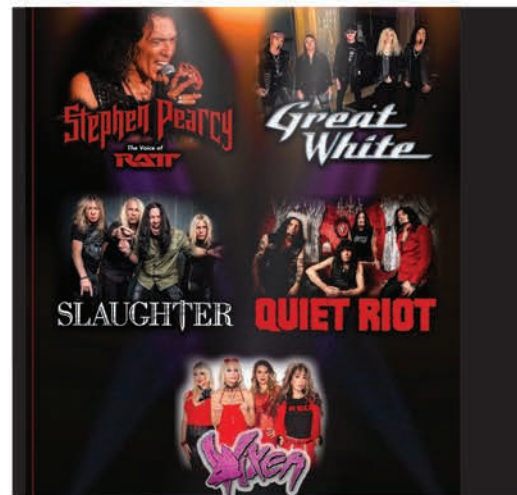
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BODY HORROR



(L-R) Connor Collings, Dirk Jeffrey, Cecil Smith and Julie Boswell of Body Horror are post-punk innovators who love “ugly dance music.”

Photo: Lo Cohen

LOCALIZED

Between the swirling electronica of **Cassette Drift** and the avant-goth danceability of **Body Horror**, September’s *Localized* showcase will present some of the most lively and dynamic post-punk Salt Lake City has to offer. To set the stage, solo synth-pop artist **maximradar** will open. See all three acts for \$5 at *Kilby Court* on Thursday, September 21 (doors at 7, music at 8). *SLUG Localized* is sponsored by *Riso-Geist*.

By **Joe Roberts**
joeroberts256@gmail.com

By the time I interviewed **Body Horror**, I’d already listened to their debut record, *is reality*, over a dozen times. Their experimental, post-punk sound immediately appealed to the **Joy Division** fan in me, and I relished their dark, political lyrics. The group is blessed with a formidable combo of something important to say and the musical chops to make you sit your ass down and listen.

Julie Boswell is the founder of the band as well as the lead vocalist, bassist and lyricist. In her lyrics, Boswell strives to reframe narratives that society is too comfortable with, often by couching them in horror concepts.

The band itself is a prime example of this. The band’s name comes from a tongue-in-cheek song Boswell wrote years ago wherein she toyed with the intersection of body horror as a film genre and our culture’s aversion to “body modification” and “transsexuality.” Boswell was “taken with the concept” and decided to cultivate it into a larger musical project. In April 2022, she took to Twitter to find collaborators, and that’s how **Body Horror** formed.

Boswell already recorded several demos when the band got together for the first time.

After hearing these demos, each member built on Boswell’s outlines and developed them to match their own style and taste. The band has been operating on this model ever since, and every member considers this synergy one of the best things about the group. In Boswell’s words, “I can come up with an idea, and then it can become a real song with everybody’s help.”

And while Boswell writes all the lyrics, hers isn’t the only perspective shared through the music. She gives voice to what they all feel. About his first time listening to the demo for “Strange Premonitions,” drummer **Connor Collings** says it “perfectly expresses all of the things I’ve been feeling about the world.” **Cecil Smith**, the band’s keyboard player, agrees that “these are things that really need to be said.”

Despite all of the heady concept-alchemy in their lyrics, the group is first and foremost meant to be a dance band. “I like ugly dance music,” Boswell says. “I’m trying to make an ugly dance music band.” They pull it off. With their rapid-fire drums, chuggy bass, searing guitar and ethereal keys, the four-piece straddles the boppy line between post-punk and goth so well you’d be forgiven for missing the message and just swaying to the music.

By all accounts, this is a band you haven’t heard until you’ve seen them live. The

group is always pushing their sound to energetic new heights on stage through bold improvisation. According to Collings, “A lot of our main set is improvised. Every time we play our set, it’s a little bit different.” Boswell agrees, saying, “The live shows have really taken on a very specific identity that is a lot of fun.”

The band recorded *is reality*—the name of which is a reference to **David Cronenberg**’s 2022 film *Crimes of the Future*—at guitar player **Dirk Jeffrey**’s newly-formed record label *Wasteland Records*. About the production process, Jeffrey said he wanted to bring the energy of the band’s live shows to the finished tracks, so he experimented with unique sounds and effects while mixing—sometimes in a delirious state at 3 a.m. The result is a startling, genre-melting flow through soundscapes that feel both strange but familiar.

When I asked if they have more music coming soon, Boswell said she’s been writing a lot lately and has several songs she’s almost ready to bring before the group. Jeffrey added that *Wasteland Records* has been hard at work on various other projects since *is reality*, many of which will release shortly. The whole band expressed their excitement for the upcoming *Localized* show. Don’t miss your chance to see them perform on September 21. I know I won’t.

(L-R) **Aaron Valentine** and **Mike Smith** of **Cassette Drift** may be polar opposites, but their musical synergy is palpable. *music.*



Photo: Logan Sorenson

LOCALIZED

CASSETTE DRIFT

At **Il d Q adop**° joeroberts256@gmail.com

It’s said that opposites attract, and SLC duo **Cassette Drift** demonstrates that opposites also make primo musical partners. During our interview, both of the group’s members expressed how dissimilar they are while also marveling at their ability to cooperate despite their differences, and the proof of their cohesiveness is in their music.

The resemblances between **Cassette Drift** and bands like **Depeche Mode** and **New Order** are obvious, but to call the band an ‘80s throwback would be reductive. The duo puts too much fresh emphasis on cinematic scoring, atmospheric soundscapes and glitchy beats. Rather, it’s more accurate to say **Cassette Drift** took foundational sensibilities of ‘80s goth music, blended them with shoegaze influences—à la **Slowdive**—and recontextualized them for contemporary appeal. The outcome is an intoxicating cocktail of ambient dream pop, retro new wave and cutting-edge electronica.

The disparity in how the two approach songwriting is the most notable of their differences. **Aaron Valentine**—**Cassette Drift**’s primary vocalist, lyricist and synth player—typically generates music by building from external inspiration. “I’m not one of those artists that hears a song and then creates it,” he says. “I get inspired by sounds, and I do the same thing with lyrics. I get inspired by words and phrases.”

Guitarist **Mike Smith**, on the other hand, usually takes an inside-out approach to composition and lyricism. “For me it’s exactly the opposite,” he says. “I start from a granular feeling ... and I’ll sit down for two hours before I go to work and try to figure out a verse from that and not let that feeling go. Really dwell on it.”

Valentine and Smith both grew up in Kaysville, attending the same junior high school but they didn’t actually meet until they were college-age in 1996. Valentine posted a flier at **Graywhale Entertainment** looking for a guitar player for his band, **Lotus**. Smith—who was studying jazz guitar at the University of Utah—saw the flier while browsing there one day. He contacted Valentine and the two began playing together soon after.

When **Lotus** dissolved, Valentine and Smith lost touch until a mutual friend reunited them for a country-rock band years later. Then in 2016, the two came up with an idea for an ‘80s-inspired electronic project. Valentine says he “threw a couple tracks over [Smith’s] way, he sent some stuff back and before we knew it, it was what we were looking for.” This was **Cassette Drift**’s inception, though they initially went by the name, **International Fateline**.

One surprising detail revealed during our interview is that Valentine and Smith

collaborate asynchronously. “I don’t think we’ve ever really been in a room together writing,” Smith says. Valentine typically shares songs and snippets he’s written over Google Drive, and then Smith adds guitar tracks and tinkers with the songs. “[Valentine] does most of the base, like the foundation,” Smith says. “I’d say that three quarters of the songs have been done that way.”

This solely virtual model probably wouldn’t work for everyone, but it enables the duo to keep up with their careers, families and other musical projects while copilotting **Cassette Drift**. As an added bonus, it means they can both work when they’re at their creative best; Valentine does his composing at 10:00 p.m. while Smith finds his best flow at 5:00 a.m.

When I asked if they’ll release more music soon, they said they’ve been working on an upcoming album of shoegaze covers with 12 different local bands. If **Cassette Drift**’s stirring version of “A Forest” by **The Cure** is anything to go by, this album should prove a refreshing, faithful take on its source material.

Once published, the cover album will join **Cassette Drift**’s many other releases on all major streaming services. Be sure to catch the duo live on September 21 at the *SLUG Localized* show.



Food Fight!

By Mike Brown • mgb90210@gmail.com

For this month's *Eat Local* issue, I chose a food-related topic. Instead of focusing on whatever the fuck Salt Lake's latest progressive restaurant is, I thought I would go a different direction and write about something food-related that I don't think gets enough attention: the age old tradition of the food fight!

As far as research on the topic goes, I re-watched *Animal House*—a '70s movie about fraternities and pantie raids—and, needless to say, the film does not hold up well in today's cultural climate. However, the scene where **John Belushi** starts a food fight in the cafeteria is a movie classic and it made me wonder, "Why, as a society, aren't we having more food fights?"

My old band, **The Fucktards**, used to do tomato shows where the crowd threw tomatoes at us while we played. It was a very, very one-sided food fight with the appearance that we lost, but it was a food fight, nonetheless. I would sell tomatoes for a dollar each and am pretty sure I made more money off of tomato sales than I did at the door. So, I guess I was the real winner.

Back when I was an adolescent growing up in Salt Lake, there was a "vegan straight-edge" scene where these guys would sometimes start actual fights over actual food. That's a different kind of food fight, in my opinion. If I remember correctly, someone started throwing baloney slices at **Earth Crisis** during a hardcore show. I don't know if that's Salt Lake urban legend or not, but the thought of that is pretty funny to me and would take some serious balls.

Regardless, I've been thinking a lot about having a food fight. My apartment is too small to host one and is already pretty messy. Obviously, the



Illustration: @iamweswood

In the 2023 September *Eat Local* issue, Mike Brown discusses a lost artform that he wishes would return: the age-old tradition of a food fight.

most appropriate battlefield would be a school cafeteria. For me, the most desirable setting for a food fight would be Sunday family dinner right when dad starts talking geopolitics, or a fine dining establishment where a Wall Street broker could get caught in the crossfire. Realistically, a mall food court, a *Denny's* or *TGI Fridays* would also work. And although I'm not on TikTok (I do enough doom-scrolling on the other apps), I like the idea of starting a food fight challenge where your social credit goes up depending on how nice the place is where you start the food fight.

Now, let's talk about some of the best arsenal for a food fight. I'm not sure what the Geneva Conventions' stance is on food that might cross a line in a food fight—would they outlaw red wine because of the stain factor? Or, is whatever is on the table "on the table"? That's not for me to decipher. All I know is anything that stains, such as wine, or anything sticky, like

syrup, is going to fuck up your enemy in a food fight.

Also, using your spoon as a catapult is a good move. Mashed potatoes and gravy are super effective with the spoon catapult method, as is apple sauce. Peas are fun too and can be hard to clean up, so they should also be considered. Anything hard like raw carrots is kind of a dick move, since someone could lose an eye. Oh, and anything egg-based is good, too. If you're lucky enough to have a squeezable ketchup or mustard bottle handy then those also make for great ammo.

I'd like to end by officially reaching out to any dining establishments in Salt Lake that would like to have me host a food fight. I'd prefer to write about things I've actually done, and I think it would be great promotion for a local business, which is important to *SLUG*. My email is above, so get at me!

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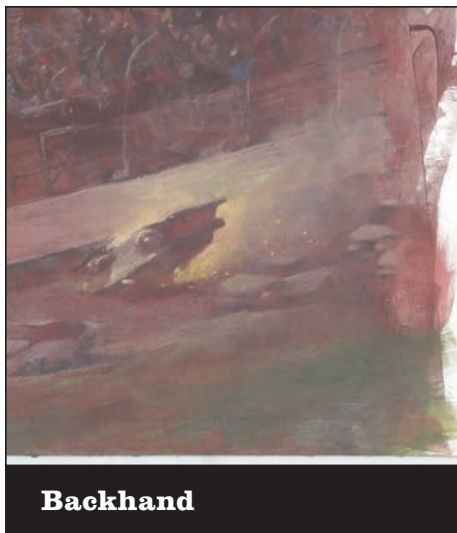
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LOCAL MUSIC SINGLES ROUNDUP

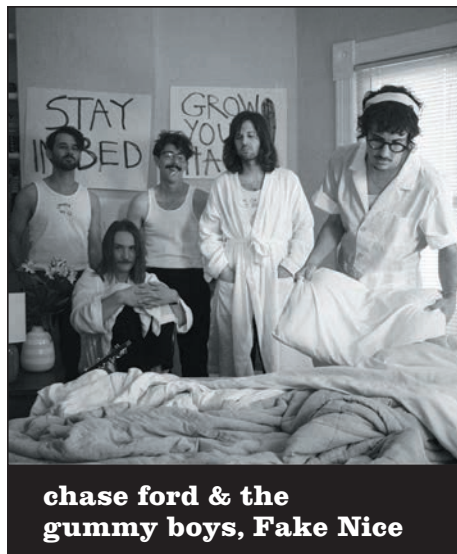
Does your playlist need a refresh? Switch it up by listening to some of our favorite singles in this month's *Local Music Singles Roundup*! Get ready for the seasons to change with these late-summer jams. Whether you're into funk, indie rock or anything in between, *SLUG Mag* has got you covered with September's roundup. We can't think of a better way to say goodbye to summer and hello to fall.



Backhand

"Safety Hammer Young America"
Self-Released
Street: 06.09
Backhand = Off! + Black Country, New Road

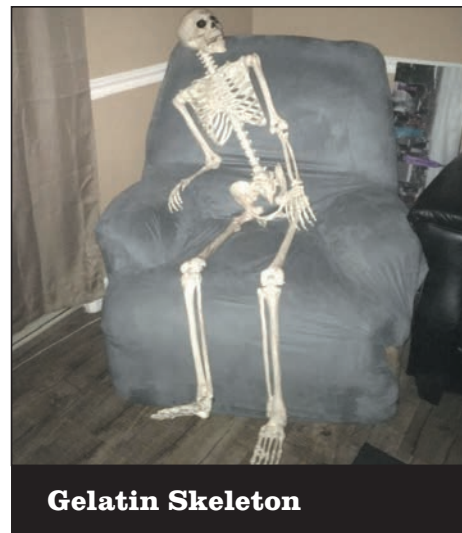
If you are experiencing an overheated, late-summer malaise, Backhand's "Safety Hammer Young America" is just for you. The track has a repeated rhythm of bass riff, stop. Guitar riff, stop. Thrash! Backhand also offers a spoonful of funk to get you on your feet with a wild, fantastic surf-guitar run that weaves into the rhythm. Vocally, there is a brave, bonkers trade-off of styles overlapping each other with raw, punk-rock screams and a dry, sardonic delivery. If you stop to process all this, it probably wouldn't work—though Backhand beautifully turns "Safety Hammer Young America" into an explosive, over-the-top, nutty burner. Listening to the song makes my teeth hurt, like biting into an ice cold popsicle—a shock to the system followed by a sensational, summertime treat. I hungrily look forward to more from Backhand. In the meantime, turn "Safety Hammer Young America" up to 11. —Russ Holsten



chase ford & the gummy boys, Fake Nice

"amsterdam hilton"
Self-Released
Street: 06.30
chase ford & the gummy boys = The Backseat Lovers + The 1975

If you're looking for a fresh, crisp, indie-rock track, "amsterdam hilton" is the song for you. The track by Salt Lake band chase ford & the gummy boys tells the story of a rocky relationship through a sound that is upbeat and funky, with lyrics referencing famous lovers **John Lennon** and **Yoko Ono**. "amsterdam hilton" alternates between soft, gentle sounds and harsh, loud guitar solos with faint drums throughout. The vocals sound a bit drawn out and dreamy, giving the song an otherworldly feel. It sounds nostalgic, like something you would have heard on the radio back in 2013 alongside **The Vaccines** and **The 1975**. It makes for a great track to add to your summer playlists and is perfect for road trips or relaxing by the pool. chase ford & the gummy boys are absolutely a band you want to see live—their music makes for a good time with good vibes. —Cherri Cheetah



Gelatin Skeleton

"Weatherman"
Self-Released
Street: 07.08
Gelatin Skeleton = Kimya Dawson x The Mountain Goats

Anti-folk singer-songwriter Gelatin Skeleton proclaims to be no weatherman. For a deceptively simple acoustic track, "Weatherman" is a surprisingly touching reflection on the futility of planning for the future and the necessity to struggle in the face of failure. Between the bare-bones chord progressions, there's a certain tenderness in the vocals that complements the unabashed earnestness of the lyrics: "I saved my cash despite my desperation / To get my fortune read / But I never paid the time to hear what could be said," he sings ever-so-gently. "Weatherman" seems tailor-made to be a campfire song—I can almost hear the faint sound of crickets chirping and feel the warm glow of crackling embers. Gelatin Skeleton may not be able to predict the future, but I predict that this song might be the perfect companion to a contemplative, starry night in the wilderness alone with your thoughts. —Asha Pruitt

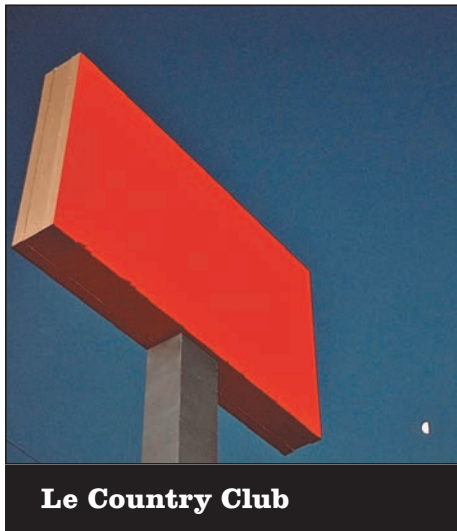


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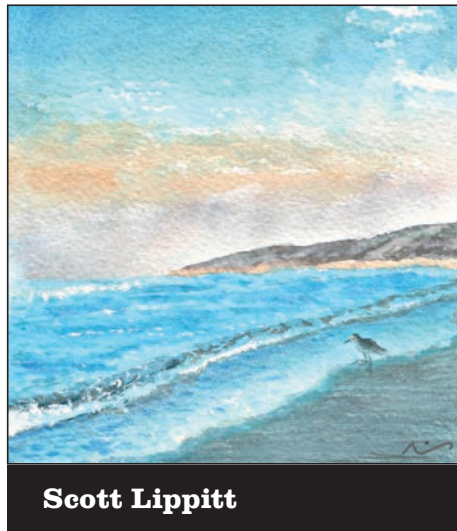
LOCAL MUSIC SINGLES ROUNDUP



Le Country Club

"the economist"
Self-Released
Street: 07.26
Le Country Club = Daft Punk + Talking Heads + David Bowie

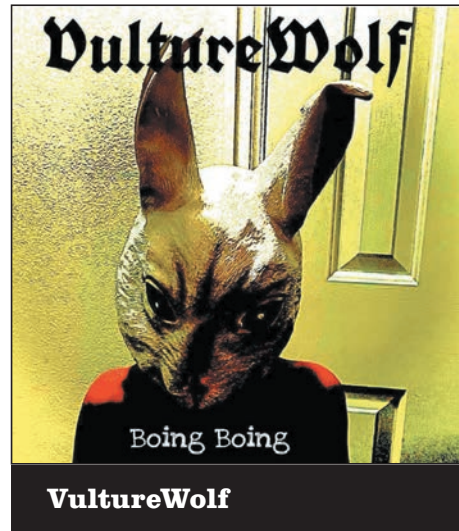
I don't think I've ever heard such a perfect blend of lo-fi production and new-age sound. The newest single from the solo project of **Noah Lefgren** is the perfect blend of retro synth, auto-tuned vocals and staccato bass. "the economist" feels like it came straight from the garage, in the best way possible—I can practically see the thrifted quilt muffling the drums, and the toned-down presence of the vocals really gives the instrumental a space to shine. The synthesizers remind me of David Bowie's clubby tracks, which provides an interesting contrast to the DIY-sound of the bass riff and drums. You wouldn't think all these different influences could fit so nicely together, but Le Country Club wraps it all in a neat, little bow. All in all, "the economist" has me incredibly hyped for the upcoming album it's attached to, *le country club ii*. —*Elle Cowley*



Scott Lippitt

"Better Friend"
Self-Released
Street: 06.23
Scott Lippitt = We Speak in Colors + Death Cab for Cutie – Cage the Elephant

Salt Lake City-based artist Scott Lippitt continues his melancholic, guitar-driven sound with his latest single "Better Friend." Reminiscent in tone of his 2022 single "Insight In Time," this new release has a more **Jack Johnson**-surf sound with a chirpy keys section. Once vocals enter, though, the Johnson comparison ends. Lippitt has a breathy, almost strained quality to his voice which reflects the longing for meaning-making in music. There's a pacing to Lippitt's melodies that feels metronome-esque. Released as instrumentals, I imagine his music would make a great soundtrack to some indie, single-player video game where a character wanders through a world experiencing many emotions. Ultimately, this is what Lippitt does with his music; there's a journey toward self-knowledge within his discography. Like his other songs, "Better Friend" has wisdom to share, exploring the balance between setting boundaries and making sacrifices while maintaining friendships. —*Katie Hatzfeld*



VultureWolf

"Chompsky Honk"
Self-Released
Street: 07.20
VultureWolf = Death Grips vocals x Noise/Girl

"Chompsky Honk" is track two on VultureWolf's *Boing Boing* EP. It is an unnerving and spartan cut, mostly playing off of one continuous, screeching synth loop. A drum-and-bass rhythm rushes into the mix and adds direction to the track's force. It's the sonic equivalent of Newton's second law of motion: force = mass x acceleration. The mass is the bleak, anxious energy of the track accelerated by the jittery, restlessness of the rhythms. Halfway through the song, the beat is supplemented by a mysterious sample. Is it from a movie? Original audio? It's a question without an answer, an itch in the brain that can't be scratched, adding another layer of discomfort to the short, strange piece of music. The song is fun and enigmatic, but for all its noisiness and erratic drumming, it could have benefited from a few additional production flourishes. —*Tin Rodriguez*

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Black Country, New Road ^{SOLD OUT} 09.06 Soundwell | **Jake Miller** - 09.13 Soundwell | **King Krule** ^{SOLD OUT} 09.16 The Depot
Jai Wolf - 09.16 The Union | **Cowgirl Clue** - 09.16 Soundwell | **The Happy Return** - 09.18 Soundwell
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Las Espookys 10.06
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