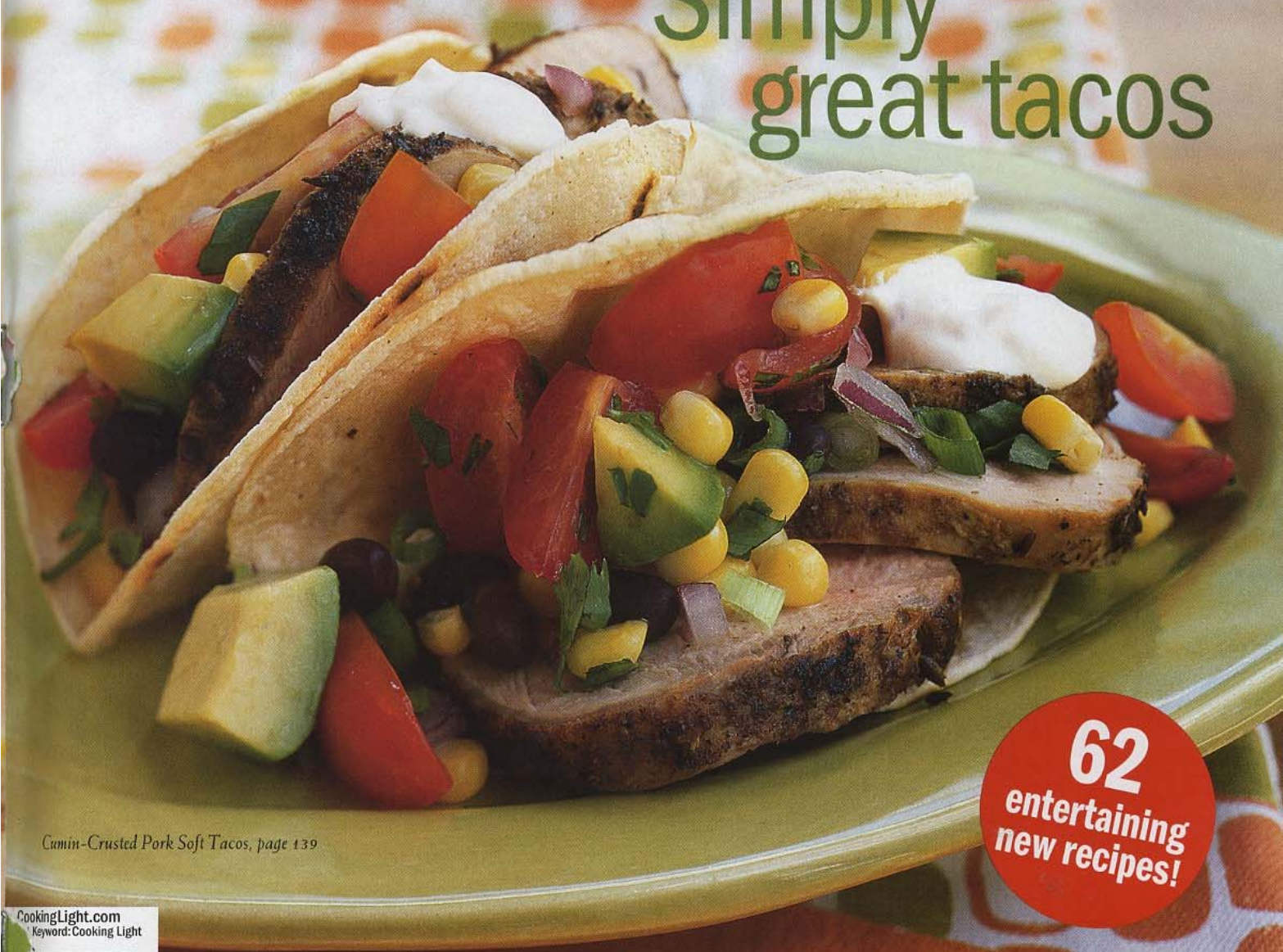


EAT SMART BE FIT LIVE WELL

Cooking Light

SEPTEMBER
2005

Simply great tacos



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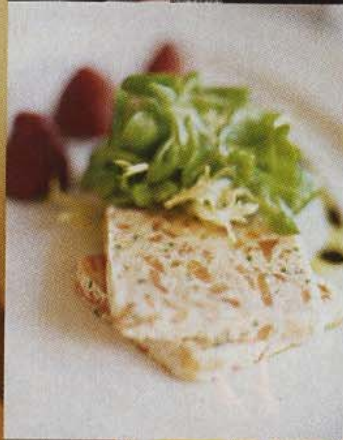


California Oil

The winemakers may get more buzz, but the Sonoma Valley is also home to a growing number of award-winning olive oil purveyors. Vintner B.R. Cohn (800-330-4064, ext. 24, www.brcohnolive-oil.com) produces several extravirgin oils, including one from French picholine olives, and offers tours and tastings on request. A daily olive oil tasting bar is offered at The Olive Press (800-965-4839, www.theolivepress.com), which makes award-winning extravirgin olive oils, citrus oils, and oils infused with blood oranges, Meyer lemons, and clementine. It also presses olives for the community and larger growers. The largest American producer of estate-grown, certified organic extravirgin olive oil, the 550-acre McEvoy Ranch (707-778-2307, www.mcevoyranch.com), straddles Marin and Sonoma counties, with 80 acres devoted to 18,000 Italian olive trees of six varieties. Special tours and tastings will be offered for \$20 on September 17 and October 1.



Specialties at El Dorado Kitchen (above) include salmon terrine paired with California greens. A trio of colorful condiments—such as strawberries, lemons, and mint—accompany drink orders.



GOOD FOOD: Make reservations early for Charlie Palmer's Dry Creek Kitchen (707-431-0330), overlooking Healdsburg's charming town square. Simple dishes, such as pan-roasted Bodega Bay halibut, take center stage. At historic Sonoma Plaza, El Dorado Kitchen (707-996-3030) features the French/Mediterranean cuisine of Ryan Fancher, former sous chef at famed French Laundry.

CALL IT A NIGHT: El Dorado Hotel (\$150 to \$190; 707-996-3030, www.hoteleldorado.com) was built in 1843 as a private residence for the brother of Mexican General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and occupied by the Bear Flag Party during the early days of the Mexican American War. Quirky as it sounds, contradictions seem to work at Gaije House Inn (\$275 to \$575; 707-935-0237, www.gaije.com), a Queen Anne-style home with eight new Japanese-style spa suites inspired by the Ryokan inns of Kyoto. —GH

