

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

September 12, 2014

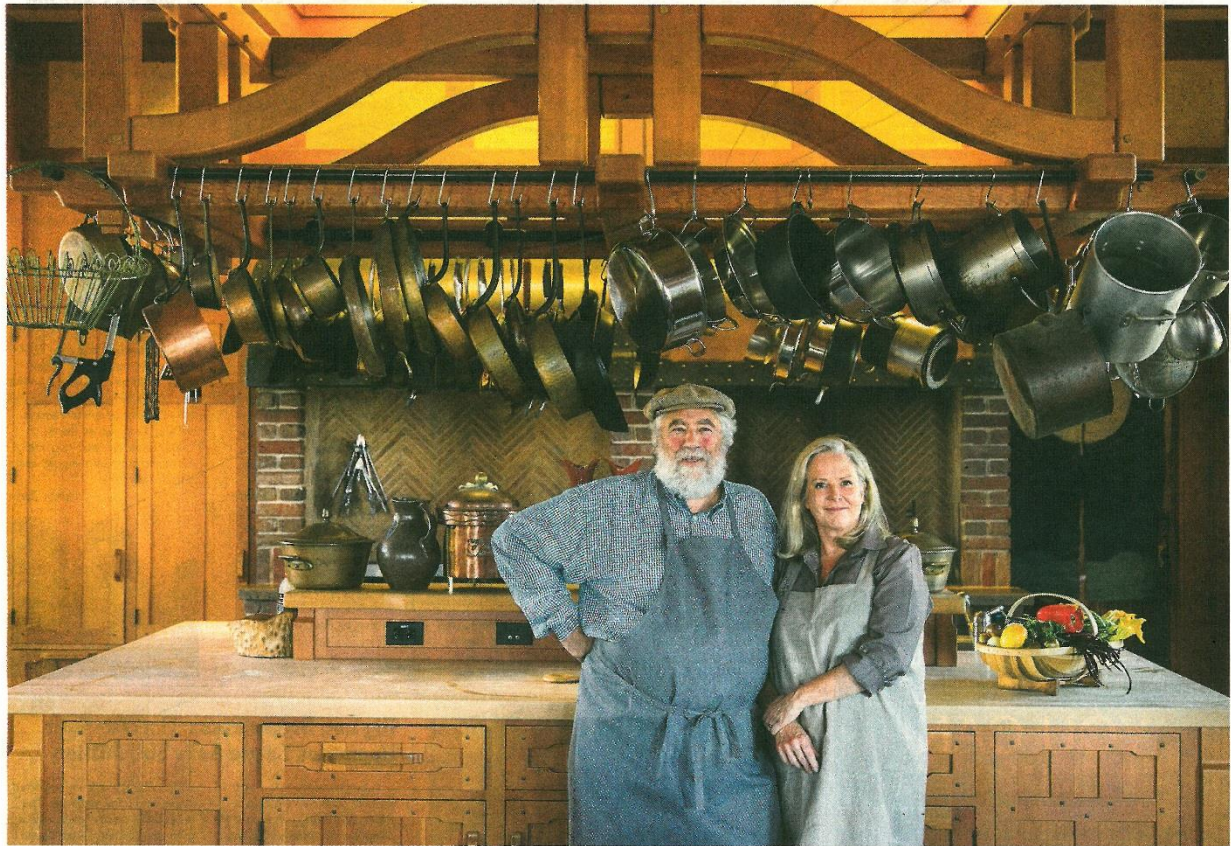


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HEALDSBURG, CALIF. Bruce Aidells and Nancy Oakes in the commercial-grade kitchen of their home, which they built in 2007 and, if listed today, would range from \$5 million to \$7 million.



SEATTLE Chef Tom Douglas recently bought a \$1.175 million apartment near Pike Place Market.

WHERE THE FOODIES LIVE

America's passion for both cooking and cuisine is reshaping residential real estate. Now, the hottest neighborhoods are built around green markets, top restaurants and celebrity chefs.

BY KATY MCLAUGHLIN

JUST PAST THE FRONT GATE to Bruce Aidells and Nancy Oakes's house is a vegetable garden that yields as much as 100 pounds of produce a week during peak season. The couple's 1,000-square-foot commercial-grade kitchen includes an indoor cooking hearth. Other delicacies are prepared in a separate sausage-making

kitchen. And the California climate means the outdoor pizza oven is on duty year round.

The couple's 4,200-square-foot Arts and Crafts-style home, built in 2007, is in Healdsburg, Calif., near Napa and Sonoma wineries and renowned restaurants such

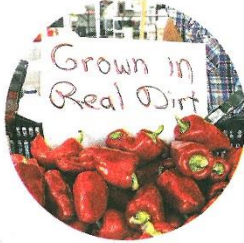
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MADISON, WIS. Jeremy Johanski rents at the Constellation, which touts its proximity to the farmers market.

THE GOURMET HOME ISSUE

CITIES WHERE THE FOODIES LIVE



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as the French Laundry. "Food is what we do, and we built a house to accommodate that," said Mr. Aidells, who has tested recipes for some of his 12 cookbooks and filmed 40 episodes of a television cooking show in the house. Ms. Oakes is chef and co-owner of Boulevard, a celebrated San Francisco restaurant.

The couple's homage to food is one example of how the foodie movement has reshaped residential real estate. Americans' passion for both cooking and cuisine has spurred demand for kitchens with top-notch appliances, specialty prep areas and climate-controlled wine cellars. Many of the newest downtown residential developments are centered on the local food scene, near vibrant green markets and top-rated restaurants run by celebrity chefs.

"Today, when you put together a mixed-use project, you start by talking about the food and restaurants first," said Kenneth Himmel, chief executive of Related Urban, the multi-use division of New York-based developer Related Cos.

The company built Manhattan's Time Warner Center, a residential and commercial development that is home to high-end restaurants Per Se and Masa. For Related's next project, Hudson Yards on Manhattan's West Side, Mr. Himmel said he is negotiating deals with various celebrity chefs to create seven new restaurants for the complex. Another 35,000 square feet will be earmarked for quick-serve eateries with premium ingredients. And, as in Related's other developments, Hudson Yards residents will get VIP treatment, such as delivery service from top restaurants as well as the use of the restaurants for private parties, he said.

In Anaheim, Calif., the Packing House, a food market with 28 vendors that opened in May, has given rise to a new neighborhood, dubbed the Packing District, where Brookfield Residential, a large Canada-based developer, is currently completing 100 condominiums. Units



IN SEASON Jeremy Johanski rents a two-bedroom penthouse in the Constellation for about \$2,000 a month. Since moving into his apartment, Mr. Johanski says he goes out to eat in nearby restaurants about five times a week and shops every Saturday at the Dane County Farmers' Market. Top left, fresh peppers for sale at the market, which is one of the largest in the country.



RESTAURANT STYLE Jerry Kleiner, a Chicago restaurateur, bought an industrial garage and turned it into an 8,500-square-foot villa with a giant kitchen, above left, and dining room, above right, with 30-foot ceilings. Mr. Kleiner has listed the house off and on for the past couple of years, most recently at \$2.795 million.

Photo: Sam Stashak for The Wall Street Journal; Top Left: VPH Studios; CD

range from one-bedroom apartments for \$335,000 to three-bedrooms for \$485,000.

Some developers are launching rental buildings with high-end culinary amenities, aimed at younger residents who grew up with the foodie movement. In Madison, Wis., Otto Gebhardt said he took a risk developing the Constellation, a 218-unit apartment building in a “nonglamorous” stretch just east of the state capitol and the University of Wisconsin. But he gambled on the area because the building is just a short walk from the city’s restaurant hub

and the Dane County Farmers’ Market, one of the largest in the country. To burnish the building’s foodie credentials, he turned down high-paying commercial tenants in lieu of a local gourmet coffee shop and a craft cocktail bar, he said. In late August, Madison’s best-known chef, Tory Miller, opened a 2,700-square-foot Asian restaurant, Sujeo, in the building.

“We have a vision for a place where people can live and go get a cocktail, get dinner, go to the farmers market,” said Mr. Gebhardt, president of Gebhardt Development. The building, which charges up to \$2,500 a

month for a three-bedroom, was fully leased the day it opened, Mr. Gebhardt said.

Jeremy Johanski, 31, rents a two-bedroom penthouse in the Constellation for about \$2,000 a month. Mr. Johanski, who works in human resources and runs his own event-planning company, said he “enjoys being a foodie in the place where I live” and posts pictures of his food and drink experiences about twice a week on Instagram. Since moving to the building, he goes out to eat in nearby restaurants about five times a week and shops every Saturday at the

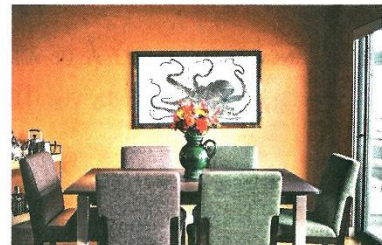
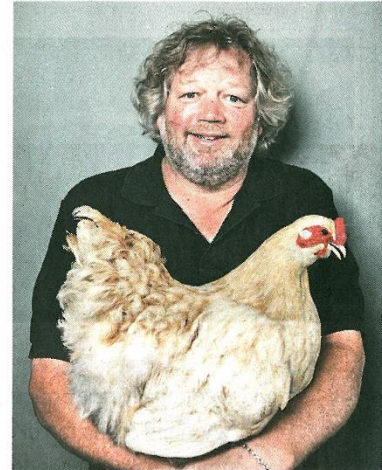
farmers market.

“I’ve traveled a lot for my event business, and I decided I wanted to have amenities like I’ve seen in other cities at my doorstep,” Mr. Johanski said.

Gotham West in Manhattan, which began leasing last year, offers a ground-floor market with Blue Bottle Coffee, ramen dishes and an upscale deli. Monthly rents range from about \$3,250 for studios to \$15,000 for three bedrooms; units have kitchens outfitted with KitchenAid and Bosch appliances, and cooking classes are offered in the building’s communal

kitchen. In Chicago, K2 Apartments, a development that opened last year, touts its proximity to Randolph Street, with numerous restaurants, and the French Market, where 30 local food vendors sell items like lobster rolls, crepes and artisanal cheese. Monthly rents there range from \$1,720 for a studio to \$6,500 for a three-bedroom penthouse.

Some homeowners are building their own temples to food. Jerry Kleiner, a Chicago restaurateur who co-owns Carnivale and Gioco, among others, bought an industrial garage and turned it into an 8,500-square-



BIRD IN HAND Tom Douglas, shown with a stuffed chicken, visits Seattle’s Pike Place Market many mornings. Above, the dining room in the nearby home he shares with his wife, Jacalyn Cross.

foot villa with a giant kitchen, a dining room with 30-foot ceilings and brilliantly colored velvet dining chairs that he designed himself. For years, Mr. Kleiner auditioned potential new chefs for his restaurants in his home kitchen. He also hosted charitable events for hundreds of guests featuring foods from 30 different restaurants.

“It was the perfect dinner-party house,” said Mr. Kleiner, 58. He bought the property in 1998 for \$400,000 and put over \$2 million into renovations over the years, he said. Now living primarily in Los An-

geles, Mr. Kleiner has listed the house off and on for the past couple of years, most recently at \$2.795 million. Listing agent Joseph Gasbarra of Coldwell Banker Previews said he promoted the home’s culinary features in marketing materials and showed it to Chicago restaurateurs before Mr. Kleiner took the property off the market in August.

Real-estate agents say the foodie angle can be a key selling point for a luxury property. In January, Seattle broker Moira Holley listed a two-bedroom unit in the Market Place North Condominiums, a building right next

to Pike Place Market, considered by some to be the epicenter of the Northwest food scene. Photos in the listing materials showed views of the market from the deck.

The day the property was listed, Tom Douglas, a chef who co-owns 15 restaurants in Seattle, made a full cash offer of \$1.175 million, he said. Mr. Douglas and his wife, Jacalyn Cross, also own a farm in eastern Washington and a home in Ballard, a neighborhood in northwest Seattle. But they wanted to be right near the Pike Place Market, where Mr. Douglas spends his mornings sipping coffee

and meandering past stalls, enjoying the sounds of street performers and carts clattering over cobblestones. He stops to buy croissants, meat and spices, spending much of his time greeting friends from the food world and tourists who recognize him from his appearances on television food shows.

“We wanted to be able to live the foodie life we’ve already been living for the last 30 years,” said Mr. Douglas.

Mr. Aidells and Ms. Oakes declined to say how much they paid to build their Healdsburg home; local real-es-

tate broker Eric Drew of Healdsburg Sotheby’s International said comparable homes in the area would list for between \$5 million and \$7 million. Ms. Oakes called their house “a sanctuary.” The couple has just one quibble.

“We can’t work together in the same kitchen. It gets ugly,” joked Mr. Aidells, adding that different cooking styles can lead to conflict. Ms. Oakes said one of the benefits of the house’s many cooking areas—the outdoor pizza oven, indoor hearth, various grills and a tandoori oven—is that she can usually send Mr. Aidells off somewhere to cook the meat.