

DELTA VOICE

The voice of those who
live, work and play
in the Delta.

Spring 2015

printed on recycled paper 

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hard work can do.

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It's spring in the Delta.

Top: Courtland pear orchard in bloom,
photo courtesy of Cathy Hemly.
Below: Asparagus in the field,
photo courtesy of the California Asparagus
Commission.



Rio Vista's "Rio Vision"

Community Organizers Make a Difference!

RioVision wants you to see Rio Vista in a different way.

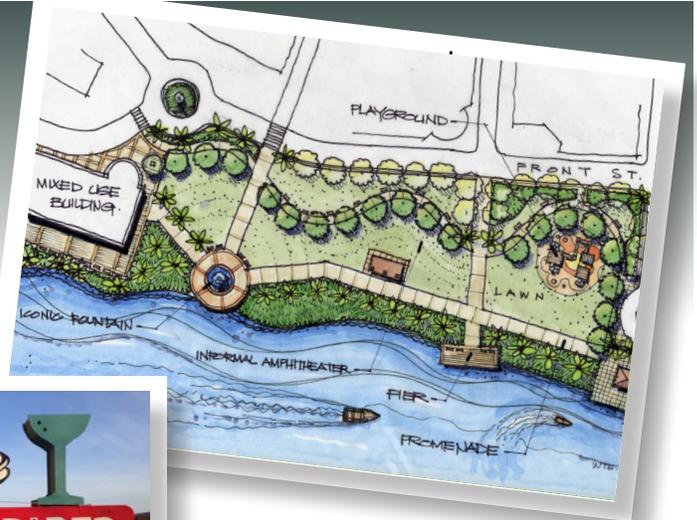
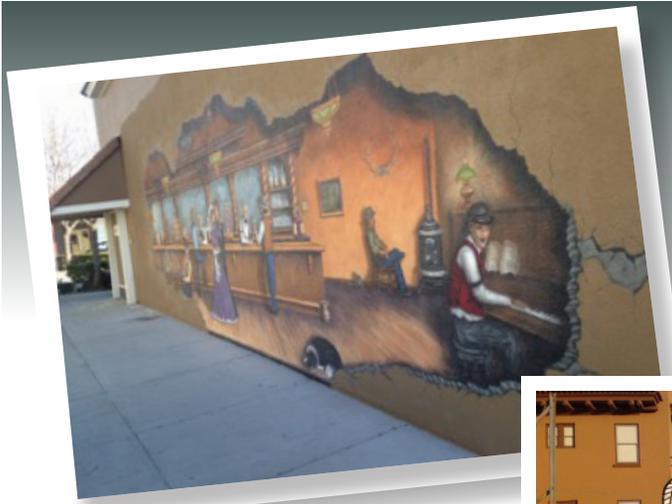
In 2012, a nationwide AT&T commercial showed a runner who starts in San Francisco and, after getting lost in his music, eventually ends up on a lonely road surrounded by roaming sheep and wind turbines. He looks at the map on his phone and exclaims in bewilderment, "Rio Vista?"

RioVision, formed that same year, has been feverishly pursuing economic revitalization projects that are aimed at transforming the largest Delta legacy community from a punchline to a vibrant, thriving place. A group of local residents formed the non-profit organization in response to Caltrans' plans for a new bridge that would potentially reroute Highway 12 through the city. The founders wanted to establish a vision for Rio Vista that was rooted in community input, a sense of unity between older and newer parts of the city, and assets such as the Sacramento River waterfront.

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The bridge at Rio Vista is a city icon.





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Finding a Partner

The group soon decided to apply to the American Institute of Architects for assistance from a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT), made up of national experts in architecture, economic development, landscape architecture and planning. Preparation of the application involved the entire community, including a survey in the local newspaper, letters of support from local governments, community leaders, businesses and civic organizations, fundraising and discussions of draft applications. The R/UDAT visited in early 2014 and presented its final recommendations in a town hall meeting attended by over 400 people.

Setting Priorities

Downtown First has been helping local retailers, particularly in the historic downtown, that have struggled due to competition with shopping centers in nearby communities. RioVision installed new bicycle racks and tree lights on downtown sidewalks, obtained approval for the redesign of 76

planters on Main Street, painted a mural on a building at 2nd and Main Streets and repainted a mural on the side of Hap's Bait Shop. The group joined the California Main Street Alliance for guidance on downtown revitalization and the opportunity to interact with other Main Street cities.

Getting it Done

RioVision is a vehicle for change, a catalyst for action. The group has already completed the following targeted projects:

- A survey of businesses located along the Highway 12 corridor, resulting in a letter summarizing merchant and police concerns sent to Caltrans and local government officials;
- Outreach to the public through weekly newspaper articles, a monthly status report, and a quarterly publication called Discover Rio Vista, which includes articles and an events calendar;

- Investigating locations for a community garden;
 - A mural painting workshop;
 - A new public art ordinance;
 - Developing activities for the city's youth.
- And all this in less than three years!

Future Projects

Future projects include a funding campaign for other proposals and streetscape projects. Rio Vista and RioVision - with their community solidarity and can-do attitude - are setting an excellent example of how Delta residents and businesses can come together to make a difference. The results have inspired Delta Protection Commission partnerships with county governments and the CSUS Center for Collaborative Policy for similar revitalization efforts in other Delta legacy communities. Check out the activity and get inspired at www.riovistavision.com.





Gourmet “Sparrow-Grass”

Delta asparagus delights foodies all over the nation.

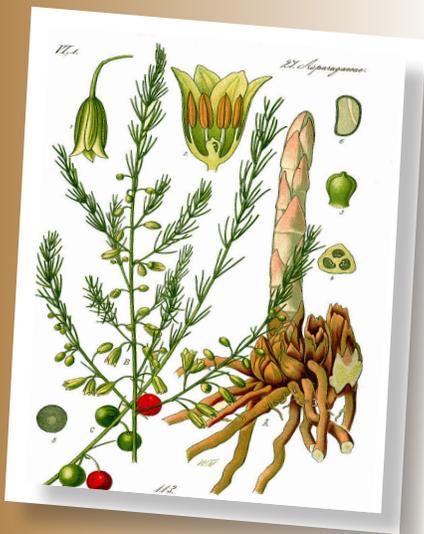
It’s spring in the California Delta, and for foodies that means ASPARAGUS. A member of the lily family and cousin to the alliums – garlic and onion – asparagus has been cultivated pretty much as long as humans have been farming. Asparagus is depicted in an Egyptian frieze dated to 3000 BC, and the name goes back past the Ancient Greeks to the Persians, who called it “asparag”, meaning “sprout” or “shoot”. In Ancient Greek it was “asparagos”, in classical Latin, “asparagus”, and the English “sparrow-grass”, cited in the 1700s, is simply a corruption of the original word. There is even a recipe for asparagus in the world’s oldest surviving cookbook, a Roman work from around 300 AD.

Always considered a delicacy, asparagus became popular across Europe in the 15th century, when an Arabic text touted its (unfortunately still unproven) aphrodisiac qualities. Madame de Pompadour, mistress to King Louis XV of France, was served asparagus in a dish called *points d’amour* (“love tips”), and it arrived on American tables in the mid-nineteenth century, once travel was fast enough for the crop to survive the trip. Today, China is the world’s largest producer of asparagus. In the United States, it is predominantly harvested in California, Washington and Michigan, with California producing 70% of the nation’s supply in the Delta, the Central Coast, and the Imperial Valley.

Asparagus in the field is a crazy-looking crop. The shoots stick up out of the ground alone, looking for all the world as if someone just stuck cut asparagus out in a field. Actually, the shoots are budding off a “crown” – much like a daffodil or iris buds off its rhizome to send up more flowers – and it takes two years for an asparagus plant to mature from seed to crown. The individual spears are harvested before the tight buds along the stem and at the tip open, usually when they are around nine inches long. One crown will send up shoots of varying size and thickness, and a commercial crown is harvested for ten to fifteen years. Asparagus is also highly labor-intensive, as workers walk along the rows harvesting one spear at a time, by hand. Once the buds on a spear open, the plant produces long, thin branches of sparse foliage and the stems become too woody to eat. At this stage you understand why asparagus ferns are called “asparagus” ferns – because the foliage looks just like the popular spiky house plant.

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ASPARAGUS FACTS

Dazzle your friends with these little-known facts about everybody's favorite spring vegetable:

- The word for Asparagus in Turkish, "kuskonmaz", translates literally as "bird can't land".
- Nowadays asparagus is consumed fresh – less than 1% of the Delta crop is processed – but until as recently as the 1950s, most asparagus was canned.
- The fruit of asparagus – a little red berry the size of a small pearl – is poisonous to humans.
- This year's San Joaquin Asparagus Festival - formerly the Stockton Asparagus Festival - will be the 30th annual celebration of the plant in San Joaquin County.

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First cultivated in the Delta in the 1850s, asparagus quickly became an important crop. Tender asparagus is highly perishable, which made the Delta ideal for cultivation since the waterways provided fast, close shipping routes to the San Francisco and Sacramento train depots. Also, in other regions asparagus has a short growing season – usually 60 to 90 days – but in California, with our varied microclimates, fresh asparagus is available January through May, and again in September and October.

Asparagus is highly nutritious and low in calories – although 93% water, the other 7% packs a long list of nutrients including potassium, vitamins C and B6, folic acid, thiamine, protein and fiber. To learn more about asparagus and taste it in all its springtime Delta glory, don't miss the San Joaquin Asparagus Festival, April 17 - 19, 2015! www.sanjoaquinasparagusfestival.net.

Delta Asparagus in Phyllo Dough

Ingredients:

- 3/4 pound Delta asparagus, cut in 1" lengths
- 2 medium leeks, white only, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped shallot
- 1/2 pound unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 pound Gruyere, grated
- 2 oz. toasted sliced almonds
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons chopped mint
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 4 tablespoons chopped dill
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 12 sheets of phyllo pastry



Instructions

1. Blanch asparagus for 3 minutes. Saute leeks and shallots in 4 T. butter and add to asparagus. Toss with cheese, almonds, eggs, herbs, spices and lemon juice, and heat oven to 350°F.
2. Butter a metal cookie sheet and lay down one sheet of phyllo dough, brushing with melted butter. Repeat up to six layers. Place half of the asparagus/herb mixture on dough and roll like a burrito, tucking ends inside. Repeat with the other six sheets and remaining mixture to create two rolls.
3. Bake for 40 or 45 minutes, until phyllo is browned and crisp. Allow to cool slightly, slice (a bread knife is best) and serve warm.

recipe courtesy of Pamela Darracq

Sharing the Delta's Beauty -
One Landscape at a Time.

Save the Date!

May 23-25

“Delta FOREVER”

Landscapes of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta
Imperiled, Irreplaceable and Inspirational

THE OLD COURTLAND BANK
COURTLAND, CALIFORNIA

Save the date for what is shaping up to be a very remarkable collection of Delta landscapes, selected by the artists themselves and presented in support of the proposed National Heritage Area status for the Delta. Artists have been inspired by the unique and timeless qualities of the Delta for decades, and with this show these painters hope to educate those who may never have visited the Delta on the beauty and fragility of the magnificent “Heart of California”.

That’s why the organizers plan to exhibit the collection in galleries in Reno, Sacramento, Stockton and the Bay Area, but it will open for Delta residents and Delta enthusiasts in the old, historic Courtland Bank building over Memorial Day Weekend.

Artists that have committed works for the show include:
Vicki Asp • Mark Bowles • Fred Dalkey • Patti and Faith Garamendi
Miles Hermann • Irmgard and Jim Hirshinger • Gregory Kondos
Pat Mahony • Anthony Montanino • Terry Pappas • Shimo
Leslie Toms and many, many more.

www.deltaforeverart.com

Top Three : Delta Landscapes by Timothy Mulligan, Shimo, and Gregory Kondos, courtesy of the artists.

Bottom Right: the historic Courtland Bank building in Courtland.



DELTA EVENTS



April

11th: *Delta Days Art Walk*, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg.

www.oldsugarmill.com

11th: *Opening Day Parade & Blessing of the Fleet*,

Pittsburg Yacht Club, Pittsburg. www.pittsburgyc.com

17th- 19th: *San Joaquin Asparagus Festival*, Stockton.

www.sanjoaquinasparagusfestival.net

25th: *Opening of "Gateway to Gold Mountain" exhibit*,

Locke. www.aiisf.org

May

9th: *Locke Centennial Celebration*, Locke.

www.locke-foundation.org

10th: *AMGEN Tour of California Bicycle Race - West*

Sac to Rio Vista. www.amgentourofcalifornia.com

16th- 17th: *Lodi Zinfest*, Lodi.

www.zinfest.com

21st: *Delta Protection Commission Meeting*, Courtland.

www.delta.ca.gov

23rd- 25th: *DeltaFOREVER Landscapes Show*

Courtland Bank, Courtland. www.deltaforeverart.com

June

13th: *Delta Days Art Walk*, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg.

www.oldsugarmill.com

20th- 21st: *Isleton Cajun Festival*, E2 Family Winery, Lodi.

www.isletoncajunfestival.net

28th- 29th: *Grapes and Grub Festival*, Old Sugar Mill,

Clarksburg. www.oldsugarmill.com



Delta Protection Commission

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