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CELEBRATING THE ABUNDANCE OF LOCAL FOODS IN THE ROARING FORK VALLEY AND NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

NO. 19 SUMMER 2012

JUSTICE SNOW'S: COCKTAIL CULTURE MEETS CREATIVE CUISINE

ANDREW ZIMMERN EATS IT ALL • WALKING THE TALK AT HOLY TERROR FARM

SMITH FORK RANCH • COWBOY CAVIAR • SIZZLING SUMMER RECIPES

Member of Edible Communities



Alison Gannett holds a fresh artichoke display just before a farm-to-table dinner held for friends and neighbors at Holy Terror Farm.

{ from the **land** }

CHICKS AND CHIX!

Alison Gannett walks the talk at Holy Terror Farm

By Nelson Harvey

When Alison Gannett emerged to greet me, I was admiring her to-do list, a whiteboard propped on an outdoor picnic table, filled with multi-colored scribbles. “Order hoop house,” it says. “Buy pigs. Corn husker.” Alongside these farm-related items were reminders to promote her “Rippin Chix” ski and mountain bike camps, and tend to her stable of environmental nonprofits, including the Gunnison Office of Resource Efficiency and “Save Our Snow,” an outfit that advocates for climate change action to insure the future of skiing.

It was enough to make the most stalwart workaholic quake with fear. And yet Gannett, dressed in a trucker hat, a green shirt that read “EAT YOUR VEGGIES” and rubber boots, seemed quite at ease.

On a brilliant spring morning, I had come to see her latest experiment: In 2010, this former free-skiing champion and global-warming activist purchased Holy Terror Farm, an 1889 homestead on 75 acres just north of Paonia, named for the creek which often rages through their property. In just two years, she and her partner, Jason Trimm, had transformed it into a menagerie of low-impact subsistence living.

Al Gore, Gannett says, was a major inspiration for the farm, albeit in an unexpected way. After working in 2007 as a trainer for staff of Gore’s Climate Project, Gannett was weary of conferences, slideshows and preaching. She resolved to make a concrete example of her own life.

“People are over the theory, and they have a deep yearning to do something that’s meaningful, she says. “For me, a big theme has always been walking the talk, and the farm shows you can do that.”

In a valley full of organic farms and market gardens of every stripe, Holy Terror is geared less toward selling vegetables than feeding its owners, every day of the year, and showing others how it’s done.

The farm is home to 170 types of trees, including several varieties of nuts for nut oil, a “banana replacement” known as the pawpaw, and one of the Valley’s oldest cherry orchards. There is a herd of Scottish Highland cattle, a small breed well suited to Colorado winters, and there are chickens as well as pigs, from which the couple renders their own lard.

With about an acre of gardens, the couple grows a huge range of vegetables, along with wheat, oats and corn for use in bread and meal throughout the winter. Gannett oversees the gardens, while Trimm handles the livestock.

To drive home the message that, as Gannett puts it, “it’s possible to live with less, and have a more rewarding life,” the team does a lot of public outreach, hosting farm-to-table dinners throughout the summer, as well as farm camps for young people and adults alike, school tours and tours for public officials. During Paonia’s Mountain Harvest Festival September 27–30, Gannett will lead bike tours to area farms and vineyards.

Yet the farm is more than just a Petri dish for green living. It’s also Gannett’s own way of protecting herself from whatever seismic global changes lie ahead. And as an act of self-preservation, it certainly beats a bomb shelter. Although there’s plenty of canned food around, it’s not of the store-bought variety.



From top: Jason harvesting Rome, Delicious and Northern Spy apples. The root cellar is always stocked with at least a year’s supply of food. Akbash livestock guardian dogs Hank and Blue work at night to guard the orchard, chickens and piglets and sleep all day.



A Holy Terror specialty, heirloom carrots, for eating and seed stock.



Jason watering the cows and rotating to fresh grass paddocks daily.

“This is a major reason we bought this place,” says Gannett as she heaves open the door to her root cellar, a squat structure with concrete walls sunken into a hill along the driveway. Although it’s the middle of spring outside, the inner shelves are stocked with artifacts of summer: applesauce, canned peaches, tomatoes, peppers, four kinds of cucumber pickles and large jars of fruit juice. Given winter’s recent end, the scores of untouched cans that remain suggest that the couple’s experiment is going well.

LOCAL FARMS FIRST BRINGS THE FARM TO YOU

Gannett and Trimm founded this online farmers’ market featuring fresh products from more than 50 Western Slope farms, now run by the Office for Resource Efficiency, a nonprofit organization based in Gunnison County.

Customers can order local, organic food online, year-round, with weekly delivery to home, school or office. In addition to produce, one can purchase meats, dairy, baked goods, processed foods and some crafts.

An annual membership fee of \$25 is required.

For more information, visit localfarmsfirst.org or call 970.641.7682.

“Last year we produced *way* too much, Gannett says, smiling. “I’m kind of a hoarder.”

In a nursery across the drive, flats full of young peppers, tomatoes and other tender summer vegetables share space with bins full of next year’s seed stock—leeks, artichokes, cauliflower and several varieties of heirloom corn. “I’ve got to grow a whole section of the garden just for seed,” Gannett says.

Any excess food Holy Terror produces is sold through Local Farms First, a nonprofit online farmers’ market that the couple founded in 2009 while living in Crested Butte. The company transports the wares of over 50 local growers to hungry mouths in that nearby resort town, and on the day I visited Trimm was out driving the week’s load.

“We founded that because I wanted to be able to pick and choose my produce,” Gannett says. “It’s sort of the next evolution of the food co-op.”

Although the farm certainly fills its owners’ bellies, it has yet to pay their mortgage—and for that, Gannett’s status as an elite athlete is key. Leftover cash from her myriad off-farm ventures goes toward Holy Terror’s ongoing experiment in what Gannett calls “integrated” farming, an approach that considers the farm a self-contained organism.

In this model, waste from one aspect is food for another, and each part serves the whole. Cow manure, for instance, is a fertilizer rather than a pollutant, aiding in the production of the very pasture that becomes hay for the cows.

“There’s no such thing as a totally sustainable farm,” Gannett says. “But we try to be *more* sustainable every day.” She smiles. “If the world ended tomorrow, we’d be better off than most people!” ^{eA}

GO FIND IT!

Holy Terror Farm
42485 Highway 133, Paonia
970.527.3373
alisongannett.com



Scottish Highland cattle’s thick coats create a more marbled grass-finished beef.