

## HAY: IT'S NOT JUST FOR HORSES

It's also for humans, apparently. Dried grass is quietly becoming one of the hottest, if weirdest, gourmet ingredients on the ground

**A GROWING NUMBER** of top kitchens across North America and Europe are harnessing hay's comforting, pastoral quality in their dishes. They're using it to lend grassy, autumnal, haute-barnyard goodness to whole poached hams, for smoking veal chops and sweetbreads, as a smoky and strangely familiar seasoning powder for meats and fish and even to flavor whipping cream for dessert. Many professional kitchens source their hay from egg and meat producers; for obvious reasons it's worth finding stuff that's fresh, organic and unused. Fergus Henderson, the London-based nose-to-tail pioneer and co-chef behind St. John Bar and Restaurant, suggests home cooks get it at the pet store. Chances are it's the only ingredient *du jour* you'll ever find next to the Friskies. —Chris Nuttall-Smith

**Alinea Chicago** Chef Grant Achatz was an early hay adopter; his creations include "hay brûlée," made with cream that's steeped with hay, and toasted hay sauce, served with caramelized cauliflower and burnt bread puree.

**Aquavit New York** This iconic Scandinavian room's sweetbreads smoked over smoldering hay and served with parsnips and apple cider have become a minor sensation in the last year. Chef Marcus Jernmark also uses hay ashes to give fiery depth to the restaurant's meats.

**Manzo New York** Mario Batali's beef-focused restaurant in the Eataly emporium grills a 22-ounce, milk-fed veal chop until it's caramelized, then finishes it in the oven, buried in a smoking bed of rosemary, thyme and hay from an egg supplier upstate. The taste? "Barnyardy, without being overpowering," one Manzo cook said. "It reminds you where the veal came from."

**Noma Denmark** René Redzepi, the young and wickedly influential genius behind the Copenhagen restaurant recently voted best in the world, smokes quail eggs in hay, combines toasted hay and grapeseed oil into a finishing drizzle and serves hay-infused whipped cream with carrot cake powder and lingonberry sorbet.

**St. John Bar and Restaurant London** Though the menu at this beloved off-cuts and organ meats specialist changes daily, the ham poached in hay, based on a French countryside classic, is a recurring feature. A bonus, chef Fergus Henderson has said, is that it fills the kitchen with "rustic" smells.

**The Hoof Café Toronto** At Hogtown's carnivore breakfast mecca, chef Geoffrey Hopgood wraps brined hams in wet hay then cooks them sous-vide, before finishing them on a griddle. They're intensely juicy, with mellow notes of nuts and grass.

**HAY NOW** Aquavit chef Marcus Jernmark's hay-charred scallops with horseradish mayo.



James Ransom for The Wall Street Journal. (Insets) J. Martin Barron for The Wall Street Journal

► Get the recipe for hay-charred scallops with horseradish mayo at [WSJ.com/Food](http://WSJ.com/Food).