

ON GASTRONOMY AND CULTURE

BACCHUS

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

MARCIA GAGLIARDI *(Food Writer)*

An insider's look into the amazing lives of some of the most important people in the world of food and wine.

9:00 A.M.

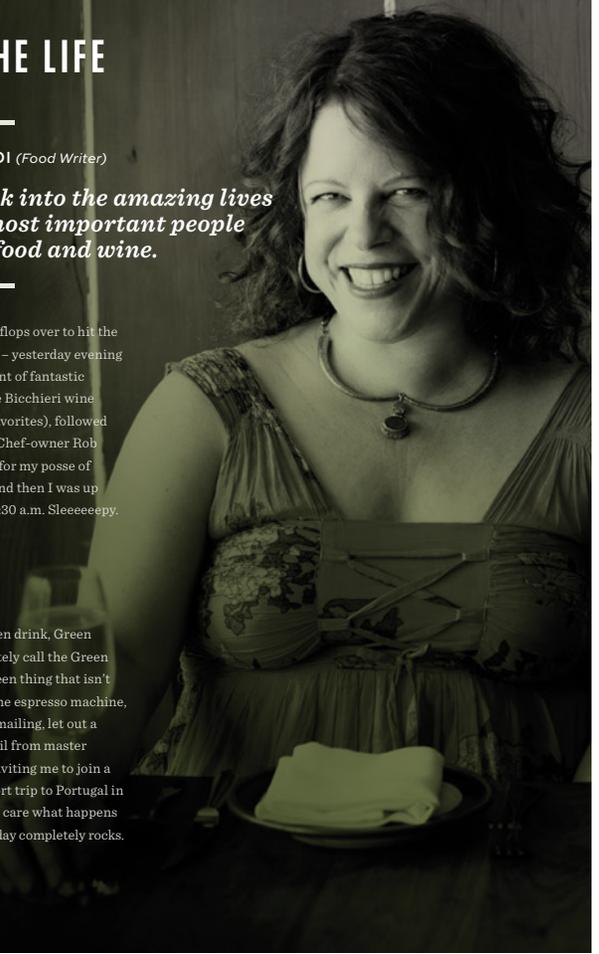
Alarm goes off, hand quickly flops over to hit the snooze. Head is a little heavy – yesterday evening I was tasting a copious amount of fantastic Italian wines (the annual Tre Bicchieri wine tasting is always one of my favorites), followed by a late dinner at Butterfly. Chef-owner Rob Lam created a custom menu for my posse of Italians, total abbondanza. And then I was up late answering emails until 1:30 a.m. Sleeeeeeepy.

9:09 A.M.

Okay, okay, I'm up.

9:15 A.M.

I start every day with my green drink, Green Vibrance, which I affectionately call the Green Menace (I swear, the only green thing that isn't in it is marijuana). Turn on the espresso machine, fire up the computer. Start emailing, let out a small whoop as I find an email from master sommelier Evan Goldstein inviting me to join a group of sommeliers on a short trip to Portugal in November. Huh wah?! I don't care what happens for the rest of day, because today completely rocks.



9:30 A.M.

Grab a Beauty's Bagel from the freezer and toast it up, slather on some cream cheese and shingle it with a few slices of gravlax. Put on one of my favorite DJs to write to on Soundcloud, Leftside Wobble, and start plowing through emails. Eat at my desk.

9:45 A.M.

Time to pull a shot of espresso – excited to be trying a new one (to me): Red Whale espresso out of the North Bay. Comes out with a ton of crema, again, today rocks. Start getting cute texts from my Dad, sis, and girlfriends wishing me Happy Valentine's Day. Meow.

10:00 A.M.

Knuckle crack, time to start cranking on my weekly San Francisco Bay Guardian column, "Tablehopping." Normally I turn it in on the weekend, but the upcoming holiday weekend means I have to turn it in by 1 p.m.

11:45 A.M.

Done. Send my SFBG piece on St. Helena to my editor with pics I took.

12:15 P.M.

Take a couple bites of last night's leftover fried rice (which had king crab, cubes of foie gras, and ikura in it, can you believe?). It's one of the perils of writing about food: it constantly makes you hungry. It's also one of the dangers of having leftovers like that in your fridge: you can't stop thinking about them. Check emails, zip through Twitter to see what's going on.

12:30 P.M.

Time to start writing my next piece, which, like any good writer, I completely procrastinated on doing for two weeks. It's for Blackboard Eats, highlighting five dishes I have eaten recently that I'm fired up on. Start looking through my iPhoto pics and some menus on my desk for highlights.

1:15 P.M.

Lunch: I cut a few slices off the piece of leftover prime rib roast I brought home from my grandma's 85th birthday dinner the other night. I tuck 'em into a little dinner roll that I have, add a

few swaths of creamy horseradish, some pieces of lettuce, and a scattering of sliced peperoncini. Give myself a thumbs up for the combo. (I could write a book on what to do with leftovers, I swear.) Eat at my desk while scanning Twitter.

1:30 P.M.

Reread and proofread my Blackboard Eats piece and submit. Exhale. Both of today's writing deadlines are done. Catch up on today's news and restaurant gossip by trawling my RSS subscriptions. Peel myself a tangerine.

2:00 P.M.

Prepare talking points for KRON 4 (I have my "tablehopper hot list" segment on early the next morning; I have to be at the studio at 8:30 a.m., but fortunately someone from the makeup line The Balm is going to be there to do my makeup (normally I have to do it myself). Going to talk about three great date restaurants in San Francisco, highlighting what to order and where to sit. Finish my copy points and send to my producer and Marty Gonzales, who hosts the weekend morning news. Plow through emails. Every day, it's a total firehose.

3:45 P.M.

Time for exercise. Head out the door and power walk through Golden Gate Park and hit some hills. Was hoping to just listen to some music but a couple calls come in (sommelier friend asking me who my favorite wine directors are in the city, and another friend wants my thoughts about how I like my Fiat 500, meep meep).

4:45 P.M.

Get home all sweaty, hop into the shower, gotta hustle, am running late. Fortunately my friend who is picking me up is running late too. Bust out some red heels in honor of the day.

5:35 P.M.

My sweet buddy arrives. He's gay, but is totally my Valentine. (Even hands me a card when I get in the car, awww.) Off to Lost Art, a gallery that one of our dear friends is a founder of – we'll only have 10 minutes at the show because of our early dinner reservation, but I still want to say hello.

6:00 P.M.

Kiss kiss, hello hello, goodbye goodbye.

6:25 P.M.

We are totally sitting at a standstill on Van Ness. Traffic is utterly, completely atrocious. Haven't been in that level of gridlock for a long while. Text one of the partners of A16 that we're gonna be 10 minutes late for our reso since I can't get a hold of someone at the host stand. Hate being late. Time to start busting some backstreets of San Francisco moves to get to the other side of town. Direct my friend on which streets to take while consulting traffic data on Google Maps. Let's do this.

6:40 P.M.

Parking gods completely spoil us with a spot less than a block away. On a Friday night in the Marina, are you kidding? Hallelujah.

6:45 P.M.

It's the 10th anniversary of A16, so the place is especially on fire. They had a party earlier in the day to celebrate, so there are lanterns hanging overhead and I love the huge arrangements of cherry blossoms on the kitchen counter. Get seated at a table but ask if we can nab the two seats at the counter instead. (I'm always a counter girl.)

They are running a special 10th anniversary tasting menu that night, highlighting dishes from over the past decade. The opening chef, Christophe Hille, is in town from New York and in the kitchen with current chef Chris Thompson.

The atmosphere is so celebratory and buoyant. Partner Shelley Lindgren is luminous in her red lace dress, and totally beaming because she has some Southern Italian winemakers in the house – the timing with Tre Bicchieri couldn't have been better.

We have perfect seats to say hello to people passing by. Have fun chatting (in Italian) with a couple Italian winemakers about their wines, and with Greg Lindgren about bars in Japan and the "hard shake" technique. Great seeing so many industry friends of the house, from my buddy James Stolich of Cook with James, to the ever-charming Eugenio Jardim, to other pals in the wine industry. Tables are packed, wine is being

poured left and right, pizzas are sailing out of the blazing oven and getting black truffle shaved on top. Yup, Happy 10th Anniversary, A16 team! Such true hospitality shown to San Francisco the past decade. Grazie mille!

Every year for Valentine's Day I usually host a "Lonely Hearts Dinner" (the title is meant as a joke) with my fellow single friends – which entails a big banquet dinner at a Chinese restaurant and drinks afterward – but this was a special Valentine's Day event I couldn't turn down. The night was a total blast. My friend and I decide A16 makes the best semifreddo in town. And put a fork in us, because we are done. Stuffed.

10:45 P.M.

My Valentine drops me off at home. I do a little bit of emailing, check Twitter, and do a dry run through what I'm going to say on TV tomorrow morning. Crawl into bed, prop up my iPad and spend about 30 minutes catching up on Facebook.

11:30 P.M.

Set alarm for tomorrow. I normally don't get to bed until after 1 a.m., but the 7 a.m. alarm in the morning is looming, and I need my sleep. Buona notte!

With a rich history in the dining scene, Marcia is always in the know. As founder and editor of the appropriately titled tablehopper.com, her positive approach is refreshing, and can be enjoyed through her weekly e-column, which is chock-full of the most up-to-date restaurant news and information about her dining adventures (be sure to subscribe!). In addition, she also pens articles for a handful of other San Francisco-based publications including 7x7.com, a weekly column for the SF Bay Guardian, and she has monthly appearances on KRON Channel 4.

Follow her on Twitter: @tablehopper.