

FINANCIAL TIMES

How to spend it

SEPTEMBER 5 2015

HOUR OF TWEED
COSMOPOLITAN,
CAPTIVATING, COOL



Jean-Georges Vongerichten

The Alsace-born chef fuses French techniques and light Asian flavours at a global restaurant empire that includes three Michelin-starred Jean-Georges in New York and Market in Paris

The vibe of New York can be draining, so my weekends in Westchester are a restorative necessity. This is where I step away, spend time with family and friends and recharge my batteries. Our home is just an hour outside the city, so weekend escapes are very easy.

Saturday is my day to sleep in – a thing I never do during the week. After starting the day with a matcha green-tea latte and seven-grain toast topped with smoked salmon and avocado, I'll head to the John Jay Homestead farm market in Katonah to stock up on provisions for the meals I like to cook over the weekend. I am always inspired by what is fresh and I'll buy whatever vegetables, berries, cheeses and country breads look appealing.

Our days are centred around being outside, so after a full shop I'll take my daughter Chloe [15] to Echo Farm, where I'll ride while she has a lesson. Or we'll go canoeing on Lake Waccabuc [pictured]; it's very peaceful and the perfect antidote to the city. Back home, I like to walk in the woods, foraging for wild berries and mushrooms to use in various dishes later.

We'll have a casual lunch at the house – a roast chicken with simple mixed greens, a tomato salad and sautéed corn. The afternoon is then spent visiting Gossett Brothers Nursery, where I like buying plants and flowers for the house and garden, particularly roses and peonies.

Evenings are our time for trying the great – and varied – cuisine the area has to offer. Blue Hill at Stone Barns is always an incredible experience, with visits to the on-site greenhouse making it even more special. Chef Dan Barber's signature "vegetables on a fence" features the freshest, simplest ingredients – baby carrots, fennel, tiny radishes – and I know I'm eating food straight from the field. If we feel like seafood, Purdy's Farmer & the Fish is the place to go, while the relaxed 121 in North Salem serves the best goat's cheese and caramelised-onion pizza.

For a fun night with friends, we'll head to Truck for creative New Mexican food and margaritas, or to Campagna at the Bedford Post Inn, where chef Michael White of Marea serves amazing branzino and fusilli with pork ragù. The evening often ends with a nightcap – Hudson Valley whiskey, tequila or a good cold beer – enjoyed next to our outdoor firepit.

I'm always first up on Sunday so I'll walk the dogs and prepare a breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon and fruit for my

family. I use this quiet time to check emails from my restaurants. Saturday nights are key in my business and I like to know how my chefs are doing. We'll then visit the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem, which has 25 endangered red and grey wolves and all sorts of interesting workshops and guided walks – as well as "evening howls".

Lunch is always a huge spread, with ribs, fish, chicken and vegetables, all cooked on our custom-made stone grill. My wife Marja might make a Korean dish, too. Our friends and family – often 12 or more people – like coming over because

they're sure the food will be good and the atmosphere low-key. After that, we'll do more hiking or canoeing before heading back to the city for an early dinner.

Sunday nights are spent with the whole family, including my two older children – Cedric, the chef at Perry Street, and Louise, the creative force at Chefs Club – and our two grandchildren. By this point, we're all ready for great sushi, so we'll go to the sleek EN Japanese Brasserie in West Village or Nobu in Tribeca. My Sundays typically end early – I'm in bed by 9pm – so that I'm rested for the busy week ahead in my kitchens. **CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS**



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PHOTOGRAPH BY DOROTHY HONG. ADDRESS BOOK 121, 2 DINGLE RIDGE RD, N SALEM, NY 10560 (+1914-669 0121; WWW.121RESTAURANT.COM). BLUE HILL AT STONE BARN, 630 BEDFORD RD, POCANTICO HILLS, NY 10591 (+1914-366 9600; WWW.BLUEHILLFARM.COM). CAMPAGNA, 954 OLD POST RD, BEDFORD, NY 10506 (+1914-234 6386; WWW.CAMPAGNA-BEDFORD.COM). ECHO FARM, 91 SPRING ST, S SALEM, NY 10590 (+1914-763 5742; WWW.ECHOFARM.BIZ). EN, 5 HUDSON ST, NY 10014 (+1212-647 9196; WWW.ENJB.COM). GOSSETT BROTHERS NURSERY, 1202 OLD POST RD, S SALEM, NY 10590 (+1914-763-3001; WWW.GOSSETTBROTHERSNURSERY.COM). JOHN JAY HOMESTEAD, 400 JAY ST, KATONAH, NY 10536 (+1914-232 5651; WWW.JOHNJAYHOMESTEAD.ORG). NOBU, 105 HUDSON ST, NY 10013 (+1212-219 0500; WWW.NOBURESTaurants.COM). PURDY'S FARMER & THE FISH, 100 TITICUS RD, N SALEM, NY 10560 (+1914-617 8380; WWW.FARMERANDTHEFISH.COM). TRUCK, 391 OLD POST RD, BEDFORD, NY 10506 (+1914-234 8900; WWW.TRUCKRESTAURANT.COM). WOLF CONSERVATION CENTER, 7 BUCK RUN ST, S SALEM, NY 10590 (+1914-763 2373; WWW.NYWOLF.ORG).