

# montalvo

A R T S C E N T E R

## Calling all Farmers, Gourmet Artisans, and Food & Drink Lovers: Be a Part of the American Pantry MAP!

*National photographic project by artist Andrea Blum celebrates American food culture with photo shoot at Montalvo on Sept. 29 at 1:30pm*



**ABOVE:** Food and drink artisans from Oakland, San Francisco, Sonoma, and Mendocino lay in a field in Marin County for an aerial photo using a drone for the My American Pantry mapping project. Photo © Kenny Blum Photography and Andrea Blum, 2013. [Click here to view a larger version.](#)

**SARATOGA, Calif.** – At 1:30pm on **September 29, 2013**, culinary artist **Andrea Blum** invites the community to participate in her national photography project **My American Pantry**: a celebration of creativity, taste, community, and entrepreneurship. Taking place on the **Great Lawn of the Montalvo Arts Center**, the event will begin with an aerial photo shoot, followed by a community picnic with participants sharing dishes prepared from family recipes. The resulting photo will be included in an interactive digital atlas of American food and drink representing American food and entrepreneurship. It is free to participate, but **advance registration is required**. Please sign up at [myamericanpantry.com/montalvo-picnic-photo](http://myamericanpantry.com/montalvo-picnic-photo).

This will be the first time Blum has invited the general public to participate in one of her MAP photo shoots. In the past, she has limited participants to professional artisan food and drink producers, including cheese makers, vintners, and farmers. “Part of the aim of my project is to celebrate the rich local traditions around the preparation and sharing of food,” she said. “Asking participants to share family recipes seemed like the natural evolution of the project.”

All participants will be asked to bring a picnic blanket of a specific color, a homemade food to share, and the recipe for the dish. Participants who are professional artisan producers will also be asked to bring products and tools of the trade of their craft. “Be prepared to relax in the grass and to share what you bring with those around you,” said Blum. “We will do the rest with the composition and with the remote control camera flying above.”

## ABOUT MY AMERICAN PANTRY

Begun in 2013, the My American Pantry (MAP) project is an interactive tapestry of people, food, story, and recipes that celebrate the American table, conceived of by culinary artist Andrea Blum. Traveling around the country, Blum documents the wide array of artisans, products, and food traditions native to different geographic areas. First arranging participants and the tools of their trade in a carefully designed composition, Blum then captures the image via aerial photography by means of a remote-controlled camera. The photo shoots also provide an opportunity to gather stories from participants about their practices, products, and their craft.

The end-goal is to create an online and offline map of people, products, and stories allowing viewers and even shoppers to interact with the images and stories. Blum hopes to bring the finalized project from all 50 states to the World's Fair in Milan in 2015. More information about the MAP project is available at [myamericanpantry.com](http://myamericanpantry.com).

## ABOUT THE FOUNDER: ANDREA BLUM

Born in Pennsylvania and raised in California, Andrea Blum is a journalist and chef turned entrepreneur. Her passion for food ignited as a child after eating her first French meal in a famous restaurant in Philadelphia at 11 years old. That experience changed the way she thought about food. At 20 years old, she took a year to study in France learning the history, art, and cultural significance of food that would quickly become part of a lifelong fascination. Though she later returned to France and Italy to resume her studies of fresco painting and art restoration, every moment of her free time was spent exploring the cooking, farming, and culture of the French and Italian food world, with mothers, grandmothers, master cheese makers, and artisans.



**ABOVE:** Andrea and Kenny Blum operate the “octocopter,” a remote-controlled aerial camera.

In 2003, Blum traded her paintbrush for pen, graduating from Columbia University in Journalism with awards in social justice reporting. She has since worked as a reporter covering the environment in Northern California. But she has also stayed close to her passion for food, writing for newspapers and magazines such as *Gourmet* and *Saveur*, and hosting tours to discover and indulge in Italian regional “food worlds” such as the Cilento and Amalfi Coast regions of Campania.

Blum’s interests have always been related to the geography of food; she seeks to discover the stories each dish can tell whether it’s from the highlands of Tibet or in remote villages in Turkey. My American Pantry (MAP) is an extension of her geographic quest to follow food back to where it’s made. Only this time, she has chosen to focus on American artisan food, its rebirth, its crafters and its terroir.



## **FLOURISH: ARTISTS EXPLORE WELLBEING**

Blum's photo shoot is presented as part of the public programming organized around Flourish: Artists Explore Wellbeing, Montalvo's latest multiyear programming theme, coordinated by the Lucas Artists Residency Program in collaboration with Montalvo's Education Department. Through exhibitions, conversations, performances, and workshops, Montalvo explores the question, "How can we live meaningful, happy, and healthy lives?" For more information, please visit [montalvoarts.org/flourish](http://montalvoarts.org/flourish).

## **MY AMERICAN PANTRY (MAP) PICNIC AND PHOTO SHOOT**

- Who:** Culinary artist Andrea Blum, in partnership with the Montalvo Arts Center
- What:** A public potluck picnic and photo shoot, organized around the My American Pantry project to celebrate American food and drink.
- Where:** Great Lawn of the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga, CA.
- When:** Sunday, September 29, at 1:30pm
- Admission:** It is free to participate, but advance registration is required. Please sign up at [myamericanpantry.com/montalvo-picnic-photo](http://myamericanpantry.com/montalvo-picnic-photo).

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**MONTALVO ARTS CENTER** is an estate of mind! A multidisciplinary nonprofit institution, our mission is to create and present arts of all types, nurture artists, and use our historic villa, buildings, and grounds in innovative ways that engage people in the creative process. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga Hills, Montalvo occupies a Mediterranean-style Villa, built in 1912 by Senator James Duval Phelan, surrounded by 175 stunning acres, including the campus of our international Lucas Artists Residency Program. Senator Phelan bequeathed the villa and grounds to the people of California for the encouragement of art, music, literature and architecture, a mandate that Montalvo has carried forward ever since its founding. For more information, call (408) 961-5800 or visit [www.montalvoarts.org](http://www.montalvoarts.org).