

ible

ter bake and a Tex-Mex fiesta.

In the evenings, a sign in the main farmhouse directs guests to pre-dinner cocktails and appetizers. One night it's skewered satay and microbrewery beers in the pub across a small gulch; another it's caviar and champagne on the deck. Following a sit-down dinner in the dining room, which seats up to 26, guests retire to yet another room for assorted cheeses, selected ports and cordials. Finally, brave souls are lured out doors to a bonfire and a nightcap of Cognac and chocolate-and-marshmallow s'mores.

Twin Farms can be reached at P.O. Box 115, Stage Road, Barnard, Vt., 05031, (800) 894-6327. Open year-round except April. Guest suites in the main house range from \$700 to \$850 a night; cottages from \$850 to \$1,500. All rates are double occupancy.

PERRY GARFINKEL

Healdsburg, Calif.

Old Jimtown Store Enjoys Second Life

For 75 years, the Goodyear family ran the Jimtown country store in the Alexander Valley, near Healdsburg, about 65 miles north of San Francis-



Paul O. Boisvert for The New York Times

also served outdoors.

co. Part credit grocery, part ersatz bank, it served a steady stream of migrant workers who harvested the prunes, pears, apples and hops cultivated on the dry, flat land.

But as prune yards gave way to vineyards and country stores were replaced by supermarkets, the Goodyears grew weary of the daily routine. The idea of going fishing became increasingly appealing to them. They put a sign to that effect on the door. The historic Sonoma country store, founded by Jim Patrick in 1893, lay idle and deteriorating for six years until a jazzy young New York couple came along to breathe new life into it.

Carrie Brown, an artist and interior designer, and her husband, John Werner, a former partner at the Silver Palate in New York, splashed the wooden facade with paint reflecting the mustard plants that sprout each winter among the vineyards around the store. A bright new garden, a shady arbor of hops and vines, and a chic sense of style have turned the Jimtown Store into a destination for food lovers and collectors of antiques and found objects ever since. The dapper Mr. Werner describes the inventory as "Proustian products that bring people back to another time."

There is a treasure for everyone at the little gossip hub of the Alexander Valley. Some items could have been on the shelves 100 years ago — horehound candy drops, balsa gliders, rock candy, Castile soap, yo-yos, clove gum and, of course, local wines. A sunny art gallery in the rear is chockablock with serious antiques and dear homely objects — washboards, linen tea towels, flowered Mexican oilcloth, Indian blankets, Wild West cowboy books, and toys and books for children.

But the food is the major draw, and loyal customers come hungry for duckburgers (made with ground Petaluma duck); a pungent olive salad (green and black olives, olive oil, capers, spices, garlic, parsley and lemon juice); a yam and andouille sausage salad with cider dressing, sun-dried-cherry scones and espresso brownies.

Many local vineyards and a large clientele of neighbors hire the Jimtown Store to cater parties. The popular green Jimtown olive salad (a great ingredient on grilled fish, water crackers, baked chicken or with tomato sauce for pasta) is available via mail order.

The Jimtown Store is at 6706 State Highway 128, Healdsburg, Calif. 95448. Telephone: (707) 433-1212. The



Terrence McCarthy for The New York Times

John Werner and Carrie Brown with olive scones and carrot muffins at the 1893 Jimtown Store near Healdsburg, Calif.

winter hours are 6:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. Monday through Friday, and 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Saturday and Sunday. It is closed on Wednesday.

PEGGY KNICKERBOCKER

Captiva, Fla.

Diet Vacation Without Spa Prices

Wally Arnold, the kitchen manager and chef in the Old Captiva House at Tween Waters Inn, armed with his trusty computer and eight years of working with visiting spa groups, crafts menus for guests who want a diet vacation without the price tag of a full service spa.

"I put all the restaurant's recipes into the computer, and it tells me the number of carbohydrates, fats and proteins," he said. Then, he says, "I figure out how I can make low-fat substitutes and how much I can reduce the size of portions."

At the restaurant, Mr. Arnold provides on request what he calls "fitness caper" meals, "light alternatives to our regular menu," he said.

During a recent five-day visit to the inn on Florida's Gulf Coast by a group of dieters, Mr. Arnold produced a daily 1,200-calorie protein diet. At the dieters' table, the staff removed temptations like menus, bread, butter, salt and sugar before the guests were seated. The staff also made sure the dessert cart did not

roll within their sight.

Breakfasts began with fresh fruit, followed by tiny whole-wheat waffles, with fruit yogurt or an egg-white omelet filled with sautéed vegetables (\$6). Lunch included a cup of vegetable broth, followed by a pasta salad with fresh seafood or mushrooms stuffed with puréed cauliflower and Bermuda onion with fresh fruit for dessert (\$12).

Dinner started with a copious salad, often spiked with edible violets or a Caesar salad with dressing made from yogurt, garlic and anchovies, followed by Fort Myers fresh fish, like grilled tuna, and stir-fried vegetables or grouper on papillote. Every evening an attractively displayed petite dessert was served (\$16). The beverage at lunch and dinner was a fruit-flavor iced-tea blend.

Even with the inn's help, dieters still cheat. "We've caught them down at the Burger King between meals or at the candy machines on the property," said Dean McMullen, a waiter. But, on this trip, with almost no cheating, the group of four dieters lost a total of 5 pounds.

Old Captiva House at Tween Waters Inn is at 15951 Captiva Road, Captiva Island, Fla. 33924; (471) 472-5161. December to May, it is open every day from 7:30 A.M. to 10 P.M. The remainder of the year the restaurant is open for breakfast from 7:30 to 11 A.M. and dinner from 5:30 to 10 P.M.

JOAN NATHAN