



# CULTURE



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## Stocking Your Summer Pantry: Chef Jeff Cerciello Recommends Delicious Seasonal Finds

*by Evelyn Crowley*



Photographed by Denise Crew

With summer in full swing, the season of easygoing entertainment is upon us and with it, trips to the market to stock up for long dinners in the backyard, twilight cocktails, and energizing breakfasts. While New Yorkers shop at standbys like Dean & DeLuca and Murray's Cheese Shop, those seeking the cream of the West Coast's crop find it at the market at Farmshop, the recently opened larder in L.A.'s quaint, albeit celebrity-laden, Brentwood Country Mart.

The vision of chef and former **Thomas Keller** right-hand **Jeff Cerciello**, the market, situated within his popular farm-to-table restaurant, Farmshop, proffers the Golden State's finest artisanal offerings (most of which are also available online). "I always wanted to get to that point in my life where I didn't have to travel so much and could focus on California and all of its amazing products," says Cerciello, who grew up in Laguna and currently splits his time between L.A. and Marin (where he is working on a restaurant by the same name).

An alum of Keller's Napa Valley trifecta (Bouchon, French Laundry, Ad Hoc), along with shuttered Michelin-star magnate elBulli, Cerciello's name carries cache in the gastronomy

world and beyond (A-list acolytes include **Jennifer Garner** and **Reese Witherspoon**). Yet at the market, there's no question as to who gets top billing. "We really wanted Farmshop to tell the story of the Southern California farmer," says Cerciello, who affixes tags to products denoting their hometown, and, with cheese monger and market manager Emiliano Lee, instituted a weekly educational series with classes on everything from beer and cheese pairings to butchery demos.

Though it encompasses a deli, bakery, beer and wine shelves, cheese and charcuterie counters, and a well-edited selection of housewares, the airy 1,750-square-foot space, with its skylights and gleaming white tile walls, feels more like a gallery than a grocery store. "I wanted to create a very different kind of market," explains Cerciello, who enlisted local design firm Commune to emulate flowing, open-plan spaces like London's Daylesford Organic. "I wanted people to be able to connect with each other and with our staff. I wanted them to talk about the food, touch it, smell it, taste it." Farmshop's restaurant component, which utilizes many of the products sold in the market, makes the experience that much more immersive. "People will say, 'Gosh, I really like this coffee.' And we'll go, 'The coffee is from Lamill, we sell it,'" says Cerciello, noting sheepishly, "I mean, the economics of it work."

*See Jeff's picks for your summer pantry below.*



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"We've been thoroughly enjoying the first releases of this year's cheese from Seana Doughty at Bleating Heart Cheese in Sebastopol. Fat Bottom Girl tastes beautiful—creamy and buttery with some bright fruit notes and just a hint of grass on the finish. Named after the Queen song, these wheels were allowed to set on one side long enough for them to settle into their characteristic fat bottomed shape. Initially a mistake, they have become a favorite amongst aficionados, and for good reason. This is some fine and fabulously flavorful fromage."

[bleatingheart.com](http://bleatingheart.com)

Photographed by Denise Crew

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