

# SHOP LIKE A CHEF

BY DANA ROBINSON AND RILEY MCDERMID

*In addition to culture, wine and the Golden Gate Bridge, the Bay Area is known throughout the world for its extraordinary cuisine. The area hosts restaurants helmed by some of the world's most inventive chefs, many of whom have deep roots in the region. But while these culinary artists are accustomed to serving up top-notch cuisine in their restaurants, they also like to cook at home for themselves, as well as their families and friends. We dared to ask chefs from some of the region's best restaurants a very personal question: "When you head to the market, what's always on your shopping list?"*

**Michael Mina**Owner, Michael Mina,  
San Francisco

Born in Cairo, Mina served as executive chef at San Francisco's legendary AQUA from 1993 to 2002. He then founded Mina Group with partner **Andre Agassi** and opened more than two dozen restaurants, including Michael Mina in San Francisco in 2010.

☞ “I love roasted nuts, and I always have that on the list. My favorites are pistachios.”

☞ “I always pick up the produce that’s most in season! Right now, there are incredible fall ingredients at the markets, especially here in Northern California.”

☞ “My favorites currently are eggplant, fennel, ginger and artichokes. On our new Middle Eastern-inspired menu, these ingredients are showing up a lot – like in our smoked fairytale eggplant with tangerine labneh and live sea scallop crudo with young ginger and the charcoal-grilled baby octopus with artichoke, saffron potato and cardamom schug.”

**Donato Scotti**Chef and proprietor,  
Donato Enoteca, Redwood City

Scotti's career path has taken him from Italy to NYC, and finally to Northern California, where he brings the authentic flavors of Italy to his restaurants in Redwood City, San Francisco and Berkeley.

☞ “Pasta dishes are a staple because they’re satisfying and can be made quickly. I particularly go for spaghetti, penne and paccheri, and I generally stick with pasta from Gragnano, Italy. It’s known to be made with the best wheat, and it’s bronze-cut, which helps the sauce stick better to the pasta.”

☞ “I also try to keep a few different olive oils on hand: Tuscan for a more pungent flavor, Sicilian for a bit of green flavor and a Ligurian olive oil that’s milder for finishing.”

☞ “I keep whole bean coffee in my pantry at all times; in particular Giannica Caffe, which is roasted in Verona by coffee roaster Gianni Frasi. Frasi is the only coffee roaster in the world who still roasts his beans manually over an open flame.”

**Kathy Fang**Co-owner and chef,  
Fang Restaurant, San Francisco

Born and raised in San Francisco, Kathy Fang grew up in the kitchen of her family's popular restaurant, House of Nanking, before opening Fang Restaurant with her father in 2009.

☞ “I always have to have some kind of Chinese vegetable at home, like yam leaf, choy sum, water spinach or bitter melon. The beauty of these vegetables is the many different ways you can prepare them. Bitter melon, for example, can be sautéed with black beans, pork, eggs or simmered in a soup – or stuffed with ground pork, or pickled and used in a salad.”

☞ “I also keep a bottle of grass-fed Hey Boo ghee in the fridge for times when I need a nice rich kick to a dish. I try to keep ponzo on hand, which is lighter than soy sauce and has a nice acidic citrus note to it. I use it on fish, salads, tofu, eggs and porridge.”

☞ “And I like to keep sheep’s cheese and goat’s cheese around for snacking.”

**Robin Song**Chef de cuisine, Stones Throw,  
San Francisco

Song was a part of the opening teams behind Bay Area restaurants such as Serpentine, Contigo and Plum Bar. He’s also held positions at AME at St. Regis San Francisco and Hog & Rocks.

☞ “Quick eats are crucial in our house. As for go-to items to cook with, we always have a whole chicken around, whether in the fridge, freezer or roasted. It’s something that can feed us for a few days with minimum process and cleaning. We also always bring home russet potatoes and sweet potatoes. We roast all the potatoes and keep them in the fridge for the week. Baked russets are great for a quick breakfast hash, and roasted sweet potatoes out of the fridge are a great way to silence a screaming toddler.”

☞ “Pasture-raised eggs are always present in our fridge, and we almost always have cooked leftover rice in the fridge. Guilty nostalgic pleasure: We always have a can of SPAM in the pantry. Quesadillas are a go-to late night fix, so a variety of tortillas and cheese always end up in our cart.”

**Guillaume Bienaime**Chef and Founder, Zola,  
Palo Alto

A native Frenchman, Bienaime knows a thing or two about Silicon Valley – he’s lived here since 1999. Now a resident of Menlo Park (and an alum of Marche and Portola Kitchen), he tells the Gazette he leans toward simplicity when stocking his fridge.

☞ “Well, with a 7-year-old in the house, we always have a good loaf of bread and peanut butter (not the fancy stuff, Jiffy) and Bonne Maman jams. Pickles are the traditional accompaniment for these sandwiches in our household (Sonoma Brinery, please).”

☞ “An assortment of sour beer and champagne is a must. You always have to be ready for an impromptu celebration. For me its eggs, cheese and good butter, since I often find myself cooking up a simple omelette after coming home from work (could I be any more French? No, I don’t wear a beret). And the cheese does double-duty for grilled cheese on Sunday nights!”