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# Getting Sauced

**Bob Weir** dishes up the latest on his new line of gourmet sauces *By Anthony Head*

Walking out of the Moscone Center in San Francisco's Mission District, Bob Weir is suddenly struck by the fact that his father once had an office on the very site of what is now the sprawling convention complex. His publicist, Dennis McNally, then points up the street and remarks that the original Mars Hotel used to be within sight of the spot they're standing on, before the hotel was demolished and the rest of the area went through such enormous renovations.

It's one of those surreal San Francisco moments, each of these veterans of the Grateful Dead organization thinking out loud about remnants of history and how time marches on, whether we want it to or not. But ideas and thoughts never sit still too long with some people, and those memories are waved away as we cross the street to the Marriott Hotel, briefly discussing everything from Weir's last tour with RatDog to Stanford University's basketball program.

We're walking away from the Moscone to escape the throngs of people that have

crammed into the vast convention center to see and taste what is fashionable in the world of gourmet food products. Weir has just spent two hours signing autographs in his own booth to promote Weir's Sauces, a line of stir-fry and wok-style condiments that he developed for commercial production.

At first, it seems odd for this accomplished musician to moonlight as a culinary entrepreneur. But avenues of creativity—like city neighborhoods—sometimes need renovating. We take the elevator to his 35th floor suite, where Weir relaxes before playing an acoustic set for tippled conventioners and assembled retailers, another part of his promotion duties. He notes with an embarrassed grin the hyperbole of the press materials that state his passion for food to be second only to his music. "The ballpark of my interests is a little bigger than that," he says. "But, sure, there's a lot of joy for me in food. The idea of preparing a satisfying meal falls neatly within the confines of my idea of a nice evening."

The idea to enter the culinary arena wasn't just a fleeting one for Weir. He can explain the subtle differences of various grades of olive oil; he knows which soy cheeses melt well, and he appreciates smoky chipotle chilies. He speaks almost reverently when discussing food. "It's alchemy," he explains. "The ingredients, the mixing, adding heat to change the properties of the food, that's all part of the magic of cooking. And my family takes it very seriously. We never cook angry and we never eat angry. You bring to the food your own feelings."

Not surprisingly, Weir cooks in the kitchen like he does on stage. "I never really know where the dish is going," he adds. "I may not even know what I'm making until I get to the market and see what's there. Then things start to take shape. It's a journey of discovery."

Weir says that he first took a serious interest in food in the 1980s. "I was hanging around with some friends—Cajun yahoos, really—and I noticed how they centered so much of their lives around the next meal," he adds. Culinarily speaking, Weir jumped into the deep end trying to comprehend the Cajun/Creole relationship between cook and cuisine—the gastronomic roots of New Orleans and Baton

## STEAL YOUR OPEN FACE WRAP **Mark and Anne Caban, Colorado**

**Prep time:** Load up the *So Many Roads* box set and forget about the time.

**Serves:** Four very hungry Deadheads.

A truly unique native southwestern dish including chilies, maize, squash, bison and beans. Ingredients from the ancient southwest along with great sauces from a great guitar player from America's greatest rock 'n' roll band.

Weir's Snake Oil Stir Fry  
Weir's Snake Oil Hot Sauce or  
Otherworld Hot Sauce  
1.5 pounds bison ribeye steak  
2 small zucchini squashes, cubed  
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion  
3 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
2–3 ears grilled fresh maize (corn) cut from the cob or about 8 oz. frozen  
7–8 roasted New Mexico green chilies or Anaheim peppers cut in 1x1" cubes (I prefer roasted and peeled or you could use whole frozen, but never use canned)  
4 whole wheat flour tortillas  
1/4 head lettuce (Bibb or Romaine), shredded  
3 cups cooked black beans  
Cow feta (milder and smoother than goat or sheep feta)  
Canola oil

Wash and prepare veggies (we prefer organic as they are better for us and the planet).

Slowly grill bison to medium rare on low flame (over natural hardwood charcoal) and cut into strips, 1/2" x 3", fajita style. Warm about 1/2 cup of Weir's Snake Oil Stir Fry sauce in saucepan, put meat strips in to coat and let sit in a warmed oven. (Bison should not be overcooked as it is a natural meat and very low in fat.)

Warm black beans in a saucepan.

Saute onion and garlic in canola oil until translucent. Add squash, saute 2–3 minutes, add chilies and corn until everything is hot.

Assemble a tortilla on a plate with a layer of bison and a layer of veggie mixture. Top with shredded lettuce, feta cheese, Weir's Snake Oil Hot Sauce and serve with a large spoonful of black beans on the side.

Box set should be on Disc No. 2. Eat and enjoy.

Rouge run deep—but he soon discovered that when it comes to his own food preferences, “The fun is in the spice.”

While being partial to the hotter, spicier styles, such as Asian, Mexican and Indian, he doesn't hold allegiance to one particular cuisine. This is, after all, San Francisco, where hungry travelers from all over the world can find restaurants serving their native dishes—and the hotter the better.

So it's not surprising that his first food products, Snake Oil Stir-Fry Sauce and Otherworld Wok Sauce, are filled with crushed chilies and peppers, and that they have a bit of a bite to them. They are currently sold, with colorful, evocative labels, in specialty food stores and online.

The idea of producing them commercially was an outgrowth of a favorite Christmas-time activity; Weir would rent a commercial kitchen for a few days to make and bottle sauces for friends. “It takes some time, but it

sure beats a trip to the mall,” he says.

Enough people finally convinced Weir to market them using the enduringly strong connections of the Grateful Dead network. After two or three batches of fine-tuning the ingredients and measurements—the alchemy phase—Weir is happy with the outcome, and claims they're as close as they can get to what he makes in his own kitchen. “They were a part of my breakfast this morning,” he says. “And they were pretty good.”

Even though he's heading up a commercial venture, Weir hasn't lost his spirit of giving. Profits from the sale of Weir's Sauces go straight to the Furthur Foundation, which then funnels grants to the Bay Area Coalition for Headwaters, Haight-Ashbury Food Program, and other organizations that champion causes for children, the homeless, the environment and the arts.

Finally, as Weir looks out of the floor-to-ceiling windows and surveys the new con-

struction sites sprouting up all over the city, he enjoys a brief moment of reverie that pulls the past and present together in a gastronomic fantasy—trying to decide which three musicians (from any time in history) he would invite to dinner, and what he would serve them.

“Jerry [Garcia] would have to be there because he was so much fun,” reveals Weir. “Then I'd like to talk with [John] Coltrane, and it seems like Mozart was a fun-loving guy.” Weir then goes into great detail about his menu, which includes an arugula salad, a hot and spicy veggie pizza (plenty of chipotles, naturally), and a couple bottles of Merlot or maybe Pinot Noir.

He gets so worked up thinking about the ingredients and techniques used to prepare this fictitious dinner that he finally admits, “I think I like cooking more than eating.”

For store locations and recipes, check out the official website, [www.weirsauces.com](http://www.weirsauces.com)

## Road Fill

**Restaurant:** Mountain Sun Pub & Brewery

**Address:** 1535 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302

**Phone:** 303-546-0886

**Hours:** 11:30am-1am daily

**Happy Hour:** 4-6pm and 10pm-12am (except Sun)

**Average Price of Meal and Beer:** \$10

**House Specialty:** Colorado Kind Ale & “The Gooney Bird” Turkey Sandwich

**Kevin Daly's Favorite Dead Show:** Laguna Seca Recreation Area run, July 29-31, 1988

“Mountain Sun embodies the spirit that I got at Dead shows,” states Kevin Daley, co-owner of this seven-year old pub and brewery. Between the hand-made artistic décor, a comfortable living room feel and a positive, colorful vibe, Mountain Sun encompasses all that is Boulder, Colorado.

Kevin Daley and Ian Blackford, who have been close friends since their college days at Boston University, have created a community-based establishment that offers a healthy menu consisting of organic soups, salads and sandwiches accompanied by a wide variety of award-winning, hand-crafted beers brewed in-house.

The walls are adorned with a combination of vivid, sunny murals painted by local artist Yvette Chappuis, numerous weavings from Daley's personal collection, and hand-painted prints by Grateful Dead and String Cheese Incident artist Michael Everett. This collection of art adds ambiance and, along with a wide variety of delicious food and beer, completes a one-of-a-kind setting.

Every Sunday night, the pub features live musical performances from local and national acts with no cover charge. Acts such as String Cheese Incident (who made mention of Mountain Sun during this past summer's Red Rocks show), Keller Williams, Yonder Mountain String Band and hundreds of other bluegrass,



folk and jazz musicians, have made these evenings a staple for local music lovers.

Mountain Sun is two blocks from the Boulder Theater and one mile from the Fox Theatre and Tulagis, making it a perfect beginning or end to a musical evening. *John Caprio, Boulder, Colorado*

**Restaurant:** Asa (Hemp)

**Address:** Kitazawa 2-18-5, Kitazawa Bldg 3F, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, Japan

**Phone:** 03-3412-4118

**Hours:** 5pm-12am; closed Wednesday

**House Specialty:** Hemp, hemp and more hemp  
Asa's owner, Maeda Koichi, opened Asa (Japanese for “hemp”) on August 15, 1998, the anniversary of Japan's surrender to the United States. He picked that date, he says, because it marks the point at which hemp production in Japan was outlawed. Japan had a fairly lengthy history of hemp production, which was effectively nipped in the bud by the conquering forces—to the detriment of public health, asserts

Maeda. “It's the perfect food,” he raves. “Hemp seeds are as nutritious as soybeans, with all the essential amino acids, carbohydrates and protein. They're ecologically sound, as well; hemp can be grown without fertilizers, at any altitude, under almost any condition.”

Maeda gets away with serving hemp at his restaurant because he only uses seeds and stems, which aren't illegal because they don't contain THC. The food is still buzz-worthy—just about every last bowl is laced with generous helpings of hemp seeds. On any given night, you might encounter twisty chips shaped like hemp rope with hemp seed salsa, hemp burgers, pasta with hemp seed oil, even hemp seed drinks. The restaurant itself is decked out in hemp—hemp placemats, hemp wall coverings, tabletops inlaid with hemp seeds. Even without reading a word of Japanese, first-time visitors won't have much trouble finding Asa; just look for the sign with the telltale green leaf. *Maki Nibayashi, Tokyo, Japan*