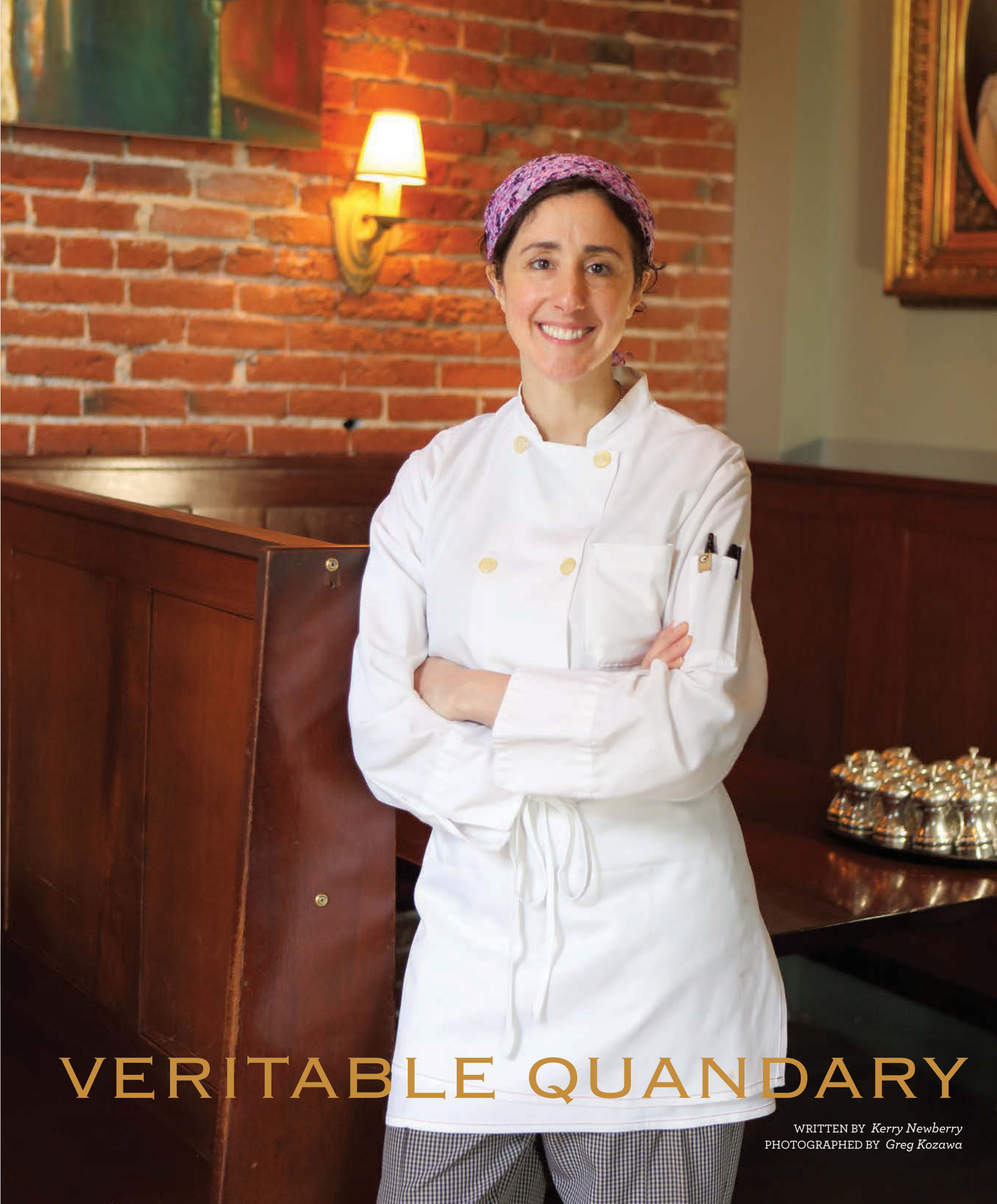


"LAUGHTER IS BRIGHTEST WHERE FOOD IS BEST." THE WORDS FROM THIS IRISH PROVERB COME TO LIFE EVERY NIGHT AT VERITABLE QUANDARY IN DOWNTOWN PORTLAND. SINCE 1971, THIS RESTAURANT HAS SERVED PATRONS GOOD FOOD AND DRINK, BUT IT'S THE SPIRIT OF THIS LANDMARK INSTITUTION THAT KEEPS DINERS RETURNING, AND THE PLACE HUMMING.



TO DRINK
St. Innocent Winery
2013 Chardonnay
Freedom Hill Vineyard
Willamette Valley

STRIPED SEA BASS
RECIPE ON PAGE 117



VERITABLE QUANDARY

WRITTEN BY *Kerry Newberry*
PHOTOGRAPHED BY *Greg Kozawa*

Chipotle & Maple Glazed Quails

Makes: 8 semi-boneless quails (2 per person)

QUAILS

Rub all 8 semi-boneless quails lightly with 2 TB chipotle in adobo (pureed), 1 TB olive oil and 2 TB pure maple syrup.

Season with a little salt, pepper and chopped garlic (1 clove).

Grill quails over hot flame until medium done – approximately 5-6 minutes.

BACON & WHITE CHEDDAR SPOONBREAD

4 eggs separated *	4 oz smoked bacon (cut into lardons & cooked)
2 TB sugar	
2 c. milk	6 scallions
2 TB butter	Salt & pepper to taste
¾ c. cornmeal	1 TB Baking powder
3 oz cheddar	

Bring milk and butter to a simmer. Whisk in cornmeal – stir constantly until thickened (approx. 5 min.) Pull off heat. Stir in cheese, bacon, scallions, and egg yolks. Meanwhile whip egg whites with the sugar & baking powder until soft peaks form. Fold whites into cornmeal mixture & season with salt and pepper. Put in a greased 8x8 baking pan. Bake at 350F until set in middle (approx. 20 min.) – should still be moist when pulled from the oven.

ROASTED ROOT VEGETABLES

½ c large diced butternut squash (peeled)

½ c large diced parsnip (peeled)

½ c large diced beets (peeled)

½ c small Cipollini onions (peeled)

Coat veggies in extra virgin olive oil. Season lightly with salt, pepper and a couple of sprigs of fresh thyme. Roast in very hot oven – 450F – until lightly caramelized.

CRISPY KALE (OPTIONAL)

Wash and cut 1 small bunch of black kale into ½ inch wide strips. Fry in 350F oil until crisp. Toss in with other veggies right before serving.

PEPITA & MAPLE VINAIGRETTE

¼ c apple cider vinegar

1 TB maple syrup

¾ c Canola oil

¼ c chopped shallots

2 TB toasted Pepitas (coarsely ground)

Whisk everything together. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

On any given night, you can stroll by and spy a chandelier through the windows casting a soft glow, and inside a convivial sparkle that moves from the intimate wood-paneled bar to the glass-walled dining room, and on summer nights, flickers across the outdoor patio. At this storied restaurant, there's something for everyone.

“For me the supreme compliment from somebody is when they look at the menu and say I don't know what to have, everything sounds so good,” says executive chef Annie Cuggino. “I want our food to be approachable and have things that people recognize as comfort foods,” she adds. “But I want to do that with a little twist, maybe adding fancier ingredients than people would use at home.”

This philosophy of elevated comfort food plays out from the appetizers (think duck confit spring rolls with wasabi ginger sauce or house made rabbit pâté) to main dishes, say, grilled halibut cheeks with hazelnut ancho romesco, charred wild onions, fingerling potatoes, and microgreens. Many of the dishes at VQ (what the regulars call it) are vegetable forward. “We have beautiful vegetables here in Oregon that change with the season,” says Cuggino. “We like to make them the star of the plate.”

The menu changes slightly each day, and is shaped by whatever ingredients a local farmer hauls through the front door. That farmer might be Renée Oberdorf of Mizuna Gardens who specializes in heirloom salad greens, or Sheldon Marcuvitz of Your Kitchen Garden. Cuggino sources from famed forager Lars Norgren for mushrooms, berries, nettles, and other wild edibles. “We also work with Stacey Givens from The Side Yard Farm and Kitchen—it's an urban garden and they supply us with micro radishes and carrots, things that make a plate special.”

In addition to a menu that celebrates ingredients from the Northwest, the extensive wine list offers 35 wines by the glass and more than 200 bottle selections, both with a focus on local producers. Like the farmers, nearby winemakers often deliver to the door. With the warm weather near, the chef knows that John Paul of Cameron Winery will soon swing by with his Giovanni pinot blanc or Saignée of pinot noir.

“We always get excited over the first signs of spring with rhubarb, nettles, and ramps,” says Cuggino. Today, the chef welcomed in the first delivery of nettles. When asked how she'll use the wily green—especially noted for a peppery punch, the chef revels in the possibilities. This week, she says, the nettles will make their way into a crepe filling for weekend brunch, and into a vibrant green, velvety soup. “We also like to make nettle pesto and spread it on pizza,” says Cuggino.

She pauses, and considers adding the purée into a risotto. “We've been getting great Oregon black truffles this year,” she muses, “and nettles and the black truffles go so well together.” Like many chefs, Cuggino knew from childhood that she wanted a career in the kitchen. “There was no other field I was entertaining,” she says.

After attending the Culinary Institute of America in New York, she honed her skills cooking in kitchens from Manhattan to New Orleans.

TO DRINK

Big Table Farm
2013 Pinot Noir
Pelos Sandberg Vineyard
Willamette Valley



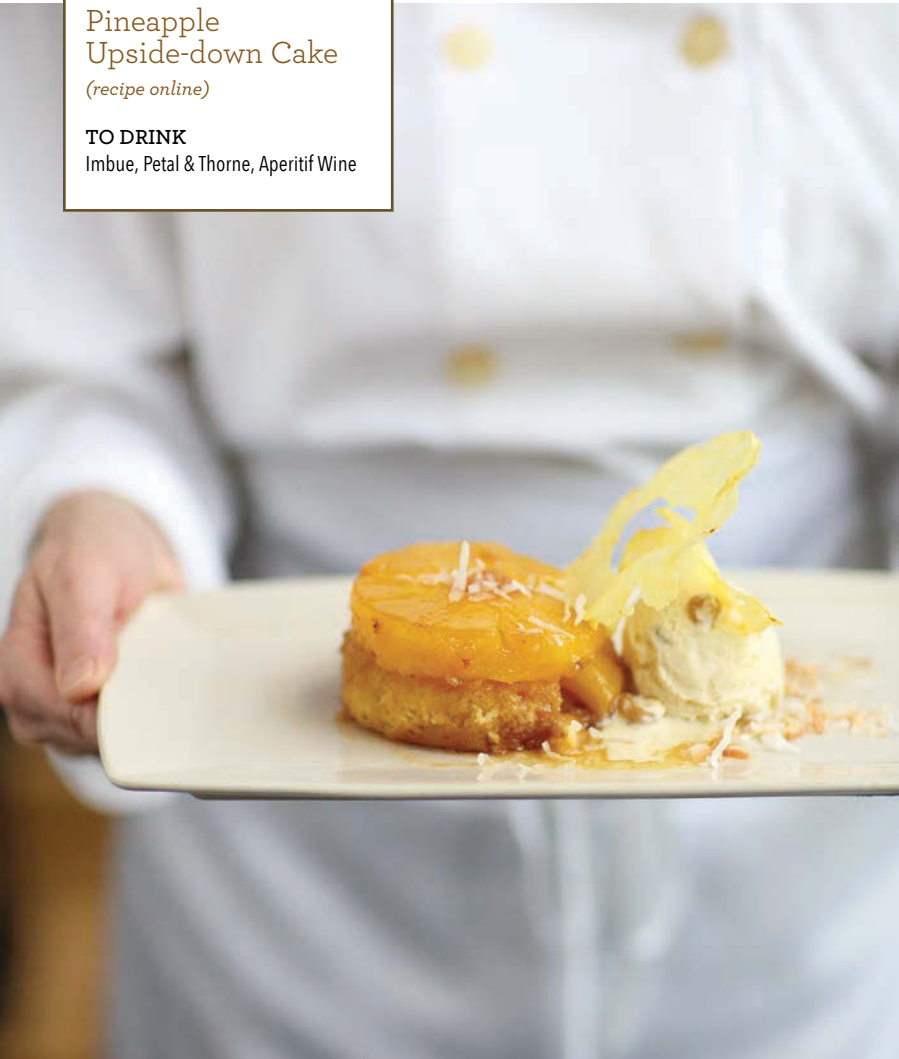
CHIPOTLE & MAPLE GLAZED QUAILS
RECIPE ON FACING PAGE

Pineapple Upside-down Cake

(recipe online)

TO DRINK

Imbue, Petal & Thorne, Aperitif Wine



An affection for southern cooking endured. It's an influence you can taste in dishes like the pan fried Rain Shadow Farm chicken that's served with a side of creamy white cheddar grits. Her stint in the south was followed by traveling across the country, seeking a place to put down roots.

"I had San Francisco in mind, but then stumbled across Portland," says Cuggino. She was 26-years old and Wildwood and Higgins Restaurant and Bar were on the verge of opening. The now fluent farm-to-table food scene was just beginning. "I felt like my timing was perfect," she says.

When she interviewed with Dennis King, the owner of VQ, one of his pivotal questions was: Can you make Ossobuco? "That's his favorite food," says Cuggino. It's now the signature dish for the restaurant, and nearly twenty years later, still a standby for regulars. "I use a lot of red wine, probably more than most," says Cuggino when pried for tips on cooking the classic Milanese dish.

The chef is easy to spot when working the kitchen—she's petite, sprightly and often sporting a wide, colorful headband. In a space

similar in size to a Manhattan studio, set between the narrow bar and sunlit dining room, she and her team churn out dishes for the 85-seat restaurant that doubles capacity when the patio opens.

Although tiny, the open kitchen does have a great view. From there, the chef can watch summertime unfurl in the patio garden, or wave to regulars at the bar—where gold plaques pay tribute to longtime friends of the restaurant. She's also seen a proposal or two transpire.

"I still love it," she says. "People ask if I'm too tired to cook when I go home—well, no," she says. "I just love food."

Veritable Quandary (VQ) is located downtown on the Portland waterfront at 1220 SW 1st Ave and is open seven days a week serving lunch and dinner daily, as well as Saturday and Sunday brunch from 9:30am every weekend. Lunch hours span from 11:30am to 3:00pm, and dinner from 5:00pm to 10:00pm. The bar is open until 2:30am everyday. For more information and reservations, call 503.227.7342 or visit online at www.veritablequandary.com

Striped Sea Bass

(serves 4)

STRIPED SEA BASS

4 6 oz. boneless, skinless fillets

Brush sea bass with chimichurri and season with a little salt & pepper. Grill on hot grill until opaque in the middle. Do not overcook or fish will be dry.

FOR CAULIFLOWER

4 ½-inch slices cut from head of cauliflower

Coat in extra virgin olive oil and season with a little salt and pepper. Roast in very hot oven – 450F – until browned & tender.

FOR CRISPY LEMONS

1 lemon (use a Meyer lemon if possible)

Slice lemon paper thin, rind and all – take any seeds out. Soak in buttermilk – just enough to cover lemon slices. Dust with a little flour or rice flour. Fry in hot oil – 350F – until lightly browned and crispy.

CHIMICHURRI

1 red jalapeno – charred, peeled and diced

2 tsp fresh oregano

2 tsp fresh thyme

½ tsp fresh rosemary

1 small bay leaf

½ c extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp minced garlic

½ TB fresh parsley – chopped

1 TB red wine vinegar

¼ tsp salt

½ TB smoked paprika

¼ tsp black pepper

Bruise herbs (except parsley) and steep in warm oil for several hours. Cool. Add all other ingredients.

ASSEMBLING THE DISH

When fish is done grilling, cauliflower is roasted and lemons are crispy, put a slice of cauliflower down on plate, followed by fish and lemons. Sprinkle each dish with approximately 1 TB crushed and toasted Marcona almonds, 5 or 6 olives of your choice (we use a mix of Nicoise, Cerignola, Castelvetrano and Kalamata), and a sprinkle of either micro greens or arugula. Drizzle a couple of TB of chimichurri on and around the fish to finish.

Squid Ink Spaghetti and Lobster

(4 appetizer portions) – shown right

INGREDIENTS

8 oz Raw lobster meat, cut in large chunks

2 TB Extra virgin olive oil

2 tsp Garlic minced

1 TB Shallot sliced

Big Pinch chile flakes

Big Pinch lemon zest (finely grated)

½ c Torn fresh basil

¼ c Parmigiano Reggiano

¼ c Tomato sauce

¼ c Garlic bread crumbs

TO COOK SPAGHETTI

Use 8 oz of fresh squid ink spaghetti if available (substitute dry if needed). Cook in salted water until al dente.

MEANWHILE MAKE THE SAUCE

Heat olive oil in large sauté pan.

Add garlic and shallot and cook 1 minute.

Add tomato sauce and 4 oz of the boiling pasta water.

Finish with fresh basil, Parmigiano and 2 more TB extra virgin olive oil.

Add spaghetti and toss to coat.

Sprinkle with the garlic bread crumbs.

FOR GARLIC BREAD CRUMBS

Use about 1 cup of Ciabatta or French bread (day old is fine).

Cut bread in cubes, drizzle with garlic infused olive oil.

Bake until dry.

Let cool and then crush into rustic crumbs.

TO DRINK

Elk Cove Vineyards
2013 Pinot Blanc
Willamette Valley

