

Los Altos Town Crier

FOOD & WINE

Seasonal spotlight: Reap the harvest

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Photo by Gilda Foss courtesy of Cetrella

Tomatoes from local growers are inspiring dishes like Cetrella's gazpacho.

Local tomatoes have kicked into high gear by this week, and beans and peppers are reaching their peak.

A Thursday afternoon tour of downtown Los Altos can take local residents from farm to table, with growers selling at the State Street Farmers' Market from 4-8 p.m. and new restaurant Cetrella, 400 Main St., buying from some of those same growers for its September menu.

Cetrella's executive chef Mike Ellis put the spotlight on three seasonal vegetables this month. Of the romano beans from Iacopi Farms in Half Moon Bay, he said, imagine "you took a green bean and made it flatter and wider." You can find them in the market, or on Ellis' menu in a risotto and also in the fritto misto with rock shrimp, picholine olives, blue lake beans and Happy Boy farms shishito and Jimmy Nardello peppers.

"Right now's the time of year that farms are exploding with peppers," Ellis said.

Super-ripe tomatoes are also at a "this-month-only" stage. Ellis serves them raw in a gazpacho with basil, garlic and a bit of bread, topped by a sorbet of piel de sapo melon and basil, pureed together into a deep green and frozen with liquid nitrogen.

Want an alternative for almost-too-ripe tomatoes? Take a page from Ellis and melt them over heat with garlic and oregano you've toasted in olive oil. Then serve with ricotta agnolotti, roasted corn and basil.