

---

---

# VALLEY BITES

---

BY PAMELA HAMILTON

---

Bread and butter. What could be simpler and more delicious? My new favorite from **MJ Bread** (610 East Roosevelt Street, Phoenix) is the Manor loaf. (Although I have to say that their beautifully decorated fougasse is also still high on my list). The Manor loaf is a large, airy-crumbed white bread with a crispy crust and liberal lashings of crunchy salt, cracked pepper, and a whole sprig of herbs. With each bite you're hit with a jolt of salt, the tang of the pepper, and the toasted aroma of the herbs.

Then everyone told me I simply had to visit the new **Simply Bread™** bakery at 2117 North 24th Street, Phoenix. There, I fell in love with Jeff Yankellow's and Harold Back's multi-grain Down Home loaf with its 10 varieties of seeds and grains, and long-fermented wheat and rye sourdough starter. This is a substantial bread that's still tender enough for fantastic morning toast.

Fresh hand-churned local butter from **Butterlicious** is a creamy accompaniment to either one of these bakeries' offerings (at Saturday's Farmers' Markets, call (602) 504-5697 for more info). Who says you can't love two breads at the same time?

My friend Sharon contacted me recently and insisted that I go to **Lisa G's** (2337 North 7th Street, Phoenix) for their meatballs. While most of the menu's salads and sandwiches satisfy a light appetite, their "Bowl of Balls" is geared to heartier hungers. Made of beef, pork, and veal, the balls are meaty, but lightly textured. Owner Lisa Giungo says the secret to their satisfying taste is the San Marzano tomatoes she uses for the sauce. The meatballs also make a dynamite grinder sandwich served with melted cheese.

I also followed the lead of my Slow Food Phoenix co-leader, David Johnson, and made my way to the new **Sol Y Sombra** restaurant at DC Ranch's Market Street in north Scottsdale (20707 North Pima Road, Scottsdale). Dave is responsible for the restaurant's daring all-Spanish wine list and is primed to show off his regional Spanish finds. You'll also enjoy sampling Chef Aaron May's deft hand with fish and seafood, and his liberal use of authentic Spanish ingredients. All dishes are meant to share, so be prepared to

graze on a procession of small dishes while sipping your wine.

I've always been a sucker for sweet and salty foods. As a child, I concocted my own special chocolate-chip cookie and potato chip combo for all of my friends. Now as an adult, I can share more sophisticated treats like the melt-in-your-mouth natural peanut butter and strawberry/lav-ender jelly sandwich cookies from the **Sweet Pea Bakery** at 209 West Jackson Street in downtown Phoenix. Or for the ultimate sweet and salty experience, we'll indulge in Poco Dolce's grey-sea-salt-sprinkled, bittersweet chocolate tiles in four flavors. They're made in San Francisco, [www.pocodolce.com](http://www.pocodolce.com),

but also sold at Sweet Pea.

After satisfying our sweet teeth, let's head to **Devlin's Market Place** at 58 South San Marcos Place in historic downtown Chandler for a box of their healthy farro pasta. Imported from Italy, the pasta is made from whole-grain emmer wheat (an ancient cereal grain) in four interesting shapes: pennette, ricciutelle, sedanini, and strozzapreti. In addition to a wide range of gourmet food products and freshly made sandwiches, Devlin's will soon offer a wine and cheese pairing menu with offerings carefully selected from their extensive wine cellar and dairy case.

Are you as entranced by this issue's beautiful peach cover as I am? If so, you'll want to pick your own peaches at one of the following Valley peach events in May. **Schnepf Farms in Queen Creek**, [www.schnepffarms.com](http://www.schnepffarms.com), will host peach picking every Friday to Sunday. There's an admission charge on Saturdays and Sundays when they will offer peach demos by local chefs and a pancake breakfast. On May 20 to 21, **Mother Nature's Farm**, [www.mothernaturesfarm.com](http://www.mothernaturesfarm.com), in Gilbert will host the Grand Canyon Sweet Onion and Peach Festival. They also offer peach picking throughout the month. Slow Food Phoenix, [www.slowfoodphoenix.org](http://www.slowfoodphoenix.org), is planning a peach harvesting trip to Aravaipa Farms in Winkelman at the end of May or beginning of June (depending on the peak of peach ripeness). You can also pick peaches at the orchard behind **Guadalupe Farmers Market Too** in Mesa beginning May 1; (480) 497-0706.

