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## Gone Gardening

“YOU’D BE SURPRISED AT THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE that have never done anything in the garden.” Paul Lynch, the self-proclaimed avid gardener who heads up Urbana Craeft Kitchen & Market at Hyatt Regency Bloomington-Minneapolis, is changing that with his garden-to-table initiative.

Lynch’s passion for gardening extends to not only the hotel’s food and beverage, but also the guest experience; if someone shows an interest in the Hyatt’s straw bale garden, Lynch will invite them along to help harvest. His mission is founded on the tenets of permaculture (the development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient); the South Loop hotel’s garden, a stone’s throw from the Bloomington Central light rail station, demonstrates that food production can (and should) happen in the city, not just “out on the farm.”

At a dinner I attended at the hotel back in July, tables were set inside the straw bale “walls” and we picked the produce for our meal—a small role in the meal prep that amounted to an immeasurable sense of pride. People are looking to create a deeper connection to food these days, and the meetings and events industry is providing. Read more in our food and beverage trends story on page 46.

Likewise, Elke Reva Sudin was looking for a more meaningful way to make art when she founded her company, Drawing Booth, in 2014. Juxtaposing the use of technology and good old-fashioned drawing by hand, she made a business out of her passion for drawing flash-portraits (she’s the creator of my portrait head shot in this issue). She captivated everyone who attended our sister publication’s *Northeast Meetings + Events* Best of 2018 event with her ability to work a room and draw her subjects in just a few minutes; with offices in New York, LA, Chicago and London, she and her team of artists are available across the country to digitalize hand-drawn portraits ([drawingbooth.com](http://drawingbooth.com)).

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