

HOLIDAY MASTERPIECE

This year's seasonal feast was assembled with help from America's best heirloom seed companies and food purveyors. Their stunning produce, crumbly cheeses, fragrant cured meats, and flaky desserts are ready for their close-ups in these tempting tableaux.

Photographs by *DITTE ISAGER* Illustrations by *JOHN BURGOYNE*

DAIRY QUEENS
The only proper way to begin a festive meal is with cheese—the stinkier the better. *From left:* Birchrun Hills Farm Fat Cat, Equinox, and fig-wrapped blue, birchrunhillsfarm.com; Landaff and Harbison from Cellars at Jasper Hill, cellarsatjasperhill.com; American Spoon cherry-peach conserve, spoon.com; Cowgirl Creamery Humboldt Fog, Monte Enebro, and Blanc Bleu Tambour from Murray's Cheese Shop, murrayscheese.com; D'Oliveira Verdelho Madeira Family Reserve, rarewineco.com. All fruit throughout this article available from Manhattan Fruitier, mfruit.com.

Cordial clear glass, brass stemmed tray, and Astier de Villatte small white cake plate at ABC Carpet & Home, abchome.com; Baccarat Harcourt wineglasses, baccarat.com.

Styled by *Kim Ficaro*
Food styled by *Rebecca Jurkevich*



THE LIFE AQUATIC

Even if you don't live near the sea, a host of underwater treasures can be sent straight to you, whether cured, smoked, baked, or alive. *Clockwise from top right:* Blue crabs from Maryland Blue Crab Express, marylandbluecrabexpress.com; Barney Greengrass chub, barneygreengrass.com; Acme kippered salmon, zabars.com; king crab legs from Browne Trading Co., brownetrading.com; platinum osetra caviar, Siberian sturgeon caviar, crème fraîche, and mother-of-pearl spoons from Caviar Russe, caviarrusse.com; Barney Greengrass Eastern Nova salmon, barneygreengrass.com; Acme smoked sable, zabars.com; Blackberry Farm pickled ramps, blackberryfarm.com; silver dollar blinis from Caviar Russe, caviarrusse.com.

Baccarat Old Fashioned tumbler, baccarat.com;
purple charger and dessert plate at ABC Carpet & Home, abchome.com.



*Tennessee Sweet
Potato Pumpkin*



Red Turban Squash



Acorn Squash

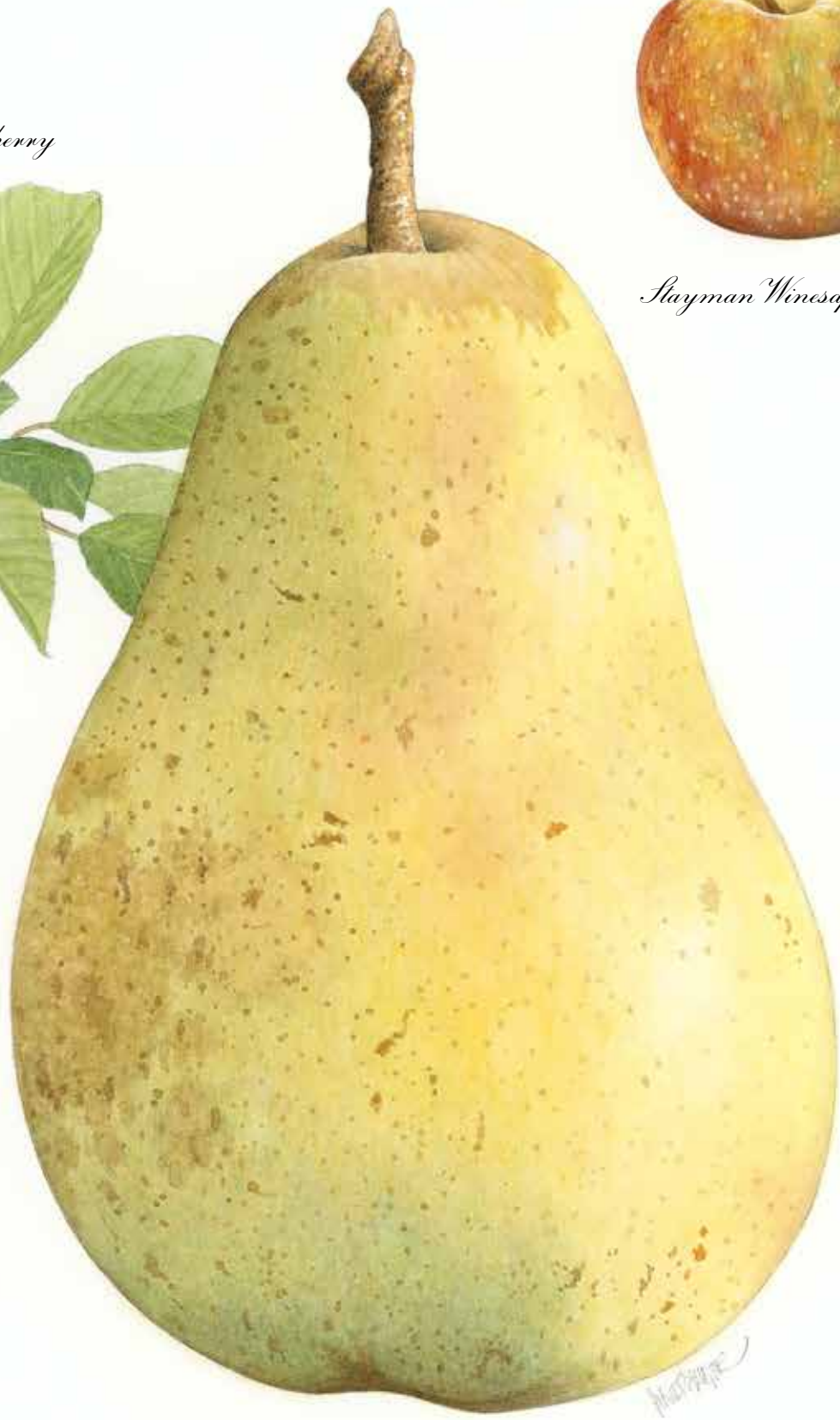


Queenstand Blue Pumpkin

Early Richmond Cherry



*Madame Meuleet
Strawberry*



Bartlett Pear



Stayman Winesap Apple

SOWING THE SEEDS

IN 1847, DAVID LANDRETH DECIDED HIS FAMILY'S seed company should start publishing annual catalogs for European immigrants, typically tradesmen, who arrived without much knowledge of how to live off the land. Landreth's first printing of 13,000 copies was swiftly snatched up, and by the 1860s, 600,000 catalogs were being distributed annually—one for every American family with a postal address. Today farmers, chefs, and home cooks still turn to the D. Landreth Seed Company, as well as Seed Savers Exchange,

Territorial Seed Company, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, among others, to plan their gardens and hunt for rare produce, such as the Tennessee sweet potato pumpkin and Brunswick cabbage, even in the depths of winter. These purveyors, and their illustrated catalogs of fruits, vegetables, and flowers, have provided an invaluable resource for more than a century. To speed up the process for the 21st-century gardener, all the seeds on these pages—like everything else—can be ordered online.

SUGAR RUSH

Sour cherry, apple, pecan, shoofly—nothing sparks debate like the question of which all-American pie is best. But purists always opt for fruitcake, especially when it's handmade by Trappist monks in Kentucky. Clockwise from top right: Beurre & Sel cookies, *beurreandsel.com*; Gethsemani Farms fruitcake, *gethsemanifarms.org*; Three Brothers Bakery cherry pie, *3brothersbakery.com*; a slice of Wendy Jo's shoofly pie, *wendyjoes.com*; apricots and prunes from Oasis Date Gardens, *oasisdate.com*; Droga Peppermint Peppies and Rebel Rocky Road, *drogachocolates.com*; Three Brothers Bakery deep-dish pecan pie, *3brothersbakery.com*; Norman Love Confections chocolates, *normanloveconfections.com*; Three Brothers Bakery apple pie, *3brothersbakery.com*; New York Malmsey Madeira, *rarewineco.com*.

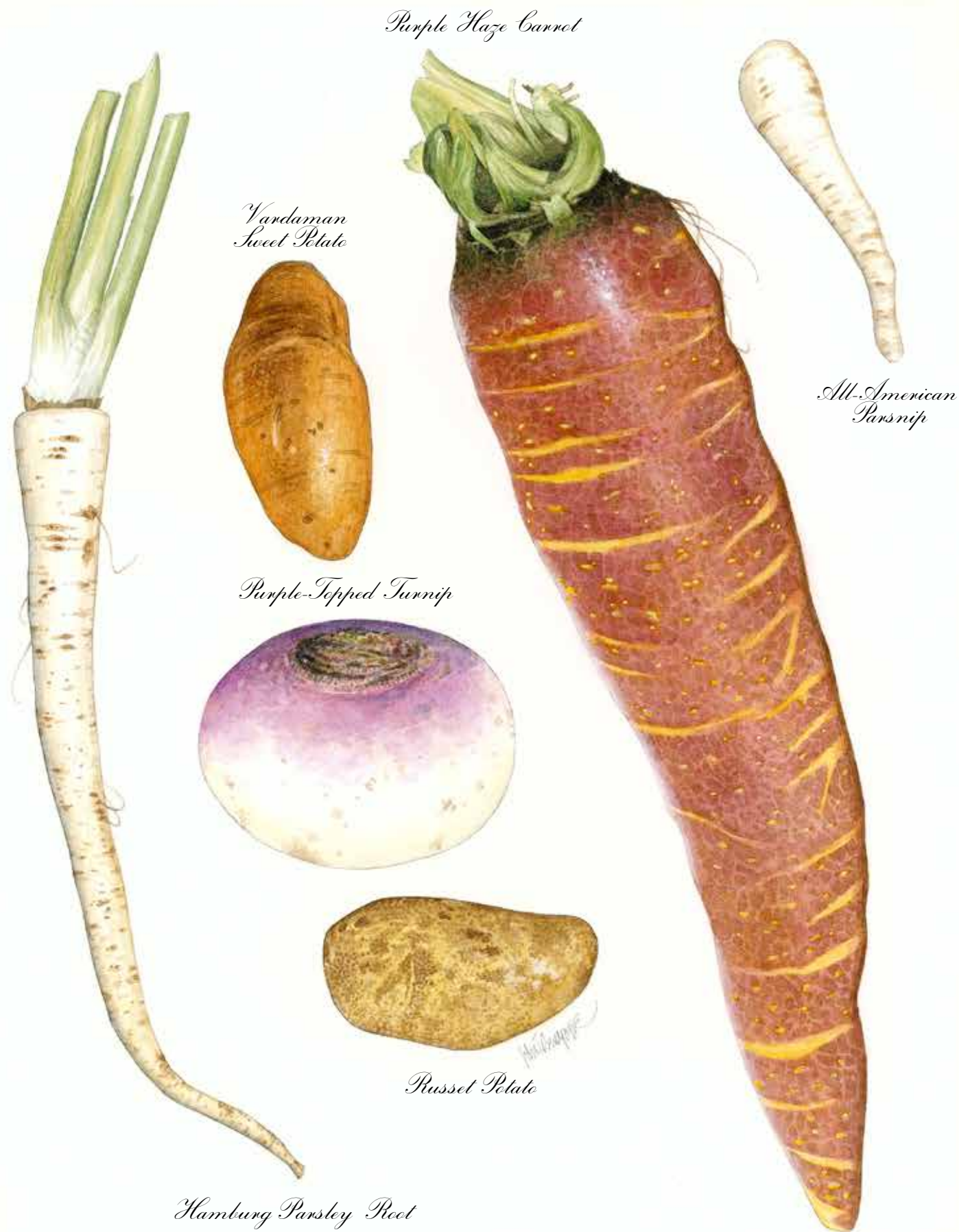
Penshurst Trading Inc. glass cake stand and Astier de Villatte white cake stand at ABC Carpet & Home, *abchome.com*.





GARDEN DELIGHTS

Winter vegetables figure heavily in any holiday menu, as side dishes, in stews, or as a colorful centerpiece. Buy them at your local farmers market, or plant them for a jump-start on next year's feast. Clockwise from top left: Red cabbage; Concord grapes; Bosc pears; Girolami Farms chestnuts, chestnutsforsale.com; Territorial Seed Company packets, territorialseed.com; Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds packets, rareseeds.com; sweet meat squash, blue Hubbard squash; leeks; broccoli; a cluster of pomegranates, persimmons, and kuri squash; shallots; D. Landreth Seed Company packets, landrethseeds.com; cranberry beans; Rancho Gordo cargamanto cranberry beans, ranchogordo.com.



Purple Haze Carrot

Vardaman Sweet Potato

All-American Parsnip

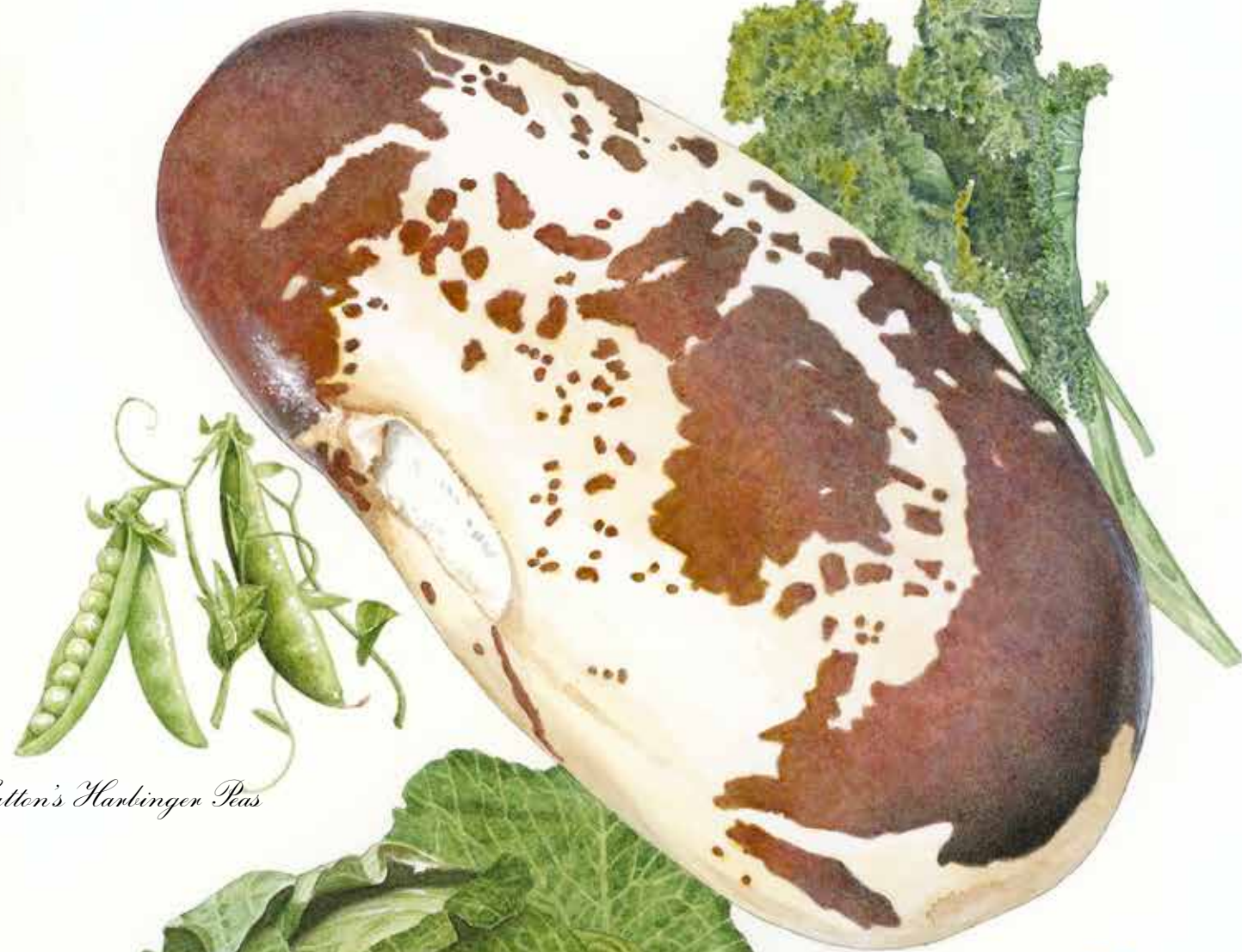
Purple-Tipped Turnip

Russet Potato

Hamburg Parsley Root

Curly Kale

Christmas Lima Bean



Sutton's Harbinger Peas



All-Seasons Cabbage



Eye of the Goat Bean

MEATY SUBJECTS

For a truly patriotic meal, pair Virginia and Kentucky hams with Hudson Valley foie gras, Texas sausages, and salumi from all over the country. *Clockwise from top left:* Salumeria Rosi Parmacotto cacciatore dolce, soppressata dolce, and coppa dolce, salumeriarosi.com; Edwards bone-in Virginia country ham, virginiatritions.com; Broken Arrow Ranch wild boar and venison sausages, brokenarrowranch.com; Boccalone capocollo, boccalone.com; American Spoon whole seed mustard, spoon.com; Newsom's aged Kentucky country ham, newsomscountryham.com; Hudson Valley foie gras torchon, hudsonvalleyfoiegras.com; Blackberry Farm soppressata and bread and butter pickles, blackberryfarm.com.

