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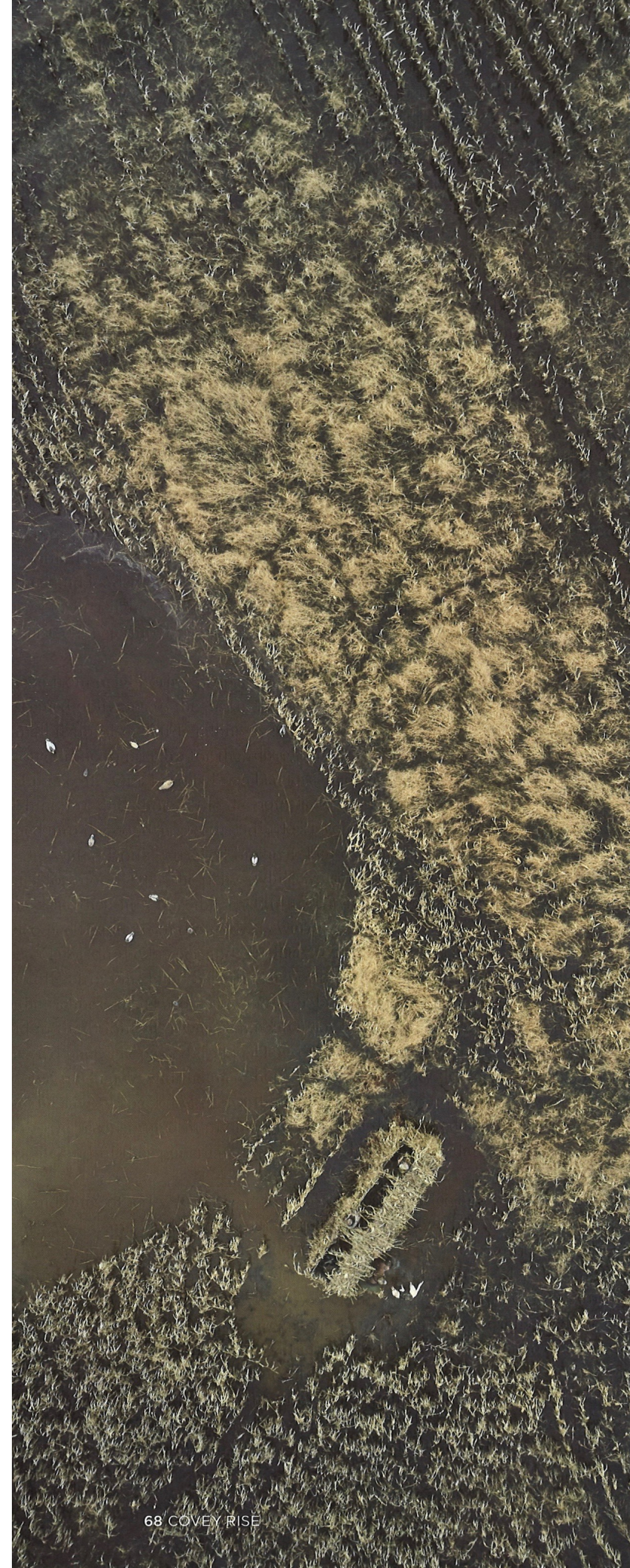
WILD DUCK GUMBO

Recipe online at coveyrisemagazine.com

SUSTENANCE AND SOUL

Chef David Guas satisfies his appetite for
inspiration through the sporting life.

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Mallards dabbled and dawdled under the cover of darkness in a flooded corn field on Maryland's Eastern Shore, their quacks and splashes creating a greater sense of urgency to abandon the warmth of our vehicle. Some final sips of coffee and multiple layers of clothing insulated us from the chill as we began to wade through knee-high water behind Chef David Guas and his son Kemp. They led us down a muddy channel with sure-footed steps as their yellow Labrador, Roux, walked between them in the muck. The corn corridor opened into a shallow pond where a blind brushed with stalks and husks awaited our arrival.

David deployed the decoys while we settled on a wooden bench behind the wall, providing concealment from the ducks' keen vision and cover from the slightest wind. A team of mallards landed among the decoy spread soon after David entered the blind. Kemp peeked above the wall and signaled to his father that the ducks were still there. Without alerting them to our presence, we unsheathed and loaded our shotguns. Cloudy skies blunted the brightness of first light, and those final minutes before shooting time lasted an eternity before David whispered, "We're legal now."

Shotguns erupted on cue from neighboring properties, and the ducks in front of us seemed oblivious to the distant salvos. Kemp spotted another small team of mallards falling into our decoys, providing just enough time to prepare for their arrival. David called the shot, "Take 'em!" Our barrels breached the portals of the blind, belching fire and shot at the descending ducks. Two of them crashed into the pond at speed, and a third was taken as it rose off the water. Roux retrieved our prizes while we scanned the skies for more. After she delivered each bird to David, he took his seat, then lit a portable gas burner, its warmth providing welcomed respite from the cold.

David positioned a percolator on the burner and produced mugs and a cloth sack of coffee from his blind bag. As the percolator brewed our joe, the richness of its aroma revealed the content of its quality, and in that moment, I was reminded of David's career as a renowned chef. He passed a paper bag of homemade goose jerky down the bench, and the mere scent of it hastened my desire for the savory snack. As each nibble of meat from the dehydrated strip reconstituted in my mouth, its piquancy delighted my palate and further punctuated his culinary prowess.

Between sips of coffee and bites of jerky, Kemp spied more mallards circling above us. We swapped our mugs for duck calls, hoping to speak their language well enough to work them down from high altitude. David sang lead vocals while I sang backup, and the small team began their descent. As they slipped from the sky, we exchanged the calls for shotguns and then waited. "Take 'em!" David and Kemp's ducks fell in succession, hitting the water with a heavy splash, and Roux retrieved their marks before we topped our mugs with coffee and resettled on the bench. People often bare their souls in the intimacy of a duck blind, exposing stories about places and

moments most precious to them. During a break in the action, David did just that—introducing us to a cast of characters who exposed him to sporting life as a child and explaining how he found his way back after a 15-year hiatus.

David's Cuban-born father, Mariano Guas, came to the United States as a child in 1959, leaving their family retreat near Cabañas Bay, Cuba. He didn't grow up hunting or fishing, but he placed a premium value on his childhood experiences there, and when Mariano started a family, he searched for ways to connect with his son through the outdoors. "My father was never a big sportsman, but he took it up to spend time with me. He knew the value of exploring small parts of the natural world during childhood that aren't too dangerous, but also aren't artificial or crash-padded," David said.

The places and things David experienced as a youth would cause massive heart attacks for "helicopter parents." But it was in those middle-ground places that fall between harmless and hazardous where Mariano knew that David could learn wholesome values. When he was 9 years old, David discovered a sunken fiberglass boat in their neighborhood lake and salvaged the wreck with his dad, outfitting it with an electric trolling motor for bass-fishing near their east-suburban home in New Orleans. It was also around this age that David paid regular visits to his Uncle Alford Huck in Independence, Louisiana, to manage the squirrels populating his pecan trees. Armed with a .410 shotgun, David harvested a bountiful bag from the pecan limbs, an errand that ultimately sowed the early seeds of his culinary passion as he learned to prepare them for chili, stew, or gumbo.

Mariano expanded their hunting opportunities by befriending a farmer who David called "Mr. Mack," whose property in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, provided another backdrop for the adventures—and misadventures—of David's youth. The old farmer charged a modest price of admission to David's childhood amusement park—a sacrificial bottle of Jack Daniel's and a pouch of Red Man chew. Father and son became more deeply involved in the sporting life when Mariano leased property in Folsom, Louisiana, with friends who he met through his veterinary practice. David loved the "cool factor" of driving the farm truck without a license while helping prepare for hunting season. When he was a teenager, he hunted and fished with his friends in prime parts of "sportsman's paradise," but his pursuit of a culinary career required him to leave home for broader markets.

David placed sporting life on the back burner after moving to Washington, D.C., in 1998, spending at least 80 hours per

DUCKS DOWN

When not pursuing his culinary career, Chef David Guas often spends his free time hunting mallards and teal with friends and family on Maryland's Eastern Shore.



Chef David Guas cherishes every moment afield with his son Kemp and appreciates the opportunity to pass on his passion for hunting and the outdoors to the next generation.



week in the kitchen as a pastry chef. He bounced around the nation's capital, opening four restaurants in five years, each with completely new concepts—his talent and work ethic were in high demand—but his body couldn't keep up. After one of his shifts, he went to the hospital where he was diagnosed with walking pneumonia. David knew the long hours were taking their toll, and in 2007, he took his culinary gifts down an entrepreneurial path, providing more time with his wife Simone and their sons, Kemp and Spencer.

Despite the career move—or perhaps because of it—David's trajectory continued upward. In 2010, he received laudable nominations from the James Beard Foundation and the International Association of Culinary Professionals for his cookbook *DamGoodSweet: Desserts to Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth, New Orleans Style*. He then opened his restaurant Bayou Bakery Coffee Bar & Eatery in Arlington, Virginia, made regular appearances on *The Today Show* and *CBS This Morning*, and hosted the Travel Channel's program *American Grilled*.

Between the accolades and appearances, David found his way back to the sporting life through waterfowling. He connected with the Maryland shoremen who supplied his seafood, and they invited him to hunt snow geese from a pit blind. Since that hunt in the early 2000s, David now pursues wingshooting and fishing opportunities whenever and wherever he can—from Maryland's Eastern Shore to the plains of South Dakota.

The sun burned off the clouds and cold as it climbed above the treetops, and the dying wind signaled the end of our morning hunt. But a lone green-winged teal didn't receive the message. The bird buzzed our blind at mach-speed, as this species is apt to do, and with a single shot from David, it tumbled from the sky and skipped across the water's surface like a flat stone. Roux found him in the cornstalks, and we stayed just a little longer before collecting the decoys and leaving the field.



EASTERN SHORE GOOSE JERKY

Serves 4 to 6

Chef's Note: For the dehydrator needed to make the jerky, I use a simple, single-mode Weston Food Dehydrator.

INGREDIENTS

2 goose breasts, skinless, sliced
¼-inch thick
¾ cup low sodium soy sauce
½ cup water
1 tablespoon crushed red pepper
¼ cup Sriracha
½ cup clover honey

1. Add soy sauce, water, crushed red pepper, Sriracha, and honey into a small pot, stirring over to medium heat until the honey dissolves. Then reserve until it is at room temperature.
2. Using a mallet, pound the slices of the goose breast evenly, being careful not to make it too thin—you do not want it to break apart. Add the pounded breasts into the reserved marinade, mix around to thoroughly coat the breast, then transfer everything to a 1-gallon Ziploc bag. Remove most of the air from the bag, and agitate again. Refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.
3. Remove meat from the bag, lay out on paper towels, then transfer to the various racks of your dehydrator. Turn on and dry for an hour and a half, then flip all pieces, and continue to dry for another hour and a half to 2 hours, or until desired texture and consistency is reached.

MIXED-BAG SLOPPY JOE >

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

1 pound goose and duck breast meat, ground
One 15-ounce can Manwich Original Sloppy Joe Sauce
1 package Martin's Famous Dutch Potato Rolls
Creole Mustard Slaw, recipe following

1. Cook the ground meat in large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, for 7 minutes or until crumbled and no longer pink.
2. Stir in the Sloppy Joe sauce; continue to cook on low heat for another 20 to 30 minutes. You may also transfer this mixture to a slow cooker and allow it to cook on lowest setting for 4 to 6 hours, to help tenderize the meat a bit.

Keep warm until ready to serve.

FOR THE CREOLE MUSTARD SLAW

1 head green cabbage, chopped
8 ounces carrots, shredded
6 ounces red onions, thinly sliced
Dressing, recipe following

Place ingredients in a mixing bowl, add the Dressing and toss. Refrigerate in an airtight container overnight for best results. Note: It can be served right after prepping, if you don't have the time to let the flavors meld overnight or the willpower to wait to eat your delicious Sloppy Joe.

FOR THE DRESSING

½ cup Creole mustard
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
¼ cup honey

2 teaspoons Kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1½ cups blended oil (canola or olive oil)

Blend all ingredients except oil on high. Slowly drizzle in oil to create an emulsion. You'll know it's ready when the vortex hole closes up in the center of the blending liquid.

To Serve: Divide the cooked sloppy joe mixture into 6 portions by portioning the stewed meat onto the bottom of Martin's buns, and top with slaw. Finish with the top of the bun, and enjoy.

Chef's Note: These sandwiches get messy. You must have a plate, or, if you are eating these post-hunt, letting them drip on the ground as a reward for your hardworking dogs should work just fine.

BAYOU BLOODY MARY >

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

One 46-ounce can tomato juice
½ cup horseradish
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1½ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1½ tablespoons lime juice
1 tablespoon Louisiana hot sauce (Crystal Hot Sauce is recommended)
¼ teaspoon Kosher salt
½ cup Creole seasoning, recipe following
1 liter vodka (2 ounces per Bayou Bloody)

For the Creole Seasoning
(yields 1 cup)

½ cup paprika
3 tablespoons freshly ground black pepper
2½ tablespoons Kosher salt
1½ teaspoons granulated garlic
1½ teaspoons dried thyme
1½ teaspoons dried oregano
1½ teaspoons dried basil
1 tablespoon granulated onion
1 teaspoon ground cayenne

Place all ingredients into a stainless-steel mixing bowl. Using a whisk combine well, making sure to break up all the dried spice lumps. Store in airtight container on spice shelf.

TO SERVE

1. Combine tomato juice, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper,

lemon juice, lime juice, hot sauce, and salt in a clean dry plastic container and mix well to create the Bloody Mary mix.

2. Sprinkle about ½-cup of Creole seasoning onto a small 5- to 6-inch plate. Then, run the rim of your glass under the faucet, just to wet the rim of the glass. Place the wet rim directly down onto the plate of Creole seasoning. Repeat until all glass rims are coated in seasoning.

3. Add ice, vodka, and Bloody Mary Mix to each glass. Stir together so the vodka is well mixed.

4. Finish with desired garnishes, and enjoy.

We shed our waders at the barn and prepared for a day of cooking and fellowship around the hearth of a KUDU Grill. Kemp hauled ice chests, cast-iron cookware, and wooden utensils from the back of David's truck. David prepared a late breakfast with hearty sausage patties of blended goose breasts and fatback. They popped and sizzled on the skillet, and he sandwiched them between a warm batch of his homemade biscuits with pepper jelly spread. Upon first bite, I was humming along with a symphony that David composed between the spirit of the harvested animal and his years of culinary and sporting experience.

Kemp and I finished our breakfast and found a spot near the barn to pluck and draw the ducks from the morning's harvest. As we worked through each duck, Kemp talked about his senior year of high school and preparing for college admissions. He plans to leave Virginia to attend an out-of-state university, and though he knows his days at home are numbered, he believes in his upbringing and expressed full confidence in his father's example as his guide for navigating the world. "I've learned more from him than anyone else, and he's done the best he can do. The rest is up to me," Kemp said. Brief silence between us acknowledged the profundity of his statement and recognized it as a mark of his early manhood.

David and I toasted the hunt that late morning with well-dressed Bloody Marys topped with olives, okra, celery, and fresh slices of Benton's Tennessee Bacon. The beverage featured his own delicious blend of spices, and upon completion of the first one, he made us both another before preparing a lunch of Sloppy Joes with coleslaw served on brioche buns. The rich sauce thinned in the high temperature of the cast-iron cookware, and he thickened it with ground goose and duck meat. He split the brioche on the top and bottom, tasted a spoonful of the meaty mixture for perfection, and ladled a heaping helping onto the bottom of each bun to ensure their sloppiness. He finished them with a towering layer of crunchy coleslaw between the meat and top of the buns. Each bite squeezed the saucy, crunchy filling from all sides of the sandwich, making it necessary to turn and nibble from alternate angles to ensure none of it was lost.

Dusk arrived and hardwood trees filtered the sun's remaining rays through their foliage as it fell below the horizon. David prepared duck and andouille gumbo on an open fire, as we watched hundreds of ducks, silhouetted against the twilight sky, drop into the flooded corn field on whistling wings. Kemp had to leave early since it was a school night, but he'd soon fly from the nest on whistling wings of his own to a place where curfews and bedtimes would be self-imposed. After he departed, David said, "I make sure Kemp knows that I cherish these moments with him." That 10-year-old boy at his Uncle Huck's, roaming through pecan trees with a .410 shotgun, awed and inspired by the natural world, has since become an avid sportsman, an accomplished chef, and a loving father—all built on the trust, respect, and adventures shared between father and son in the great outdoors. 🍷





BUTTERMILK BISCUITS WITH GOOSE BREAKFAST SAUSAGE

Serves 8 to 10

INGREDIENTS

2 cups all-purpose flour, chilled
(preferably White Lily), plus more
as needed
2 tablespoons baking powder
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon Kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, cold and cut
into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup buttermilk, plus more for
brushing
Goose Breakfast Sausage, recipe
following

1. Chill a food processor blade and bowl, as well as a large mixing bowl.
2. Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
3. In the chilled food processor, pulse the flour, baking powder, and salt until combined. Add the cold butter, and process with 10 one-second pulses; the butter should be the size of small peas.
4. Transfer the mixture to the chilled mixing bowl. Add the buttermilk, moving your hand, with fingers apart, in circles to incorporate it into the dry ingredients. The dough is mixed when it just barely comes together.
5. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work surface. Pat and roll it into a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick square. Using a

floured $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round biscuit cutter, cut out as many biscuits as you can, dipping the cutter in a little flour between cuts, to prevent sticking. Make sure to lift the cutter straight up as you work, without any twisting. Arrange the biscuits on the parchment-lined sheet so their edges touch.

6. Gently gather the remaining dough scraps and press them into a 1-inch thick rectangle. Cut out as many biscuits as you can again, and arrange them on the sheet, snug against the others. You should now have 8 to 10 biscuits.

7. Brush the tops of the biscuits with buttermilk and bake until golden-brown, 20 to 25 minutes. While the biscuits are baking, begin to prep your sausage. Remove the biscuits from the oven when done, and brush with the melted butter.

FOR THE GOOSE BREAKFAST SAUSAGE

2 goose breasts (10–11 ounces),
cubed into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
7 ounces pork fatback, cubed into
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
2 teaspoons Kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon granulated garlic
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon smoked paprika

1. Place the goose and the fatback in a metal mixing bowl, then add all of the

seasonings, and toss together. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes.

2. Remove the bowl from the freezer. Using the coarse cutting blade of a meat grinder, begin running the goose mixture through the machine, allowing the mixture to drop into another mixing bowl. Once all the ground meat is in the bowl, gently stir using a fork to rake the mix together.

3. Place a cast-iron skillet over medium heat and begin portioning out the patties. Using an ice cream scooper, scoop out onto some wax paper or parchment paper that has been lightly sprayed with a pan release spray. Dampen your hands to gently press the patties into shape, making them about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick and 3 inches in circumference. You should have about 10 patties.

4. Place the patties in the hot, dry skillet with no oil or additional fat; the fat from the mix will be plenty to render out and keep the sausage from sticking. Cook on medium heat for 3 minutes on each side. Remove from the pan and allow them to drain on some paper towels while you continue cooking the rest. You will need to pour off the excess fat in the pan between each round that you cook.

To Serve: Once your biscuits are done, cut in half lengthwise and add a sausage patty. Top the sausage with a tablespoon or so of your preferred jelly, and enjoy!

Chef Guas says: “What is food? It nourishes us, satisfies hunger, and is essential for survival. But like art, music, movies, and books, food tells a story that we can pass on to future generations. It is one of the earliest forms of communication—extremely powerful in how it defines us and creates our identity.”