



# FATGOLDZINE

FALL 2019 HARVEST / ISSUE 2

Welcome to the second issue of Fat Gold's third year, made from taggiasca or moraiolo olives harvested in November 2019!

## THE BASICS

The plastic top pulls *out* from the tin to form a pouring spout. Don't be afraid to give it a good yank. (This can be puzzling, so we've posted a video demonstration at [fat.gold/open-sesame](https://fat.gold/open-sesame).)

The label is a magnet for you to keep and save, if you wish! The design of this shipment's magnet is a map of the Fat Gold grove in Sunol, California, with the specific trees we harvested for this oil highlighted.

Admit it. That's cool.

## THE PEPPERY PUNCH

This shipment marks our eager return to the Sunol grove. As many of you know, two harvests ago, in 2018, that grove did not produce any olives—the result of a climate glitch that hobbled olive production across California. This year, the trees bounced back in a big way, setting a new record for the grove.

This is a split shipment; you're receiving an oil made from either taggiasca or moraiolo olives, both traditionally associated with Tuscany, known for their bold, bitter, peppery punch.

The bitterness you taste on your palate, as well as the spiciness you feel at the back of the throat, comes from the phenols in the olive oil—antioxidants that are the signature of extra virgin olive oil. (For a complete discussion of phenols, check out our February 2018 zine, available at [fat.gold/super-secret/zine](https://fat.gold/super-secret/zine))

Kathryn describes the taggiasca as super herbaceous—like woody herbs, or the forest floor. She thinks the moraiolo tastes like fresh olives, just picked from the tree. It's herbaceous as well, with hints of warm spices.

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If you'd like to learn how to taste extra virgin olive oil like a pro, check out our step-by-step guide online at [fat.gold/taste](http://fat.gold/taste).

## THE STORY OF A GROVE

We want to take a moment to tell the story of the Fat Gold grove. It's a story that has a beginning, a middle, and now, an end.

The story began when Kathryn visited the olive grove established by D'Aun Goble in Sunol, California, which is about halfway between Oakland and San Jose. Three acres, 327 trees, spaced wide; it was one of the most beautiful groves Kathryn had ever seen, and shortly after that visit, she learned that D'Aun was interested in leasing it to someone who could manage the trees and make use of the fruit.

That unexpected opportunity led directly to Fat Gold. Kathryn had, at that point, been an olive miller for several years, and she was interested in learning more about the farming side of the equation, but neither of us imagined establishing a grove; we couldn't (and certainly still can't!) afford to buy land in California. So, this was a unique opportunity. The grove was healthy and beautiful; it was available to lease, not buy; and it was a 40-minute drive from our front door in Oakland.

Now, after four growing seasons, hundreds of 40-minute drives, and about a dozen tons of olives, we're giving up our lease.

The reason is simple: it's too expensive. After our most recent harvest, Kathryn ran the numbers and discovered that, of all the olives we milled, the cost per ton was highest for the olives from Sunol. Keep in mind: these are the olives we farm ourselves. They ought to be the cheapest! But the fixed cost of the lease, on top of all the other inputs, not to mention the price we pay for harvest and transportation, made them our most premium purchase.

We were heartbroken to give up the lease, most of all because we truly loved that grove. It took a lot of our time, and we didn't "pay ourselves" for any of it, but it was time we enjoyed, out there in the sunshine (sometimes, the mud), pruning and mulching and watering. Eyeing ground squirrels suspiciously. Watching blossoms yield to buds and then tiny olives.

Also: we really, *really* wanted to prove you can grow and produce olive oil without being independently wealthy. Should olive groves

really be the exclusive domain of California's "landed gentry"? A leaner approach has become more possible in the world of wine—many of the most exciting winemakers in California right now are doing the work without owning the vines—and it seemed like the same might be true for olive farming. But, the economics beat us... for now.

However, there's good news in all of this.

## THE NEW MODEL

As we mentioned before, the Fat Gold grove did not produce any olives in 2018. As a result, we had to hit the road, sourcing olives from other growers across California.

That ended up being an amazing experience. We drove from Bakersfield to Capay Valley, meeting new friends, making oil from new varieties of olives. Some of those oils became our favorites—and yours, too! (We've heard from many Fat Gold subscribers who have discovered they love picual and hojiblanca olive oil.)

So, we're going all-in on sourcing great olives. In the world of wine, this is the role of the *négociant*: the winemaker who finds great grapes and uses them to make wine under their own label. We'll now be able to take all the resources we were plowing into the grove—not inconsiderable—and use them to pay olive farmers generously for their fruit and picking crews fairly for their labor. That feels good.

## HOW TO USE YOUR FAT GOLD

### *Kathryn's Idea: Sweetness*

Not enough people have experienced how well this kind of robust olive oil works in sweet applications. Think: chocolate ice cream sprinkled with flaky sea salt and drizzled with Fat Gold, or—okay, actually, just go ahead and google "nigella lawson chocolate olive oil cake." You're welcome.

**As always, if there are any problems whatsoever with your shipment, let us know.** Just email [robin@fat.gold](mailto:robin@fat.gold) and we'll get things fixed.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Fat Gold. Remember: use it up!

–Kathryn and Robin