



# FATGOLDZINE

FALL 2020 HARVEST / ISSUE 4

Welcome to the fourth issue of Fat Gold's fourth year, made from mission olives harvested in November 2020!

## THE BASICS

Here's how to open your tin: pull the cap up by its "ears," extending the translucent pouring spout below. Don't be afraid to apply steady pressure until the spout pops out. This can be puzzling, so we've posted a demonstration at [fat.gold/open-sesame](https://fat.gold/open-sesame)

## YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT

The mission olive is unique to California; Kathryn likes to call it a California heritage variety. It's a descendant of some cultivar that (you guessed it) missionaries brought from Spain, but apparently its DNA doesn't match any existing Spanish varieties. An orphan!

In California, mission is commonly grown as a table olive, sometimes even canned. But it's used much less commonly for oil, so this shipment provides a rare opportunity to taste it in this form!

In her years serving on an olive oil tasting panel, Kathryn has noticed that mission olive oil tends to be extremely bitter; it's a difficult variety to work with. The oil in this shipment is, indeed, bitter—but we think it's a good bitter, and remember: bitterness can be balanced by salty or savory foods.

Kathryn says the experience of tasting this oil is "like walking through a forest." She smells dried herbs and aromatic wood: thyme, oregano, a bit of pine. (We've omitted the step-by-step tasting guide from this zine, but you can always find it at [fat.gold/taste](https://fat.gold/taste))

**You're invited to join Kathryn for a live tasting and discussion** of this oil on September 22 at 5 p.m. Pacific, 8 p.m. Eastern. We have been doing these consistently with each shipment, and they are lots of fun; you're invited to come hang out with us!

You will find a link to register at [fat.gold/tv](https://fat.gold/tv)

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## A MAGNETIC LANDSCAPE

As always, the label is a magnet for you to keep and save, if you wish. In a surprise twist, this shipment's magnet doesn't use any public domain art; it's an original creation.

Because the mission olive is unique to this state, we wanted to celebrate its specific geography. So, for this magnet, we rendered an abstract 3D view of California, the real topography: can you see it? The coastal range on the left, the Sierra Nevada mountains on the right, and the great Central Valley in between. (If you look closely across that flat interior, you'll see the blip of the Sutter Buttes!)

The latitude line highlighted gold, glowing faintly, is the one where these mission olives came from. Specifically, they were grown near Oroville—just east of the buttes.

Let's hear it for visualizations: even though we've driven this terrain many times ourselves, seeing the topography in this stripped-down view helped us understand it more deeply. That vast Central Valley really is spectacular...!

To complete your geographic orientation: this oil was milled at Apollo Olive Oil, about an hour southeast of Oroville, where the landscape begins to crinkle and rise again. Many of you have tasted their work before: the picual in our picual-arbequina blend, the first shipment following the 2020 harvest, was milled at Apollo, too.

## HOW TO USE YOUR FAT GOLD

### *Marinated Feta*

A while back, Kathryn stopped by Harley Goat Farms in Pescadero, just south of the Bay Area, and she came home with fresh goat feta. We ate half of it immediately. To prolong the shelf life of what remained, Kathryn cut the cheese into cubes, packed them into a small jar, and covered them in Fat Gold, adding a few smashed garlic cloves and whole dried chilis, plus a sprig of oregano.

Kathryn used this technique to preserve our fancy feta; it would also work to *enhance* any fresh cheese (goat chevre or mozzarella, for example). Use the cheese just as you would have otherwise—enjoying the extended longevity and expanded flavor—and when it's gone (this is the real trick) use the oil as a salad dressing, or for dipping, or in any situation where you'd use olive oil. It's just that much more flavorful!

## BOOM AND BUST AND IN BETWEEN

This is the final shipment of oil from the 2020 harvest!

Here in California, last year's harvest was pretty light. This year's is looking similar; maybe it will be as scant as 2020, maybe a bit better. We'll soon find out. We made great oil in 2020, and we'll make great oil this year, too, but the relative paucity of fruit makes everything more challenging.

Why so few olives? Some growers speculate it was too hot during the olive tree's blooming season this year. We heard reports of a beautiful, abundant bloom, followed by a disappointing "fruit set"—the moment when pollinated flowers become tiny baby olives—which might have been the result of too much heat withering too many of those flowers.

None of this compares to the "olivepocalypse" of 2018, which some subscribers will remember hearing about; that's when we were still farming our little three acres, which that year didn't even produce enough olives to harvest. It was a disaster for growers across the state. The cause was probably a climate glitch in early spring: an unlucky sequence of temperatures that first told the trees to start making flowers... then promptly froze them all to death.

2019, by contrast, was the olive *boom*, with almost too much fruit to handle. It might be nice to have another one of those, some day...

There are ancient texts about olive cultivation which suggest that farmers back then only expected to harvest olives once every two years. So, the challenge posed by the olive tree's strong "alternate bearing" tendency has been with us for a long time!

We'll be sharing peeks of the harvest season on our Instagram account, so follow along if you're curious to see the process unfold. We're @fatgoldoliveoil.

That's it for the zine! **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, Robin, and Bryan