

BEST OF THE WEST

WHAT WE'RE TRACKING THIS MONTH

BEST
UPDATE

Think of Zelectric Motors as a genius mash-up of *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Love Bug*. ("We can rebuild it. We can make it better than it was.") The San Diego company takes vintage VWs—not just Beetles but also Things, Fastbacks, Karmann Ghias, and even Microbuses—and turns them into electric vehicles. You won't be using yours for the great American road trip—it'll have the same range, 80 miles or so, as a Nissan Leaf—but you'll have the cutest little around-town car going. And given that the original motors were ... well, underpowered is putting it kindly, the conversion actually improves the cars' performance. "At night," says Zelectric Motors cofounder David Benardo, "I just plug mine into the outlet my garage door opener uses." From \$64,000; zelectricmotors.com.



BEETLEJUICE

Photograph by JUSTIN CARRASQUILLO

SUNSET ♦ AUGUST 2015 11

BEST UNVEIL

HOUSE PARTY

It's almost here. Our 2015 Denver Idea House is due to debut August 7—your chance to see for yourself the update and expansion of this 1954 brick ranch house. The architects, Design Platform, decided to move the kitchen from the front of the house to the back—how did that turn out? Was interior designer Megan Hudacky able to work the original white-brick fireplace into her vision for the living room? And if you somehow sense an extra fizz of anticipation in the *Sunset* world, there's a reason. The granddaughter of the house's original owner has been following our progress from afar via home editor Joanna Linberg's blog posts about the project. (Thanks for the encouraging comments, Lia!) We're looking forward to hearing what she—and you—think. The house will be open for tours Fridays through Sundays, so order your tickets now. From \$20; through Sep 13; sunset.com/ideahouse.

Blown away

BEST OBJECT

It's arts and crafts time again at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center, as the venerable American Craft Council brings its annual show to town. Feeling the heat, perhaps, of such upstarts as West Coast Craft and Maker Faire, the council this year is adding hands-on craft stations and Hip Pop, a series of pop-ups that focus on up-and-coming talents. Still, what we're looking forward to seeing is fresh work from established artisans like East Bay glassblower Dave Stroock, who makes these glorious tumblers (*from \$40*). Admission \$14; Jul 31–Aug 2; craftcouncil.org/sf.



BEST WESTERNER

WASTE ACE

...is Claire Cummings's Twitter handle. Here's why.

Just four years out of Lewis & Clark College, Claire Cummings has carved out a niche at Bon Appétit, a food service based in Palo Alto, California, with 500-plus cafes—the word “cafeteria” is gently discouraged—around the country. The company's first waste specialist, Cummings tackles the problem on three fronts from her Portland home office: in the kitchen (promoting stem-to-root, snout-to-tail cooking), at the table (reducing discarded food and getting leftovers to the needy), and on the farm (using blemished fruits and veggies via a program called Imperfectly Delicious Produce).

You got involved in food activism in college—was waste a problem there? I remember the first month of my freshman year being so overwhelmed by how much food there was. At all-you-care-to-eat facilities like that, you really see waste skyrocket. Instead of making trays widely available, though, you can give someone a plate, and the amount of waste goes down by a third. People simply grab less.

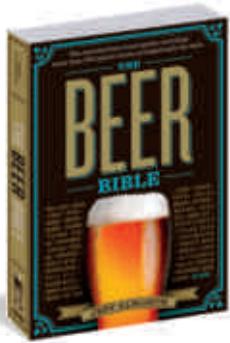
How do you reduce waste in your own life? Nothing revolutionary—using parts of fruits and vegetables that I would've thrown out, like carrot tops or the beet greens. And now, when I travel, I carry a reusable eco clamshell container, for leftovers at a restaurant.

Next month, the Natural Resources Defense Council is releasing Dana Gunders's *Waste-Free Kitchen Handbook*. Why is this issue so hot? It's a win-win: It's good for the environment and good for the bottom line. And it's shocking that one out of every six Americans is food-insecure, while 40 percent of our food is wasted. Also, there are things people can start doing today to address the issue, and that's empowering. You eat three times a day, hopefully, and at each meal, you could be having a real impact on the world.

BEST REFERENCE BOOK

CRAFTWORK

Pardon the pun, but we've often tapped the expertise of Portland beer guy Jeff Alworth, whose entertaining Beervana blog pulls no punches when it comes to the curious creations of some big-brewery labs. ("Imagine an off-brand Jolly Rancher melted down and cut with Everclear" was his tart take on one alco-pop.) So we're pleased to see him releasing an ambitious compendium called *The Beer Bible*. Although it's organized by style of beer, not region, an understandable Cascadian bent comes through—this is the book to carry on a Northwest pub crawl. \$20; due out Aug 11 from Workman Publishing.



BUSTER NOW HAS A HOME! TO MEET EQUALLY DESERVING (AND ADORABLE) DOGS, GO TO ILOVEFAMILYDOG.COM.

Dog day afternoon

BEST IDEA TO STEAL

When we heard about Dogo, a program in the Bay Area that lets you take shelter dogs to the beach or on a hike or to the park, we knew we had to check it out. (Art director James McCann called dibs, so he got to spend a recent afternoon in Golden Gate Park with two-year-old Buster, above.) You go through a two-hour orientation at San Francisco's Family Dog Rescue, then sign up online for playdates. It's good for dog lovers who can't (yet) adopt one—like Dogo cofounder Danielle Bowers—and, of course, for the pups. What are the most popular outings? "Dolores Park, of course, and Ocean Beach," says Bowers. "Some people will even take a dog to their office!" So why not make a friend for a day? You might just end up with a friend for life. dogosf.com.

BEST NEW ROOM

EAST SIDE STORY

We've been fans of downtown Portland's Hotel Modera since it opened in 2008—the midcentury-mod decor, the courtyard's living wall of native plants, the gentle prices. Now the same people have brought their boutique sensibility to the other side of the Willamette River. Sure, most of the guests in the Hotel Eastlund's 168 rooms may be conventioners attending trade shows across the street, but there's nothing stopping you from taking the Portland Streetcar a few blocks south to the Central Eastside Industrial District, which we anointed the hottest artisanal-foods hood a few months back, or over the Broadway Bridge to the Pearl District. From \$189; hoteleastlund.com.



TOP: DAVID FENTON



One word: plastics

Looking for an excuse to pick up some cheery tablecloths for Labor Day weekend entertaining? We've got you—and your table—covered. Based in La Jolla, California, BottleCloth makes a line of simple, graphic, and decidedly unfussy linens out of old plastic bottles. The machine-washable fabric looks and feels like cotton, but no, it's stain- and spill-resistant polyester—and 100 percent recycled. *Placemats from \$16, tablecloths from \$99; bottlecloth.com.*



**BEST
UP
& OVER**

LOOP THE LOOP

A little more than 25 miles long, San Diego's eighth annual Bike the Bay ride starts off with a bang: the once-a-year chance to pedal, legally, over the curving arc of the 2.12-mile San Diego–Coronado Bridge. (The east-bound lanes, where you ride, are entirely closed to cars.) The community fundraiser then continues down the Coronado peninsula, crosses Imperial Beach, and heads back up through Chula Vista and National City to downtown. Just remember, during that first stretch, not to look down. \$55; Aug 23; bikethebay.net.

PEAK TAHOE

**BEST
EXHIBIT**

Hard as it may be to believe, no museum has yet tried to mount a comprehensive exhibition about Lake Tahoe. The Nevada Museum of Art is about to change that. Opening August 22, *Tahoe: A Visual History* documents how we see, and have seen, our Western jewel over the last 200 years. A mere handful of the nearly 500 items on display: a Washoe fish trap, worthy of any design museum; Albert Bierstadt's luminous oil of twilight on the lake; Michael Light's aerial view of State 89 snaking toward Mt. Tallac (right); and a sweetly kitschy souvenir teacup. Get to Reno before the show closes in January—it's one more excuse for a trip to the mountains. \$10; nevadaart.org.



CASCADE LAKE AND EMERALD BAY FLANK STATE 89.



Prefab ... ulous!

Climatologically challenged locales like snowy Yellowstone National Park and Washington's rainy Vashon Island require the designers of new hotels to think outside the box. Make that *inside* the box. And by box, we mean prefabricated modules, constructed off-site and then trucked (lighting, finishes, and even bathroom sinks already installed) to the final location and quickly assembled. In July, the Lodges on Vashon opened at the north end of Vashon town: 16 stand-alone one- or two-bedroom units (left) with gas fireplaces, kitchenettes, and heated floors. Those units were built in Idaho, which also happens to be where Yellowstone's newest lodges hail from. This month, a trio of three-story structures begins welcoming guests near the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. (Two more buildings should be ready by next summer.) Unlike the Vashon prefabs, though, these are dozens of modules—containing 409 bedrooms in all—that have been bolted together and then draped with suitably park-y stone and wood paneling. *Lodges on Vashon: From \$190; lodgesonvashon.com. Canyon Lodge & Cabins: From \$122; yellowstonenationalparklodges.com.* 🏡