2025 | Issue 2

Physicians office Resource

Resources for You, Your Patients, & Your Practice



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Early Detection,

Rapid Diagnosis,

Better Outcomes

4800



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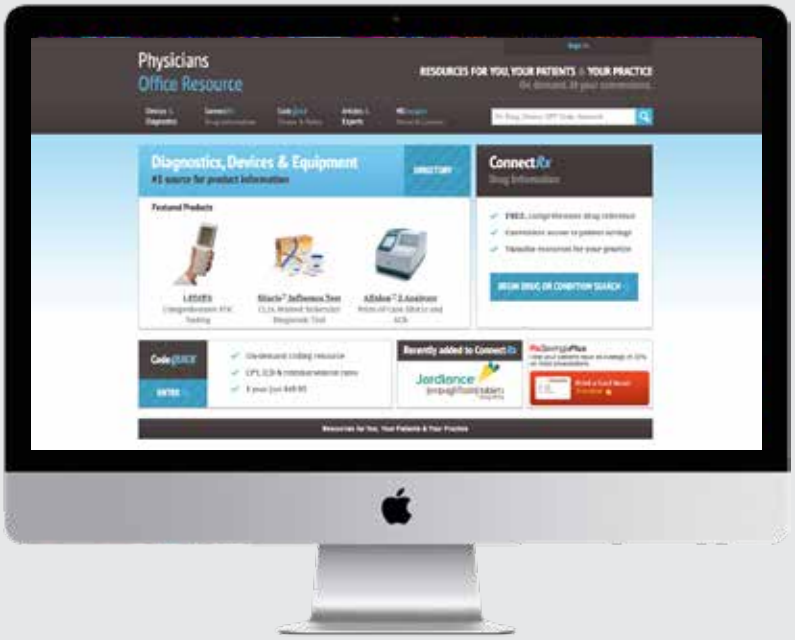


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FARM *to* FACTORY *to* TABLE:

Ultra Processed Foods

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Ultra processed foods (UPFs) have become a significant component of many modern diets, and understanding their impact is essential for physicians who strive to promote optimal patient health. As the landscape of food production evolves, it is increasingly important for healthcare providers to recognize not only the nutritional shortcomings of these products but also their broader implications for public health.

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Optimizing Diagnostics: Key Components to Consider When Selecting a New Hematology Analyzer

Integrating a hematology analyzer into a medical practice offers several key benefits that can enhance both patient care and operational efficiency.

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MDescapes: Something Precious in the "Land of Plenty" Four Seasons Resort and Residences Napa Valley

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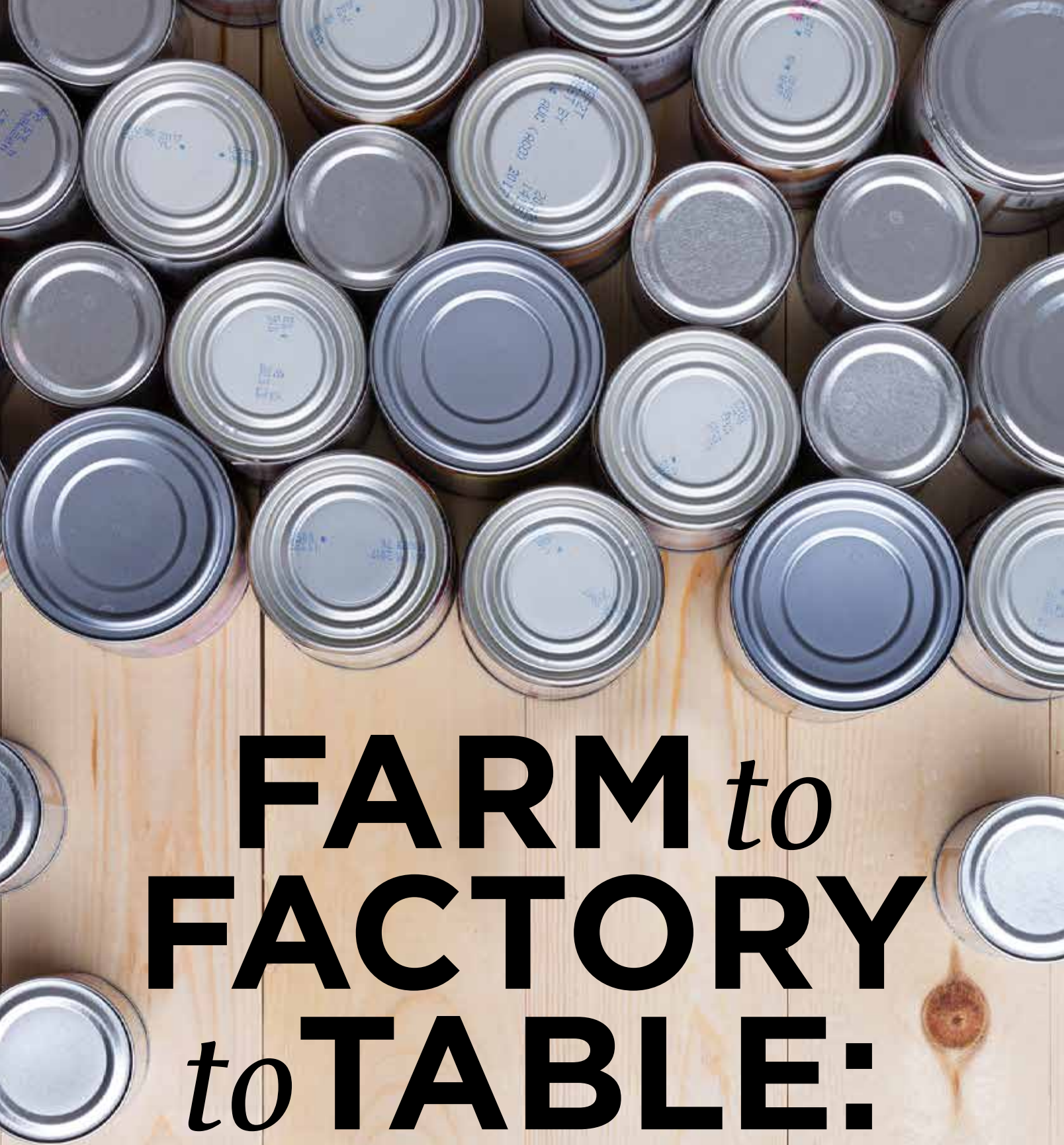
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Ultra Processed Foods

BY ADAM IRVINE, STAFF WRITER, PHYSICIANS OFFICE RESOURCE

Ultra processed foods (UPFs) have become a significant component of many modern diets, and understanding their impact is essential for physicians who strive to promote optimal patient health. As the landscape of food production evolves, it is increasingly important for healthcare providers to recognize not only the nutritional shortcomings of these products but also their broader implications for public health. This article outlines key points physicians should know about ultra processed foods and provides insights into the potential mechanisms behind their adverse health effects, epidemiological evidence, and clinical considerations.

As the landscape of food production evolves, it is increasingly important for healthcare providers to recognize not only the nutritional shortcomings of these products but also their broader implications for public health.

What Are Ultra Processed Foods?

Ultra processed foods are defined by their industrial formulation and extensive processing. Characterized by the inclusion of additives, artificial flavors, colors, and preservatives, these products often contain ingredients rarely used in home cooking. According to the NOVA food classification system, UPFs are created through a series of industrial techniques and typically have a high content of added sugars, unhealthy fats, and sodium, with minimal nutritional value.

Epidemiological Evidence and Health Implications

Multiple studies have associated high consumption of ultra processed foods with an increased risk of several chronic conditions, including:

- **Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome:** Diets rich in UPFs are linked with weight gain and a higher incidence of insulin resistance.
- **Cardiovascular Disease:** The high levels of sodium and unhealthy fats in UPFs contribute to hypertension and dyslipidemia.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** The rapid absorption of refined carbohydrates and added sugars in these foods can impair glucose metabolism.
- **Cancer:** Emerging research suggests that additives and the chemical by-products of processing might have carcinogenic properties.
- **Gut Dysbiosis:** Altered gut microbiota due to excessive consumption of additives and low dietary fiber can impact immune function and inflammation.

Mechanisms Behind the Adverse Effects

Understanding the potential mechanisms by which ultra processed foods affect health can aid physicians in advising their patients:

- **Nutritional Imbalance:** UPFs often displace nutrient-dense foods, leading to deficiencies in essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- **High Glycemic Load:** The refined carbohydrates found in UPFs can cause rapid spikes in blood glucose, contributing to insulin resistance.
- **Additives and Chemical Exposure:** Emulsifiers, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives may disrupt gut barrier function, promoting inflammation and metabolic disturbances.
- **Palatability and Overconsumption:** The engineered taste profiles of these foods can lead to overeating by stimulating reward pathways in the brain, similar to addictive substances.

Clinical Considerations and Patient Counseling

Physicians are uniquely positioned to influence dietary behaviors. When discussing ultra processed foods with patients, consider the following strategies:

- **Patient Education:** Explain the differences between whole, minimally processed foods and ultra processed alternatives. Use practical examples that resonate with patients' everyday experiences.
- **Nutritional Counseling:** Collaborate with dietitians to develop dietary plans that emphasize whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- **Behavioral Interventions:** Encourage mindful eating practices, such as reading labels and preparing meals at home, to reduce reliance on UPFs.
- **Chronic Disease Management:** For patients with conditions like diabetes or hypertension, provide tailored advice on reducing UPF intake as part of a broader therapeutic strategy.
- **Community Health Advocacy:** Physicians can also play a role in public health by advocating for policies that promote access to fresh, minimally processed foods and transparent food labeling.

Will there be government regulations on Ultra Processed Food?

The U.S. government hasn't yet unveiled a comprehensive policy specifically targeting ultra processed foods. However, several initiatives and regulatory efforts are indirectly addressing concerns related to these foods:

1. **Nutrition Guidelines:** Agencies like the USDA and HHS regularly update the Dietary Guidelines for Ameri cans. These guidelines emphasize the consumption of whole and minimally processed foods, indirectly discouraging diets heavy in ultra processed items.

2. **Labeling Regulations:** The FDA has been working on improving nutrition labels—such as clearer disclosures of added sugars and other ingredients—which can help consumers make more informed choices about ultra processed foods.

3. **Public Health Campaigns:** Various public health programs and educational campaigns aim to raise awareness about the risks of diets high in processed foods. These efforts encourage healthier eating habits that favor whole foods over highly processed alternatives.

4. **Research and Monitoring:** Government-funded research, including studies by the CDC and NIH, continues to examine the health impacts of ultra processed foods. Findings from this research can inform future policy decisions.

Future Directions and Research Needs

While the evidence linking UPFs to chronic disease continues to grow, further research is essential to understand the complex interactions between food processing, additives, and health outcomes. Physicians should stay updated with the latest studies to refine dietary recommendations and contribute to informed discussions on public health nutrition policies.

Conclusion

Ultra processed foods represent a significant challenge in modern dietary patterns, contributing to a host of chronic diseases and metabolic disturbances. For physicians, understanding the composition, mechanisms, and health impacts of these foods is critical in providing effective patient care. By educating patients, advocating for healthier food environments, and staying abreast of emerging research, healthcare providers can help mitigate the adverse effects of ultra processed foods and promote a shift towards healthier dietary practices.



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QUANTAFLO® PAD

From Semler Scientific

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1. Smolderen KG, Ameli O, Chaisson CE, Heath K, Mena-Hurtado C. Peripheral Artery Disease Screening in the Community and 1-Year Mortality, Cardiovascular Events, and Adverse Limb Events, AJPM Focus (2022), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.focus.2022.100016



NOVA PRIMARY BLOOD GLUCOSE REFERENCE ANALYZER

From Nova Biomedical

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1. Sillesen, H., & Falk, E. (2011). Peripheral artery disease (PAD) screening in the asymptomatic population: why, how, and who?. Current atherosclerosis reports, 13(5), 390–395. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11883-011-0196-x
2. Diehm, C., Allenberg, J. R., Pittrow, D., Mahn, M., Tepohl, G., Haberl, R. L., Darius, H., Burghaus, I., Trampisch, H. J., & German Epidemiological Trial on Ankle Brachial Index Study Group (2009). Mortality and vascular morbidity in older adults with asymptomatic versus symptomatic peripheral artery disease. Circulation, 120(21), 2053–2061. https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.109.865600

ML00190 Rev A

FLU AND RESPIRATORY

STATUS FLU A&B

From LifeSign

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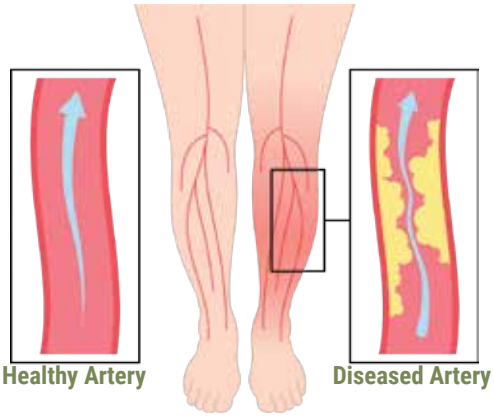
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BE PREPARED FOR RESPIRATORY SEASONS WITH THE OSOM® COVID-19 ANTIGEN RAPID TEST

From Sekisui Diagnostics

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OSOM® COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test has not been FDA cleared or approved. It is authorized by FDA under an EUA for prescription use only. It has been authorized only for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 antigen, not for any other viruses or pathogens and is only authorized for the duration of the declaration that circumstances exist justifying the authorization of emergency use of in vitro diagnostics for detection and/or diagnosis of COVID-19 under Section 564(b)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C S360bbb-3(b)(1), unless the authorization is terminated or revoked sooner.



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STATE-OF-THE-ART BENCHTOP CBC ANALYZER

From Sight Diagnostics

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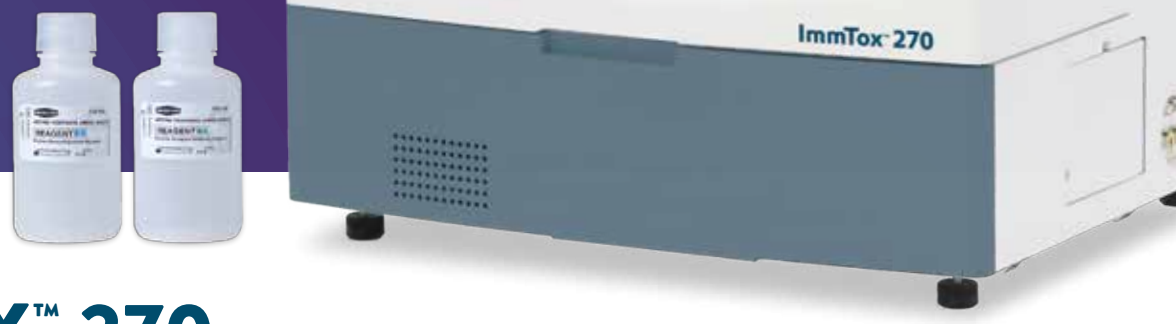
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Optimizing Diagnostics:

KEY COMPONENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A NEW HEMATOLOGY ANALYZER

BY: MICHAEL BAKER, STAFF WRITER, PHYSICIANS OFFICE RESOURCE

Integrating a hematology analyzer into a medical practice offers several key benefits that can enhance both patient care and operational efficiency. In-house testing allows for immediate processing of blood samples, leading to faster diagnostic results. This can facilitate prompt clinical decision-making, especially in urgent cases. Quick access to hematology results enables physicians to rapidly identify and address conditions such as anemia, infections, or clotting disorders, thereby enhancing patient outcomes and satisfaction. Modern hematology analyzers provide high precision and reliability. In-house control over the testing process can minimize pre-analytical errors, ensuring more accurate results compared to sending samples to an external lab. Streamlining laboratory processes with an integrated analyzer reduces turnaround times, minimizes administrative delays, and enhances workflow efficiency, ultimately saving time for both clinical staff and patients. Reducing reliance on external laboratories can lower per-test costs over time. Additionally, offering comprehensive in-house testing services may

attract more patients and create additional revenue streams for the practice.

When adding a new hematology analyzer to a physician office laboratory, both physicians and lab managers must carefully consider a range of factors to ensure that the instrument meets clinical needs, integrates well with existing systems, and supports the overall efficiency of the laboratory. A thoughtful evaluation can not only improve diagnostic accuracy and turnaround times but also contribute to long-term cost savings and streamlined workflow. Below are key considerations to keep in mind when selecting a hematology analyzer.

1. Analytical Performance and Throughput

- **Accuracy and Precision:** Verify that the analyzer has been validated through robust clinical studies and meets regulatory standards. Look for detailed performance data that demonstrates reliable precision, linearity, and low error rates.
- **Sample Volume and Throughput:** Assess the instrument's ability to handle your typical sample load. Ensure that its throughput aligns with your lab's daily volume without compromising turnaround times.
- **Specimen Requirements:** Consider the type and volume of specimens needed. An analyzer that accommodates smaller sample volumes or diverse sample types can be particularly beneficial in a physician office setting.

2. Workflow Integration and Automation

- **User Interface:** A user-friendly interface minimizes training time and reduces the likelihood of operator error. Intuitive controls and clear on-screen prompts help ensure consistent results.
- **Automation Features:** Look for automated sample loading, barcode reading, and error detection systems. These features not only improve efficiency but also help maintain quality control.
- **Software and Connectivity:** The analyzer should seamlessly integrate with your Laboratory Information System (LIS) and Electronic Medical Records (EMR). This connectivity facilitates data management, reduces manual data entry, and supports real-time result reporting.

3. Regulatory Compliance and Quality Control

- **Regulatory Standards:** Confirm that the analyzer complies with current regulatory and quality standards. This includes adherence to FDA guidelines and alignment with CLIA requirements for laboratory testing.
- **Quality Control Mechanisms:** An integrated quality control system—such as built-in calibration checks and internal QC materials—helps maintain accuracy over time. Consider how the instrument supports both internal and external quality assurance programs.

4. Cost and Total Cost of Ownership

- **Initial Investment vs. Operational Costs:** Evaluate both the upfront purchase price and the ongoing costs, including reagents, consumables, maintenance, and service contracts. A higher initial cost may be justified if the instrument offers greater reliability and lower long-term expenses.
- **Service and Maintenance:** Investigate the vendor's service offerings, warranty details, and support responsiveness. Reliable technical support can minimize downtime and ensure continuous laboratory operation.

5. Space, Scalability, and Future-Proofing

- **Physical Footprint:** Ensure that the analyzer's size and design fit within your existing laboratory space. Compact models that do not compromise on performance can be ideal for smaller facilities.
- **Scalability:** Consider whether the instrument can accommo date future testing needs or be upgraded as technology evolves. An analyzer with modular features or flexible software can adapt to changing laboratory demands.
- **Integration with Future Technologies:** With the rapid advancement in diagnostic technologies, choose an analyzer that supports integration with emerging tools and methods, ensuring your laboratory remains at the forefront of clinical diagnostics.

6. Vendor Reputation and Training

- **Vendor Track Record:** Research the vendor's history and reputation in the market. User testimonials and peer reviews can provide insights into the reliability and performance of the instrument.
- **Training and Support:** Adequate training for laboratory staff is essential. Evaluate the availability of comprehensive training programs and ongoing educational resources provided by the manufacturer.

Conclusion

Investing in a new hematology analyzer is a strategic decision that requires balancing performance, integration, cost, and future needs. By carefully evaluating the analyzer's analytical capabilities, ease of use, regulatory compliance, and support infrastructure, physicians and lab managers can ensure that the instrument not only meets current diagnostic demands but also supports long-term laboratory efficiency and patient care quality. A comprehensive assessment today paves the way for a more streamlined and responsive laboratory environment tomorrow.

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1. Smolderen KG, Ameli O, Chaisson CE, Heath K, Mena-Hurtado C. Peripheral Artery Disease Screening in the Community and 1-Year Mortality, Cardiovascular Events, and Adverse Limb Events, AJPM Focus (2022), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.focus.2022.100016



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Sofia® 2 Fluorescent Immunoassay Analyzer and Rapid Diagnostic Test Kits Sofia 2 takes rapid testing to a new level. Proven lateral-flow technology and advanced fluorescent chemistry are all integrated into this small benchtop analyzer which can be used in any point-of-care setting. Sofia 2 kits are easy to use and adaptable to any healthcare setting. Excellent performance, objectivity, quality control, LIS capabilities, and an expanding test menu make Sofia 2 the perfect solution for the physician's office laboratory.



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WOMEN'S HEALTH

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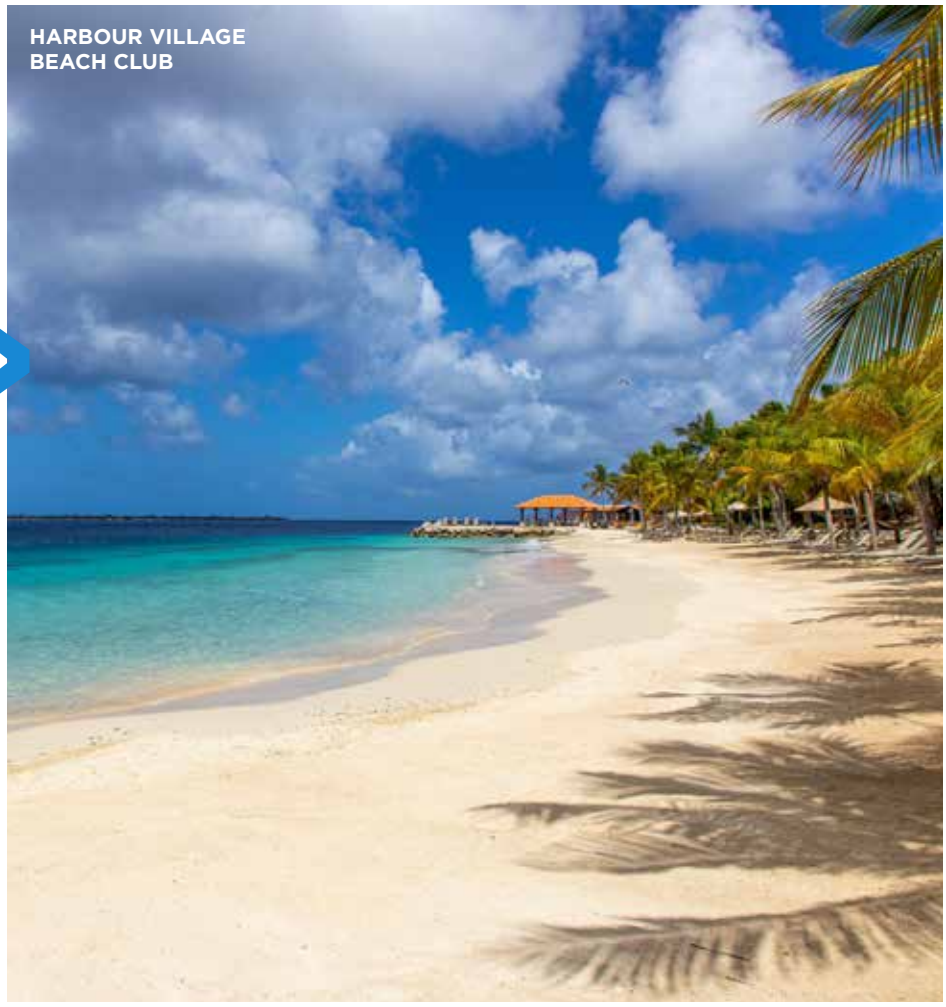
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HARBOUR VILLAGE BEACH CLUB



TURTLE BAY RESORT

TURTLE BAY RESORT

OAHU, HAWAII

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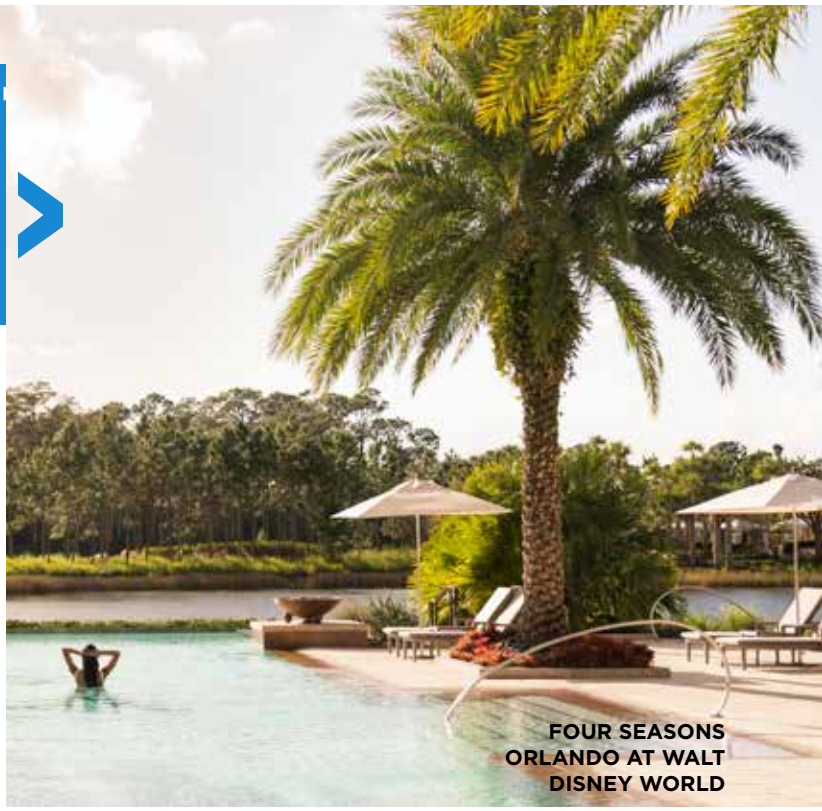
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FOUR SEASON ORLANDO AT WALT DISNEY WORLD

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

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SECRETS CAP CANA

PUNTA CANA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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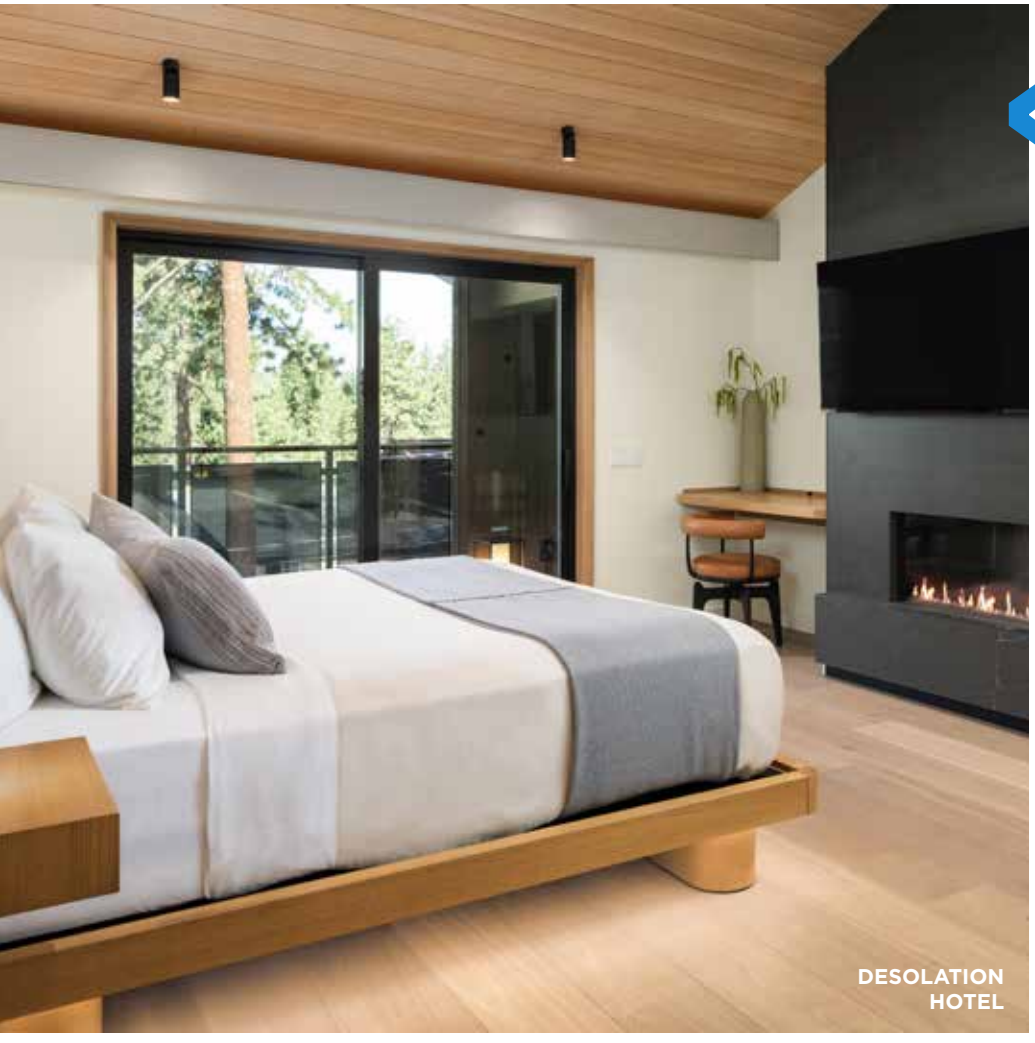
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TURTLE BAY RESORT

DESOLATION HOTEL

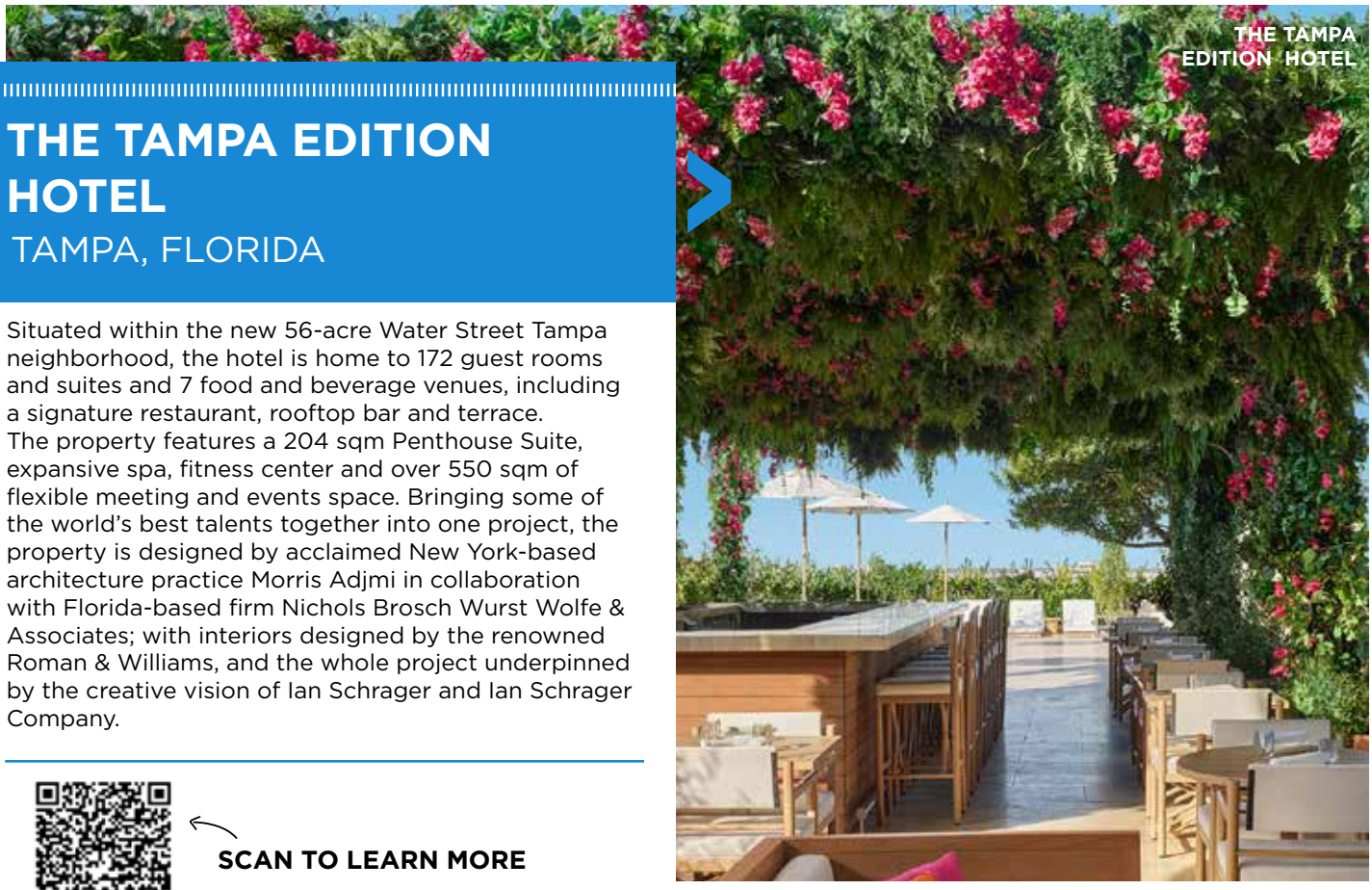
LAKE TAHOE, CALIFONIA



DESOLATION HOTEL

At Desolation Hotel, modern conveniences and eco-luxury commingle with Japanese tranquility and Scandinavian design. Our one-of-a-kind South Lake Tahoe experience inspires adventure and invites tranquility, providing the right space to recharge your battery. Balancing reverence for the past with appreciation for the present, Desolation Hotel nods to the simple days of yesteryear, while modern technology serves as a quiet backbone to the entire resort experience.

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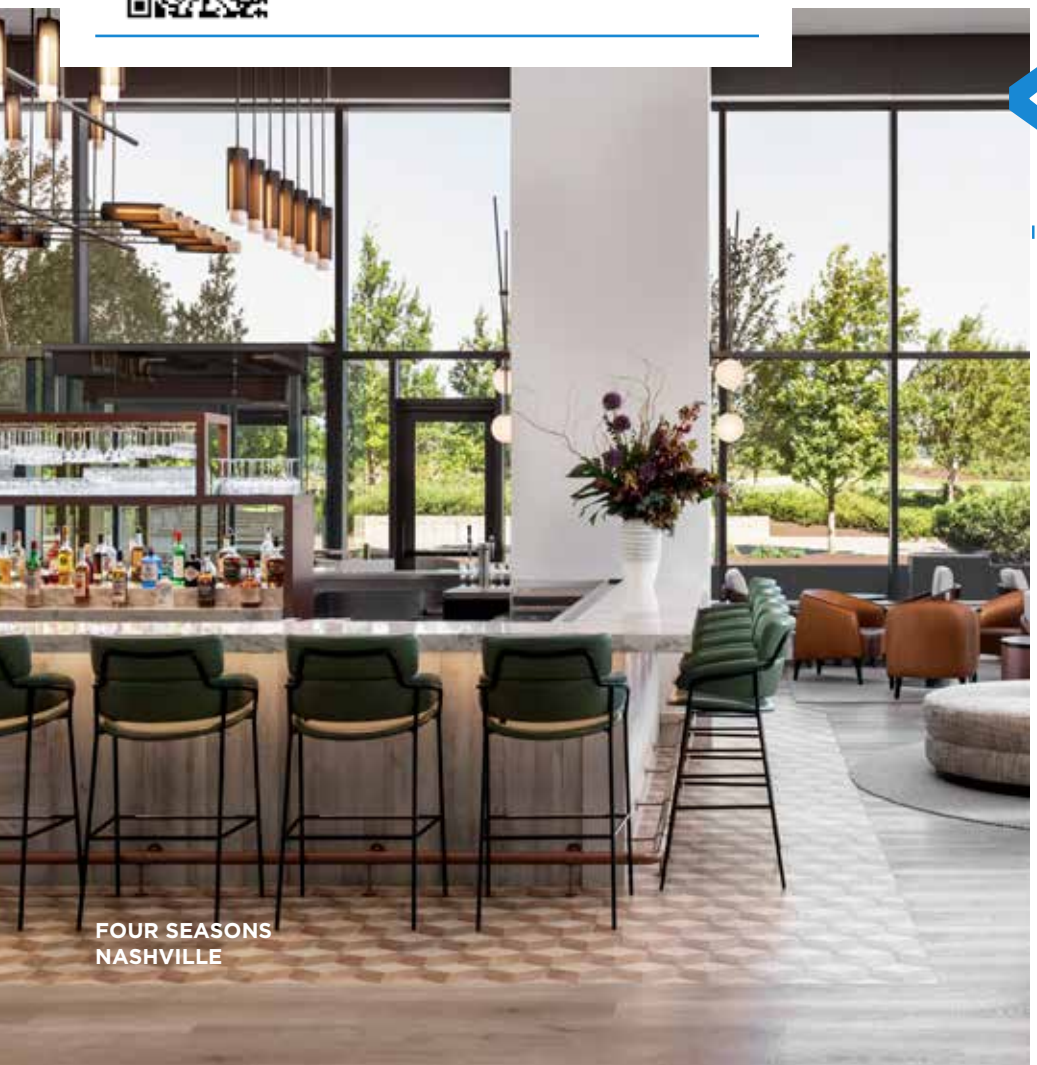
THE TAMPA EDITION HOTEL

THE TAMPA EDITION HOTEL

TAMPA, FLORIDA

Situated within the new 56-acre Water Street Tampa neighborhood, the hotel is home to 172 guest rooms and suites and 7 food and beverage venues, including a signature restaurant, rooftop bar and terrace. The property features a 204 sqm Penthouse Suite, expansive spa, fitness center and over 550 sqm of flexible meeting and events space. Bringing some of the world's best talents together into one project, the property is designed by acclaimed New York-based architecture practice Morris Adjmi in collaboration with Florida-based firm Nichols Brosch Wurst Wolfe & Associates; with interiors designed by the renowned Roman & Williams, and the whole project underpinned by the creative vision of Ian Schrager and Ian Schrager Company.

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FOUR SEASONS NASHVILLE

FOUR SEASONS

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FOUR SEASONS
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

As one of the only non-gaming and non-smoking hotels on The Strip, Four Seasons Hotel Las Vegas is a unique oasis in the heart of the action-packed sports and entertainment capital of the world. Offering Five Diamond luxury accommodations, acclaimed dining and a Forbes Five-Star spa, Four Seasons offers the best of both worlds: a resort retreat amid the famous energy of Las Vegas.

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Something Precious in the "LAND OF PLENTY"

FOUR SEASONS RESORT AND RESIDENCES NAPA VALLEY

BY BRANDI BROWER, TRAVEL EDITOR





In the beginning, Napa Valley was solely inhabited by the Wappo people for thousands of years until the Gold Rush of 1849. Mexican missionaries in the 1800s gave the native people the name "guapo," which eventually became Wappo, meaning "handsome" and "brave." These brave inhabitants were generally peaceful hunter-gatherers who named their beautiful home "Napa," meaning "land of plenty" in their native language. The diurnal landscape of this very fruitful valley can be attributed to its geography; the Vaca Mountain range to the East shields the valley from the scorching heat of Central California, while the Mayacamus Mountains to the West protect the region from the cooler climate marine influences—a perfect basin for bountiful yields and winemaking.

The history lesson continues with a jump ahead to the first vineyards in the valley. Wild grapes grew in abundance in the region. However, Spanish Franciscan missionaries from the 1700s planted the first vines to make wine for religious purposes. In 1839, European settler George Yount arrived and was given land via a grant from the Mexican government, as California was yet to be awarded statehood. The proper cultivation of grapes began. Even though the town of Yountville in the valley is named in his honor, others followed in his footsteps and curated the craft of vineyard growing. Samual Brannan planted 100 acres of vines on his tract of land, naming the region Calistoga. At the same time, John Patchett started planting his vines in 1854, using an old cider press to create his wine, which is recognized as Napa's first official vineyard and winery.

Class dismissed. Today, the famed region's viticulture is thriving. The Napa Valley, with the "land of plenty" moniker by the Wappo people, still fits, as there are over 500 wineries in the valley today. It's the most renowned wine-growing region in the U.S. and one of the world's smallest and most diverse. The valley floor spans a mere 30 miles in length and five miles across at the widest point. More than 40 different wine grape varieties grow in Napa County. The Mediterranean climate in Napa Valley aids wineries by providing long, warm, sunny days with cool nights, allowing grapes to ripen slowly and evenly and develop complex flavors while retaining necessary acidity, which is considered ideal for producing high-quality wine grapes.

The weather, the wine, and the region's incredible landscape make it a dream-worthy destination. What better place to plant yourself for a vintner adventure than the new Four Seasons Resort & Residences Napa Valley? After a lengthy construction process delayed by wildfires and the global pandemic, the highly anticipated project was completed, and their large glass double doors were opened for business at the end of 2021. Located at the north end of the Silverado Trail, the winding scenic route highlights the breathtaking views of the valley and the whimsy of the wineries; the property is a must-see anchor in the sleepy but charming town of Calistoga.

A town ordinance discourages "formula businesses," so the resort's signage along the roadside is relatively nondescript, blending in with the other local establishments and preserv-



ing its small-town feel. In other words, if you aren't explicitly looking for it, you'll admire the property's splendor but pass by the barely marked entrance at 400 Silverado Trail. The aesthetic blends seamlessly into the landscape and valley vibe but also stands out with its modern farmhouse-chic design. Neutral-colored materials of stone, wood, and metal throughout pay tribute to the culture of Napa; barn silhouettes strike a pose as the stand-out architectural features. But the highlight of this special spot is that it sits smack dab in the middle of a vineyard. That's right; this property is Napa Valley's first and only resort in a working winery. You have lovely views of the onsite vineyard from every vantage point on the property and every suite.

When we pull up to the incline to the courtyard, one valet takes our car while another promptly carries our bags into the stand-alone building housing the lobby. As we check in, a team member offers a warm smile and a glass of sauvignon blanc, an appropriate welcome for the heart of wine country. The white beams accent the vaulted ceiling, and the front and back glassed walls allow nature to enter the space. Access to an outdoor space with seating overlooking a pond with a water fountain is an attractive architectural addition. The decor has splashes of both industrial, with rustic chains securing the dome fixtures, and natural features, with the large tree trunk coffee tables and the focal point of the reception area, a 20-foot section of a giant eucalyptus tree used as the front desk. Two art installations at either end of the space are a creative nod to the region's history. On display behind the front desk are 24 glazed ceramic pieces representing the farmworker hats worn by those who cultivated this land. On the other end of the large lobby is a distinct floor-to-ceiling piece by Bay Area artist Carmen McNall, using both paint and wood carving, depicting a Wappo woman with her gathered harvest in a basket. Between the two artistic conversation starters, comfortable couches and chairs cluster to gather guests.

There are just 85 rooms and suites, grouped in two-story, free-standing cottages and 20 residences, all in an iron grey board and batten treatment. Landscaped paths with native grasses, sage bushes, and olive trees blend perfectly with the natural surroundings throughout the 23-acre site. Every accommodation offers outdoor living with a patio or terrace, furnished to enjoy al fresco room service or a sip of some wine while watching the setting sun. We were pleasantly surprised at the roominess when we walked into our Palisades room on the second floor. If this was the size of a room, I could only imagine what a suite must be. As a bonus, windows on three sides bring energy to the space with abundant natural light. The amenities were impressive as well: gas fireplace, 20-bottle temperature-controlled wine refrigerator, private bar station with Nespresso machine, beverages, and libations, curated stemware, generous shower/bath combo area with soaking tub, rain and hand-held shower, dual vanities, desk, chase lounge, window seat with table and chair, and automated blinds and integrated lighting. But it's the design elements that punctuate the premises: the bead board, the vaulted ceiling, the substan-

tial pocket doors, interesting light fixtures, the custom-made live edge headboard above the consistently exceptional Four Seasons beds and linens, and the little touches like the leather bridle that decorates the mantle, the beautiful throw across the couch, or the pieces of driftwood and books on the shelf. The brightness of the living area transitions into the moodiness of the charcoal bathroom; octagon tiles surround the glassed-in shower area, accented with the warm wood of a tray that lays across the stand-alone tub and the petrified wood side table where the Le Labo products rest, the natural grey stone countertop with the open shelves below hold baskets of thirsty towels, the brass on all the fixtures and accents around the mirrors offset the tonality of the space. The design vision, executed beautifully throughout the resort by Hirsch Bedner Associates, offers a regenerating and private atmosphere, a home away from home sentiment. "Love Opens Doors" is imprinted on the key card; it's clear that much love was put into this resort.

Across the courtyard from the reception building, another sandstone-bricked structure houses two of the three restaurants on the property. We are out this evening to enjoy the signature restaurant TRUSS, which boasts farm-to-table cuisine, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Even though the design elements inside the eatery are gorgeous with the farmhouse chic aesthetic, panoramic glass doors that can open up to the outside, and the now familiar vaulted ceilings and trusses (I'm assuming this is why it's named as such), we choose to eat outside on the sprawling terrace overlooking the expansive view of the resort from this elevated vantage point. The Four Seasons are not only celebrated for their luxury accommodations and service, but their cuisine never disappoints. We both savored our starters, but my main course was chef's kiss. I kept guard over my Mezzi Rigatoni: Wagyu Bolognese San Marzano Tomato, Ricotta- as I gave my husband a bite, and I could tell he wanted more. We both loved this specific dish so much that we returned the following evening so he could order it and I could enjoy it one last time. Dezarae was our charming server and timed our dining experience perfectly.

It was another banner weather day, with not a cloud in the sky as our in-room dining breakfast was delivered and arranged on our terrace table. There's just something about room service: enjoying avocado toast, eggs, and a yogurt parfait, both wrapped up in lux Four Seasons robes and soaking in the vineyard view that spells a perfect morning. The only thing that could improve upon this day would be a visit to the spa. Don't mind if I do! The third separate but equally beautiful building in the courtyard houses the exercise facility and Napa Valley Spa Talisa Resort. The Wappo people discovered the healing waters of Calistoga over 500 years ago, so it's appropriate that the resort selected "Talisa," which means beautiful water in the Native American language, to inspire the epithet. It should come as no surprise that the two-story facility's decor was cozy and chic. The relaxation rooms are well appointed with a fireplace, comfy reclining loungers, couches, sun-filled windows overlooking the hills, tea, and snacks, all you would need for your pre and post-relaxation from your treatment. There are eight treatment rooms where therapists render skilled service. Jessica executed the Splendid Glow facial perfectly.





The escape to the gorgeous wine country rejuvenated my soul, while my therapist rejuvenated my skin with a glow. The spa offers several areas to enhance relaxation: a classic steam room, spa garden whirlpool, and outdoor misting decks. I used all of these offerings to reset and recharge.

Over 500 years ago, the Wappo people mixed volcanic ash





into the mud for detoxification. Samuel Brannan, one of the original vintners, also built the first spa and mad baths in the 1860s. Calistoga's mayor, Dr. John Wilkinson, popularized mud bathing in the 1940s and 50s. When I was offered my Calistoga Mud Experience while visiting Spa Talisa, I thought, "When in Rome." Directing me to a private area, gated with tall fencing within the spa garden, I was instructed to massage the wet earth onto my skin and bathe in the sun to allow the earth to draw toxins from my body. Afterward, wash it away in the outdoor shower. Benefits include improved circulation, soothed muscles, and a renewed complexion. Calistoga has a renowned history as a place of healing. Spa Talisa is a lovely place to facilitate that journey.

Relaxation continues poolside. The property has two pools, one for families and one for adults. The Resort Pool is centrally located and features shallow splashing areas perfect for families with children.

The 23-meter Adult Pool, a five-lane heated lap pool, is perfect for an invigorating swim or the ideal spot to lounge by and soak in the California rays. Request a super cabana for an h20 hideaway. We plant ourselves on the thick cushioned loungers underneath the shade of the white umbrella. With the help of sweet staff members Amber and Anthony, we are served delicious drinks and yummy Cal-Mexican fusion fare courtesy of CAMPO. Open daily for lunch, we enjoyed the tantalizing tacos and Campo Salsa Tasting. There is a bocce ball court, corn hole, ping pong, two heated whirlpools for cooler days, and misting decks for hotter ones.

After a whole afternoon enjoying the activities and another delicious dinner at TRUSS, we go to a comfortable couch next to a fire pit. The golden hour is quickly passing as the amber glow on the distant mountains grows darker, the stars begin to appear, and the twinkling lights strategically placed on the limbs of the giant oak tree illuminate. There's a magic here.

On the last day, with much to see and experience, we stopped in the lobby to grab a complimentary muffin while we waited for the valet to bring us bikes to ride—a leisurely peddle up the road to check out the rumored cuteness of Calistoga. We pass the vintage sign for "Dr. Wilkinson's Hot Springs & Mud Baths" at one end of Lincoln Ave. down to the old neon sign "Lovina Great Food" at the other end, checking out the many cute shops, bakeries, and art galleries in between. What a charming town to enjoy just one mile away. On our way back, we decide to ride around the perimeter of Four Seasons Resort and Elusa Winery. There's something romantic about riding a bike past the rows and rows of grapevines with the one you love.

We pull our bikes up to the Elusa Winery, which sits just a stone's throw away from the TRUSS restaurant. The Four Seasons structures complement the beautiful Elusa reception building in both architectural style and design. The vision is Hirsch Bedner Associates of San Francisco. The property's connection to nature inspired this rustic yet refined statement, its roots in the world-class locale reflecting a fresh expression of the vineyard lifestyle. We're greeted by Valeria, our guide and host, during our tour and wine tasting. Elusa Winery is a fully operational, organically farmed vineyard that is small compared to the valley's more popular estates. But she informed us that the award-winning winemaker and valley vintner rock star, Thomas Rivers Brown, has been involved with the winery from day one and is responsible for crafting the brand's lus-



cious varietals. She shares the special significance of the name of the winery, Elusa. A tribute, once again, to the native Wappo people, the word "elusa" means to care for or hold something precious. They used the word to describe things they had grown or made, like baskets. The tribe was known for basket weaving, thus the artwork in the lobby of the Wappo woman holding a basket. The label design on the wine bottle is woven in a pattern shaped like a rudimentary heart. The Elusa team felt the name reflected their commitment as caretakers for the land on which the grapes grow.

After hearing about the history, we were driven into the vineyard via a golf cart. We picked a few grapes from the vine while learning about the harvesting of the plants. We were then driven to the facility and educated on the winemaking journey from harvest and sorting to blending and aging. We arrive at the Vintner's Lounge, where the wine tasting occurs. A striking suspended copper sculpture created by Cannonball Studios is the reflective focal point of the room. The art piece was made by firing a vintage cannon at sheets of copper. We are presented with three Cabernet Sauvignon and one Sauvignon Blanc, with selected accompaniments of Manchego, Gouda, prosciutto, almonds, and tart-dried cherries. I'm not a wine connoisseur. But it was fun pretending.

A late afternoon drive is on the itinerary for our last day. We hop in the complimentary car, a Lucid Air electric vehicle, to explore Napa Valley. We take off with a curated route courtesy of the concierge, highlighting the most scenic roads. With music playing, we cruise along the winding hillsides, admiring Mother Nature's handiwork, with miles and miles of perennial plantings, vineyard after vineyard, all the grapes, all that potential wine, all the work that goes into the process from vine to bottle. The beauty of the valley is awe-inspiring.

On our last evening, we saved the best for last: a dinner to remember at the twice-honored Michelin-starred restaurant AURO. We anticipate being seated in the main dining area overlooking the vineyard. We were escorted past tables and through the entrance of the floor-to-ceiling glass wall, which separates the kitchen from the patrons; we were completely surprised as the maitre d introduced us to the large kitchen; all of the staff stopped in their tracks and greeted us in unison "Welcome!" We are shown a special bench seating area, a glassed-in alcove, a front-row table to all the action, and a view of what our AURO host refers to as the "controlled chaos" that is an award-winning kitchen.

AURO combines the word aura with the Spanish word oro, which means gold. The golden atmosphere and quality are apparent thanks to Executive Chef Rogelio Garcia and his team. Chef Garcia has quite the resume: a James Beard Foundation finalist for Best Chef: California, an alumnus of Bravo's "Top Chef" Season 15, and under his helm, the AURO team received the coveted Michelin star in 2023 after only being in operation for eight months and receiving it again in 2024. Born in Mexico



City and raised in Los Angeles and Napa, an after-school job as a dishwasher in Yountville grew into a passion and career. Later, Garcia held positions in other Michelin-starred restaurants before earning his first stars in '18 and '19 at San Francisco's Spruce.

The three-hour AURO experience was unforgettable. The dinner was a 7-course seasonal tasting menu, but as I look back on the photos of the delectables, I count 13 actual dishes with the Japanese milk bread, amuse bouche, and additional desserts. "Cooking is storytelling," Garcia shares, "This menu begins in the fields and farms of Northern California. It captures my joy of ingredient sourcing: the excitement of beginning a new season, the smell of the sea and the soil, and my friendships with our ranchers, farmers, and fishermen. At AURO, we honor the ingredients and the labor that brought them to us." A few of the impressive menu items: White Binchotan-Grilled Japanese Wagyu, Petit Summer Squash, Foraged Matsutake, Mole Negro and the Golden Chanterelle and Whole Grain Mustard Gnocchi, Tenbrink Farm Heirloom Tomato, Maitake Mushroom. The staff struck the perfect balance of professionalism and friendliness as they rotated in describing each gastronomic delight. Award-winning sommelier Derek Stephenson guides you through the wine pairing he has selected if you choose to vine and dine. There are moments, tastes, smells, and sights that you make a mental note of: I will never see this again, be here again, taste this again. It makes it even more precious when recognized and savored. This meal was one of those moments.

Reflecting on all the memorable moments at the Four Seasons Resort and Residences Napa Valley, I see a thread that binds so much of what's beautiful about this destination that rests in the shadow of Mt. St. Helena. It's found in the heritage of the land it rests upon. Respect for the inhabitants who once lived in this "land of plenty" shines through from the art displays honoring the workers who harvest the bounty to the commitment to caring for the vineyard, incorporating the area's history of healing through the Talisa Spa, the relationships cultivated with the farmers sourcing the food for AURO. There's a lot of honor for the history of this valley. The Wappo word "elusa" is perfect, not just for the wine produced from this particular plot of land. Still, "to care for or hold something precious" is a great way to define the hospitality, service, and experience at the Four Seasons Resort Napa Valley; they care for you as something precious.

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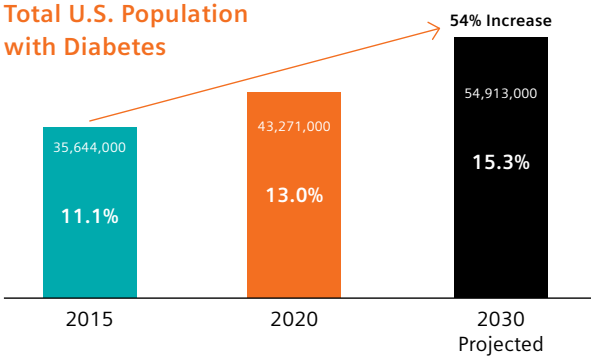
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1. Rowley, William R et al. "Diabetes 2030: Insights from Yesterday, Today, and Future Trends." Population health management vol. 20,1 (2017): 6-12. doi:10.1089/pop.2015.0181.

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