

The diners looked out over the wharf, where the fisherman had worked, down the elegantly set table that ran the length of the dock and out to the sea beyond.



make any of his events feel memorable —though all of that is crucial. For him, it's also about that ephemeral, natural element of a lived experience, how everything can suddenly change in a moment, outside of our control, that makes every event singularly special.

The celebration of the moment is something he learned to embrace in the earlier days of Outstanding, while at a meal on a vegetable farm in Craftsbury, Vermont. He placed his table right in the middle of a field of fiery buckwheat, which, Denevan noted giddily, was exactly the same height as his table. The site was too far away from the barn, which might have provided shelter in the case of rain; sure enough, the skies opened up and poured warm drops on Denevan's guests. Everyone was soaked. "It rained the entire event, all the way through," he recalled. "There was a salad that became soup." But he noticed something incredible: his guests were still having a good time. Some came up and told him afterward that it was the best event they had ever been to.

If you end up near one of the vegetable farms, fruit orchards, olive groves, date gardens, or beaches where yet another Outstanding event will soon be taking place, you might consider stopping by. Reconnecting with nature and food, and the people who produce it, is a powerful ritual—especially when the moment takes over the plan. "When people are brave and willing to get out of their typical patterns," said Denevan, "they're rewarded, they're fulfilled by it." He will set the table. All you have to do is put on some field-friendly shoes and find your way to it.

08 The dockside dining experience at Stock Island, Florida paid homage to the local seafood and maritime tradition.

09 The summit of California's Mount Tamalpais provided no shortage of dramatic vistas for a particularly memorable edition.

