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CREATIVITY, CULTURE, AND SOUL
OF THE MODERN SOUTH.



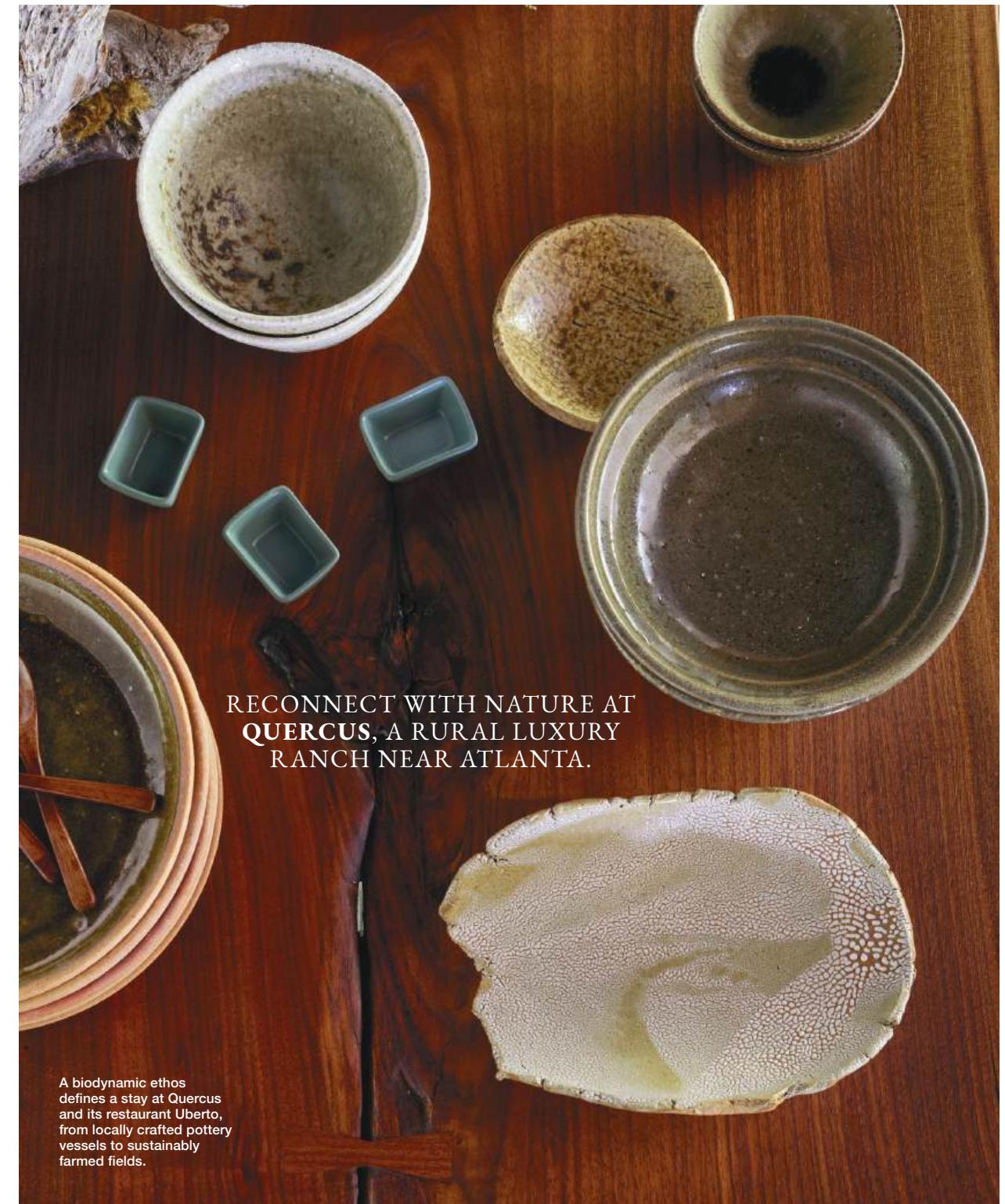
SUMMER 2025

WANDER

• SOULFUL PLACES NEAR AND FAR



V | JOURNEYS + DESTINATIONS



RECONNECT WITH NATURE AT
QUERCUS, A RURAL LUXURY
RANCH NEAR ATLANTA.

A biodynamic ethos
defines a stay at Quercus
and its restaurant Uberto,
from locally crafted pottery
vessels to sustainably
farmed fields.



At Quercus, the all-inclusive experience merges outdoor activities, refined dining, and serenity into an idyllic escape.

Circle of Life

A former cattle farm and hunting reserve is transformed into an idyllic retreat outside of Atlanta

BY ANGELA HANSBERGER

Endless turquoise skies with tufty clouds stretch over Georgia pastureland. Below, hawks hovering and gliding in the infinite blue, dew-laden leaves of a nascent carrot are plucked by gardener Wes Palmer. His hands, stained with the rich ochre of the soil, nurtured the precise burgeoning rows, each plant a deliberate stroke in the landscape's edible masterpiece.

This was my first glimpse of Quercus, a luxury guest ranch that was once a cattle farm and hunting reserve founded in 1977 by an Italian duke and duchess of the family Visconti di Modrone. Now home to their daughter, Chiara, the resort, its biodynamic farm, and restaurant are the realization of she and visionary husband, Angelos Pervanas, together with partners Kara Hidinger and Ryan Smith—owners of Michelin-starred Staplehouse in Atlanta.

A stay at the luxury guest ranch is a restorative escape that feels in the middle of nowhere but is just an hour south of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Immersion begins quickly. Down a small gravel lane and through a pecan grove, a sign that

blends in with the scenery yields to a clearing. Cars are cleaned and tucked away in a garage for your stay. There is no sprawling edifice of ostentation but a collection of thoughtfully placed and spaced guest cabins, their intentionally weathered wood blending seamlessly with ancient oaks and Georgia pines.

There are only four bungalows over the 3,900 acres of Quercus, which means "oak tree" in Latin, all stunningly unique and appointed with original art and family antiques. Each is equipped with a kitchenette, porch, wood stove—or a fireplace in the one two-bedroom property—walk-in showers, and soaking tubs. Fostering health and healing is a core dynamic here—lighting is circadian, mattresses are organic, and calming finishes are nontoxic.

Charleston designer Tammy Connor connects interiors with their picturesque views through a juxtaposition of old and new, with natural elements and clean modern edges. Each space feels like a home, not a rented room. "We want people to share this experience," Pervanas says, "because we are experiencing it as well at the same time."

Guests can take daytime meals created by Smith in their quarters or in the communal cottage, replete with a library and bar. Homes are stocked with house-made snacks and beverages. Provided golf carts make it easy to explore the grounds and the workings of regenerative farming, horseback riding,





Chef Ryan Smith of Staplehouse in Atlanta centers his tasting menus at *Uberto* on the produce from *Quercus*'s on-site farm, as well as from neighboring Georgia farms. The restaurant's culinary program focuses on a holistic approach to sourcing.

Tucked into the trees, cabins at *Quercus* may appear rustic, but inside they foster tranquility with luxe décor and amenities.



fishing, or indulge in yoga, in-house massage, and other wellness activities provided by *Chiara*. But a garden tour is a must, as the biodynamic vision is the ethos that runs through everything at *Quercus*.

And now, patrons can book dinner at restaurant *Uberto*, the heart and soul of the experiential reserve—and named for *Chiara*'s father. “He enjoyed good meals with great company,” *Pervanas* says, “and he originally put this place together.”

Gardens are filled with unique produce awaiting Chef Smith’s adept hands. There are *puntarella* (an Italian chicory), green coriander, galanga root, and cilantro at the ready. The subtle sweetness of Atlas carrots, a Parisian market variety that looks like an auburn-hued radish, might be served numerous ways at *Uberto*. In the glassed-in food lab at the center of the former unfinished garage, Smith, with a deep respect for the land and an artist’s eye, might experiment with carrot-top vinegar. A carrot grown from seed, pulled plump and vibrant from the soil just hours before, undergoes transformation by Smith’s hands as a delicate component of the tasting menu. Featuring more than 15 dishes, the menu is a fleeting moment of culinary perfection, not only of technical skill but also of connection to the land.

The vessels of Smith’s food are *terroir* in themselves. North Carolina potter Matt Hallyburton sourced clay from the property and fired them in his kiln using pecan and oak ashes from *Quercus* timber for glazes.

Remnants of those Atlas carrots—the feathery tops and last scrapings from the gorgeous pottery—return to the earth, joining compost heaps near cattle pastures. The ranch raises a hybrid breed of Brahman and Angus cattle called Brangus, which adds to the 3,000 tons of compost used to fertilize 600 acres of hay fields and gardens. It’s self-sustaining. The rich, dark alchemy nourishes the next generation of seeds, completing the circle, a quiet testament to *Quercus*’s devotion to the land’s gentle circadian rhythms.

Leaving *Quercus*, I notice the air now perfumed with the subtle scent of unseen blossoms, the rustling secrets of leaves, and the scent of damp earth—moments newly observed in this sanctuary where the insistent clamor of the world fades to a distant hum, leaving only the stillness and serenity of a natural escape. **V**

Quercus, 208 Caldwell St, Gay, GA; book your experience at worldofquercus.com.