

# 101 WAYS TO SAVOR FALL!

# CountryLiving

## DECORATE!

Easy Ideas for Corn, Pumpkins, and More

## CELEBRATE!

A Laid-Back Thanksgiving on the Farm

## UPDATE!

Peel-and-Stick Reclaimed Wood (Really!)

## HIBERNATE!

10 Finds to Cozy Up Your Bedroom

*Couples*  
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THANKSGIVING ON THE RANCH

## Western Reunion

A New Mexico family in the business of hospitality puts its expertise to good use during a casual, close-knit gathering infused with flavors of the Southwest.

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styling by PAGE MULLINS   food styling by MARIAN COOPER CAIRNS*

The Los Poblanos silos are purely decorative these days. (Left) The Rambes' current home, built in 2005.





**L**os Poblanos, a family-owned-and-operated organic farm and boutique inn located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has gotten a lot of attention in the last few years. Their chef, Jonathan Perno, has received numerous accolades. The resort's field-to-fork philosophy and unique Southwestern aesthetic have been heralded by travelers from around the world. The property has popped up on both the Food Network and PBS. And business is booming for the farm's retail arm, which includes products ranging from gardening tools and beauty products to farm-fresh foods ([farmshop.lospoblanos.com](http://farmshop.lospoblanos.com)).

But all of that would have been impossible to predict more than 40 years ago when Armin Rembe, an oncologist, and his wife, Penny,

bought their dream home. The 1930s farmhouse was designed by famed New Mexico architect John Gaw Meem and set on 12.5 acres that had been part of the massive 800-acre Los Poblanos Ranch and one of Albuquerque's cultural centers for many years.

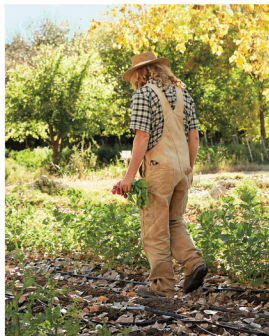
This little slice of the Rio Grande became the ideal spot for the Rembes to raise their four children—Armin Jr., Matthew, Jay, and Emily—and teach them the beauty of living off the land. Back in those days, before the lights and the cameras, the action pretty much consisted of the kids sweating beneath the Southwestern sun while herding sheep and farming alfalfa. “We worked 40 hours a week during our summers,” says Matthew, now Executive Director of Los Poblanos. “We all developed our work ethics in those fields.”

**Matthew Rembe, left, and his three siblings have transformed a family ranch into a thriving farm that produces 50 to 60 crops annually.**

While the Rembe kids were grown and gone by the '90s, they kept tabs on what was happening back home. And they were worried. Land surrounding their childhood house—which Penny and Armin turned into a bed-and-breakfast in 1999—began to give way to rows of cookie-cutter spec houses. Says Matthew, “What remained of Los Poblanos proper was getting chopped up to the point where it couldn't be put back together.” So the prodigal sons—and daughter—returned to co-invest with their parents in another 12.5 acres along with several old buildings, some of the region's last remaining and best examples of adobe architecture.

## TAKE A GETAWAY Stay at the Ranch

The 50 guest rooms range from cozy accommodations in the historic inn to freestanding cottages nestled among the lavender fields. Don't miss the Farm Shop, which stocks lots of New Mexico-inspired finds, including “Better Call Sal,” a savory salt blend. Rooms from \$195; [lospoblanos.com](http://lospoblanos.com)







Matthew and a few family members (wife Teresa, niece Isabel Benak, and sister Emily Benak) gather 'round a 19th-century table to toast a thriving farm, bustling Farm Shop (right), and furry farm friends.



Once the deal was done, the Rembes set their sights on developing a way to make the farm financially viable while preserving the historic architecture. To address the former, they began experimenting with different types of crops that could thrive in dry desert terrain and also be marketable post harvest. Lavender was the clear (and most fragrant!) winner. "It requires very little water and has so many uses," says Matthew.

The aromatic herb quickly flourished, and the family got to work developing products. Matriarch Penny whipped up the first, Lavender Salve, over the farmhouse's original 1934 Garland stove. Almost immediately after they brought it to market, New Mexico farmers began to swear by it to treat their overworked, dry hands.



From there, they developed a line of more than 20 bath and beauty items, as well as an array of lavender-based food products, such as honey.

Once that business was off and running, the family created an agricultural cooperative, inviting young local farmers to grow and raise their own vegetables, poultry, and more at Los Poblanos. "We're proud to say that we grow growers," Matthew says. And in 2004, they began renovating the old buildings on the property, transforming them into guest accommodations and event spaces. "You can visit a lot of historical properties where the buildings stand empty. We were looking to have more than tourists filing through and leaving," says Matthew. "We wanted every building to have a use—to be filled with life and activity."







Red Chile and  
Orange Glazed Turkey  
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Tamale  
Dressing  
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Red Chile and  
Orange Gravy  
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Sparkling  
Lavender  
Cocktail  
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The Rembes' Thanksgiving traditions  
include a roasted turkey with a  
red chile glaze, tamale stuffing, and  
a lavender cocktail. Below, a couple  
of peacocks pop by for a visit.



Mission accomplished. Today, Los Poblanos welcomes more than 10,000 visitors annually, employs more than 120 people full-time, and plays host to countless others at its world-famous restaurant, which has just moved into a larger space—a historic dairy barn.

While the Rembes love a crowd, Thanksgiving is more of a family affair. Each year, the clan, now three generations strong, gathers on the pavilion and toasts their success with cocktails flavored with lavender, naturally. "It's become the holiday most special to us," says Matthew. "It's the day where we celebrate our family values and our family business." Everyone comes together at a 200-year-old pine table perfectly weathered from centuries of cutlery dings and lingering elbows to dish out bounties from their own lovingly tended land. Says Matthew, "There's a deep connection with not only every person, but every single ingredient at the table."