

# DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

## The truth about food

Sara Brito's Good Food 500 will rank chefs who think local.

ED SEALOVER, A4



## LAW BOOK

8 practice specialties and the industry hot topics they face.

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## MARIJUANA INDUSTRY LIKELY HERE TO STAY

Attorney Brian Vicente said, "In many ways, (Denver) is the Silicon Valley of marijuana and innovation."

BY DANIELLE IVANOVICH, B12



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## TECH THAT TRACKS TRUCKS

CEO Travis Rhyan's 10-4 Systems provides shippers with real-time data. GREG AVERY, A8



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New condos are rare these days in Denver; cheap condos like these are even rarer. MOLLY ARMBRISTER, A5

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## Telling the truth about food

GOOD FOOD 100 WILL RANK CHEFS WHO THINK LOCAL, SUSTAINABLE, NATURAL

Sara Brito realized that in an age of celebrity chefs and stellar food-show ratings, restaurants are gaining more influence in people's lives.

And the former executive director of the national organization Chefs Collaborative wanted to put that influence to good use.

So, in June, the co-founder and president of the Denver-based Good Food Media Network will release the first Good Food 100, ranking chefs in different regions of the country based on their impact on farmers and the environment.

Based on assessments of chefs' food purchasing practices, including use of locally-produced and sustainably-grown ingredients, "the Good Food 100 spotlights the restaurants (including food service) that are helping to build a better food system by using their purchasing power to support local/state, regional and national 'good food' economies," the program's mission statement says.

She is gathering participants now from eateries ranging from high-end Michelin-starred restaurants to school-district kitchens. She hopes her data and the conclusions she reaches with it will make people think twice about what they are eating and what the people who are preparing the food for them can mean to their communities.

"I want people to understand the



Sara Brito is the co-founder and president of the Denver-based Good Food Media Network.

PROVIDED BY THE GOOD FOOD MEDIA NETWORK

truth about what's on their plate – and understand that chefs and restaurants have power, and that with that power comes responsibility and further influence over people's lives," Brito said.

"In the age of alternative facts and fake news that we're now in, I truly believe that chefs have this great power they've earned. And I think it's an opportunity for chefs to not fall from grace like corporations have and like politicians have."

Brito's first effort at a big-picture study of the food industry came in October 2015, when she released a

study that the University of Colorado's Leeds School of Business conducted for her.

The study showed that seven restaurant owners with a combined 12 Denver-area locations were responsible for a \$7.4 million economic impact in 2014 just from the foods that they bought locally. The Good Food 100 is the national extension of that.

Brito is surveying participating eateries on the percentage of spending they allocated to "good-food purchases," both locally and nationally, that positively affect local farmers and lead

to cultivation of natural foods.

She has worked with restaurants in 10 states in five different regions, though she's gotten particularly good response from Colorado institutions ranging from The Kitchen to Rioja to Snooze.

Restaurants will be compared with others in their regions, understanding that some regions have easier access to local produce. Participating eateries will get anywhere from two to five links showing the percentage of budgets spent on good food.

Working again with Leeds, she hopes also to produce an annual economic assessment to show how important these restaurants are to local economies.

Jeff Hermanson, president and CEO of Denver development and investment firm Larimer Associates, has provided the initial funding for the effort. And Brito is applying for grants and hoping to get corporate funding as well.

In addition to changing the way people think about restaurants, she believes the study can change perceptions about Colorado.

"New York will always be the culinary capital of the world, and San Francisco and the Berkeley area will always be the focal point of the farm-to-table movement," Brito said. "I think Colorado is poised to be the capital of the good-food movement."

### ► BY THE NUMBERS

Downtown Denver's newest hotel, The Maven, opened on March 30. Here are a few facts about the property at Wazee and 19th streets.

**172**

Number of rooms in The Maven.

**2,300**

Square footage of event space at the hotel.

**400**

Number of original pieces by Colorado artists that hang in the hotel.

**4,500**

Square footage of the fitness center at the Dairy Block development of which The Maven is part, to which guests have access.



PROVIDED BY THE MAVEN  
Bunk beds at The Maven.

**3**

Partners in the property: Sage Hospitality, McWhinney and Grand American Inc.

### ► BRIEFLY NOTED

## TIMBERS STARTS ON RESORTS IN TWO STATES

Colorado-based Timbers Resorts has begun construction on two major oceanfront projects that are likely to bring the private residential club significant notoriety.

The company — which operates five Colorado mountain properties but also includes private clubs from Tuscany to Mexico in its portfolio — is set to open a 47-unit property in Kauai and a 21-unit club on Kiawah Island, South Carolina, in the first half of 2018. The Hawaii location alone generated \$69 million in per-registration sales, CEO Greg Spencer said.

"It helps further cement that we know how to build in A-plus markets," Spencer said. "I think it does give not only the consumer confidence that we're going to continue to add locations like this, but it [also] gives the investment committee confidence, too."

Founded in 1998 in Carbondale, Timbers caters to high-dollar professionals — the average unit owner has a net worth of \$7.5 million — with



PROVIDED BY TIMBERS RESORTS

Rendering of Timbers Resorts' club in Kauai.

an array of 14 existing properties near ski resorts, on beaches and on golf courses. It survived the Great Recession and since has been looking to grow and diversify its holdings.

After what Spencer called a tough 2016 for the luxury-travel industry, people are investing again in such properties this year. Sales are up significantly in 2017 at both its Sebastian-Vail property and at its Castello di Casole in Italy.

For more, go online to [bizj.us/1p4i5o](http://bizj.us/1p4i5o).

### ► THE LIST

## 3 COLO. CHAINS AMONG TOP UP-AND-COMERS

QSR magazine recently released its first "40/40 List" of 40 fast-casual restaurant chains with fewer than 40 units that could be ready to boom. And it included three Colorado chains in the top three tiers of its list:

► **1st tier: Modern Market of Denver**, a made-from-scratch sandwich and entrée restaurant with 25 locations;

► **2nd tier: Larkburger of Denver**, a better-burger concept with 12 locations;

► **3rd tier: Pizzeria Locale**, a Boulder-based build-your-own-pizza restaurant with seven location.

For more, go online to [bizj.us/1p4eg8](http://bizj.us/1p4eg8).