

VANITY FAIR

"YOU CALL THIS FAT?"

FOODIES' DELIGHT

A TREASURE TROVE OF DELICACIES ONLINE

We've all heard of the local-food movement, the slow-food movement, but the exotic one? **Brett Ottolenghi** started hunting and selling truffles when he was 13. At 17, he interviewed muddy farmers in his tiny boarding-school room to find out how they made their cheeses, and later began beating the bushes around the world for other local delicacies—fresh chanterelles, *ibérico* hams, and old Mussini balsamic vinegars. Now 23, Ottolenghi has a specialty-food business that purveys exotics to leading

From left: Merula Spanish olive oil; four-year-old white balsamic vinegar by Mussini; white-truffle oil by the Truffle Market; pistachio oil by La Tourangelle; buckwheat honey by Bee Row.



chefs, such as **Joël Robuchon**, as well as everyday foodies via his new Web site, **ArtisanalFoods.com**. Provenance is everything in this business. Ottolenghi studies, travels, and finds small producers who use traditional techniques that maximize unique flavors. That's step one. "I have the same passion on the supply side as the chefs in the kitchen preparing the meals. I go through every single truffle before I sell one," he explains. Two hundred teas from China were whittled down to Ottolenghi's favorite 22. Chefs cottoned to him a long time ago. They also like his prices—an olive oil by Marqués de Valdeuza, with a grassy, almond bouquet, used by eight Michelin three-star restaurants, sells for \$20 a bottle. Not bad, even in these tough times. There are nearly 200 items available, and the site's growing every day. —CYNTHIA KLING