THIS PAGE: Red amaranth micro greens from Bloom Microgreens pack a flavor punch. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** *Pizza & Wine,* by Leonardo Curti and James O. Fraioli, is full of unsual recipes, such as Schiacciata with Cotto Salami, Mushroom, and Prosciutto pictured here (a *schiacciata* is a flattened, unsealed calzone). The authors suggest pairing it with Trattoria Grappolo Private Label Grappolaia, Santa Barbara County from Arthur Earl Winery.

A BLOOM *of* FLAVOR

As it approaches its second anniversary this October, Bloom Microgreens in Los Osos has amassed a client list that reads like a who's who of Central Coast chefs (Neil Smith of Windows on the Water and Chris Kobayashi of Artisan Restaurant, for instance). But Bloom Microgreens began much smaller with a single item—popcorn shoot—which owner Kara Wood describes as a bright yellow shoot that's "sweet and beautiful." These days she offers about 40 types of micro greens, including Thai basil micro herbs and daikon radish micro greens.

For the uninitiated, micro greens are simply the young shoots of greens, vegetables, and herbs. Chefs and serious home cooks prize them for their elegantly diminutive size, their punch of fresh flavor, and their healthfulness. While you'll find Bloom Microgreens on the menus of many fine area restaurants, they're also available to home cooks: New Frontiers in San Luis Obispo, Sunshine Health Foods Market in Morro Bay, and the Spencer's Fresh Markets in Arroyo Grande and Morro Bay carry two Bloom Microgreens mixes.

"I love them with just a little balsamic and extra-virgin olive oil; we eat them almost every day at my house—on sandwiches, as the final touch to the top of our dinner, or as a side salad," says Wood. "A little goes a long way so you don't really need more than a 2-ounce serving. My micro greens are big flavors in tiny packages." *For more information go to www.bloommicrogreens.com.*

—Laura Samuel Meyn