



HERB & KATHY ECKHOUSE

food artisans



TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO in Parma, Italy, Iowa-born Herb Eckhouse first tasted the artisanal prosciutto that inspired him to start La Quercia, a company dedicated to producing American cured meats to rival the best of Europe. Today Herb, his wife, Kathy, and seven employees (none of them Italian) turn out luscious *guanciale*, piquant pancetta, and salty-sweet prosciutto Americano. Their products are served by perfectionist chefs like Mario Batali and Alice Waters and are available to home cooks at stores like Whole Foods. Not satisfied with matching the Europeans at their own game, the Eckhouses are going one step further: Next up is a line of pork products made from heritage-breed pigs fed on a diet of acorns, an ancient method that even the Italians no longer practice. Here's to a couple, and a company, that are bringing authenticity back into the kitchen. ► *page 52*