



SAVEUR

THE ALBATROSS GROUSE

THERE'S NOTHING so refined as a Sunday lunch at an English country house. Such was my anticipation several years ago when I was invited to an afternoon feast at the Staffordshire home of a family friend. The lady of the house had prepared field grouse, which her husband had bagged a week earlier with the help of the trusty family dog, Berry. As it turned out, Berry was to be my dining companion. Seated at one corner of a long oak table, I felt like an outcast as I struggled with the greasy bird on my plate. Though it tasted delicious, my knife and fork could find little purchase on its surface, between its bones, or under its wings. The more I fought the creature, the more embarrassed I became. My grouse lunch was becoming an albatross! Suddenly, embarrassment turned to horror as a slip of my knife caused the bird to take flight from the plate, skip onto the polished surface of the table, and skid to its absolute edge, where it teetered six inches above Berry's drooling jaws. I realized that he had been waiting patiently at my feet, sensing something both foreign and fallible in my approach to grouse eating. His luck was worse than mine, though. As the table erupted in laughter, I sheepishly scooped the mess back onto my plate. Looking sympathetically down at Berry, I remember thinking, If no one had noticed, old chap, you would have gotten your bird back. —*Tony Poer, San Francisco, CA*

