

GRAND TOUR

Traveling Gourmet

A TASTE OF WINTER ROMANCE



By Diana von Welanetz Wentworth

SIPPING A CUP OF VELVETY WARM CAULIFLOWER vichyssoise while writing for this Valentine's issue, I'm reminiscing about my most romantic travel memory.

It was fifteen years ago, and Ted and I had been dating only a few months. We were spending every moment we could together, and the forthcoming weekend was to be one almost like any other – flying somewhere romantic in his Cessna 210. He told me we were headed to Carmel, but I began to notice that instead of flying our regular route along the coastline, we were working our way inland. I watched him curiously as he circled and landed at a tiny airport in Mariposa in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. Soon we were off for an hour's drive along a winding road lined and glowing with the vivid reds and golds of autumn – into Yosemite National Park.

Ted had reserved a room at the historic Ahwahnee Hotel, and that evening, the maitre de met us at the doors of the huge, cathedral-like dining room. He showed us to the special table Ted had reserved, a single table, the only table at the base of an immense, twenty-foot arched window with a spectacular view of the hotel grounds, the forest and Yosemite Falls spilling down the dark, gray granite cliffs beyond. I found out later the table is called the Queen's Table, and I felt exactly like a queen being led to her throne. The setting was beyond romantic – it was a masterpiece.

We ordered dinner and Ted insisted on four courses, saying he wanted dinner to last a long time. He reached for my hand. "Diana, what I love about our rela-

