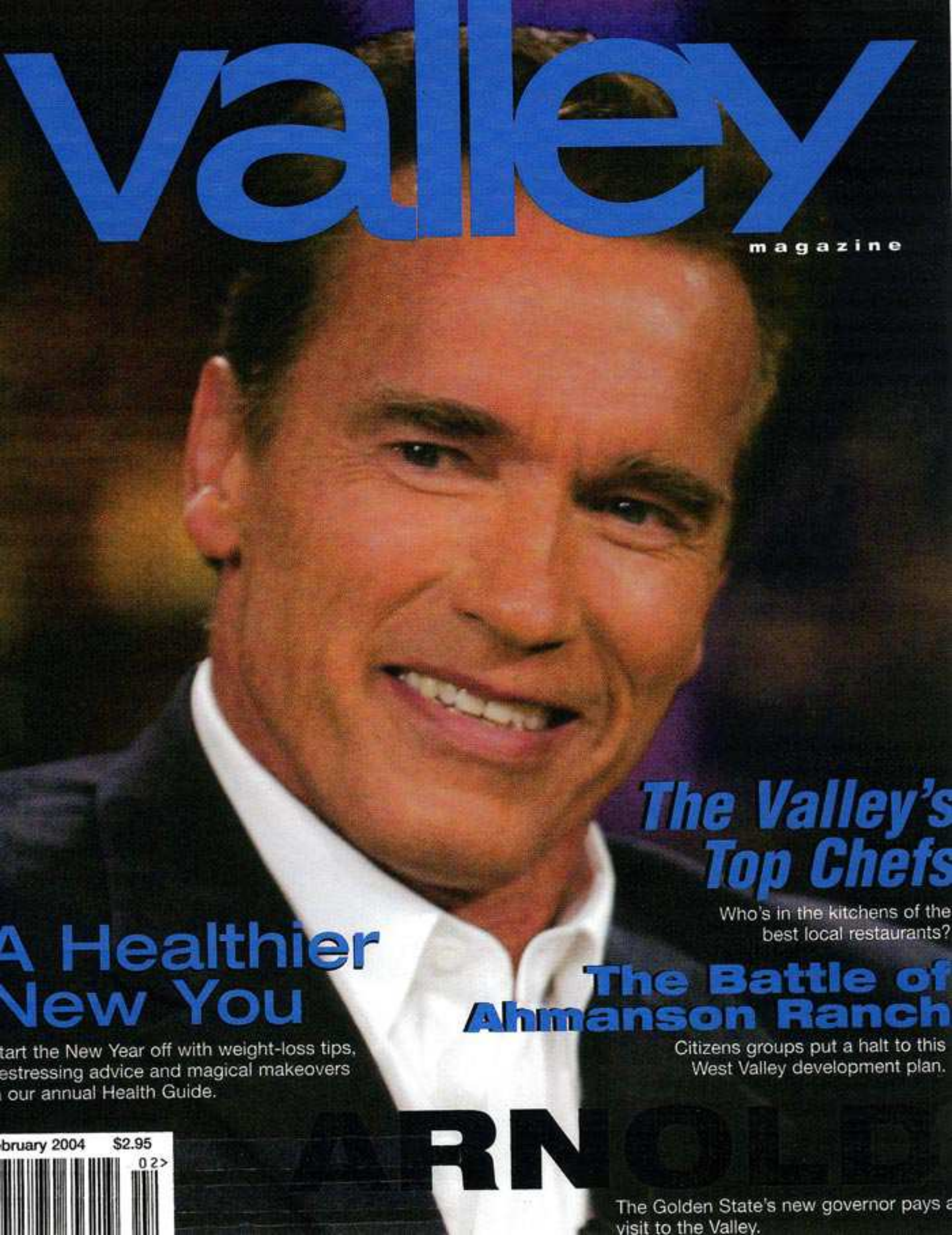


Valley

magazine



A Healthier New You

Start the New Year off with weight-loss tips, stress-reducing advice and magical makeovers in our annual Health Guide.

The Valley's Top Chefs

Who's in the kitchens of the best local restaurants?

The Battle of Ahmanson Ranch

Citizens groups put a halt to this West Valley development plan.

February 2004 \$2.95



ARNOLD

The Golden State's new governor pays a visit to the Valley.



GIACOMINO DRAGO

Co-Owner and Co-Chef (with brothers Tano and Calogio Drago) of Pazzanella in Sherman Oaks. (Opened 1/1/04)

Age: 30

How He Got Here:

Studied culinary arts in Italy, worked at family restaurant in Sicily. Cooked at brother and famed chef Celestino Drago's Celestino and Drago. Now executive chef and owner of Il Pastaio and Piccolo Paradiso in Beverly Hills.

Signature Dish:

Involtini di Melanzane con Spaghetti (spaghetti wrapped with eggplant, with tomato sauce, basil and mozzarella cheese).

Why he's a chef:

I love to be around people, and I love to be around food. Whenever there is good food, it's going to be a good time.

What he loves most about his profession:

I love the rewarding feeling I get when I see a customer enjoy a dish I created.

If he wasn't a chef, he'd be...:

A horse trainer for competitive racing. I love horses and own a couple in Sicily. Hopefully, when I retire, I can pursue this dream.

The dish that should have been a hit:

Baked Baby Pumpkin filled with Pumpkin Gnocchi, served with Truffle Fondue.

Preferred midnight snack:

Godiva white chocolate ice cream.

What's in his refrigerator:

Cheese, salami, water, beer and wine. And there's bread in the freezer.

The three people (living or deceased) he'd invite to dinner:

Sirio Maccione, one of my favorite restaurateurs and one of the only Italians who can open a successful French restaurant; Mauro Vincenti, one of the first Italians who brought talented young Italian chefs to Los Angeles; and my mother and father. When I wanted to go to culinary school, my parents preferred I study something less time-consuming, so I would have more time for family. Regardless, they are always supportive, despite all the crazy things I've done.

What he does for fun:

I relax by gardening at my home.

Favorite Valley haunts:

When I have time, I go to Casa Vega for a margarita.

Dreams and goals:

My dream is to go to Italy for two months during the summer and explore the culture with friends I have made here in the United States.

Photo by Robert D'Adda