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MAGAZINE



The  
Food  
& Drink  
issue



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## HUNGRY AND THIRSTY?

Are you hungry and thirsty? I sure am after putting this issue together! This is our annual "Food & Drink" issue – our longest-running themed issue. Our first "Food & Drink" issue came out in our first year of publication, in July of 2013. Wow, how time flies! This has been one of our favorites, too, because who doesn't love all things delicious? We decided to focus on this theme in July because it is at the height of growing season, and in the month where everyone loves to be outside, barbeque, and celebrate with food and drink. We're all for it!

Boy do we have some stories for you in this issue! CB starts us off with sharing the artistry of the chef-extraordinaire at Troutbeck. Meanwhile Christine interviews the man behind Cascade Mountain Winery, what a fascinating story it is to learn how the winery and restaurant there came to be.

Dominique had some fun with the theme, creating her own contest. That's right, she made up her own contest. She and a few of her friends got together, and took it upon themselves to judge the best croissant in all of Columbia County. Their findings are both interesting, somewhat scientific, and delicious.

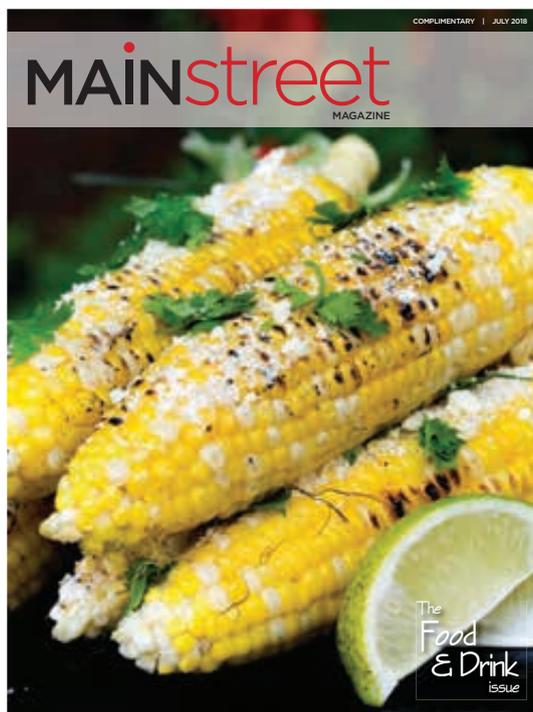
For those of us who are thirsty, Ian writes about the craft beer movement that he's found at two local establishments. Regina, on the other hand, focused on one winery: Tousey Winery in Germantown, NY. Regina's visit there and subsequent story has certainly made me thirsty for some great summer wine!

Regina also visited a new burger joint in Red Hook, NY. This place is quite unique in that none of their products have meat! But before you decry "vegan," the reviews for this place are amazing – enough to make your average "meat-a-tarian" want to check it out. And speaking of healthier food options, CB also interviewed the healthy ladies at The Green Cafe and Studio Lakeville about their new facility and food.

Mary and Peter each bring us a different type of food-based story. Mary dove into the subject of food waste, and bears light on the fact of how much food we waste. It is actually dispicable! But she provides some helpful tips about how to avoid waste. Meanwhile, Peter dove into the major issue of plastic. Plastic, that material that a lot of our food is packaged in. Are you aware of how hazardous plastic is to not just humans and our health, but to the entire planet? It is both scary and a real eye-opener!

Have happy and healthy meals in July.

– *Thorunn Kristjansdottir*



**JULY 2018**

Grilled Mexican sweet corn à la chef Olivia with a little bit of kick.

Cover photo by Olivia Valentine Markonic

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### PRINT, LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, & INSURANCE

Printed by **Snyder Printer, Inc.** • Legally represented by **Davis & Trotta Law Offices**  
Accounting services by **Pattison, Koskey, Howe & Bucci CPAS** • Insured by **Brad Peck, Inc.**

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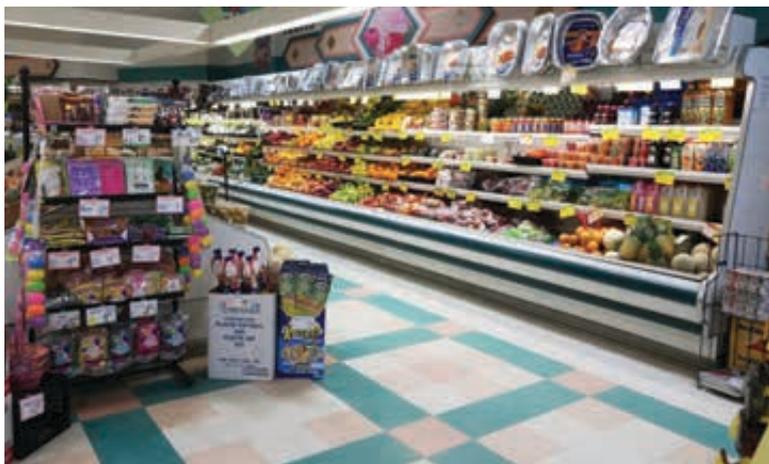
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MARCEL ALAIN LOUIS  
AGNEZ OF TROUTBECK

# Monet... Degas... Agnez



By CB Wismar  
arts@mainstreetmag.com

There is such artistry in the elegant plates proceeding from Chef Marcel Alain Louis Agnez's kitchen at Troutbeck in Amenia, NY, that the natural instinct of diners seems to be a moment of solemn contemplation prior to taking their first bite.

The wait is more than worth the moment. Delicious as they are beautiful, the salads, entrees, and desserts created by Chef Agnez are worthy of several stars by any measure. He is a great chef ... and an artist of note, as well.

### Troutbeck reborn

Midway between Amenia, NY, and Sharon, CT, Troutbeck sat idle for many years before enterprising investors took on the ample acreage and stately buildings and brought a freshness and renewed elegance to the property that makes it a prime location for a weekend getaway, a modest corporate retreat, or a simply wonderful wedding. Make no mistake, the contributions of the artistic chef have a great deal to do with the desirability of an event at Troutbeck.

Born on the coast of France in Normandy, Marcel Agnez was one of ten children. From an early age, he gravitated to the family kitchen, where his mother consistently gathered the local produce, the abundant fish, and the meats from local farms to create meals that inspired. At the heart of his cuisine is the Normandy influence and a dedication to the now popular notion of "farm-to-table."

When the love of cooking transitioned to a career, Marcel enrolled in Lycee Hotelier Granville and graduated to take an apprenticeship with Bernard Leprince of Cherbourg who, himself is a decorated chef, recognized with both the Meilleur Ouvrier de France and the French National Order of Merit.

As a journeyman chef, Agnez became a widely traveled, and widely heralded pastry chef, sous chef, and, ultimately, an executive chef. Following the seasonal world of Club Med resorts, he made stops in Mexico, the Bahamas, Switzerland, Guadeloupe, Capri, and Spain.

### The lure of The Big Apple

The lure of working in the high profile restaurant world of New York City, however, became a recurring theme in his thinking. Following his muse, he settled in the city and, by his own telling, found a permanent home

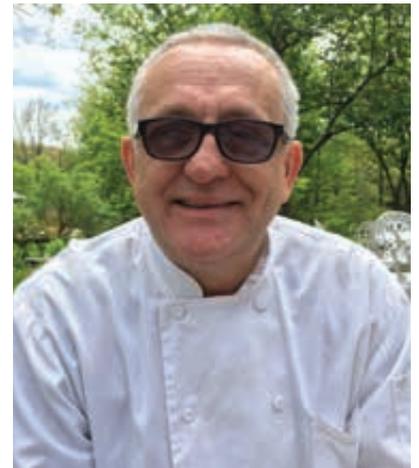
on his second encounter.

"I knew 20 words of English, so I took out the *Yellow Pages*, looked up French restaurants, and made a list," he acknowledges with a smile "The first call was answered by the first offer ... but after spending a morning in the kitchen, I realized that I didn't want another apprenticeship."

The next day, the aspiring executive chef appeared at the legendary Plaza Athenee hotel, which boasted of one of the most famous French restaurants in the world – Le Regence. In a six-year span, Marcel Agnez worked his way through all of the "stations" in the kitchen – pastry, sauces, fish, meats, sous chef – until the departure of the head chef provided the opening he had dreamed of. Until 1997, he was celebrated as the executive chef at The Plaza Athenee.

Changes come to all endeavors, and when a change in management occurred, Marcel decided it was time to step out on his own. For four years, he was the owner/chef at Joanies on 29th Street. It was only the holocaust we universally refer to as "9/11" that changed the hospitality industry forever ... and with it, the trajectory of Marcel Alain Louis Agnez.

"I needed to step back ... to find a place that would let me re-focus." That place was back in Normandy, so for the next four years, Marcel became



Above, top to bottom: Nougat Glacé. Above: Chef Marcel Alain Louis Agnez. Photos: Troutbeck, Alexis Gittens.

the Chef de Cuisine of the Hotel Des Iles in Barneville-Carteret, France. Back to Normandy and the familiar sights, sounds, sources, and recipes of his youth. Farm-to-table. Ocean-to-table. Fresh, imaginative, and highly satisfying food continued to be his trademark.

**“If you can make it here...”**

“But, I missed New York,” he admits. The energy and the dynamic market brought him back ... this time, to stay. He did not tie himself to one restaurant, however, but took advantage of his stellar reputation to become a private chef to some of the highest profile ventures and individuals centered in New York. National Artists Management, Boxwood Gardens, Manolo Blahnik USA all engaged Agnez to create private dinners, lavish receptions, and culinary experiences worthy of high-profile guests and clients.

As a private chef, Agnez did not need to have a physical base in the city, so gathering the collection of restaurant kitchen equipment he had stored, he moved his base of operations to his home in Millerton, NY. In the local area, he discovered well-managed farms that specialized in organic fruits and vegetables, well-maintained herds of cattle, pigs, and sheep. His record-keeping is precise, and as each new discovery was made, he established relationships that could supply the finest ingredients for his cuisine.

And, then, along came Troutbeck.

**A new home**

Maintaining relationships is often the key to career success. The individual once known in far reaching career experiences remembers the dish, the attitude, the dedication to true gourmet excellence ... and finds the right candidate for a new job online or on the phone.

“A manager from the days at the Plaza Athenee reached out to see what I was doing. Was I interested in opening a new restaurant? The conversation quickly focused on the emergence of Troutbeck.” Chef Agnez was intrigued with the prospect of building an experience from the ground up – not inheriting traditions and habits from other chefs, but bringing his imagination and skill to bear on a new venture.

“It’s been a year, and with tremendous management support, we have become a premier restaurant in the area,” confides Chef Marcel with justifiable pride. “We change our menu with the seasons. I don’t think corn is worth including until August ... tomatoes have to be locally sourced to have the flavor and consistency that makes our dishes come alive.”

Farmers, fish mongers, foragers are trusted and relied on to bring the finest ingredients to his kitchen. As morels and king trumpet mushrooms, fiddlehead ferns, and asparagus come into season they appear on the menu, only to leave when the season changes and rhubarb, tomatoes, and squash blossoms presage the appearance of



root vegetables in the fall. Q Farms, Silo Ridge Farms, Morningstar Farms, Yellow Bell Farm, and Meili Farm source the freshest ingredients, joined by other notable farms “in a 20-mile radius,” affirms the chef. We enlist trusted suppliers to bring the best they have to offer so that our guests are not offered anything but the best.”

**Personal touch**

When dining in the Troutbeck restaurant, there is the high probability that the meal presented tableside by an enthusiastic wait staff has been plated by the chef, himself. The presentations are, in each case, works of culinary art. Watermelon radishes are carefully cut and formed to appear as flowers punctuated with crispy chickpeas set atop a salad of roasted baby beets and house made lemon ricotta. Loin of lamb is set on a ramp puree with crispy polenta, fresh garbanzo beans, and a perfectly flavored mint emulsion.

“There is a quote that I use with our kitchen team – quite often, actually,” explains Chef Agnez when asked about his philosophy. “It’s credited to British writer Norman Douglas: ‘A true cook is a perfect blend of artist and philosopher. He knows his worth. He holds in his palm the happiness of mankind, the welfare of generations yet unborn.’” ●

*To fully appreciate the artistry of Chef Agnez, reservations are encouraged at (845) 789-1555 or visiting [www.troutbeck.com](http://www.troutbeck.com). Bon appetit!*

*Are you an artist and interested in being featured in Main Street Magazine? Send a brief bio, artist’s statement, and a link to your work to [arts@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:arts@mainstreetmag.com).*



Above, top to bottom: Langoustine. Pork chop. Left: Baby beet salad. Photos: Troutbeck, Alexis Gittens.



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## friendly faces: meet our neighbors, visitors and friends



**Mark Trager** has over 40 years of business consulting experience working in establishing new businesses, fine tuning existing ones, and expanding successful ones. Four years ago, Mark and his wife Lauren decided to relocate, full time, to their property in Salisbury, CT. They established Two Twelve Consultants LLC, to solely concentrate on helping local entrepreneurs benefit from their experience and expertise. Mark says that, “We loved coming here weekends, but we were concerned about keeping busy after leaving New York. As it turns out we are much more active here between the consulting work, volunteer work, and social activities. The Tri-state area is beautiful and the people are great.” Although his wife cooks French, Italian, and Chinese cuisine, Mark is always ready for a juicy hamburger from the grill. We couldn’t agree more!



**Eliza McCabe** recently joined Best & Cavallaro as a real estate agent. Before that, she had been at home raising her two children, Lily and Henry. “I absolutely love it here at B&C! Everyone is so helpful and I am looking forward to matching buyers to the right homes.” In the winters Eliza likes to ski and read, but during the warmer months she enjoys hiking, gardening, camping, getting together with her family and friends, and preparing her favorite dish: Faroe Island salmon from the Sharon Market – yum! Born and raised in Amenia, NY, Eliza moved to CT in 2005 and bought a house in Lime Rock in 2013. “I love living and raising my family in the country. I love the community of people who live here – every day I feel fortunate to be a part of it.” You said it, and we concur!



**Daniel Desaulniers** has been cooking for 16 years, ten months of which have been at the Church Street Deli in Copake, NY. “Not only do I like to cook, but I love making food that people will enjoy and that satisfies their taste buds.” His personal favorite dish to make is chicken and broccoli alfredo. When Daniel isn’t in the kitchen he enjoys going for walks and spending time with his family. As true born and raised local, Daniel says he loves the area’s beautiful scenery, waterfalls, and hiking trails. “This summer I look forward to cooking with fresh ingredients, but I am mostly looking forward to camping with my brother. I may work a lot but the thing I love more than anything is my family!” That’s what it’s all about too, family and good food!



**Deana Conlogue** is the owner and operator of Piece of Cake, a special order custom cake and cupcake business. She has always loved to bake, and in 2011 the business began. As more and more people tasted Deana’s cakes, she started getting requests for orders. Deana especially enjoys making tiered wedding cakes and birthday cakes. “While it’s taken years to perfect my signature flavors and favorite designs, I still love trying new techniques like ombre buttercream!” When she’s not busy baking beautiful cakes, Deana enjoys spending time with her family. She also works as a paraprofessional at Salisbury Central School. In fact, Deana grew up in Salisbury, CT, and her family has lived in the town for generations. “I can’t imagine raising my family anywhere else.” We couldn’t agree more, Deana, and we’re off to check you out on social media right now!



**Brett Boyles** is a busy guy! He has worked full-time for a highway department for the past three years while his nights and weekends (for the last two seasons) have been spent focusing on his seamless gutter business, Superior Seamless Gutters. “I love working with- and meeting new people. I also love working with my hands and being proud of a project that I can call all mine.” During Brett’s free time he is an outdoorsman in every way, from hiking to ATVing. “I am from the area, born and raised. I like the climate of having all four seasons ranging from 6 feet of snow to 80-degree weather.” Brett is also a grill master: “Grilling anything for dinner is my ‘bread and butter.’ Steaks, hot dogs – and burgers are my specialty! On nights when I’m not grilling, I enjoy Baba Louie’s pizzeria.” Honestly, who doesn’t?



**Jessie Sheehan** is a recipe developer (for all things sweet), a food writer and a cookbook author. “My books include *Icebox Cakes* and *The Vintage Baker* and I have worked on many other cookbooks, besides my own.” Jessie’s active sweet tooth has been helping her make and write about sweets professionally for a little over ten years. “Nothing is more satisfying, than having a bunch of ideas in my head and translating them into a cohesive essay about something that is important to me ... like cake!” During Jessie’s down time, she loves reading (particularly on the beach), but often finds herself reading cookbooks. Living in both Sharon, CT, and Brooklyn, NY, Jessie feels blessed to call both places home. “I love how things seem a tad slower and less frenetic when I am in Sharon and I love baking in my yellow kitchen, too!

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# A family business saga

CHARLIE WETMORE OF CASCADE MOUNTAIN WINERY & RESTAURANT, AMENIA, NY

By Christine Bates & Charlie Wetmore  
christine@mainstreetmag.com

On a gray, Monday morning I drove down the dirt road at the top of Cascade Mountain to find Charlie Wetmore, a technology entrepreneur and a member of the family that founded Cascade Mountain Winery & Restaurant. In 1972 they planted 15 acres of vines in the hay field in front of the tasting room and evolved into a venue for food, wine, and music festivals, as well as private events. We sat upstairs in the dining room where weeks before I had enjoyed a special Saturday night of music over a delicious dinner with friends – a supper club on a dirt road, every table was full. I like to ask questions but with Charlie that was completely unnecessary. Here is his story.

## Novelist to vintner

Dad began writing novels in the early 60s and eventually published five, though none made the best-seller list, *House of Flesh* was almost made into a movie and he did learn how to build our beautiful Minoan stone walls while writing *Voyage to Atlantis* in Greece. In 1965 a real estate agent took a shortcut on route to a big white house in Sharon. When Dad saw the little white house and the big field on top of Cascade Mountain he said:

“What’s this?”

“This is not for sale.”

“Pull over please.”

After knocking on the door and making friends with Mrs. Ohler he eventually struck a deal to buy the property despite the fact that it had no plumbing or heating. We officially became pioneers. She said the last people to try to buy the property were moonshiners, they liked the three escape routes.

Toward the end of his novel writing

career, Dad began doing freelance work for *Look Magazine*. After his second or third trip around New York State he returned home with 200 grape vines and announced that we were going to turn the big field into a vineyard. Despite the best efforts of our family of five, those first 200 grapevines didn’t survive long. Undaunted, we planted 15 acres of grapes the following year. We were the first to grow premium wine grapes east of the Hudson River and we were the ninth ‘Farm Winery’ in New York State. With little money and even less know-how, we forged ahead. My sister, brother, and I would help out each day after school and all throughout the summer.

## A winery built by a teenager

In the winter of 1977, during my senior year in high school, I discovered that I had the option of doing an independent studies project in the spring instead of attending school (a no-brainer for me). After I shared some ideas, Dad said how about: “Winery Construction and Design?” I said yes. After many revisions we agreed on the design of the building and in March of 1977 we dug the foundation and I began building the forms for the wine cellar walls. Dad was busy tending the vineyard, but we would work side-by-side, each time the cement trucks arrived to pour another layer.

That fall we had our first grape crush, which was about 2,500 gallons. By this point I firmly believed in the old saying, “where there’s a will there’s a way” aka “if you wish upon a star...” For only \$25,000 we had both constructed a 2,500 square foot structure (essentially, a tarpaper wine shack) and bought the necessary equipment to make the wine.

If the winery looks like it was built by a teenager that’s because it was! It’s amazing what you can do with cheap labor and hard bargaining. I was interviewed by CBS Radio because it



was very unusual for an 18 year old to be building a commercial building by himself.

General speaking, a lot of unusual things were happening back then. I remember one Sunday in the early 80s when the “town fathers” drove by and said to my father:

“What’s that?”

“A winery.”

“When did you build a winery?”

“A few years ago.”

“Did you file anything with the town?”

“Like what?”

“A platte?”

“What’s a platte?”

“It shows the location of the foundation.”

“Oh, ok, hang on a minute.”

Dad came back with white piece of paper that he had drawn a rectangle on. “Like this?”

## The winery became a restaurant

Dad proved to be a talented winemaker and we began winning lots of medals and some them were gold medals.



Above, top to bottom: Charlie Wetmore, the man in charge at Cascade Mountain Winery today. Charlie’s Dad making wine. Images courtesy of Cascade Mountain Winery.

Continued on next page ...



Above: Nothing beats a great summer party in our beautiful area! One of Cascade Mountain Winery's festivals at sunset. Below: Cascade's tasting room. Images courtesy of Cascade Mountain Winery.

By the early 80s, success caused us to begin selling out of our wine and the cost of planting more vineyards was prohibitive. After searching for growers in Long Island and The Hudson Valley, we found families in the Finger Lakes who grew high-quality grapes at reasonable prices in endless varieties. Dad used these new grapes to make his signature “something for everyone” line, which we still sell to this day. After that the vineyard itself became less important, and we turned our focus to the winery and opened a restaurant in order to become a destination.

As usual, we learned the hard way.

### Getting on the map

Our first offering was a simple picnic lunch on a paper plate. Dad wrote a killer press release, and just like that we were on the map. *The New York Times*, *The Daily News*, and *The New York Post* all wrote us up on the same day for our \$5.00 lunch, which New Yorkers read as essentially “free food in Amenia.”



Cars started pulling in every 20 seconds. If you build it they will come, but if you practically give it away with the approval of the NYC press, a lot more people will come.

Not long after that, with the help of Hilary Baum, we hired Melissa Bernard, a Culinary Institute graduate, as our chef and she quickly turned us into a serious restaurant. We created a very formal Supper Club – five course, fixed price, fixed menu dinner with a different wine accompanying each course. After swinging from informal and easy to the stressful and expensive, we finally found a middle ground with a less stressful though still delicious lunch and dinner menu.

At this point I moved on to a career in technology. A few years later in the early 90s the restaurant earned two stars from the *New York Times* and very high Zagat ratings. After that we were basically booked for the next decade or so. My sister Joanie and brother-in-law Walter steered the ship successfully through those years despite a tidal wave of hungry wine lovers and constant stream of exhausted staff.

### A changing of the guard

As my father got older he decided the restaurant's days were numbered, but kept the winery going with Joanie at the helm. When my father passed away three years ago, Joanie was ready to start a new career and I was foolish

enough to think I could successfully run a winery and restaurant – again.

Not ready to lose what I had spent my life building, I decided to take another crack at it and I'm very glad I did. Families and couples who were regulars in the 90s have come back and been delighted to see the dining room and deck open again. The combination of excellent food, wine, and music have brought a whole new generation of devoted regulars.

Our model for the future is to create a destination that features national recording artists and world-class food, wine, and service. Last year, during our 40th anniversary celebration, we introduced our first new wines in 35 years – our Red Tail Chardonnay and a Red Tail Cabernet – and we welcomed Jonathan Edwards and Jesse Colin Young to our first summer music festival.

We have doubled our case production year over year and tripled restaurant sales. Simultaneously, we are planning to turn the big field into a seasonal performing and culinary arts center where students can practice their art and mingle with great artists and chefs from May to November.

The dream is evolving, but one thing hasn't changed: Cascade Mountain is still a beautiful place to spend time. “A hidden gem” – *Getaways for Gourmets*.

Our weekend menu features the freshest scallops and salmon, along with steak frites, BBQ (ribs and chicken), and wood-fired pizza. We learned along the way that the secret to success of any business is a great product and great service. For a winery and restaurant it means making sure we consistently deliver, but most importantly that customers know without a doubt that we care about the experience they are having. We do. •

*To learn more about Charlie Wetmore and Cascade Mountain Winery & Restaurant, you can call them at (845) 373-9021 or visit them in person at 835 Cascade Mountain Rd, Amenia, NY, or online at [www.cascademt.com](http://www.cascademt.com).*

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EASY

# Rhubarb

MIXED BERRY SLAB PIE

By Jessie Sheehan  
info@mainstreetmag.com

I love a traditional round pie in a nine-inch pie plate as much as the next person, I swear. But I do get awfully excited when I see a pie in a sheet tray or a rectangular baking pan and here's why. First: the crust to filling ratio is kind of all that, and then some (i.e.: we're talking 50% crust to 50% filling, as opposed to a smaller, round pie, which tends to be more like 70% filling to 30% crust – and if the crust is as good as the one in this here rhubarb mixed berry version, I think you're going to be okay with that. Think massive Pop-Tart and you'll have a pretty good idea of what I am talking about here.

Second, slab pies, as pies like these are affectionately called (at least by me), feed a crowd, but with no extra work – particularly this rhubarb mixed berry one, as it calls for a press-in bottom crust and a crumb topping, which means ... you guessed it: no rolling pins or chilling of dough needed.

Third: slab pies travel beautifully – even to a picnic – and if you're passing on a scoop of ice cream, or a dribble of cold heavy cream, my personal favorite, a slice of this here pie can even be eaten out of hand – either while you are on said-picnic, or while binge watching Netflix in your living room. But please use a napkin.

## Why rhubarb?

I call for rhubarb in this pie because I love its tang, and mixed berries because a mixed berry pie, will forever be my number one. But if you can no longer find rhubarb by the time you get round to making this pie, you can

substitute extra berries in its stead, and delicious it will be... And fresh or frozen fruit works – so, if you really wait around before making this pie, and it's the dead of winter, you can use your frozen rhubarb and berries, stashed in the freezer from the prior summer, no problem.

## Heavenly crust

The bottom crust and crumb topping come together in minutes in the food processor, and combine just the right amount of sweet cookie-like crunch to the bottom of the pie and buttery crumble to its top. The pie also freezes well, so if you have leftovers, slice them into squares and freeze on a cookie sheet. Once frozen, transfer to a zippered plastic bag, and voila, slice o' pie at the ready whenever your heart desires (or your family demands).

## For the crust:

2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
3/4 teaspoon table salt  
3/4 cup unsalted butter, cold and cubed  
1 yolk  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
1/4 cup cold water

## For the crumb topping:

1 cup all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 teaspoon table salt  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cold and cubed

## For the filling:

5 cups rhubarb, sliced, fresh or frozen  
5 cups mixed berries, fresh or frozen



3/4 cup corn starch  
1 3/4 cup granulated sugar  
1/4 teaspoon table salt  
Confectioners' sugar for dusting

## To make the crust:

Preheat the oven to 400-degrees. Grease a 13x9x2-inch pan with cooking spray or softened butter. Line with parchment and grease again. Set aside. Combine the flour, the granulated sugar, and salt in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade and pulse to combine. Add the cubed butter to the bowl, and pulse until coarse crumbs form. Add the egg yolk, vanilla, and water and process until the dough begins to come together as a cohesive mass. Transfer the dough to the prepared pan and evenly press it into the bottom and two-thirds of the way up the sides of the pan. It may seem like there is not enough dough, but there is. Place in the freezer wrapped in plastic wrap while you assemble the filling and crumble, or for up to three days.

## To make the crumb topping:

In the same bowl of the food processor (no need to clean it), add the flour, granulated sugar, salt and baking powder, and pulse to combine. Add the cubed butter to the bowl, and process until a cohesive mass forms.

Transfer to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and place in the refrigerator until ready to use.

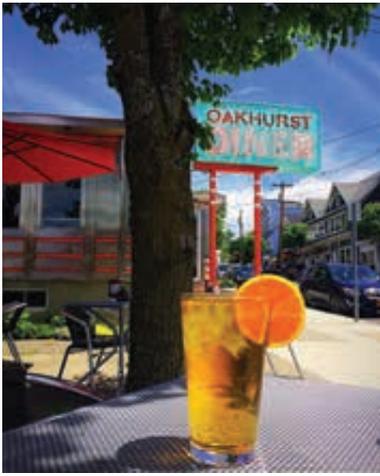
## To make the filling:

Combine the rhubarb, mixed berries, corn starch, granulated sugar, and salt in a large bowl and mix together.

To assemble the pie, place the filling in the crust and top with the crumble. Bake for 60 to 80 minutes, less time if you are using fresh rhubarb and berries, rotating the pan after 30 minutes, and tenting the top with aluminum foil. At 60 minutes, remove the foil and if the center is not yet bubbling and the crumb is not yet browned, continue baking the pie.

The pie is ready when the filling is visibly bubbling in the center, looks set, and the crumble is nicely browned. Let cool to room temperature before dusting with confectioners' sugar and serving (with vanilla ice cream, of course). •

*Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website [jessiesheehanbakes.com](http://jessiesheehanbakes.com).*



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# The tipping point? REAL ESTATE IN THE TOWN OF PINE PLAINS, NY

By Christine Bates  
christine@mainstreetmag.com

Five years ago, in June 2013, *Main Street* published its first analysis of the Pine Plains, NY, real estate market. One broker described it as the “Bermuda triangle of real estate. It has never been a hot market. There’s nothing to do there.” Today we are happy to report that there may be signs of improvement, or as Josh Matherson of the newly opened Gallery and Goods on Church Street, said, “It seems like Pine Plains has reached a tipping point.”

So much has changed in the center of Pine Plains at the traffic light at the intersection of Church Street (Route 199) and Main Street (Route 82) in the intervening five years. The library has come out of foreclosure and is operating again. Irene and Jack Banning have invested in resuscitating Church Street by renovating commercial buildings and encouraging small business. The charming Pine Plains Inn is usually full, the barbershop has a wait, and the Pine Plains Platter is dishing out great food. Others have followed in upgrading buildings while the anchors of the hamlet (Peck’s Market, Stissing House, Bank of Millbrook, the pharmacy, and the long-loved beer garden) continue to operate. But bigger changes are on the way.

### Transformative projects

The large brick building next to Stissing House is Pine Plains Memorial Hall, built in 1915 in honor of John McIntyre, his wife and children by their philanthropic granddaughter Mary Ellen Lapham Sanders who



grew up in Pine Plains. The hall was a regular stop on the Vaudeville and Minstrel circuits, and then a first run movie house until the late 1950s. Abandoned, it was purchased at auction in May 2014 for the bargain price of \$199,000 by local investors, and is now in the process of being transformed into a live music venue for the region. Jack Banning sees the performing arts and community space as driving the economic and cultural rebirth of agrarian Pine Plains. So far over \$3 million has been raised with \$2 million to go.

Another big change is still lurking outside the town – the development of the Carvel golf course into a high-end second home development by the Durst Organization – has reopened conversations with the town. Perhaps it is the success of Silo Ridge in Amenia, NY, but early this year the developers reignited talks with Pine Plains and neighboring Milan. What is now being proposed (basically

unchanged since the 2012 version) is an environmentally sustainable planned community of 645 units, 591 in Pine Plains, on 1,932 acres. The usual luxury golf condo amenities will include a

redesigned 18-hole golf course plus dining, tennis courts, croquet, etc. But, unlike Silo Ridge, there will be 4.3 miles of trails open to the public as well as Spruce Farm Chautauqua, a cultural center for agriculture, the arts, historic preservation, education, and even a community garden, which will attract local residents as well as visitors to Pine Plains. And lastly, the project promises to contribute to Pine Plains’ Affordable Housing Trust as required by the new Zoning Law.

Construction would take place over eight years, creating local jobs and economic activity and, upon completion, generating increased tax revenue for the town and school district. Many residents object to the change that this sort of development will bring to Pine Plains – negotiations have just begun.

### Better but not great

The Pine Plains real estate market has gradually, but not steadily, recovered since we wrote our article in 2012 with year-on-year total sales volume increases since 2014 largely driven by the sales of crop land, vacant land, and rural estates. The last three years have shown sustained sales of single-family homes, although 2017 levels are below 2015 and 2016. Another good sign is the total number of transactions, which shows a real uptick in

### PINE PLAINS SINGLE FAMILY & VACANT LAND ON MARKET

| Homes                              |                |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| # on market                        | 24             |
| Total \$ all listings              | \$19.5 million |
| Average price                      | \$811,572      |
| Median price                       | \$325,000      |
| # homes > \$1,000,000              | 6              |
| Total \$ value \$1,000,000 + homes | \$13.4 million |
| Vacant land                        |                |
| # of properties                    | 13             |
| Total \$ value                     | \$9.7 million  |
| Cost per acre > 5 acres            | \$17,099       |

Includes all single family residences including rural estates and vacant land.

Above: On 200 acres, Folly Farm with a restored 1838 residence on Tripp Road is on the market for \$4,950,000 and includes a tennis court in one of the barns. Photo courtesy of Candy Anderson of H.W. Guernsey. Left: Memorial Hall as it will look when it becomes a music venue and vibrant center of Pine Plains designed pro bono by Doug Larson.



Continued on next page ...

**NINE YEARS OF REAL ESTATE SALES IN PINE PLAINS, NY 2009 TO 2017**

|                     | Crop land          | Single family homes | Rural estates       | Raw land           | Total sales         | Total transactions |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2009                | \$390,500          | \$2,475,000         | 0                   | \$251,720          | \$3,117,220         | 12                 |
| 2010                | 0                  | \$1,398,875         | \$7150,000          | \$2,292,800        | \$10,841,675        | 18                 |
| 2011                | 0                  | \$2,453,500         | \$965,000           | \$945,000          | \$4,363,500         | 17                 |
| 2012                | 0                  | \$1,694,000         | \$1,498,000         | \$51,500           | \$3,243,500         | 17                 |
| 2013                | 0                  | \$3,166,200         | \$3,423,000         | \$34,305           | \$6,623,505         | 19                 |
| 2014                | 0                  | \$2,276,855         | \$470,000           | \$640,000          | \$3,386,855         | 15                 |
| 2015                | \$375,000          | \$4,245,700         | 0                   | \$27,000           | \$4,647,700         | 23                 |
| 2016                | 0                  | \$3,719,750         | \$1,727,161         | \$255,500          | \$5,702,411         | 19                 |
| 2017                | \$2,764,500        | \$3,186,650         | \$1,075,000         | \$1,924,250        | \$8,950,400         | 25                 |
| <b>9 YEAR TOTAL</b> | <b>\$3,530,000</b> | <b>\$24,616,530</b> | <b>\$16,308,161</b> | <b>\$6,422,075</b> | <b>\$50,876,766</b> |                    |

Does not include two family + residences, mobile homes, commercial or public buildings.

the last three years with a record 25 in 2017. To put the totals in perspective, nine years of residential sales of approximately \$40 million in Pine Plains was \$10 million less than the same nine years in Ancram, NY, and \$10 million less than just 2017 sales in Salisbury, CT.

Key numbers also indicate that prices of single family homes on small acreage remain accessible in Pine Plains with an average median price of \$210,522 over nine years, which dropped to \$175,000 in 2017, a low matching 2010 and far below the Dutchess County median price of \$265,000. The nine-year average price of a single-family home of \$221,069 indicates that the market is not highly skewed toward the high end.

During these nine years only 12 homes classified as rural estates sold at an average price of \$1.3 million and an average acreage of 77 acres – very affordable for millionaires. Vacant land parcels over five acres sold for an average of \$13,356 an acre. Only six pieces of vacant land, residential or agricultural, sold for over one million during the entire nine years! All of these results are distorted by the over \$10 million dollars in purchases by David Cote, the former CEO of Honeywell International.

**This could be the tipping point**

As far as public records permitted, we looked at sales in the first four months of 2018 and were encouraged. There were seven recorded sales of single-family residences through May 3 com-

pared to four last year in the same period. The median price rose \$75,000 and the average price to \$255,000. Maybe there is a real uptick.

An architect-designed house on the lake closed in June (not included in results above) at close to the listing price of \$1.1 million – a nine-year record sale for a single-family residence on a small lot. “This sale will historically represent one of the highest sale prices around the lake,” said Jill Rose of Houlihan Lawrence, “The buyers are excited to be here and look forward to life in Pine Plains.”

**Sellers are hopeful**

There are trophy properties like Folly Farm for \$4,950,000 with 200 acres, barns and guest houses listed by Candy Anderson of Guernsey Real Estate, and also rural estates that have lingered on the market for years like a home on 22 acres on Hoffman Road which has reduced its listing price from \$2.2 million in January 2009 to \$1.2 million. However, out of a total of 24 houses listed for sale at the beginning of June, 50% of them are over \$300,000 asking. Last year only three houses of a total of 16 sold were above this level and so far this year only two homes have sold over \$300,000. In short, in Pine Plains,

there is very little that is affordable and many high-end homeowners are looking for buyers. This is also true for vacant land, even spectacular land, like the Berkshire Stud parcels ranging in price from \$300,000 to \$2,750,000.

**The real deal**

Pine Plains remains an authentic, rural town with an awakening center hamlet. You can park and pick up some groceries at Peck’s, the town’s only super market, walk to the Pine Plains Platter for breakfast, drop by the bank and fill a prescription at the pharmacy. Outside the center are lakes, farms, and horse country with verdant green fields, board fences and barns.

The population has declined slightly to around 2,400 since the *New York Times* did its most recent travel article on Pine Plains in 2003, but daily life has not changed. Residents still ice fish on the lake in the winter, enjoy the summer in the beer garden, root for the Pine Plains Stissing Mountain high school sports teams, hike in the Thompson Pond Nature Preserve, and go to bed early.

In 2008 Pine Plains was the last town in Dutchess County to adapt Zoning Laws to help preserve the town’s character. Now Pine Plains is coming into its own. “Many of my buyers are in their 30s and are spending money,” observed Candy Anderson, a high-end real estate broker with H.W. Guernsey Real Estate in Millbrook. “They like the low-key atmosphere and rural setting. I believe this year will show stronger sales.” ●

**SINGLE FAMILY HOMES**

**9 YEAR MEDIAN PRICE** **\$210,522**  
 HIGH \$279,000 in 2009  
 LOW \$175,000 in 2010 and 2017  
**YTD median price** **\$259,500**

**9 YEAR AVERAGE PRICE** **\$221,069**  
 HIGH \$275,000 in 2009  
 LOW \$174,859 in 2010  
**YTD average price** **\$255,000**

**# SALES OVER \$1,000,000** **6**

**RURAL ESTATE SALES**  
 Number sold 12 Properties  
 Average price \$1,343,763  
 Average acreage 77 acres  
 Sales over \$500,000<\$1,000,000 12  
 Sales over \$1,000,000 6

**SALES OF VACANT LAND OVER 5 ACRES**  
 Average \$ price per acre \$13,356  
 Number of Sales > \$500,000 < \$1,000,000 12  
 Number of Sales >\$500,000 < \$1,000,000 6

Left: This architect-designed home on the lake was sold for close to its asking price of \$1.1 million in June 2018. It’s a record sale for a house on less than one acre in Pine Plains. Photo by Wendy Sbrollini of Kee Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.



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# Trending upward: *The craft brew movement*

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Trends are fascinating. I'm not speaking of any specific trend, but the phenomenon of trends in general, and especially when we view them in retrospect. I'm old enough now to look back on previous decades with nostalgia and regret, and I wonder how my parents' generation became collectively obsessed with fake wood paneling and floral-print couches. "Seemed like a good idea at the time," sums up most trends, but how is it that an entire country can experience a synchronized groundswell of fevered obsession for objects as hideous as fondu and butterfly collars?

## Trend autopsies

When a trend addresses a need, it avoids becoming a fad, so while I won't attempt an exhaustive inquiry into the conditions that gave rise to Furbies, it may be instructive to consider the way in which, say, smart phones, have become indispensable to most of us. Autopsies of trends should not begin with the objects, but with the societies in which they emerged. Like a frog in a stove pot, we don't realize the hot water we are in until it is too late to jump out.

So let's fast forward to our present time to examine a current trend

while we still have time to avoid regretting it.

Or maybe even embrace it.

## Changing numbers

Over the past twenty years, church membership has declined across the country, but nowhere in America is less religious than the tri-state area of New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts (43rd, 47th, and 50th among states according to a 2016 Pew Research Center report). Survey data show fewer people believing in God, heaven, and hell than anywhere in the country, and even fewer attending religious services regularly. During the same time period, laws and observations once associated with religion have also disappeared. Most stores are open for a considerable portion of Sunday, and Connecticut recently rolled back the "blue laws" that prohibited the sale of alcohol on the sabbath.

Now I'm not saying that the two are directly related, but if you're not drinking wine in church, perhaps you're imbibing elsewhere. According to The Wine Institute, the average American consumes nearly three gallons of wine per year, up about a gallon per person compared to most of the nineties, and The Brewer's



Association notes over 6,000 craft and microbreweries in operation today compared to 1,453 back in 1998. If trends are defined by trend lines, the craft brew ones are decidedly slanting up and to the right.

## Breweries in the Hudson Valley and surrounding area

Compared to other parts of the country, the Hudson Valley and the surrounding area is a little late in joining the trend, but we still enjoy our fair share of breweries. Within our coverage area, nearly twenty craft brewers ply their trade through a combination of restaurant-only sales, bottling or canning, and in many cases, taprooms that feature site tours.

Above: Several restaurants in Amenia and Millerton, NY, recently began serving Svendale Brewing, a Millerton-based operation. Left: Gleaming holding tanks and cans reflect impressive growth in just a few years of brewing at their Camp Farm Road location.



Continued on next page ...

With Svendale Brewing coming online recently in Millerton, NY, and Great Falls Brewing set to open this summer in North Canaan, CT, the trend has definitely arrived.

Svendale's offerings are currently only available at local restaurants in the Millerton/Amenia, NY, area such as Manna Dew and The Lantern, where I sampled their Starting Line ESB (Extra Special Bitter), a balanced, crisp ale that is "sessionable" in brewer's parlance. To the rest of us, that means you can probably have a few and still stand up, and the out-of-this-world pizza at The Lantern will help soak up a few, too. Svendale also had their Patrick Stout on tap, which was a lighter take on the Irish standby, almost like a porter to my palette.

**Tapping into something more**

So here I am, back in that familiar place I found myself a few issues ago when reviewing artisanal coffee: savoring each sip and appreciating the craftsmanship, knowledge, and ingredients that bring such beverage

to life. Have I found God at the bottom of a beer mug? Far from it. But something about this craft brewing movement does seem to tap into experiences beyond gustatory sensations.

To appreciate just what that is, I visited Kent Falls Brewing, an operation that embodies this artisanal, small-batch approach to brewing. When I first spotted a bottle of their farmhouse ale a few years ago, I wondered who in the world these guys were. Their generic label and decision to bottle instead of can indicated a small operation, and knowing Kent as well as I do, I wondered which barns could be hiding their operations.

Fast forward a few years, and that barn, located off of some dirt roads behind Lake Waramaug, is open for business (even on Sundays), and their hand-bottled operation has given way to a kaleidoscope of labels for their pint-sized cans. There is a tasting room on the premises as well as direct sales of their cans and some of the products of Camp Road



Above: Kent Falls has expanded in just a few years to a range of beers and colorful branding.

Farm, which shares residency of the site, and where many of the ingredients for the beer are grown. It is this authentic, literal farm-to-table operation that sets Kent Falls apart from not only the other breweries in our area, but among breweries everywhere.

**Ingredients, fermentation, and the process**

Fermentation is a slow process, and along the way, beer takes on the flavors of the grains and methods used in its production. It is seasonal, evolving from heavier stouts and porters in the winter to lighter, crisper beers in the summer months – a quality that Kent Falls celebrates with their annual Hop Harvest at the beginning of September, featuring a pig roast and some of their hopper offerings.

What better way to draw out this appreciation of ingredients and time than to witness it happening on site, beginning at the acre of hops that grow outside the brewing tanks? Visitors can tour the complex, taking in all aspects of the process while sipping on a saison that captures it in a glass. It is a quiet, bucolic setting, and if you can set aside an hour on the weekend, it is an ideal locale to gather with friends over a few pints. On the day I visited, couples, clusters of friends, and

even a few children floated around the facility, celebrating a perfect spring day with laughter and smiles.

A few weeks earlier, I drove past a church in Sheffield that was advertising a beer tasting event. Having grown up as the son of a pastor and attended Catholic school for most of my life, it caught my eye. Some may cry "sacrilege," but perhaps this trend does, indeed, address a need for fellowship, celebration, and community that has been lost in the modern world.

Humans are more than workers and players, and opportunities for reflection and community are few and far between. There probably is no direct correlation between the closing of churches and the opening of breweries, but the two trends are happening simultaneously. In North Canaan, Great Falls Brewery is in the final stages of preparing to open their operation in the renovated train station in the center of town. It may be just coincidence, but nearly across the street, the beautiful Christ Episcopal Church lies vacant, awaiting a buyer. •

*To learn more, visit Svendale and Kent Falls Brewing in person or online. For an online visit go to [www.svendale.com](http://www.svendale.com) and [www.kentfallsbrewing.com](http://www.kentfallsbrewing.com).*



Above: As you would expect in a farm-to-table operation, Kent Falls features a barn-based brewery and tasting room on site.



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Explore the menu offerings at Red Hook’s Wild Flower Café, which offers comfort food with a conscience:

# A different kind of burger

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Wild Flower Café is Red Hook, NY’s, inviting new comfort food burger bar with a conscience. Housed in a charming three-story building, the café opened its doors in March 2018. On the menu are delectable burgers, fries, sandwiches, milkshakes, and other items that one would expect to find at any burger hotspot.

However, unlike other burger destinations, the offerings at Wild Flower Café are meatless and made of pea proteins, and potato and soy protein. When sourcing, only ingredients of top-notch quality are selected. Beyond its offering of health-conscious plant-based burgers, everything is grilled to order, and the fries and onion rings are baked to order.

## The trio

At the helm of the friendly café are co-owners Bonnie Brouse Schewpe, Martin J. Pucino, and Bobbi Jo Forte. When launching the café, the trio agreed to intentionally omit the v-word (shhh, it’s “vegan”) from branding.

“The word ‘vegan’ has a negative reputation and we didn’t think it would be wise to use a negative word to promote our business. A ‘burger’ can be many varieties, so there was no reason to define its’ type. We want to appeal to all burger lovers because it’s impossible for most people to tell

that these burgers don’t contain actual animal meat,” states Bobbi Jo Forte.

She explains the many benefits of the plant-based burger: “A plant-based diet is healthier and more digestible. It’s also proven to reduce cholesterol and the risk of certain cancers such as colon cancer. Plant-based burgers also use 95% less land, 74% less water, and 87% less greenhouse gasses than meat burgers,” adds Forte.

“There’s far less water used in making these products and less environmental devastation from methane gas emissions from livestock, waste runoff, and deforestation,” adds Bonnie Brouse Schewpe.

There’s also the health of the animals, which is another priority for both Forte and Brouse Schewpe. “We are not at all interested in contributing to the suffering of other beings,” says Forte.

## Gimme’ some cheez

Wild Flower Café’s top selling item is the Cheezburger – a quarter-pounder with sliced cheese, pickles, fresh lettuce, and a savory signature sauce. Also in demand is the Eden Burger – another quarter-pounder complete with signature sauce, crispy lettuce, fresh tomato and red onion, and pickle chips. Next on wish lists is the Onion Lover – a quarter-pounder smothered in grilled caramelized onions, onion rings, signature sauce, and lettuce.

Foodies are also invited to Build a Burger. The flame-broiled quarter-pounder can be loaded up with expected options such as lettuce, tomato, or red onion, but other toppings



Above: The Cheezburger is a house favorite. Quarter pounder with sliced cheese, pickles, lettuce, and the signature sauce, with a side of fries. Left: The welcoming interior of Wild Flower Café. Images courtesy of Wild Flower Café.

include diced white onion, dill pickle chips, jalapeno, cheese, caramelized onions, sautéed mushrooms, and fresh guacamole. Sauces include the special signature sauce, sriracha mayo, creamy wasabi, blue cheese, ranch, or thousand island dressing. Plain mayo, ketchup, mustard, and tartar sauce are also offered.

## The Impossible Burger

The café also offers its own version of the Impossible Burger – the plant-based burger that became the subject of much media attention and captured the interest of Bill Gates, who participated in a \$75 million fundraising round for Impossible Foods – the California-based start-up company that makes meat from plants. It “uses 0% cows and a fraction of the Earth’s natural resources” and is made from all-natural ingredients such as wheat, coconut oil, potatoes, and heme – an ingredient found in both plants and meat.



Continued on next page ...

The Epic Burger Meal is Wild Flower Café's version of the Impossible Burger. Foodies are invited to add their favorite toppings and sauce. This meal is served with a choice of baked fries or onion rings, and comes with freshly brewed iced tea or lemonade.

"We have been told by customers that our version of the Impossible Burger, known as the 'Epic Burger Meal' is the best version they've ever had. We attribute it to the pretzel roll and our sauces, which are all made in-house," says Forte.

An average meal costs about \$15, but most menu items at Wild Flower Café come with a side of fries, onion rings, or a garden salad. "When someone is buying our burger, I personally see it as a conscious decision to save a cow and that's worth \$15," says Forte.

Beyond the burgers, health-conscious sandwiches include Fishless Fillet; Avocado Chik'n BLT; and a Fully Loaded Frankfurter topped off with onions, sauerkraut, and mustard. Fresh baked cookies entice those with a sweet tooth. The café also offers homemade soups and a special menu for kids.

**Conscience choices**

Being attuned to the wellbeing of animals is not a new philosophy for the team. Beyond spending eight years in the US Army and 15 years in corporate America, Brouse Schweppe volunteered at Catskill Animal Sanctuary. In 2011, she opened the doors to her own private farm animal sanctuary. Still fueled by ideas and an entrepre-

neurial spirit, in 2013, she and Forte opened the doors to Living Eden – a boutique that sells cruelty-free/vegan clothing and accessories.

Upstairs from the café and boutique is Morgan's Cat Café, which initially opened in 2016 as a vegan café and adoption center. Forte is the visionary behind the successful café, which soon outgrew the space.

"We decided to open a larger café and move the cat adoption center upstairs into a larger space. It offers a warm, welcoming area for the cats to roam and interact with potential adopters or anyone who just needs a bit of fur time," says Brouse Schweppe.

Wild Flower Café's customers are invited to carry their lunch up to the café. While there, they can enjoy interacting with the rescue kitties. Other crossover between the shopping/eating destinations includes a 10% discount offered to customers of Wild Flower Café who make a purchase at Living Eden.

The novel business model at this experiential destination has certainly been well received. Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. "Customers can eat, shop, play with the kitties, and enjoy time spent with healthy, cruelty-free food. Here, they can also buy vegan/cruelty-free clothing and accessories," says Brouse Schweppe.

**Helping hands**

The team behind this trio of Red Hook establishments certainly makes



This page: The Wild Flower Café offers more than just burgers, it offers sandwiches, onion rings, and even milkshakes! Images courtesy of Wild Flower Café.

ethical decisions and operates its businesses from the mind, as well as the heart. The cat café brings in a great team of volunteers, including some who are enrolled in Ramapo for Children's Camp Ramapo – a Rhinebeck-based camp that serves children affected by social, emotional, or learning challenges, including those affected by autism spectrum disorders.

"They often come to work for us at Wild Flower Café. Most of them are on the autism spectrum and truly benefit from the social interaction and job training. It's a win-win situation for all," concludes Forte.

The café has been quick to win over hearts and bellies. It has garnered lots of accolades, which include 99.9% Five Star Reviews on Facebook. Comments include "You weren't kidding... this is Epic," and "This burger is epically impossibly good."

Until he met Forte, Wild Flower Café's other co-owner Pucino was a meat lover. He admits that he had reservations about a menu that offered exclusively plant-based burgers, and believed that it would alienate a lot of people. "Now that we're open, I am very proud of what we have created and I love the way I feel now that I'm eating a plant-based diet," concludes Martin J. Pucino.

After learning more about these plant-based burgers, it's time for curious vegans and meat lovers to head to Wild Flower Café to explore its menu. ●



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# Country picnics

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Is there a better way to spend a warm summer afternoon or evening than laying a blanket on the grass, popping a cork from a bottle of fine wine, and cutting into an expensive Brie cheese from France? While some may argue the point, it's hard to beat a picnic in the country for relaxation during the warm weather months. Whether it is with a bunch of friends and family or merely a cozy, romantic respite for two, a picnic soothes the worries of everyday life and takes us into the joys and beauty of nature.

## Picnic tips

Danielle DeFreest, co-owner of Every Little Detail, an event planning company in Red Hook, NY, says you must plan accordingly when heading out for a picnic. "For large groups I would suggest having a caterer come in to cook. They will take care of all the set up and clean up and let all the guests just enjoy the day. For an intimate picnic between two people, it's nice to simply pack a basket with a nice bottle of wine and go to a favorite spot and enjoy some alone time."

DeFreest advises to always check the weather forecast before you leave so as to not have it rain on your special day, and "Don't go to an area that has not been mowed in a long time. There will be lots of bugs and spiders." They can certainly ruin a picnic in a hurry. She adds, "Don't have set activities. Let guests enjoy talking to one another. Over planning makes the picnic feel like work for yourself and guests."

As for what food to bring along for an intimate outdoor *soirée*, DeFreest suggests wine, cheese, a meat platter, and small sandwiches. "Don't bring

anything too messy because there won't be anywhere to clean up after eating." For larger groups, a barbecue works great.

## Where to picnic?

As for where to get close to nature, Nancy Lutz, Director of Communications for Dutchess Tourism, Inc., opines, "There is no better way to enjoy the incredible beauty of Dutchess County, the heart of the Hudson Valley, than to pack a picnic and head out to one of these spectacular spots." Here are a few of her suggestions for perfect picnic venues:

### Innisfree Garden in Millbrook:

You can enjoy lunch in a designated picnic area and then take a stroll through a 150-acre public garden where "the ancient art of Chinese landscape design has been reinterpreted, without recourse to imitation, to create a unique American garden." You can enjoy streams, waterfalls, terraces, retaining walls, rocks and plants as well as a 40-acre glacial lake.

### Taconic State Park, Rudd Pond Area in Millerton:

The Rudd Pond Area is a "rural wonderland." With views of the Taconic, Berkshire and Catskill Mountains, the 225-acre park offers picnicking, camping, hunting, fishing, boating, swimming, hiking and biking.

### Lakeside Park in Pawling:

The 290-acre park has picnic tables, shelters, and pavilions where you can set up your personal outdoors party, Lutz says. There are athletic fields for large groups to enjoy, bike trails, and nature trails, including part of the Appalachian Trail that runs through the park. There's also a playground for the kids, and on hot days, you can cool off at the beach. You can even rent a boat.

**Poets' Walk Romantic Landscape Walk in Red Hook:** This is an ideal

venue for a romantic outing. You can stroll through the 120 acres of rolling meadows, gardens, and forests. The rustic Overlook Pavilion offers stunning views of the Hudson River and the green-blue peaks of the Catskill Mountains. Poets and artists alike have been drawn to this spot for years. Lutz reports that author Washington Irving, who gave the park its name, is said to have come up with the idea here for his classic story "Rip Van Winkle".

### Wilcox Memorial Park in Milan:

This 615-acre preserve was formerly the estate and farm of Mrs. Frederick P. Wilcox, and still contains many of the 18th century farm buildings that dot the landscape. According to Lutz, with four covered pavilions, Wilcox Park is a popular place for company picnics, family reunions, birthday parties, and other events. The park boasts two lakes at its center where you can relax and fish from shore or from a rented boat. Paddle boats are also available to rent. Swimming is allowed at a lower lake where there are lifeguard facilities. There's also a Disc Golf course.

### Burger Hill Park in Rhinebeck:

Here you will find panoramic vistas of the Hudson River Valley, including the Shawangunk Ridge, the Catskill and Taconic Mountains, Stissing Mountain and the Berkshires, as seen from a 550-foot hill. There are 76 acres to picnic.

### Bowdoin Park in Poughkeepsie:

Lutz says this park is ideal for families as well as for large and small groups. The 301-acre park offers scenic views of the Hudson River, pavilions, numerous picnic tables, grills, and lots of open areas for picnicking. There are over four miles of well-maintained trails, wetland areas accessible by boardwalks where you can observe

the wildlife. There are athletic fields, and an award-winning handicapped-accessible playground for the kids.

### Montgomery Place in Annandale-on-Hudson:

The 380-acre historic site overlooks the Hudson and has lawns ideal for spreading out a picnic blanket. You can walk through gardens, visit an arboretum or wind your way along woodland trails. Laid out over a hundred years ago through a hemlock and mixed hardwood forest, you can follow one trail here to the cascading waterfalls of the Saw Kill River. Picturesque orchards border the estate and fruit is available in season at the Montgomery Place Orchards Farm Stand.

### Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site in Hyde Park:

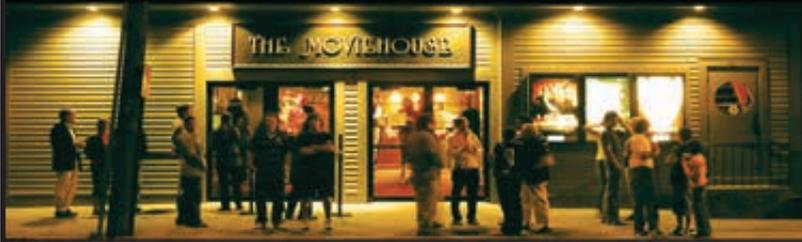
There are a number of picnicking options at this Gilded-Age country "palace" that was once home to Frederick Vanderbilt. The famous overlook is an ideal spot to take in the rolling hills of the grounds that lead down to the Hudson River. You'll also find ample room for picnicking on the expansive lawns. A stroll through the site's Italian Gardens is a must, says Lutz, and a three-mile-long riverside hiking trail is another way to enjoy this historic property. The Music In The Parks series is held all summer long, alternating between the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site and Staatsburgh State Historic Site just to the north.

Entry fees are required and there are opening and closing hours at some of the above mentioned sites, so it is wise to check the parks' websites first, or visit [www.dutchesstourism.com](http://www.dutchesstourism.com).

So, pack a basket and head out to one of these special venues, or visit your own secret destination, spread a blanket, listen to the birds, and watch the clouds, and your cares, pass by. •

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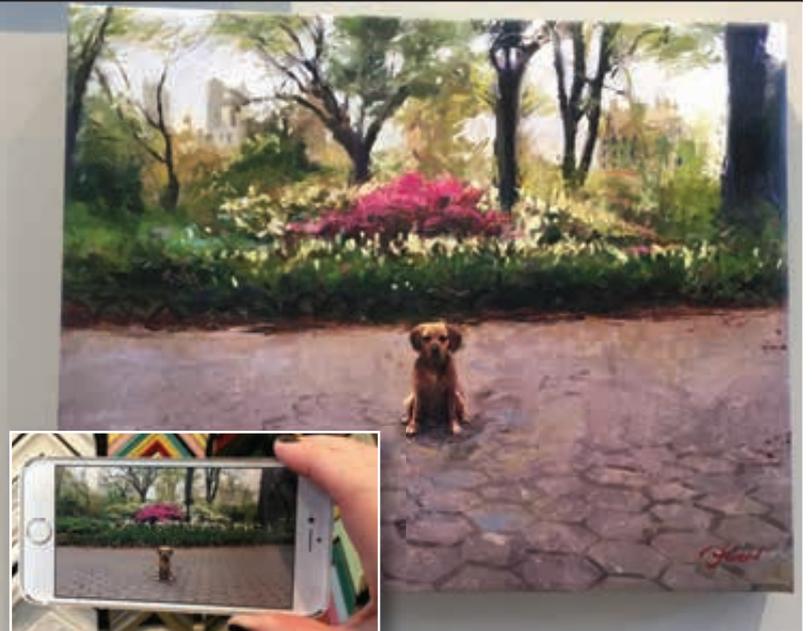
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## GILDED MOON FRAMING

# What the health? STUDIO LAKEVILLE & THE GREEN CAFE

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

With summer in full bloom, the massive doors across the front of Studio Lakeville at 9 Sharon Road in Lakeville, CT, are often thrown open to seamlessly blend the outside world with the inside environment.

Once the Lakeville Fire Station, when Leslie Eckstein fused her two passions and created the equation, Fitness + Great Food = Health, the long-abandoned building seemed the perfect location. “I worked with Seth Churchill on the idea of combining a fitness studio – exercise equipment on one level and open studios above – with a cafe that would offer healthy, locally sourced food.”

Leslie is justifiably proud of the architectural result – a six month labor of love and imagination. Studio Lakeville and The Green Cafe share both a common entry and a common vision.

## Building a dream

A force in Lakeville/Salisbury for years, Leslie may be known to some as the pastry chef who created elegant breads and pastries in Salisbury’s Harvest Bakery. To others, she would be known as the fitness guru who leads spin classes and is a personal trainer, who operated out of a small space behind The White Gallery in Lakeville. The fusion of the two disciplines made the combined facility a very vivid and persistent dream.

“When I was 15, I used to skip school,” demurs Leslie. “I was keen on fitness, so I led a class at a local gym. That was the beginning. I knew how important it is for people to be healthy, feel healthy ... and to eat healthy foods.”

Expertise in two parallel pursuits continues to fuel Leslie’s cafe/studio operation. She leads classes, uses her personal training degree, applies her license as a trained masseuse – and does all the baking for the cafe. “Sometimes it’s a 20-hour day, but I love it,” she offers with the energy of someone who continues to explore the dream.

But Leslie can’t do it all. One can’t be in the kitchen, preparing savory breakfasts, fresh and flavorful lunches and, now, dinners, while leading a spin class or providing a therapeutic massage. Enter Karen Jacobs.

## Ladies and gentlemen: the chef

With a degree from the Culinary Institute of America and deep experience creating healthy menus and managing a kitchen staff, Karen has found a new home in The Green Cafe kitchen. Previously the Chef Manager at Kildonan School, Karen’s penchant to create healthy menu items from locally sourced produce and meats fit right into the thinking behind The Green Cafe.

Prominently displayed on a side



Above: A fig and arugula flatbread. Below, left: The Green Cafe’s menu board.



wall of the cafe portion of the building, the menu boards both recognize and celebrate the tastes of the clientele. One can anticipate “Breakfast” – the studio opens at 6am for exercise classes and a brisk morning workout often calls for a healthy breakfast. There’s an ample coffee and tea bar that caters to every taste and the prospect of fresh smoothies is often enough to satisfy the morning pallet.

The menu selections that bear closer scrutiny are arranged, conveniently, as “Carnivore,” “Herbivore,” and “Daily Specials.” Ample salads, veggie burgers, and the “Melly Goodness” that combines cheddar, gruyère, and mozzarella cheeses with spinach, tomato, and caramelized onions are all crowd favorites.

For those who need a bit of protein to satisfy, an outstanding burger, grilled chicken, blackened salmon, a “Cubano” featuring citrus-marinated pork loin, and a turkey, avocado,

Continued on next page ...



Above: A fresh salad from The Green Cafe. Below, right: The exterior of Studio Lakeville and The Green Cafe, Lakeville's former fire station.

Swiss cheese, cranberry mayo sandwich on pecan cranberry bread baked in house is a special treat.

"When we started out," admits Leslie with a smile that's half resignation and half keen customer service, "I thought we'd just feature vegetarian and vegan menu items. Our first customers were quite clear, however. The 'Bangin' Burger' was an instant hit."

Daily menus are something of a cooperative effort, with Karen leading the discussions based on her criteria of local, fresh, and wholesome. "We publish a daily menu that we send out to anyone who gives us their email address," Karen offers. "Early in the day, you know what's going to be on the 'Specials' board and plan accordingly. You can even order online and we'll have your selections ready to eat in, or to take out."

#### Still to come: dinner

The advent of warm weather, the completion of the patio adjacent to the building, and the expectation of offering wine and beer give The Green Cafe an additional appeal. Dinner will be announced soon and served until 9pm from Thursday through Sunday with both daily specials and the reliable regular menu offerings. "Based on the construction of the original fire station, we have a great parking lot, so being open for dinner with easy access should be very appealing," continues Leslie.

Holding up the anticipated announcement of dinner hours is the flood of catering orders that appeared as graduations, weddings, and Father's Day popped up on the calendar. "We're booking well into July," offered Chef Karen. "We're going to need more kitchen staff to keep satisfied customers both inside and outside the cafe."

Also in development are special evenings with two designated seatings. Brazilian barbecue and Indian night, these themed dinners will allow the chef to unveil her mastery and get the reactions of invited customers.

Those interested in being kept aware of specialty dinners need only sign in at the cafe counter and can expect to have a preview of a special evening in time to make plans ... and reservations.

Another reason for reservations – this time for the entire space – is the availability of Studio Lakeville and The Green Cafe for private parties. What better way to burn off the energy of some eager partiers than a lively session coordinated by Leslie Eckstein in the studio followed by a carefully selected menu of delights from Karen Jacobs in The Green Cafe?

#### Summer refreshments with a healthy twist

Summer fare often means ice cream and gelato, and The Green Cafe is already ahead of that seasonal curve.

With frozen treats made with fresh fruit, the offerings will maintain the healthy mantra that exudes from every corner of the Lakeville facility.

Worth noting, and believing, are two signs prominently featured on the walls of the studio and the cafe. The first is the four words motto of Leslie's substantial dream: "Wellness, Vitality, Nutrition and Balance." There is no deviation from those goals and both the programs offered and the excellent menu offerings hold true to the declaration.

The other sign that may not be as immediately apparent, but finds a place set proudly on the cafe wall is a very simple black and white framed poster. "She believed she could – so she did." In an age of enlightenment and discovery, those words truly capture the ambition, energy, and dedication of Leslie Eckstein. The safe harbor of healthy behaviors and healthy food that she has created in the center of Lakeville, CT, are a testament to her dedication and skill.

Here's to your health! ●

*The Green Cafe and Studio Lakeville are located at 9 Sharon Road, right near the intersection with Route 44 in Lakeville, CT. For menus, online orders, and daily specials, call The Green Cafe at (860) 596-4580 or visit [www.greencafelakeville.com](http://www.greencafelakeville.com). For class schedules and hours of operation for Studio Lakeville, call (860) 671-1741 or visit [www.studiolakeville.com](http://www.studiolakeville.com).*





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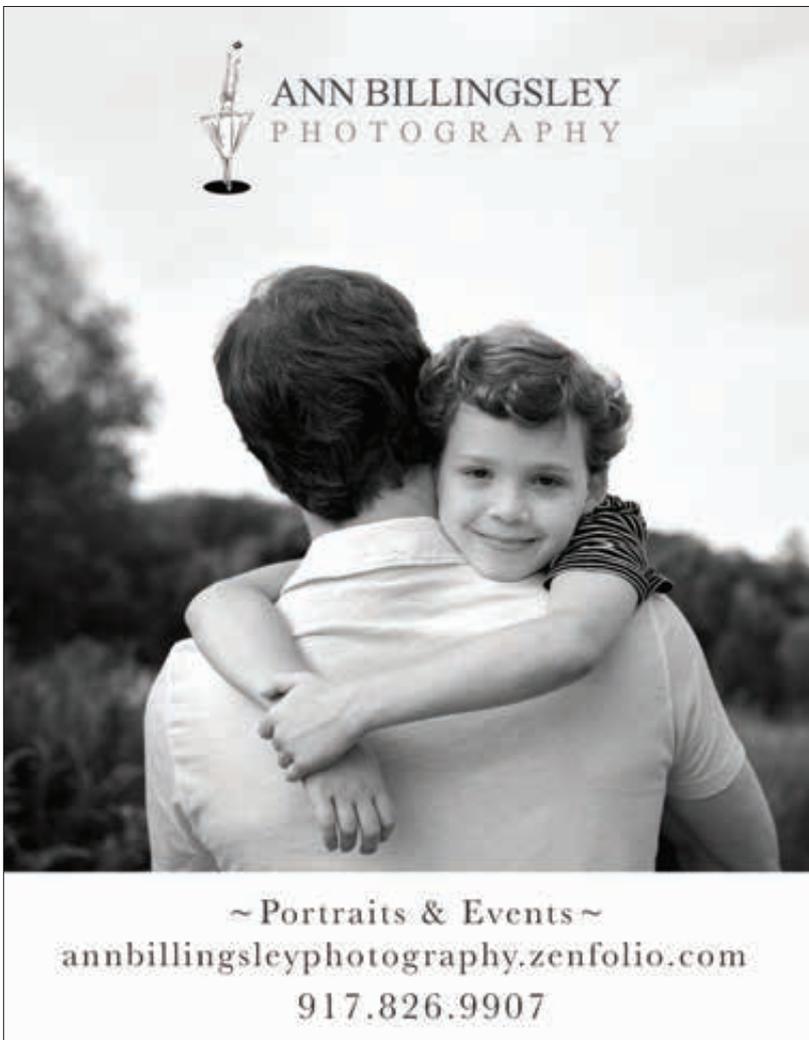
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# WASTE NOT: Taking food waste personally

By Mary B. O'Neill, PhD  
info@mainstreetmag.com

If you think this is going to be an article to make you feel all warm and glowy on the inside, you can stop reading here. If you're open to some self-reflection, moral indignation, and individual action, then read on. After some sobering and disturbing food waste facts and figures, I'll suggest some simple actions to reduce our own consumer food waste.

## Defining your waste

The World Resources Institute considers food wasted when food that is safe and nutritious for human consumption doesn't end up being eaten. This is typically due to spoilage or being discarded. It often happens at the retail and household level and is more prevalent in developed countries. Food waste is part of the larger issue of food loss, which occurs primarily at earlier points in the food production chain.

## Food waste by the numbers

Alarming statistics exist for the food Americans waste each year. While I know that the human mind glazes over in the presence of large numbers, I'd be remiss if I didn't share a few of them with you.

While estimates vary somewhat, a 2017 report by the Natural Resources Defense Council outlines the United States of food waste:

- We waste 40 percent of our food supply each year, which is 50 percent more than in the 1970s
- Food waste costs the economy \$218 billion a year – that translates to \$1,800 for the average family of four
- 42 million Americans face food insecurity and could be fed with one-third of the food we waste
- Food waste accounts for 2.6 percent of greenhouse gas emissions (mostly in the form of methane generated by landfills) – the equivalent of emissions from 37 million vehicles
- 21 percent of water that goes into agriculture is associated with wasted food

- The two largest categories of food waste are fruits and vegetables and prepared food and leftovers

Glazing over? Well, here's a way to recast that 40 percent waste statistic in a way that will really make you lose your appetite. Imagine going to the grocery store and spending \$100 on five bags of grocery (of course you've brought your own bags with you). Imagine driving off leaving two of those bags – \$40 worth – in the parking lot to be trampled.

Food waste is not only a moral and environmental issue. It hits us in the wallet, which is often the greatest motivator for change, and change we can. It requires intention, awareness, incremental progress, and creating some new habits while breaking old ones. And to be clear, I'm no food waste saint – I'm on this journey right there with you.

## Food chain

Food waste occurs in all levels of the food supply chain – farms, processing, distribution, storage, retail stores, and food service. However, we're focusing on action on the household level, where we prematurely dispose of 43 percent of all wasted food.

Combine this statistic with the fact that the most prevalent type of food wasted is produce and leftovers, and you can see the impact of individual action.

## When is a banana not just a banana?

When we waste one item of food there are other economic and environmental costs associated with it, which may or may not be reflected in the price we pay at check out. Throwing out that overripe banana isn't just getting rid of a piece of fruit. That brown and mottled skin and mushy interior represent much more than that. We are also disposing of the labor, fuel, electricity, growing and storage space, water, and fertilizer associated with that banana. Less bananas wasted



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor MementoImage

means less futile resources – some of them with meaningful environmental impacts.

I have found that thinking of my wasted food as embodying all these other precious resources helps me to only buy what I need and reconsider what I do with it along its life span. The overripe banana rises in stature as something more precious, worthy of a better death than my trash can.

## The waste continuum

As individuals, we're mostly concerned with food waste at the end of the food supply continuum – in our homes. However, if we consider these hidden costs of growing, transporting, storing, and selling that banana, it's clear that had it not been grown to then be wasted, none of its associated costs would have been incurred.

The choices we make in purchasing habits, consumption, and waste reduction can have a powerful trickle up effect. If we buy less, farms and companies will grow and sell less. If we make food waste a political issue on a local and state level, it will influence policy about labelling, disposal, and donating unused but edible food.

## Compost NOW

Despite my best intentions, I buy food that will go to waste – and it is usually produce. As I write this article,

I'm staring at those four browning bananas on my kitchen counter. So, while it's clear that not purchasing them at all would have been the best choice, I can still reduce my food waste – with composting.

Given the immoral nature, environmental impact, and economic costs of food waste, composting our food scraps is not just a nice thing to do. It's a moral imperative. If you're not composting on some level in your household, you need to seriously ask yourself why that's the case.

Composting is easy. The reasons and results are compelling. You should do it in some form.

Composting creates a nutrient rich soil to spread around your yard and it reduces landfill, which reduces both the space and resources needed for trash in our country and the climate change culprit methane gas.

The compostable overripe fruit and vegetables that we throw into a plastic trash bag will likely find their way to a landfill. There, that bagged perishable food will be compressed by the weight of other waste, which won't allow air, light, water, aerobic microbes, and enzymes to do their thing and help these items biodegrade.

Continued on next page ...

This creates the environment for anaerobic bacteria to break down the waste. This type of bacteria doesn't require oxygen to live, but the product of its decomposing activity is a greenhouse-effect mixture of methane and carbon dioxide gases. This cocktail is affectionately known as "landfill gas." In terms of deadly potential, methane is a greenhouse gas on steroids – 25 times more harmful to the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub>.

Composting is an easy remedy. Composting bins are widely available or homemade. Resources and how-to guides are plentiful and easy to follow, and you can be as high- or low-tech with it as you like. My version of composting is quite simple – throw in my food waste, throw on some leaves and grass cuttings and mix it when I remember. I'm not really sure what's happening in there, but I'm taking less waste to my transfer station and I see lots of worms!

### Grocery store psychology

Yup, grocery store psychology is a thing – and it subconsciously leads us to buy food we don't really want and don't need, and that leads to more waste. How many times have we mindlessly rolled our cart from aisle to aisle? The path is laid out for us and what we need is in easy reach.

Reducing food waste requires us to bring our A-game and a well-crafted grocery list. It's a time for full awareness and solid intention to get in and get out with only what we truly need.

Grocery stores send a message of "buy, buy, buy." Here's how:

- **Endless variety:** The average supermarket contains 64,000 items
- **Directional flow:** Shoppers typically enter at the right and move counterclockwise. Ninety percent of shoppers are right-handed. Moving counterclockwise allows you to push with your left hand and pick up food with your right
- **Dairy's in the rear left corner:** Most people have dairy on their lists, and store design makes you walk through the entire store to get it

- **No clocks and windows:** Like Vegas casinos, we're encouraged to spend more time in the store

- **Shelf and display placement:** Whatever is in easy reach is what we're more likely to buy. And those sugared cereals at knee height? Guess whom that appeals to? You got it – my husband.

Even perimeter shopping, where most of the healthy foods are, is in peril. Those tricky store layout people know that we figured out where to find the real food. Now, less healthy food is leeching into the perimeter.

For me, being aware of these coercive attempts to get me to buy makes each visit to the grocery store a mini-rebellion against mind control. When I emerge buying no more than what's on my list I feel a small victory for independent thought and a clearer sense of my wants and needs.

### Beauty is only skin deep

As consumers, we have more power over the Man than we think. Our choices drive what's offered, and once we emerge from our food waste torpor to a place of knowledge and clear thinking, we can make demands about the types and quantities of food that we buy.

A case in point is ugly fruits and vegetables. Around 20 percent of the produce wasted each year never makes it to our plates because of how they look. Uniform and blemish-free is how we want our food – and our bodies and lives.

With all the farmer's markets beginning their season, ask your local farmer about their ugly produce. Tell them you'd be interested in buying some. Maybe we can begin demanding Ugly Produce CSAs. And if blemished or misshapen produce were on offer at a reduced price, it might extend the affordability of organic and local food in our region and reduce the amount that is unsalable and left to rot.

### The dating game

Food dating is another prominent source of food waste that's in our control, but most Americans have no clear idea of what they all mean. We often take "Display Until," "Enjoy By," "Expires On," "Better if Used



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor fotomem

Before" as manufacturer food commandments or governmental dictates for safety and quality, and yet they're mostly illusions.

The federal government has no laws regulating food labelling. It has delegated this task to the FDA and USDA, both of which have not used this authority to regulate date labels. The only item the FDA regulates in this way is infant formula. The USDA doesn't require dating labels. However, if manufacturers label USDA-regulated foods, e.g., meat, poultry, and eggs, because of state law or choice, then they must adhere to USDA guidelines for date labelling.

States can set their own laws for date labels. For example, Connecticut requires date labels for dairy products only and doesn't explicitly forbid the sale of items past date. It has also adopted the voluntary version of the Uniform Open Dating Regulation. Manufacturers don't have to date, but if they do they must adhere to Open Dating criteria – which applies to food only, not romantic relationships.

Various environmental and consumer stakeholders are pushing hard for government regulation of food date labelling. To ward off potential regulation, two major grocery indus-

try trade groups – the Food Marketing Institute and the Grocery Manufacturers Association – announced last year that they have adopted standardized voluntary regulations.

They propose reducing the ten food date labels to two – "Use By," which will indicate when perishable foods are safe to eat and "Best if Used By," which is the manufacturer's subjective guess about peak flavor. Manufacturers have until July 2018 to adopt these voluntary standards.

By understanding food labelling, using our senses, and thinking critically we can reclaim much of our past-dated food that is still safe and flavorful and reduce our food waste.

### The power of one

We have direct control over a large part of food waste produced in this country. We can create the intention and make the effort to reduce our food waste footprint for moral, environmental, and economic reasons.

Join me! Let's reduce our waste together by going on a food waste diet. I don't know about you, but at this point in my life, this is the only waste size that's going down! •

*To begin learning more about food waste and what you can do about it, visit [www.nrdc.org/issues/food-waste](http://www.nrdc.org/issues/food-waste) and [www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home](http://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home)*



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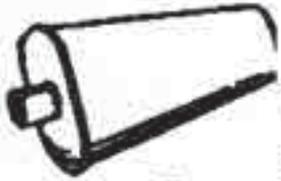
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# Plastics: a life & earth issue

CHEAP, DISCARDABLE, CONVENIENT – AND DANGEROUS

By Peter Greenough  
info@mainstreetmag.com

In the famous 1967 film *The Graduate*, Dustin Hoffman is advised by his father's colleague at his graduation party to listen carefully to the one word he is about to say: "Plastics."

Hoffman replies, "Exactly how do you mean?" The reply comes "There's a great future in plastics. Think about it." And well he might have, if he had understood the burgeoning future of plastics across the globe, both beneficially and environmentally. Three thousand years ago the Olmecs of Mexico may have been the earliest users of resins by tapping rubber trees to make game balls, but plastics manufacture use and growth has surged just in the decades since 1950, with vast, unforeseen global consequences that now are dramatically apparent. Most human beings have no idea of the scope or the impact.

## Plastics are everywhere

Plastics are everywhere today, and often have supplanted natural materials (wood, metals, glass, fibers, etc.) and methods for many purposes. Since World War II, when plastics began being utilized for practical military purposes, and subsequently in all manner of products, plastics have become ubiquitous and indispensable in our lives. From toothbrushes we first use upon rising until turning off

the lamp knob at bedtime, we have perhaps a hundred or more daily interactions with some form of this engineered man-made molecular creation. Your own list will be very long although we tend not to even think about it: toothpaste caps, toiletries, combs, cosmetics caps, tubes and vials, pens, most switches, fast food cups, containers and utensils, all sorts of packaging and bags, toys, sports equipment, many food and most medicine containers and their colored caps, little labels on our fruit that say Guatemala or Chile, steering wheels, handles, buttons, straws, apparel blends, key chains, swabs, TV remotes, computers, keyboards and phones, tools, flashlights, bubble wrap, diapers, planter pots, signs, binders, electric cords, suitcases, vehicle dashboards, interiors and trim, kitchen utensils, counter tops, band aids, plastic wrap, push pins, FedEx envelopes, hair dryers, small motor gears, credit/debit, insurance and ATM cards, ... and 100 trillion plastic bags per year (*National Geographic*, June 2018).

## Plastic and your food

Plastic has become so common and utilitarian that we don't even think about it. That is the good side: very cheap, discardable, highly moldable, less breakable, attractive in many cases, extremely convenient, lightweight, and often seemingly irreplaceable. New molecules are created by chemists to meet the needs of the designer or engineer. A new product, no problem. Plastics are mostly derived from cracked petroleum and propane feedstocks, then manipulated into kernel-like nodules and resins.

Almost the entire modern food industry is heavily dependent on discardable plastics to wrap, package, contain, protect, label, secure, market, and explain the food we eat (milk, yoghurt, meats, sauces, con-



diments, beverages, baked goods, etc.) – row after row and category after category. It is the same with non-edible products offered in plastic packages, including those we can barely manage to open. Ingredients for restaurant food also arrive and get stored in plastic.

Recently, I mused while in a big modern supermarket in Dutchess County, that vast emporiums with aisles full of thousands of packaged SKUs are really markets selling plastic in a myriad of forms, peddling food as the excuse to peddle plastics that start with Exxon. There is just not much that modern consumers can do to avoid plastics, except to grow your own food, shop at farmers' stands and markets, and bring along your European style natural fiber bag wherever you shop.

## The (plastic) food chain

The meteoric utilization of plastics worldwide means that several overwhelming problems now challenge us. The larger one is more enduring

Above: Plastic is everywhere, including in packages that contain our food. Just think of all of the tops for our food and drinks. Left: Some stores offer compostable bags. All photos: Peter Greenough.



Continued on next page ...

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Chef Dan Kish consults nationally for the food industry, but for the past 20 years, he and his wife, Cindie have also fed three kids here in Millbrook.

"I know how challenging that can be," he says. That's why Dan started Market Kitchen - available at Marona's - because, "what's good for Millbrook is good for the rest of the country."

Dan came to the Bank of Millbrook with an innovative approach to small-town business. Build an industrial kitchen for his national business and keep it busy by bringing in catering and production for boutique labels, all while making fresh, affordable food for the village. Not every bank would see the value in that kind of outside-the-box thinking. We saw it as the kind of business we'd like to help Dan build.



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and insidious, possibly endangering the food and water chain and the health and existence of all living organisms. If the phyto and zooplankton near Antarctica now have nano plastic contamination, they get consumed by tiny krill, which are consumed by intermediate creatures like fish, seals, penguins and birds, increasing nano concentrations all the way up to gigantic whales, which also are being found dying with guts full of plastic bags and unable to eat real food. An Ellen MacArthur Foundation report says there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish by 2050...

**You are what you eat**

This first danger is molecular level plastics contamination of our food – plastic molecules ingested after having direct contact with the food and beverages we buy that come in some plastic delivery product – beverage bottles, chip bags, ketchup squeeze bottles, prepared sauces and salsas, packaged pastas, wrapped meats, breads in freshness preserving bags, Glad Wrap, BPA-lined soup cans, etc. There is an unknown amount of transfer of molecules that enter our alimentary tracts, and science has not successfully or widely publicized what it knows and we should know. “You are what you eat.”

This is the direct ingestion problem of concern to many eco-oriented people these days (although the European-led anti-GMO public awareness campaign and active opposition are much more widely known, despite being less of an



immediate, documented threat than plastics). Plastics nano contamination is the sleeping disaster that could eliminate many of the world’s current species and contaminate the food chain starting with basic plankton – especially human beings.

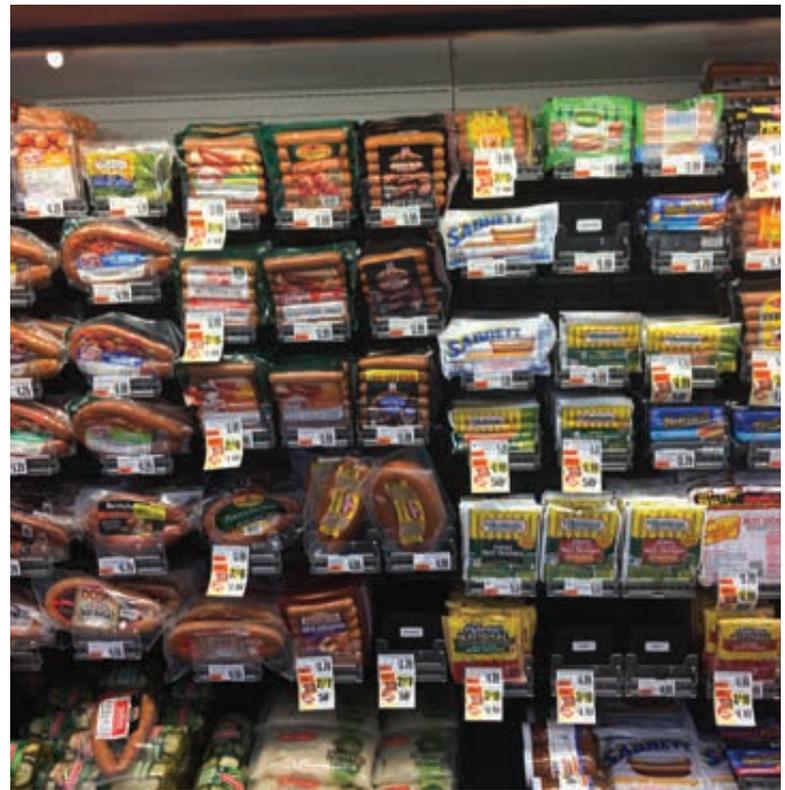
The second problem is the larger, more pernicious, enduring, and ominous concern: Plastic molecules are becoming as endemically contaminating of the entire food and water chain as the plastic products are in modern life. Most plastics are believed to not degrade, or only over many centuries, although even radioactive remnants do over time. And that means nearly everywhere, with scant chance of escaping plastic nano particle contamination anywhere habitable on the globe.

Sound alarmist? Not really. Scientists estimate that the equivalent of one truckload of plastics is dumped into the oceans every minute of every day. As much as “About 10% of the volume of each fish haul caught is plastic” (*The Guardian*, June 8 2018).

If you search “plastics” or “nano plastics contamination” or any number of plastics articles, research or statistics, you will see an array of information that will catapult you to a new level of awareness and concern about the issue. The fundamental issue is that the industry has focused on the utility, convenience, and attributes of plastics, but not much industry effort has been focused on determining how we effectively can recycle, reuse, or reconfigure these man-made modern molecules to avoid their hugely detrimental impacts on the world – or even filter out the particles smaller than ten microns in size, which are common and can end up in shellfish and other marine creatures that we eat.

**Water, and plastic, eventually all flow down stream**

Some efforts, research, and policies have been successful in responding to the basically unrecyclable mega tonnage of discarded plastics. But they are minor and confined to wealthy societies, although plastic is a global product with quite



democratic distribution throughout the world. Think discarded plastic bags caught on trees in the poorest countries in the world, and remote beaches littered with bottles and debris. Hospitals and airlines generate vast amounts of plastic trash daily. This spring a river’s flow in Russia was so clogged with bottles that local authorities sent municipal teams to remove the bottles in order to avoid flooding and even more political embarrassment than YouTube already had engendered virally. Many plastics eventually flow toward water and barriers, and losing nano particles along the way that enter the global food and water chain.

There are some bright spots that give hope despite powerful, successful lobbying by the global plastics industry against regulation. McDonald’s and Dunkin’ Donuts have committed to end using Styrofoam and other plastic materials over the next few years. Cities like San Francisco, and Great Barrington, MA, locally, have mostly banned plastic bags in stores, with others considering similar measures. Europeans typically take their own bags along when they shop. Plastic fruit and vegetable bags that readily compost in 180 days (see photo on previous page) are becoming more common in stores like Trader Joe’s, which is German-owned. European

This page and next page: It seems almost near impossible to escape plastic-wrapped foods and products at the grocery store. All photos: Peter Greenough.

Continued on next page ...

regulations generally require that discarded plastics be separated by consumers for recycling. Also many Euro manufacturers are subject to carrying the burden of recycling their products after they are discarded.

IKEA, the global retailer of economical housewares with over 360 stores globally, announced their plan in early June to phase out all single-use plastic from its stores and cafes by 2020, and has financed a recycling plant for plastics, plus taken other green initiatives like solar and wind farms.

Japanese scientists recently have discovered potential commercially viable enzymes in trash dumps that can eat certain types of plastics, breaking the materials down. But once in the ocean, such debris is difficult to capture or recycle and much of it sinks to substantial depths where it is effectively lost forever.

### The greatest plastic pollution

Numerous scientific studies show the waters of the Northeast Pacific Ocean are the most densely polluted in the world with plastics of all possible categories; from bottles, containers, and fishing nets and gear to toys and signs. The larger oceanic Far East and Southeast Asia are the most plastics-contaminated regions in the world. Plastic bags have been filmed by robots at a depth of just under eleven kilometers down in the Mariana Trench. One third of

oceanic debris is plastic, with 92% being single-use items like bottles and Styrofoam foam cups used once for a few minutes (see Deep-sea Debris Database). Marine plastic debris is forecast to triple over the next decade. So the world's oceans are where much of the 300 million metric tons of plastics produced annually come to rest every year, with only about 20% recycled or incinerated. Informed estimates are that 8.3 billion metric tons of plastics have been produced globally since the 1950s (*The Guardian*).

But fresh water is also contaminated throughout the planet. Plastic beverage bottles recycled into fleece apparel seemed like a bright recycling innovation until researchers later discovered that hundreds of thousands of nano particles are washed down drains each time fleece garments are laundered – too overly minute to be filtered by most existing treatment technologies. Plus, additional particles are expelled into the open air when plastic textiles are machine dried.

Recent reports of both bottled water and beer samples taken in the US Great Lakes region and in Germany, indicated that most contain nano particles of plastics. The same is true in most other countries – even in the remote Himalayas.

When President Trump last year visited Saudi-owned Sabic and Exxon he signed a \$10 billion agreement to build a vast new plastics materials plant on the Gulf Coast,



just north of Corpus Christi, TX, which will benefit from about \$1 billion in US tax breaks. It will produce 1.8 million tons of polyethylene annually, a key plastics input. The new plant will be the largest in the world, and in part supply the expected 40% growth in global plastics production – and debris – over the coming decade.

### It's also falling from the sky

But it gets worse; airborne nano particles are falling from the sky (I kid you not!). Sky, earth, and water are where they come to rest and persist. Concerns about potential harm from GMO products seem so minor when confronted by the certain, visible, current, and ongoing global contamination from plastics.

Remember, there is a large island of plastic debris floating in the Pacific Ocean that is about the size of Delaware – and growing.

The accompanying list (right) provides some modest, practical suggestions for personally reducing, reusing, recycling, and avoiding some plastics contamination, which is a life and earth issue for humans and other creatures of the earth, sky, and oceans.

As Annie Leonard recently commented in writing about the problem, “Recycling alone will never stem the flow of plastics into our oceans; we have to get to the source of the problem and slow down the production of all this plastic waste.” (*The Guardian*, June 9 2018)

My question is how many decades do we all have to figure this out? •

### SOME IDEAS:

- Become vocal and active locally on the issue of smart plastics use. Educate your friends, acquaintances, and elected officials about your concerns. This issue is not going away.
- Minimize food contact with plastic by using glass containers to store and hold fresh ingredients and leftovers, as well as grains, raisins, spices, etc. in Grandma jars.
- Use glass, ceramic, or metal containers for liquids, especially water.
- Save, repurpose, and recycle plastic bags, containers, lids, plastic film, bubble wrap, etc.
- Take natural fiber bags whenever you shop, or, at a minimum, ask for paper bags.
- Use a high-quality water filter for drinking and cooking. Use a metal water bottle.
- Reduce your seafood consumption. (Famous actor and non-profit Oceana board director Sam Waterston admitted, when asked in Millerton at an event, that he doesn't eat seafood anymore).
- Obtain the new reusable beeswax-treated food wraps rather than discardable clear wrap or baggies – they really work well.
- Read up on the topic of plastics contamination – there is so much interesting information. (*National Geographic* has a whole issue on plastics - June 2018).
- Make your concerns known to your elected officials, locally, and otherwise.



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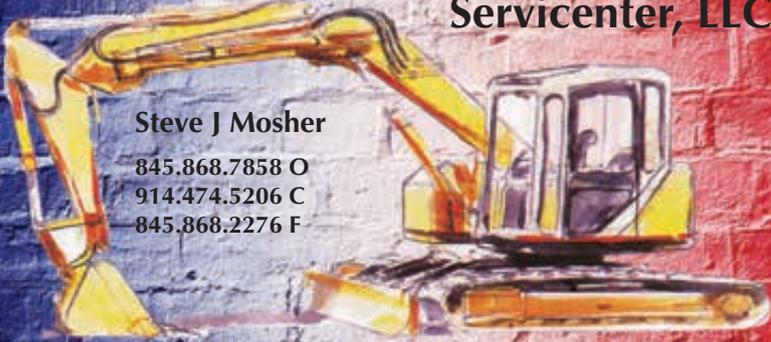
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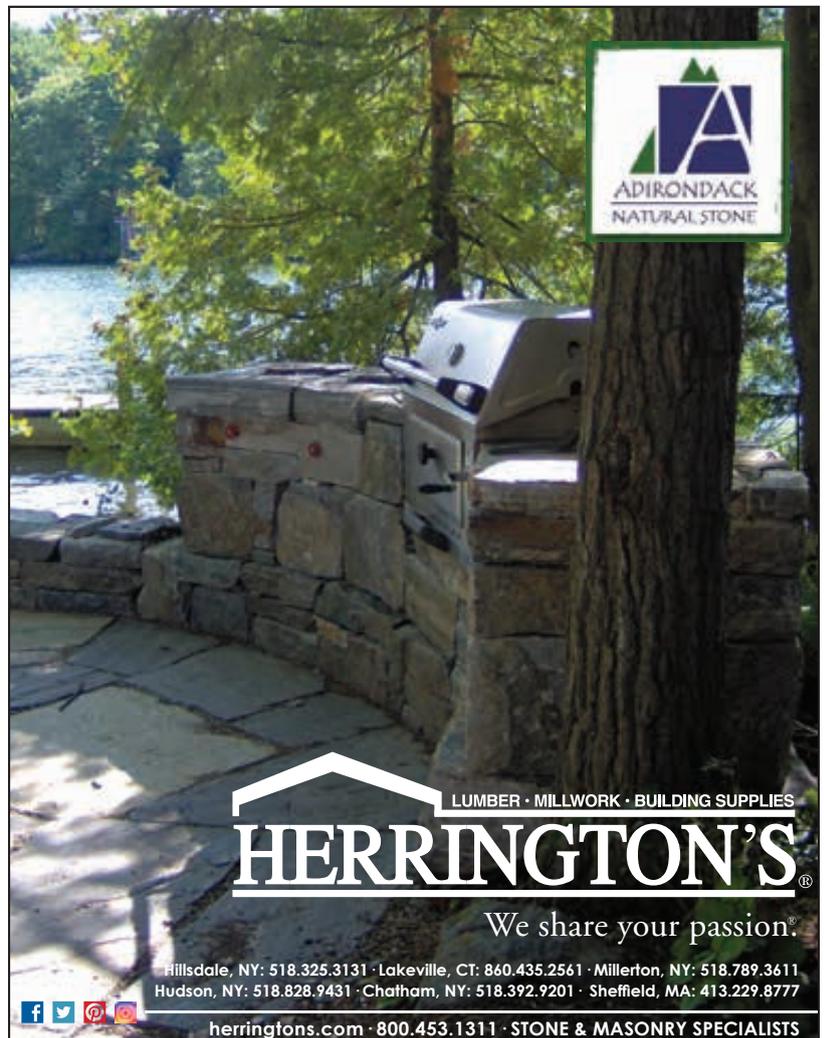
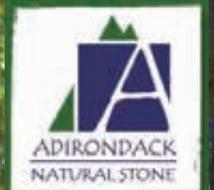
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# A warm welcome. A wine welcome.

TOUSEY WINERY INVITES GUESTS TO UNWIND & OFFERS TOP-NOTCH WINES & A FRIENDLY VIBE

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Upon entering Tousey Winery in Germantown, NY, guests are pleasantly greeted by some of the more idyllic charms of country life. A verdant green lawn creates serenity and a casual country-style swing invites guests to unwind while basking in the sunshine. Crates of colorful flowers and wooden barrels usher a rustic aesthetic to the outdoor space.

Once guests step into Tousey Winery's spacious tasting room, they'll discover a contemporary interior with an inviting vibe. A brick wall lends warmth and character to the long, sleek bar. A blackboard-style slate menu informs guests of Tousey's offerings and an enormous chalkboard stretches over one of the walls.

It's difficult not to be lured into reading the fun and philosophical wine-related sayings scribbled in chalk. Messages range from "Beer is made by men, wine by God" to "If you have to ask if it's too early to have a glass of wine, you're an amateur and we can't be friends."

A long farm table in the center of Tousey Winery's space beckons guests to relax while sipping various wines and enjoying the conversation of friends or family. A pair of comfy plush chairs are perfectly positioned in a corner in front of a retro-style sign that is aglow with large light bulbs. It's an ideal locale to snap some photos to post and the friendly staff is willing to pitch in to make it happen.

## Hygge

At the essence of it all is "hygge" – a Danish word that is used to acknowledge a feeling or moment that is cozy, charming, and special. The word is quite apropos for this ultra-stylish wine destination, which is run by Kimberly and Ben Peacock who are both former residents of Copenhagen, Denmark. After starting their family while overseas, the

couple flew to the Hudson Valley with baby in tow to introduce Kimberly's dad, Ray, to his grandchild.

## All in the timing

At the time Ray, a honey farmer by trade, just embarked on a new business venture to market his *Crème de Cassis*. He had all of the necessary licensing in place to create and bring other wines to market, but Ray lacked the capacity to run a complete operation.

"My father asked my husband and I to get the winery going from scratch," says Kim. Late in 2009, the duo took over and in October 2010 the tasting room opened its doors to the public.

Kimberly and Ben shared a vision for Tousey. "We wanted to make the best wine possible from local grapes. That was our mantra then and it still is today. We also wanted to focus on grapes/wines that already had recognition in the marketplace such as Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Cabernet Franc," reveals Kimberly.

Tousey's wines tend to be medium-bodied and not overly alcoholic, making them ideal for pairing with food. The wine also suits the lifestyles of locals and tourists who visit the Hudson Valley, which is renowned for its top-notch restaurants, engaging foodie scene, and its many breweries and tasting rooms. People in the area certainly take pride in buying local.

It's difficult for Kimberly to name the best-selling wines. "It changes from season to season. Overall, our white wine blend – The Queen of Clermont has been a customer favorite for a number of years," says Kimberly. In 2017, Tousey Winery's Rebellion Rosé was voted Hudson Valley's rosé of the year. As for the reds, the Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc have both garnered some great press over the years.

Tucked away on the side of the



Above: Tousey wines. Photo courtesy of Tousey Winery.

main tasting space is a private tasting room with a long wood table. A swag of flowers and candles embellish the table and create instant ambiance. A colorful graffiti-style mural boasting "I Love NY Wine" ushers in an urban vibe. The private space is offered to groups of six people or more. It must be booked in advance and Tousey's staff is happy to cater a special tasting experience for guests.

Beyond wine, Tousey's tasting room brings an array of other enticing items to market, which hail from the 200-plus bee hives her dad has in dotting the Hudson Valley. A small boutique section sells everything from wine soap to beeswax candles, decorative flasks, honey, T-shirts, and beyond.

## A big Tousey bash

On July 7, Tousey Winery will host its big bash – a summer party. New wines will be released and live music will up the fun factor at this all-day celebration.

"We aim to bring out a new wine this year, the Sparkling Queen. It's a spin-off of our best-selling white blend, but this time with bubbles. We're also releasing new vintages

of Cab Franc, Pinot Noir, and our barrel-fermented Chardonnay," reveals Kimberly.

As for the Peacock's vision going forward, they aim to have a longer-term goal to migrate from the current location to a larger building. "We have reached maximum capacity in terms of the wine we can produce in the space we've got and the tasting room is fast approaching maximum numbers, too. What's crucial to us is that we can make the next step without jeopardizing the quality of wines," admits Kimberly.

While sipping and tasting the day away, grab a bite at the attached Heirloom Café, which is owned by Culinary Institute of America grads Joe Barilla and Caleb Kimble. Be sure to catch one of its specialty nights such as Taco Thursday, Asian Fridays, or Saturday Pasta Dinners, which keep the food scene just as lively as the happenings at Tousey Winery. •

To learn more about Tousey Winery, you can visit them in person at 1774 New York Rt9, Germantown, NY, or online at [www.touseywinery.com](http://www.touseywinery.com), or give them a call at (518) 567-5462.



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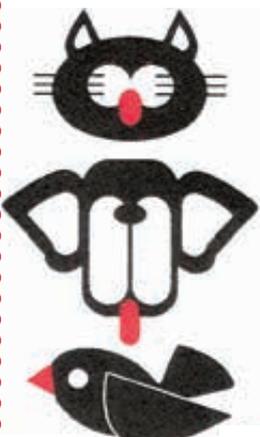
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AN INEXACT BUT HIGHLY ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE

# The Columbia County Croissant Contest

By Dominique DeVito  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Welcome to July, or, as the French say, *Bienvenue à juillet*. This is a month of celebrations of national pride for both the US (Independence Day on July 4) and France (Bastille Day on July 14), and I always think about Marie Antoinette's revolutionary proclamation of "Let them eat cake" when July rolls around. I can hardly blame her, disrespectful as it was. Who doesn't like cake? And kudos to the French for declaring "*Assez!*" I digress.

My mother is French and lives in France now, and I'd rather be watching fireworks in St. Jean Pied de Port at the fronton where they play pelote than from the banks of the Hudson, but, hey, the Hudson will do! I digress.

## The crown jewel of breakfast treats

For this year's food and beverage-themed issue of *Main Street Magazine*, I wanted to tip my chapeau to the iconic masterpiece of French pastry, the simple yet sublime croissant. The jewel in the crown of breakfast treats, as interpreted – and made – here in not just the US, not just New York state, but here, right

here, in Columbia County (and, ok, a bit beyond). When I was growing up, the closest we got to a croissant experience was shaping Pillsbury dough into crescent-shaped things that tasted like, well, if you remember, you know. If you don't, consider yourself lucky.

## The croissant contest

The truth is that there are bakers making authentic croissants here in Columbia County. *C'est magnifique!* In fact, there are quite a few of them, which is how I came up with the idea for a contest to see which might be best. It's no fun to do this by oneself, so I invited friends to do it with me. We each selected where we would get the croissants, and we each bought two from these places. We gathered at my house on a Sunday morning and, armed with coffee, water, knives, pens and paper, we got to the serious and seriously enjoyable task of tasting, and describing, and comparing.

Here's the list of where we got the croissants, in alphabetical order so as not to give anything away:

Bartlett House  
Berkshire Mountain Bakery  
Café Le Perche  
Hawthorne Valley  
Our Daily Bread  
Patisserie Lenox  
Price Chopper

For those protesting the selection of Berkshire Mountain Bakery, they sell their goods at the Copake Hillsdale Farmer's Market, which is in Hillsdale, which is in Columbia County. Remember, this is not a scientific study! And, yes, we included Price Chopper's croissants because, what the heck, we wanted to! (We would have loved to include croissants from Bonfiglio, which used to be in Hudson but is now in Athens, and Tivoli Bakery, which is just over the border in Dutchess County,



but time and distance didn't allow it. You could include them in your contest).

The lovely ladies at the tasting were me (of course), Nancy Kohler, Sarah Lipsky, and Betsy Wyman. All but one of us has lived in Columbia County for several decades. All are Francophiles (*mais, bien sur!*). All are serious about their food. All are huge fans of Columbia County and all it has to offer. And all agreed to forget their waistlines in the pursuit of crowning a croissant on a Sunday. Great qualifications!

## Contest prep

To prepare for the contest, I did some research. I wanted our croissants to be able to perform at the peak of their abilities, so I shared with my co-tasters the tips I found on freshness. A croissant is considered fresh if kept in a paper bag and eaten within 36 hours of being baked. If you need to freeze a croissant, it should be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, put in an airtight baggie from which the air has been removed and the bag properly zipped closed, and frozen. Thaw before heating. All croissants taste best slightly warm, and should be heated in a 365-degree oven

Continued on next page ...

Above: Croissants demand a lot of patience and chilling of the dough when being made. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor kolesnikovserg. Left: Dominique and her judges cut the croissants in half to examine them inside and out.



for three minutes before serving. We followed these rules. All of our croissants were fresh, and they were warmed in the oven just so.

With the mouth-watering selection of croissants before us, we set about rating the goodies based on:

- Appearance
- Overall size
- Flakiness of the crust
- Texture and structure of the inside, and, most importantly, Taste

None of us hesitated to acknowledge that different parts of a croissant taste different. The ends don't taste like the middle. So we cut them so that we could each taste ends first, then middles. We tasted, talked, and tabulated results in alphabetical order, as well. We judged on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a low score and 5 the best.

**No croissant recipes to be found**

Before I get to the results, let me share a little more of my research. While I've personally baked puff pastry and brioche, I never tried making croissants. I'd heard that it was quite involved. I thought I'd find some recipes and see what my mentors had to say on the subject. I turned to *Beard on Bread* first, by my hero James Beard. Nothing. *The Martha Stewart Cookbook*. Nothing. Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything*. Except croissants, apparently. Not even in MFK Fisher's *The Art of Eating*, where I did find a recipe for *tête de veau*, if you're interested.

Thank goodness for Craig Claiborne, dear friend of Julia Child. In his book, *The Best of Craig Claiborne*, co-authored by Pierre Franey, I found a recipe for croissants. It begins, "Morning croissants and café noir are as essential to the Parisian scene as the Rive Gauche and the Champs-Elysees. Most

home cooks presume the making of croissants to be beyond their scope, but it involves only two things – patience and careful chilling of the dough. The dough must be rolled, folded, and chilled several times so that the butter will not ooze out of the dough. It also helps if the surface on which the dough is rolled is cold. The ideal surface is marble, but Formica will do. Wood is not recommended."

Then there are 15 steps. I understood immediately why his culinary counterparts didn't venture into croissant territory. Making croissants involves at least five things by my count, Craig: patience, careful chilling of the dough, a knack for working with dough, dedication, and marble. Another reason to leave the baking to the pros, and to truly appreciate what goes into something we practically take for granted.

**The results are in:**

It will probably come as no surprise that we awarded Best Croissant in Columbia County (and slightly beyond) to the Bartlett House. Comments included, "Super flaky crust;" "buttery but light;" and "extra crispy ends." Their plain croissant scored 24 points, with only one point off for appearance. It's more of a cigar-shaped croissant and less the elegantly curved pastry we associate with *le vrai français*.

In a close second place with 23 points was the croissant from Berkshire Mountain Bakery. It scored high in all categories, including a solid 5 in taste, losing points only in comparison to Bartlett on flakiness and texture.

Third place went to Our Daily Bread's lovely croissant, which scored 20 points. We felt it was a bit bready and not as light and buttery as we would have liked, but still delicious. We all commented on the fact that Our Daily Bread was the pioneer of bakeries in Columbia County to offer fresh-baked croissants (and other baked goods more associated with the City), and we toasted them heartily with our coffee cups.

The rest of the croissants scored



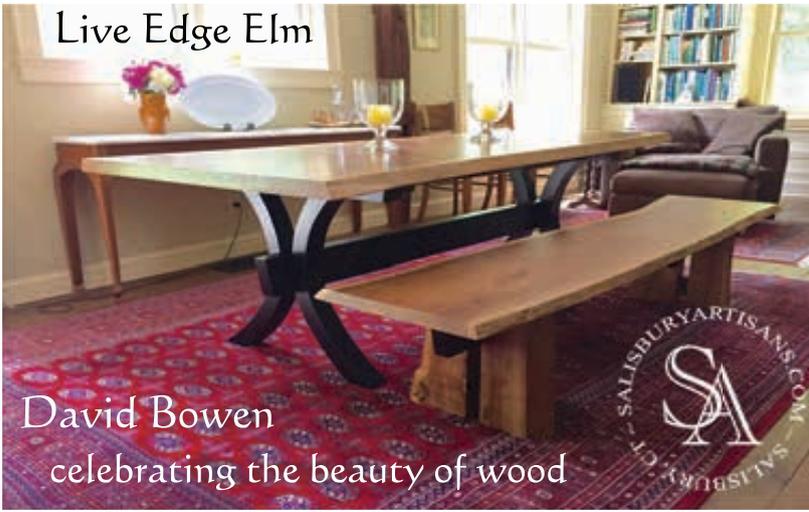
lower and relatively equally. We weren't blown away with the one from Price Chopper, but neither were we terribly disappointed, and we all realized that, 'Yes, it's available on Mondays, when none of the others would be.' (And they also have a whole wheat version – go figure!).

We feasted for sure, but there were leftovers. What to do? Make bread pudding, which is especially decadent with pieces of croissant, just as sitting in the sun with a cup of coffee or tea and a fresh croissant is decadent. We are so lucky to have so many choices of worthy and wonderful croissants here. Don't wait til Bastille Day to indulge, but do mark it on your calendar and treat yourself. And your friends. *Bon Appetit!* •



Above, top to bottom: The contenders in the contest. Nancy with her plate of croissants, ready to give her deliberations.

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# Alice's Restaurant

THE WOMAN. THE RESTAURANT. THE SONG. THE COOKBOOK.

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

This is a story, well, a story about a story, rather a song that was basically a story, written and sung by Arlo Guthrie in the 1960s, his famous *Alice's Restaurant Massacre*, or simply *Alice's Restaurant* as it came to be commonly referred as.

Guthrie is the son of famed folk artist Woody Guthrie and the former has made his own name for himself over the years. Back in the 1960s he was the darling of the hippie counter-culture for his sardonic views on the Vietnam War that was tearing apart the country at its social fibers. The Berkshires were, and remain, a haven for thinkers and activists, what with the numerous artists, writers, and musicians that live or frequent the area, especially during the summer months. Tie dye was everywhere on the streets of Great Barrington, Stockbridge and Lenox in the sixties.

## "Alice's Restaurant"

The song is Guthrie's most prominent work, based on a true incident that began on Thanksgiving Day in 1965 with a citation for littering (dumping trash from the Brocks' home down a hill), and ended with the refusal of the US Army to draft him because of his conviction for the crime. The final part of the song is an encouragement for the listeners to sing along, to resist the draft and to end war. The term "massacre" is a colloquialism from the Ozark Mountains that describes "an event so wildly and improbably and baroquely messed up that the results are almost impossible to believe."

The song consists of a long monologue with a short chorus about the diner, "Where you get anything you want," although there isn't a whole lot of discussion about what that might be, or food in general. The track lasts 18 minutes and 34 seconds and has

several times been re-released with updated lyrics. Only last year it was selected for preservation in the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or artistically significant."

## Who's Alice?

The Alice mentioned in the song was restaurant owner Alice May Brock. After graduating from college, she purchased a deconsecrated church in Great Barrington, MA, where she and her husband, Ray Brock, would live for a time. In fact, it was at the former church, not the restaurant, which would come later, where famous Thanksgiving Day dinners were held, including the one that served as the ignition for Guthrie's song. The Brocks, who would later divorce, were both teachers at the Stockbridge School, from which Guthrie graduated. Alice Brock operated her restaurant made famous by Guthrie's song for only a short time.

According to an IMDb (the online Internet Movie Database) biography by Victor Franko, Alice Brock owned and operated three restaurants in the Berkshires: The Back Room, Take-Out Alice, and Alice's at Avaloch. The first of these served as the inspiration for Guthrie's song. Born in Brooklyn, NY, she attended Sarah Lawrence College. Brock worked at the Stockbridge School as a librarian where she met Arlo Guthrie. She married Ray Brock and purchased the Old Trinity Church in Great Barrington, MA. Brock never intended to pursue a career in the restaurant business and always expressed more interest in art. After the closure of Alice's at Avaloch, she relocated to Provincetown, MA, and opened an art studio.

In addition to her cookbook, Alice Brock has also authored two other books: her 1976 autobiography, *My Life as a Restaurant*; and a children's

book, *How to Massage Your Cat*. She also illustrated another children's book, *Mooses Come Walking*, written by Guthrie.

"Brock initially bristled at the fame that the song and film 'Alice's Restaurant' had brought upon her, but later came to appreciate her role as an icon of the 1960's," said Franko.

"The Back Room" was located in back of a row of stores on Main Street in Stockbridge, as mentioned in Guthrie's song. A sign marks the space that was formerly "Alice's Restaurant."

## The cookbook

The song (there was also a poorly received movie based on Guthrie's work) inspired a number of "Alice's Restaurants" around the country. And, lo and behold, a cookbook surfaced named after the song title, naturally, *Alice's Restaurant Cookbook*, with 232 recipes from the eatery's matron. The cookbook had a number of printings, and there was a tear-out record included in the book with Brock and Guthrie talking on two tracks about "Italian-Style Meatballs" and "My Granma's Best Jam."

According to the website, Cookbook Village, the book is a collectible that constantly sells out on its website. Says the site, "You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant. Now you can get it all right in your own kitchen! Here are actual edible magnificent recipes, from Beef Stroganoff (the most popular dish in the restaurant) to Mom's Pork Delight (piggies are my favorite animals) to Mexican Heartburgers (serve them and run!)." Every phrase was written entirely by Alice who also added lots of relevant and helpful bits of information plus

drawings and photos."

The website says, "*Alice's Restaurant Cookbook* is, as Alice Brock put it, dedicated to the proposition that 'being a good cook is not just being able, after careful preparation with all the proper ingredients, to prepare a terrific meal. It is being able to prepare a terrific meal out of absolutely anything, anytime, with whatever you happen to have in the house. And all you need to be a good, Alice-style cook is confidence, a sense of humor, and a little nerve.'"

To demonstrate her point, Alice revealed that, "Just because you have four chairs, six plates and three cups is no reason why you can't invite 12 people to dinner," and then goes on to tell even the least experienced cook exactly how to pull it off.

It is this kind of humorous outlook on life that hippies and others in the raucous 1960's and "old hippies" of today found and continue to find enjoyable and what keeps Alice's Restaurant alive in the minds of many. Although Alice Brock has long since left the Berkshires and there is another eatery where she once catered to all types of people, to those who grew up in the 1960s and who remember Guthrie's famous song, the space will always be Alice's Restaurant. ●

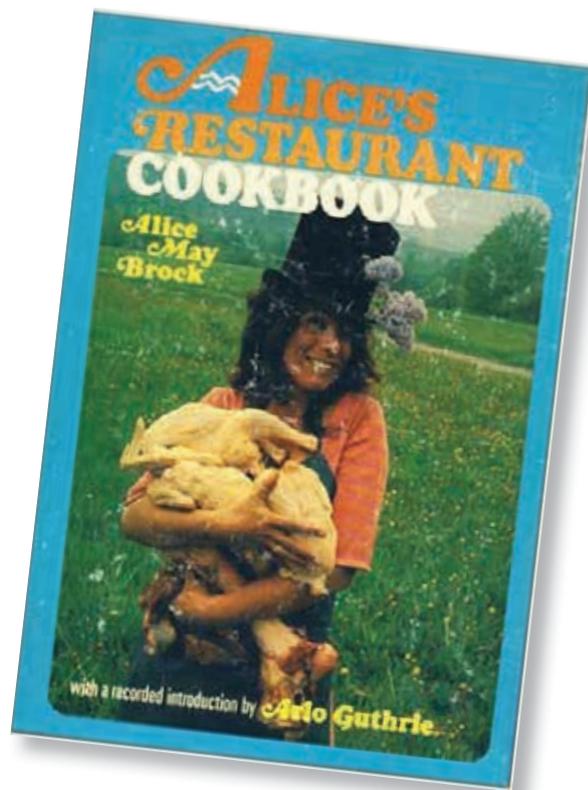


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# ICELANDIC CUISINES: THE FOODS OF MY HOMELAND

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir  
info@mainstreetmag.com

History, geography, availability, and life circumstances have all played a vital role in food and food developments since the start of man. This is something that we can forget (daresay take for granted) in today's world. But those four attributes played a pivotal role in my ancestor's foods, and as a result, the foods that I grew up with.

For those of you who don't know this about me, I was born and raised in Iceland. Yes, that little island nation in the North Atlantic, located between Greenland and Norway. My ancestors endured some dramatic climatic conditions (and still do today), which greatly impacted how they ate.

When the Vikings traveled to Iceland in the ninth century in open Viking ships, they brought with them only their best, including livestock. That livestock, along with the people, for the most part then lived in isolation. In the year 1000 no more importation of animals was allowed, and so the livestock in Iceland was what it was, with no more influx of other breeds or types of animals. That is still the case today and the animals that had been brought by the Vikings remained the same. In Iceland today we have cows, sheep, pigs, horses, chickens and many different types of wild birds, along with native animals such as Arctic foxes and reindeer, and fish – we have plenty of fish!

## Growing food

The growing season is short in Iceland, and you never know what the

weather will do (it can snow in the summer). So making hay and feed for livestock has always been vital to keep the country ... well, alive.

Since the growing season is so short and the weather is moderate (a great summer day is sunny, with temperatures between 60-70s F, and little wind), what we had traditionally been able to grow in regards to vegetables for human consumption was limited. That has changed dramatically since I was a child thanks to technology, geothermal energy, and greenhouses. But traditional Icelandic-grown vegetables when I was a kid were root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, rutabaga. As a child I helped my mother and grandmothers plant and harvest potatoes that were then eaten through the winter. To this day I have a tremendous affection for potatoes – most meals are not complete without a potato on the plate in my opinion.

Growing up in Iceland in the 1980s, root vegetables were a very prominent part of our meals along with cucumbers and tomatoes (during their growing season), but fruits were a scarcer item (all fruit was imported). Apples, oranges, and bananas were a fairly common item in my house – I don't remember having many more choices other than them though. At Christmas-time clementines filled the grocery store shelves, and to this day I associate them with the holidays.

Thanks to Dole's canning abilities we were able to get "exotic" fruit like pineapple and mixed cocktail fruits, which were only brought out for dessert at Sunday dinners.

I always went blueberry picking in the summers at my grandfather's farm. The blueberries were then made into jam so we would have blueberries through the rest of the year. My father's mother also had lingonberry bushes at her house, and so the



Above: Kjötsúpa. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor from\_my\_point\_of\_view

whole family would go to her house to help pick them, and then everyone made jam. My cousins and I weren't much help, we just stuffed our faces with the tangy berries.

Another favorite past-time of my cousins and mine was to eat raw rhubarb from my grandmother's garden. When the rhubarb was ready to be harvested (which was also made into jam), she would allow us to break off a stem, then she'd give each of us a mug with a bottom-fill of sugar that we'd dip the sour/acidic, raw rhubarb into and eat with sheer delight. The sugar helped to take the edge off the rhubarb's acidity.

Today the world of fruits and vegetables has changed dramatically in Iceland. They are able to grow them year-round in geothermally heated greenhouses, and since the temperature is controllable, they are able to grow a much larger variety than when I was growing up. This has helped to change both food choices and access.

## Lamb, it's what's for dinner

But despite that, the cultural "staples" still play a very important part in a lot of the cuisine, like in the traditional *Kjötsúpa* (lamb stew), which literally translates to "meat soup." The soup consists of a bounty of potatoes, carrots, rutabaga, simple spices, and

lamb. A wonderful and hearty meal that is still eaten all over Iceland today.

Lamb was a more favored meat, at least in my family's households. Iceland has always had a great love of lamb, and anyone who has been to Iceland has probably had an Icelandic (lamb) hot dog, which are notorious.

A hot dog, you ask? Why yes! You can get a hot dog just about anywhere in Iceland, even at the gas stations – and they're delicious. I like my hot dog with "everything:" the bun is fresh-baked and slightly warmed, fried onions are then placed on the bun first, followed by ketchup and raw onions, the hot dog (which has been boiled in water or beer) is then placed in the bun, and it is then topped with Icelandic mustard and what we call *remoláði*, which is a mayonaise-based yellow, relish sauce. You can't go to Iceland without having one!

## Food preservation

In order to survive in Iceland for the last thousand-plus years, my ancestors became masters of food preservation. That is why you will find that a lot of Icelandic foods are smoked, dried, or cured. I mean, heck, you can easily get "rotten" shark in Iceland. Yes, you



Above: Icelandic hot dogs. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Marcin\_Kadziolka

Continued on next page ...



Above: Dried fish being buttered. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor LiljaKristjansdottir

read that correctly. You see, the shark meat is, I guess, difficult to digest, so it needs to break down in order for humans to digest it. The same type of process is used for a fish we call *Skata* – the ammonia smell of which is like no other (the smell will stop you dead in your tracks). But for those who like it, they *love* it! For those who can't stomach the smell or taste – well, there are hot dogs for you!

For those who might be somewhat familiar with Iceland and or Icelandic cuisine, you may know about the mid-winter festival called *Þor-rablót*. The festival's foods comprise of, should we say, *odd* dishes, like the shark and sheep heads (the likes of which could be right out of an episode of *Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern*). Yeah, I know, sheep heads – but honestly, they aren't that bad. If you can get past a sheep head staring back at you from the plate, then the meat is quite good.

I know, some of you might be quite disgusted, but you have to look at the cultural impacts of this: every portion of the animal had to be utilized for foodstuffs. Icelanders had to preserve the food by smoking, curing, or drying it, so it would last, and nothing went to waste. My culture isn't the only one to have done this either, and that is why you'll find what we might consider "unique" foods from different cultures around the world.

### Fish

As previously mentioned, Iceland is an island nation, surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean. So, as you guessed, we have a lot of fish and fish dishes. My mother's father and his

father were fishermen. My grandfather still goes out on his boat and fishes to this day. There's a lot of fish, cod in particular, in the Icelandic diet, and my small island nation actually went to war with the super power Great Britain over fishing boundaries – going so far as ramming the British navy ships. Iceland was victorious in every one of the Cod Wars, the last one ending in 1976, and Iceland continues to protect its fishing boundaries to this day.

Having grown up in this fishing nation, it's no surprise that every Monday we had fish for dinner at my house: boiled cod with boiled potatoes, mashed together with butter, and with buttered *rúgbrauð* (an Icelandic dark rye bread). We would also have salted fish, fishballs (like meatballs, except with fish) and potatoes, and many other types of fishes and fish dishes like fresh river-caught trout and salmon.

When I was finishing grammar and secondary school in Iceland I lived with my mother's parents and my grandfather, the fisherman, used to cook a lot of fish that he had caught (like five days a week). I eventually got fished-out! It took a few years being away from fish that I started appreciating it again.

When I took my husband to Iceland I got to play tourist with him. It was during those trips that I really started to appreciate the many variations of fish dishes that are to be found at the amazing restaurants in Iceland now. The fish is all fresh and it is so light and tasteful, and paired with fresh vegetables and sides – a healthy and super tasty meal.

It was during my husband's first trip with me that I fell in love with

Icelandic lobster – something that I hadn't known about as a child. Icelandic lobsters are much smaller than Maine lobsters for example, but are delicious. And the lobster bisque soup – oh my goodness! Words can't even begin to describe this delicacy. Obviously it is a very rich soup, whereas it is filled with cream and topped with whipped cream, but if you ever go to Iceland, try it. You won't be sorry.

I have to mention dried fish – think beef jerky, but fish. The dried fish can really be made from most any fish, but my grandfather always makes his from cod. Basically they take the fish, filet it, sometimes salt it, and then leave it to dry. The result is essentially fish jerky, and it's both savory and sweet. A lot of Icelanders like to lather theirs with butter, but I like mine without to get the full flavor of the fish. And mind you, it's full of protein and is super healthy!

### Milk products

Iceland is known for its milk products. I'm a huge fan of the yogurt-



Above: A fraction of the offerings at an Icelandic bakery. Photo: Thorunn Kristjansdottir.

based products, some of which, like *Skyr*, are so popular that you can get them at our local grocery stores here in the Tri-corner. *Skyr* has the consistency of Greek yogurt, it's thick and creamy, and is full of protein (extremely healthy). Icelandic competitors for the World's Strongest Man are known to consume a lot of *Skyr* due to the protein. I personally prefer what's called *AB Mjólk*, which is thinner and the individual packs come with muesli and dried fruit.

### Candy and baked goods

Speaking of milk products, Icelandic ice cream is like the hot dogs: famous.

And it doesn't matter what time of year it is, you'll always see Icelanders at the ice cream shops. My favorite type of ice cream is what's called a *Bragðarefur*, soft-serve vanilla ice cream mixed with candy. I always get mine mixed with some sort of Icelandic licorice and chocolate.

Icelanders are notorious for their sweet tooth. I have it, and it's almost problematic. The majority of the candy in Iceland is made there, and a lot of it has licorice – actual licorice, not Twizzlers, which isn't licorice (no offense). You're going to find a lot of chocolate paired with licorice and marzipan in any candy store that you go to, and you can get candy just about everywhere in Iceland.

Bakeries are something that you also find on every other corner. Fresh baked breads, cinnamon buns, Icelandic donuts called *Kleinur*, and other European-style baked pastries. The European bakery culture is something that I miss here in America – nothing compares to picking up fresh-baked sweets at the corner bakery.

I could obviously go on and on about the foods of my culture, just like you could similarly discuss the foods of any culture of this world, but this at least gives you a little taste, no pun intended. And for anyone travelling to Iceland, you must: have a hot dog with everything, try the fish and lamb, go to the bakery and candy stores and just lose yourself. Worry about the diet when you get home, and enjoy amazing fresh food that's unique to this island nation that I still call home. ●



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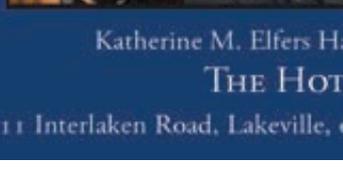
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Former owners, Don and Karen Edge, built Dad's Diner in the Hamlet of Copake. They began building Dad's on March 15, 2000, and opened to the public on July 8. Dad's is a 50s style diner serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner Wednesday through Monday. In addition to their large menu, they also offer featured specials during the week and on weekends. Every Thursday they have a \$10 deal which features one special served with soup or salad. And to keep you cool during the summer, don't forget to try out their delicious hard and soft-served ice cream in an array of flavors. But most importantly, Dad's Diner is known for their fresh daily ground Black Angus beef burger. Proudly serving Columbia County, they do their best to serve fresh quality food and provide good service on a consistent basis. Don, Karen, and new owner Brian Peacock all agree that the most rewarding part about the business are the relationships that they build with their customers. "Without the loyalty of our customers Dad's would not be the place it has become today – we appreciate their support. The entire Copake community is beginning to thrive again and we are just happy to be a part of such a great community." Brian's goal as the new owner is to carry on the same traditions Don and Karen created 18 years ago.



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### Hillsdale Supermarket

Fresh produce, meats, bakery, deli, & all other grocery needs. (518) 325-4341. 2628 Rt. 23, Hillsdale, NY. hillsdalesupermarket.com

Charles (Chuck) Weldon bought the Hillsdale IGA in 1982 after moving here from CT. After only three months of ownership, the building burnt down and Chuck was forced to rebuild. Since the rebuild, the Hillsdale Supermarket has continued to offer fresh produce, a meat counter where you can get daily fresh cut meats, fresh out-of-the-oven baked goods, a great selection of deli meats, cold cut sandwiches, and pasta salads, and all of your other grocery needs. Open seven days a week, patrons come from all areas surrounding Hillsdale including Copake, Ancram, Craryville, and beyond! As a family-owned and operated business, the Weldon family not only finds it rewarding, but also takes pride in catering to their community, offering friendly customer service in every department of the store, and providing the freshest products – especially their prime certified Angus beef and fresh seafood, which they are known for. Sales change weekly, so if you are not already receiving your weekly sale flyer in the mail please visit them on the web to have a copy emailed to you. And don't forget to sign up for your free club card to make sure you receive the sale prices at the check out. "We have been and will continue to grow our organic and local product options in all departments. We are continually growing as the product demands change," says Chuck.



### Marshmeadow Farm

A family-owned bio-dynamic farm offering food & flowers. (518) 537-4654. 113 Lasher Ave., Germantown, NY. Like us on social media!

Marshmeadow Farm is a fourth generation farm, bought in 1954 by the Ericson family as a working fruit and dairy farm. It's currently owned by Elfreda Meacher, third generation, and run by her and her two daughters, Dorothy Meacher and Lauren Williams, who took the farm in a different direction. They raise registered Alpine dairy goats, Boer meat goats, heritage Berkshire pigs, chickens for eggs, ducks for eggs and meat, grow fifteen varieties of organically-grown artisan garlic, seasonal vegetables, greenhouse production of herbs, heirloom vegetable plants, and unique and unusual flowers. "Everything grown and raised at the farm is sold here. We also vend at the Catskill Farmers market, select local events, and the Hudson Valley Garlic Festival." They are a woman-owned and operated farm focusing on sustainable bio-dynamic farming practices and humanely raised livestock. Since they are such a diversified farm, they're always looking into different ventures. Dorothy has also been a floral designer for seven years and offers traditional flower arrangements and will be introducing the farm's own fresh cut flowers into her designs. "We love to educate people on the importance of small farms and the positive impact they have on our communities."

## INSURING YOUR WORLD

As the grilling season is upon us, as well as outdoor weddings and parties, it is ever so important to make sure that the folks preparing the food are insured correctly – should a food-borne illness outbreak occur. Preparing food in outdoor kitchens and warming trays can be tricky business, yet if bacteria contaminates and your guests get ill from tainted food, large lawsuits can and will follow. Before any gathering where caterers are used, simply ask to be named as an additional insured on their policy so you get coverage under the caterer policy and not have to file a claim against your homeowner's policy for a liability that you did not create. While you are at it, make sure if you are serving liquor at the party, that the caterer carries the appropriate liquor legal liability to cover any accidents caused by someone that has had too much to drink. The devil is always in the details, so pay attention to the details!



Kirk Kneller  
Phone 518.329.3131  
1676 Route 7A, Copake, N.Y.

Kneller Insurance  
Agency

## Summer favorites

I absolutely love Rosé, but I think it's fair to say we have reached full Rosé saturation. This summer, if you've had your fill of the pink stuff, consider these varietals, which are tried and true summer fave's:

Muscadet, unbelievably crisp and dangerously drinkable, is a Loire Valley white made for warm afternoons and freshly shucked oysters. Grüner Veltliner is the ultimate thirst-quenching citrusy table wine, always affordable and even found in a liter bottle with a screw-cap. Lugana, from the shores of Lake Garda, home to its own DOC that specializes in light, delicate whites, is ideal for drinking by one of our many area lakes. Gamay is a light-bodied red wine that's similar in taste to Pinot Noir. I love its juiciness and surprising ability to pair with all types of food. It can even be found in the sparkling section and you can usually find high quality Gamay at a much better price than Pinot Noir.

That being said, I know that I will still be drinking some Rosé! A couple of my go-to Rosé regions would be the Loire Valley as they have great acidity and body while maintaining dryness, and the other would be Italy, where they call Rosé Rosato. Rosatos tend to have more body than other Rosés making them great year-round food wines. A pro tip would be to look for an Italian Rosé from the previous year as they really benefit from a year in the bottle.

So, this summer let's not forget all of the great wines that pair perfectly with the season. Stop by and we'll be glad to help you select the perfect wine to go with your summer fare!



(860) 435-1414  
19 Main Street, Salisbury, CT  
wine@salisburywines.com  
www.salisburywines.com

## Pointers for fruit & the home orchard

### Planting an orchard:

- The site – lots of sun, moderately well-drained, fertile soil, away from wooded edges, protected from deer, cold air drainage, facing southeast.
- Choose disease resistant varieties when you can – plenty of fungal and bacterial pests feed on your trees (apple scab, cedar-apple rust, frog-eye leaf spot, brown rot, black knot, and more).
- Consider staying with only one or two species, e.g. apples/pears or peaches/cherries, to minimize the disease and insect pressures and need for sprays.
- Plant according to arboricultural guidelines.
- Mulch and install hardware cloth to protect the trunks from rodent chewing.
- Apply a liberal dose of patience.

### Managing an existing orchard:

- Determine varieties and label (because you'll forget).
- Prune annually to encourage central-leader form, the setting of fruit buds, and the development of fruit exposed to open air and light.
- Apply sprays to control numerous disease and insect pests (whether organic or not, commercial orchardists apply 18-20 sprays per year – you can likely get by with six applications to get fair to decent fruit).
- Pay attention to insect life cycles – especially that of plum curculio, the bane of all fruits.
- Keep them mulched
- In good years, prepare to eat, preserve, and store your harvest!



RON & KIERAN YAPLE  
Licensed/Certified Arborists, Tri-State Region  
(413) 229.2728 • www.RaceMtTree.com

## 7 garden bugs to watch out for:

**1. Aphids:** These tiny bugs appear in large groups and suck sap from plants, causing wilting and slow growth, and they exude a sweet honeydew that contributes to sooty mold growth. To control aphids, encourage ladybugs and praying mantises in your garden, spray the pests with hot pepper sprays or use neem oil for severe infestations. **2. Colorado Potato Beetles:** These beetles quickly defoliate potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and other plants. To control these aggressive pests, use deep straw mulch around plants, encourage ladybugs and hand pick them whenever possible to reduce their population. **3. Japanese Beetles:** These insects can do serious damage when they skeletonize plants. The fat white grubs with their brown heads feed on the roots of turf grass, causing bare brown patches. Beneficial nematodes can help control these beetles, and insecticide traps are also effective. **4. Scales:** Appearing on both indoor and outdoor plants, sucking the sap of the plants where they are feeding. This causes wilting and stunts growth, and can kill the plants in severe infestations. They also exude honeydew, which can foster sooty mold growth. To control scales, protect ladybugs and praying mantises in your garden, prune away-infested plants and use neem oil sprays. **5. Snails:** Can do severe damage as they chew on foliage of garden and landscaping plants alike, leaving their slimy mucous trails behind. Hand-picking is an effective method of control, and you can also encourage birds that will happily eat snails. Minimizing watering after dark will make your garden less snail-friendly, and so will applications of diatomaceous earth around delicate plants. **6. Tomato Hornworms:** These huge caterpillars are often missed because of their excellent green camouflage and diagonal stripes that break up their outline. You can't miss their damage however, as they chew through leaves, stems and even fruit. Hand-picking is an easy way to eliminate them, and tilling the soil in late fall and early spring will kill many overwintering larvae. Ladybugs can also help keep tomato hornworms in check. **7. Grasshoppers:** Their jaws will defoliate leaves and stems of a wide variety of crops and landscaping plants, but using row covers on young garden plants can discourage grasshoppers. Other effective control techniques include encouraging birds in the yard to eat the grasshoppers, as well as rototilling in the fall or spring to destroy overwintering grasshopper eggs.

Phone 518-789-4471  
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# Bon appétit

Love, Millerton 



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