

Artisan Ice Cream: A Happy Business

Thomas Jefferson was a passionate gourmet — a foodie, in today’s parlance — who, in addition to his well-documented fondness for French wine, also acquired a taste for ice cream while abroad. Upon returning from France to his home at Monticello, he sated his craving for ice cream by making his own. The ice used in making the ice cream was harvested from the Rivanna River in winter and taken to the Monticello icehouse, which held 62 wagonloads. Jefferson noted that the ice supply lasted until October 15 — ensuring an ample supply of this creamy treat for himself and his guests through the fall. One guest, who was served ice cream nestled in warm pastry, remarked upon the “curious contrast, as if the ice had just been taken from the oven.”

by LINDA CHASE photography by CARIN KRASNER





This page: Mashti Malone lavender ice cream. Hering-Berlin bowl from MicucciCollection.com. Opposite page: Mashti Malone ginger rosewater ice cream with chocolate sauce and candied ginger. Alessi "Bettina" plate from Divafurniture.com. Table Art and mother of pearl spoons from TableArtonline.com.

Jefferson's original vanilla ice cream recipe, which has been kept on ice at the Smithsonian Institute, was recently re-created by The Bent Spoon, a Princeton, New Jersey-based company. Consisting of two bottles of good cream, six egg yolks and sugar, the recipe, and the methods used in making it, hark back to a simpler time, when ingredients were few but pure, and time and care were taken in the making. The pursuit of happiness would surely require at least one scoop of this Jeffersonian marvel.

Like other old-fashioned American institutions (the Constitution, baseball), this time-honored approach has its willing disciples today — in this case, the makers of artisan ice cream. While devoted to the classics (vanilla, chocolate, strawberry), they have experimented with exotic new flavors, such as ginger, lavender, even saffron.

Among the 400-plus flavors available seasonally is The Bent Spoon's Peach ice cream made from late-summer peach harvest from local orchards. This New Jersey company makes its ice cream from fresh, local ingredients, using a process that favors quality and flavor over volume. The crème anglaise custard base is made from eggs from Runnin Free Farm and Dairy from hormone- and antibiotic-free New Jersey cows. The batches are fresh daily, with a low amount of overrun (air) whipped in.

What could taste better on a hot New York summer day than an Espresso Sundae, topped with cocoa nibs, dark fudge sauce and whipped cream? This dreamy, creamy concoction, dubbed the

summer's must-have dessert by the *New York Times*, made the rounds of SoHo last summer, courtesy of Van Leeuwen Ice Cream's butter-yellow truck. The truck, and the ice cream it purveys, is the brainchild of the Van Leeuwen brothers, Ben and Pete, of Brooklyn. Their natural renditions of classic flavors — and the more exotic flavors of Hazelnut, Ginger and Red Currant — start with an all-natural base of hormone-free milk and cream from Lewis County. The other ingredients are sourced from around the world — the vanilla beans come from orchards in Papua New Guinea, the red currants from the Hudson Valley, pistachios from the slopes of Mount Etna, while the chocolate is made from Michel Cluizel chocolate from France and the organic peppermint comes from Oregon. Said Ben, "It's been an education in global food systems."

Dani Slatter is also thinking globally. Gazing out at her husband's dairy herd in Gloucestershire, England, she came up with the idea of using the milk to make ice cream with ingredients from companies accredited by Fairtrade, an organization committed to promoting fair labor practices, working conditions and pricing. Slatter's Cotswold Ice Cream Company sources its ingredients from Africa; the sugar is from Malawi, the Nadali® vanilla from Uganda, and the cocoa and chocolate blended from African suppliers. The cream — pure Cotswold.

From cow to carton in one day, Cotswold ice cream comes in a small but satisfying assortment of flavors — Vanilla Bean,

The recipe harks back to a simpler time, when ingredients were few but pure, and time and care were taken in the making.





This page (left to right): Laloo's Vanilla Snowflake; Laloo's Rumplemint; Van Leeuwen's Chocolate. Driade "Mediterraneo" bowl from TableArtonline.com. Pampaloni silver spoon from MicucciCollection.com. Opposite page (left); Mashti Malone's Orange Blossom with Pistachio; Van Leeuwen's Pistachio and Hazelnut; Lilith Rockett handmade porcelain

pedestals and bowls with hand-carved wood spoons from Okthestore.com; (right) Mashti Malone's Mango; Van Leeuwen's Red Currant. Kvetna crystal stemware, Anthologie Quartett martini glass and antique spoons from TableArtonline.com. Tres Tintas Barcelona "Galaxia" wallpaper from WalnutWallpaper.com. Food styling by Robyn Valarik; Prop styling by Kim Wong.



"I founded Laloo's on goat milk because it is as close to a perfect food as possible in nature." — Laura Howard

Double Chocolate, Strawberries & Cream and the delectable Mango & Passion Fruit Madness.

Italy is the source for all of the ingredients in The Original Rossi ice cream. Also made in the UK, this ice cream comes in numerous flavors, from vanilla and chocolate to Pistachio, Black Cherry and Tutti Frutti.

Even the fat-averse and lactose-intolerant can indulge in ice cream, thanks to companies such as Laloo's Goat Milk Ice Cream Company. Founded in 2004, Laloo's was born out a desire of founder Laura Howard to embrace the Slow Food Movement and to satisfy her pint-a-week ice cream habit. Having embarked on a yoga-inspired diet that allowed only goat's milk, she began mixing, tasting and sourcing ingredients. "I founded Laloo's on goat's milk because it is as close to a perfect food as possible in nature," she says. The milk for Laloo's comes from goats that graze on 350 acres of rolling hillsides in Sonoma County, California. The goats enjoy the good life on farms that are certified Free Farm Humane. The first flavor to emerge was Black Mission Fig, made from tree-ripened, organic Valley Orchard black mission figs. Since then, Laloo has developed more than 24 flavors, from the must-have Deep Chocolate, made from 77 percent pure Scharffenberger cacao, to their Chocolate Cabernet, which adds a luscious note of the grape

with a swirl of Sonoma Cabernet. Deemed the "holy grail of low-fat ice creams" by the *Wall Street Journal*, Laloo's was chosen by the Food Network as a top three ice cream innovator in 2006 and 2007.

Sunset Boulevard is a long way from the hills of Sonoma. This Hollywood Street of Dreams is also home to Mashti Malone's, an artisan ice cream store run by Mashti and Mehdi, two brothers from northern Iran. The Shirvani family had been in the ice cream business in Iran, where the ice cream was churned by hand in barrels. After emigrating to the United States, Mashti purchased an ice cream parlor on Sunset called Mugsy Malone's, appended his name and began to cultivate a local following. Like other artisan ice creams, Mashti's is made without preservatives, refined sugar, eggs, trans fats, or artificial flavors or colors. What sets these ice creams apart is that they are infused with rosewater, a popular dessert flavoring in the Middle East — "it's just like vanilla here," said Mehdi, who joined the business in the late '80s. This distillation of roses is also used in aromatherapy as a rejuvenating agent. Among the new flavors is Orange Blossom with Pistachios, joining Mango, Turkish Coffee, Creamy Rosewater and other unique flavors. Mashti also dabbles in exotic spices — Peruvian saffron (aka "red gold"), cardamom — and even florals such as lavender.

As Mashti says, "Ice cream is [a] happy business." 🍦