

# FOOD *& Spirits*<sup>®</sup>

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Issue 27

The Omaha Metro's Best Guide for Food, Dining, Spirits and Wine.

MAGAZINE | OMAHA EDITION



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# FOOD & Spirits

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## On the Cover

This delicious salmon with strawberry mango salsa was made from Charles Schlussel's recipe. See recipe on page 24. Photo by Jacob Herrman.

No. 27

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## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Welcome to the newest issue of Food & Spirits Magazine, our 27<sup>th</sup>. With this issue we are just one issue away from our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To commemorate the event, you'll find some of our old issues scattered among the current issues out on the street. We thought it would be a nice surprise to our readers to see where we've been and a nice way to say thank you to past advertisers. As we try

to evolve, we've made some slight tweaks to the aesthetics of the magazine in this issue and we hope you'll like them.

You'll find two more of our food and spirits maps in this issue. With patio season in full bloom we thought it time to update our map of some of our favorite patios in the Omaha Metro. **Brickway, Avoli, Brushi, Charlie's on the Lake, Enzo's, Goldbergs, Mantra, Petrow's, Little Espana, Salt and Soaring Wings** all make an appearance so make sure to check out the map and the accompanying article. As well, anytime is a good time for pizza, so you'll also find a map of our top choices for pizza in the area.

Speaking of pizza, Food & Spirits Magazine just hosted the **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Omaha Pizza Review**. With over 250 pizzas on hand, 400 attendees and music by **Brad Hoshaw and Kait Berreckman**, a good time was certainly had. If you weren't able to attend, our article recaps the event and tells you the results. Make sure to check out our next event on September 15th when part 2 of the **2nd Annual Food Truck Rodeo** takes place in **Benson** from 4 pm to 11 pm.

Owner-manager **Robbie Malm's Hook & Lime Tacos + Tequila** is making quite an impression in Omaha. With an ever-changing menu anchored by tacos and tortas, family-style meals and shareable small plates, it's added an outstanding option for local diners. Make sure to take a look at our feature article by **Leo Adam Biga**.

This issue's recipe article by **Charles Schlussel** gives you a perfect summer recipe for salmon paired with strawberry mango salsa. As an added bonus you'll also find a recipe for a cocktail that pairs perfectly with this delicious dish. **Michael Pickell** gives you an explanation of some Asian dishes that are perfect for the summer months and **Oliver Pollak** reminisces with his matchbook collection for Omaha restaurants who are no longer with us. The food section of the magazine is rounded out, as it should be, with **Kent Cisar's** article on where to find some of the best desserts around town. Of course, at the end of the issue you'll find **Michael Campbell's** 'Dumpster' and his take on 'space food'.

**Edward Berna** is back with an excellent article on how changing our food buying habits can also positively change our community and, in an entirely opposite and unrelated note, **Eddie Morin** gives you the all important soda review by taking a look at Kickapoo.

In the spirits section, **Jill Cockson** breaks down the dynamic and differences between being an employee and being an apprentice in the service industry, while our bartender profile

features industry stalwart **Phoe Mess**. FSM writer **Mark Gudgel** helped curate a wine flight at **Nosh** and clues you in on all the details. Take a look at the article and then make sure to head down to Nosh to try them out. In **John Finocchiaro's** latest article he schools us on what your expectations should be for a given wine and then Mark returns with his wine recommendation and what to nonalcoholic wine to drink when you're expecting.

Finally, it would be a huge omission to not mention our advertisers. Without them, none of this would be possible and I can't adequately express how grateful I am to them. Make sure you patronize their businesses because they basically subsidize this magazine for the entire city.

That's it for now. As always, we love to hear from our readers so let us know what you like, and what you don't. We're always listening.

***Erik Totten – Publisher**  
Food & Spirits Magazine*

## EXPERTS PANEL



Edward G Berna

Leo Adam Biga

Michael Campbell

Kent Cisar

Jessica Clem



Jill Cockson

John Finocchiaro

Mark Gudgel

Eddie Morin

Charles Schlusel

**Edward G. Berna** Edward Berna is founder of Paradigm Gardens. He is fascinated with local food systems, intensive plant production models and plant nutrient density. His connections to year round local food production fuels most of his foodie desires. Edward enjoys experience travel and learning from others and their heritage experiences

**Leo Adam Biga** Leo Adam Biga is an Omaha-based author-journalist-blogger. His books include *Alexander Payne: His Journey in Film*, *Crossing Bridges: A Priest's Uplifting Life Among the Downtrodden and Memories of the Jewish Midwest: Mom and Pop Grocery Stores*. The University of Nebraska at Omaha graduate contributes articles to newspapers and magazines. His work has been recognized by his peers at the local, regional and national levels. Sample his eclectic writing at [leoadambiga.com](http://leoadambiga.com) or [www.facebook.com/LeoAdamBiga](http://www.facebook.com/LeoAdamBiga).

**Michael Campbell** Michael Campbell is a songwriter and humor essayist. His "Dumpster" essays close every issue of *Food & Spirits*. *Are You Going To Eat That*, a collection of sixty humor essays, was released in 2009, and *My Turn Now*, his most recent album of 13 original songs, was released in 2015. Learn more at [michaelcampbellsongwriter.com](http://michaelcampbellsongwriter.com).

**Kent Cisar** Kent Cisar searches the local and national scene for unique ingredients and flavors to bring to the table here in Omaha. He'll catch his own fish from Florida, ship farmer's market shrimp from Louisiana, stash jams from the Pacific Northwest, or find the best cut of meat from a Nebraska farmer. Kent believes that regardless of where the it comes from, good food is meant to be shared.

**Jessica Clem** Jessica Clem is a freelance writer based in Omaha, Nebraska. A marathon runner and food writer, her favorite way to get motivated to finish a project is the promise of a craft beer. She has a B.A. in English, and an M.S. in Urban Studies, and enjoys traveling, finding typos on billboards, and the smell of a real book. When she is not eating or running, she works as a producer and account executive for Omaha Video Solutions.

**Jill Cockson** Jill Cockson is a veteran bartender of 20 years, and co-developer of The Other Room, Nebraska's only James Beard-nominated cocktail program. She is also the owner of Rabbit and Turtle Beverage Corp., producers of Colonel Jesse's Small Batch Tonic, and has most recently established Atomic Hummingbird, Inc., a hospitality group dedicated to developing focused hospitality concepts in Kansas City, MO. Their first venue, Swordfish Tom's, is scheduled to open in the crossroads of Kansas City in April, 2017.

**John Finocchiaro** John Finocchiaro is a former owner of Finocchiaro Wine Company, Inc., a Nebraska wholesale wine, spirits, and beer distributorship dating back to 1935. He also formerly co-owned Johnson Brothers Finocchiaro, LLC. John is a former Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Specialist of Wine.

**Mark Gudgel** Dr. Mark Gudgel is a wine writer and educator who holds credentials through the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) and is working towards becoming a Master of Wine. His interest in wine was sparked on his honeymoon to Napa and Sonoma. Gudgel and his wife, Sonja, have co-authored several articles as well as a book on the wineries of Nebraska, to be released in the spring of 2017. Gudgel is a regular contributor to Food & Spirits Magazine and American Winery Guide, as well as the blog he maintains with his wife, [www.itheewine.com](http://www.itheewine.com). Mark and Sonja live in Omaha with their children and their dog.

**Eddie Morin** I'm Eddie Morin. I'm from Omaha. I run B & G Tasty Foods, and I like eating food, playing video games, and dinking around with my wife and kids. I used to not be so fat. That's all I really think there is to me.

**Charles Schlusel** Professional head shaver, Reckless adventurer, Erstwhile Semi-Pro skydiver (amateur lander), Fanatical tomato lover, All round awesome cook extraordinaire!

# TACOS AND TEQUILA, take center stage **AT HOOK & LIME**

by Leo Adam Biga, photos by Ryan Tantillo



The high concept behind **Hook & Lime Tacos + Tequila** is a small plate nirvana paired with crafted margaritas for a fine dining-meets-street food experience.

The changing menu is anchored by tacos and tortas, family-style meals and shareable small plates. Seafood, pork, beef and chicken proteins predominate but some veggie dishes are available, too. The tortillas are made fresh on the premises every day. The extensive bar program is highlighted by homemade syrups and infusions and fresh-squeezed juices to complement the many varieties of tequila (140) and mescals (25).

"It's so fulfilling to watch how excited our guests get when I drop food off at the table or when I notice them savoring their first bite like they've never had food before."

Owner-manager **Robbie Malm** is vying for a North Downtown niche after making a success of **Dudley's Pizza in Aksarben Village**. He's confident Hook & Lime is reeling in the discerning diners it needs.

"We're starting to find our audience," he said. "It's so fulfilling to watch how excited our guests get when I drop food off at the table or when I notice them savoring their first bite like they've never had food before. Everyone here works hard to over-deliver, and seeing our guests react like that on a daily basis makes the long hours worth it."

He looked at other locations before fixing on **NoDo**, where a development boom is underway.

"North Downtown is the perfect spot for us. I'm very glad we settled here. It's exciting to be open at the beginning of this new wave of development and watch the landscape emerge right outside our door. Right across the street we've got people that will be working here, staying here, living here.

"And obviously there's a giant baseball stadium (**TD Ameritrade Park**) right behind me and the Century Link within walking distance, which doesn't hurt."

**Slowdown** and **Film Streams** are on the same block and the **Omaha Design Center** and **Hot Shops Art Center** within easy walking distance.

"Slowdown and Film Streams are great neighbors. We get a lot of traffic from people coming in to eat or sip on a margarita before a show. We're starting to get a lot of neighborhood regulars as well which is fantastic," Malm said.

Whoever ventures there is sure to note Hook & Lime is not your mainstream Mexican restaurant.

"We try to stay away from Tex Mex," said Executive chef **Brandon Kalfut**, Kalfut previously worked as Executive Chef of **Blue Sushi** in Denver and with **Dario Schicke** at **Avoli Osteria** and **Clayton Chapman** at **The Grey Plume**.

"Above all else our goal is to make good, tasty food. Our menu is inspired by authentic Mexican cuisine that we pour our own creativity into," Kalfut said, "There are familiar things and adventurous things on the menu, and that's kind of what we try to strike a balance between."

Familiars include a battered cod fried fish taco. On the more adventurous side is the Yellowtail Escabeche.

"You don't have to go all-in on something that's totally unfamiliar," Malm said. "That's the reason we do a la carte tacos during dinner and the whole point of small plates. You can do both. Get something in your comfort zone and something intriguing in the same meal. I promise they'll both be delicious."

"Get something in your comfort zone and something intriguing in the same meal. I promise they'll both be delicious"

Two signature dishes – the Chorizo Torta and the Bone-in Barbacoa – represent the pains taken to do things right. The house-made sausage is made with select cuts from the whole hog used head-to-tail in the kitchen and the shank is prepared over several days.

"A lot of technique and time is dedicated into making our chorizo," Kalfut said. "It's a double grind. For every one pound of meat, it takes about 17 ingredients. We grind anywhere from 80 to a hundred pounds, so multiply those 17 ingredients by 80 or a hundred. It's one day literally just creating all the seasoning for it. A thousand peppers go into a hundred-pound batch. We soak and char off the peppers. Somebody physically stands in front of the grill to lightly char each pepper individually.

"The second day you grind the meat and marinate it. On the third day you do a secondary grind. We do all this before it's even capable of going on the menu."

The dish then is ready to be composed.

"Our Chorizo Torta is a classic," Kalfut said. "We complement the chorizo with a local wild arugula, marinated white onions, house-made crema and a fried egg. A lot goes into something that eats really well, yet it's simple and a hundred percent approachable."

So is the Bone-in Barbacoa.

"It's a five-pound bone-in beef shank served as a family-style build-your-own taco meal. We actually have people call-up to make reservations just to reserve one because we can only do so many per week. It's a cut of the cattle (femur) rarely used whole. We do a 24-hour salt cure and a three-day sous-vide (precision cook in a water bath). Then it rests one day before we even let it go on the menu.

"We do table-side service where the beef shank is hand-shredded, and to showcase the marrow, the bone is tilted and poured over the shredded beef. We finish it with Campella sea salt."

"It's an experience," Malm said.

"It's served with our achote rice and Anasazi beans in addition to salsas, cilantro, cotija cheese, grilled limes, and many other toppings so everyone at the table can build their perfect taco," Kalfut said. "Part of the bone-in presentation is an explanation of these specialty components that don't exist anywhere else on our menu because it's all just infused into this one dish."

"We actually have people call-up to make reservations just to reserve one because we can only do so many per week"





For Malm, the care that goes into this single menu item is “a good example of our approach to everything, nothing is an after-thought here. Rice and beans is the easiest thing to make an afterthought, but we have that same level of attention to detail for it”

It all matters.

“And that extends to the bar program,” he said. “We make our own syrups. With our margaritas, instead of using Grand Marnier, we make our own orange brandy. That’s a collaboration between the chef and the bar manager. It’s always fresh-squeezed juice. We’re not using any kind of corn syrup, sour mix garbage. I would say these are the best margaritas in town.”

Bar manager Brian van Egmond, who learned his trade working at various Omaha spots and in Monterrey, California, said, “This is my first full cocktail menu and I am very excited being able to take our margaritas and give people a craft experience. Everything here is handmade. We’re not carrying any liqueurs, we’re actually building them in-house. It’s something that really heightens the experience and we’re doing it at a great price point.”

Using van Egmond’s alchemy with flavors and Kalfut’s food science savvy, he said, “we’re able to take an infusion that would normally take days and crash it down into a five-hour process, which is hugely significant in keeping costs down.”

Details make magic of what could be mundane.

“The house margarita is usually the after-thought cocktail on a Mexican restaurant’s bar menu,” Malm said. “But not here. We start with Exotico Blanco which won double gold at the San Francisco World Spirits competition last year. We infuse a portion of the blanco with lime, lemon, and orange zest to pull the citrus essence into the mix. We add our own orange brandy and our house-made Turbinado syrup. And the lime juice is always fresh squeezed - When we make a large batch we leave the juice out of it. Fresh squeezed juice is added to each margarita individually. It’s a damn tasty margarita – and that’s the house margarita. We call it the H&L.”

“That’s what sets us apart.”

Kalfut and van Egmond work closely on food-drink pairings.



“Finding the nice subtle differences between two or three Blancos to complement two or three fish dishes,” van Egmond said, “means one is going to have a grassier note and another one’s going to be a little sweeter and pull through to complement a more savory dish. You’re trying to get two completely different items to work together in a sort of harmony.”

“Having someone with Kalfut’s experience,” van Egmond said, “is an advantage.”

“Brandon’s been a great source to learn from during this whole process.”

Collaboration “makes the pairings a lot more fun,” Kalfut said. “From the chef’s side of it, I tell Brian, ‘These are tasting notes for the dish,’ and then Brian reads them, spends time thinking about it and starts pulling stuff off the shelf and matching key points from the food’s flavor profile with key points from tequila or mescal profiles.”

“Brian’s very open to us saying, ‘No, that won’t work with that dish.’ Then he grabs another bottle down. With his knowledge and palette, he has the ability to find what will complement the dish.”

It helps, Kalfut said, that “we take the criticisms of the food and the tastings very well from each other” and from guests, too.





"We do take guest feedback very strongly, so if there's something that needs to be tweaked, we evolve to what diners are looking for. Getting it out of our heads and onto a plate is the first step and then after that it's just feedback, feedback, feedback, until you get it to that perfect little bite."

Hook & Lime is also a reflection of its chef's and owner's personal cuisine adventures. A trip to Tequila Valley in Jalisco, Mexico made Malm a tequila convert and fired his passion for tortillas.

"One of my favorite dining experiences there was this giant market with food vendors making the tortillas right in front of you. Seeing and smelling those fresh cooked tortillas was one of the main inspirations."

As for Kalfut, "I go down to Austin, Texas a lot and try to hit up as many of the authentic restaurants as I can. My (culinary) background is very much French-Asian, so I would say a lot of the stuff I do is influenced by the places I've eaten, the places I've gone to."

He and Malm both advocate sustainable practices.

"We're as close to zero waste as we can be on all of our proteins," Kalfut said, "Everything we bring in is head-to-tail and we find a way to use every component. Same with our produce. Every single day we only have about one Slim Jim trash can worth of food waste."

The team takes it one step farther by recycling its oil, cardboard and glass.

Local sourcing is also important to Hook & Lime. Its local purveyors are listed right on the menu.

Malm enjoys it all, but "what really jazzes me," he said, is "the creation part" of turning concept into reality.

"Figuring out how it's going to look, getting samples of plates and figuring out how they're going to go together, piecing the menu together little by little – I really like that part of it. At Dudley's, once that was done, there wasn't a lot of opportunity for reinvention and that was one of the main reasons I wanted to do something smaller. I wanted to find a little more of a niche where the menu could be reinvented on a regular basis."

"The idea was always an elevated tacos and small plates restaurant. It's evolved a lot, like every idea does. You tweak some things and little by little you find out what it wants to be."

"We're on our 12th menu adaptation," Kalfut said. "I think we're finding our stride. We're continuously pushing."

He's happy to have an owner equally motivated by quality.

"Robbie's never once said, 'No, don't buy that, it's too expensive, no don't bring that in, it's too foreign.' It's always, 'Yeah, bring it in, we'll try it, we'll see if it makes sense, we'll see if it works, and if it doesn't, we'll try something else.' That, from a chef's perspective, is a dream come true."

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# 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL OMAHA PIZZA REVIEW RESULTS

**F**ood & Spirits Magazine hosted the 9th Annual Omaha Pizza Review at The Waiting Room Lounge and Reverb Lounge on June 6th at 6:30 pm. Musicians Brad Hoshaw and Kait Berreckman performed.

Those attending voted for their top three pizzas and judging was conducted by Food & Spirits Magazine's panel of judges.

## PEOPLE'S VOTE

- 1 - Villagio Pizzeria
- 2 - My Pie Pizza
- 3 - Johnny Riccos Brooklyn Pizza
- 4 - La Casa
- 5 - Sam & Louie's
- 6 - Salt



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**Sam & Louie's**  
EVENT CATERING

## JUDGE'S VOTE

- 1 - Frank's Pizzeria
- 2 - Orsi's
- 3 - Johnny Riccos Brooklyn Pizza
- 4 - Prairie Fire Pizza/Sam & Louie's
- 5 - Villagio/My Pie Pizza
- 6 - Tasty Pizza

## PUBLISHER'S PICK

Salt 88

## MISC. CATEGORY WINNERS

Best 'Nebraska' Pizza - My Pie Pizza's Husker Pizza

Best Newcomers - My Pie Pizza and Tasty Pizza

Most Inventive - Sam & Louie's Nacho Pizza

Most Traditional - Orsi's

## OMAHA'S 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PIZZA REVIEW - MENU

Hosted by Food & Spirits Magazine

### Frank's

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### La Casa

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### My Pie Pizza

Pepperoni - Top shelf pepperoni made just the way you like it.  
Husker Pie - Alfredo, Mozzarella, red onions, sweet corn, bacon.

### Orsi's

Combo - Hamburger, pepperoni, sausage, green pepper, mushroom, onion, black olives.  
Vegetarian Combo - Green pepper, mushroom, onion, black olives, tomato.

### Prairie Fire Pizza

Double Pepperoni - Just like it sounds. Loads and loads of pepperoni make this a pizza you don't want to miss!

### Salt

Sweet-n-Spicy - Spicy sausage, roasted bell peppers, mozzarella, sweet & spicy sauce

### Sam & Louie's

Nacho Pizza - Cheese sauce, beef, diced Roma tomato, jalapeno, black olive, cream cheese, cheddar, mozzarella

### Tasty Pizza

Bacon Gouda - Bacon, mozzarella, gouda, & caramelized onion.



### Villagio

Sweet Chili Chicken Pizza - Chili base, grilled chicken, cream cheese, red onion, red pepper, pineapple, our house blend cheese and topped off with chopped fresh scallions.

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performs!



# 8 OF OUR FAVORITE PIZZA PLACES

Who doesn't love pizza? It's a great way to enjoy a fast and fun family meal, or to start a night out on the town with friends. Omaha is bursting with pizza restaurants, and each one is unique and striving to put a different spin on this traditional, ever-popular dish.

## 1 FRANK'S PIZZERIA - 711 N 132ND ST. 402-493-0404



When it comes to New York pizza in Omaha, Frank's Pizzeria is at the top of the list. We're one of '35 Reasons You Should Visit Nebraska Now' according to City Style and Living Magazine. Others may claim to have true New York Style Pizza but at Frank's we make it just like the pizzerias in New York City because that's where we

started out at. Frank's Pizzeria has been open since September of 2003. Frank's is the only pizzeria in town to offer a true original pizza, a margarita, made with mozzarella fior di latte, fresh basil and olive oil. Need to feed a Big crew or a Big team, well we have what you need, the BIG JOE! 30" of the best New York pizza in Omaha guaranteed to feed whatever you throw at it. We sell our customers the best of the best. There's pizza, subs, appetizers and pasta! We have daily lunch specials and eat in specials and mouthwatering desserts like cannolis and zeppoles. Hours are Monday - Thursday: 11:00 am - 9:00 pm and Friday & Saturday 11:00 am - 10:00 pm.

## 2 LA CASA - 4432 LEAVENWORTH ST. 402-556-6464



La Casa Pizzeria is Omaha's original Neapolitan-style pizza. Founded by Joe and Nellie Patane in June of 1953, La Casa was originally located in a house, giving the business its name. Successful from the very beginning, the pizzeria literally ran out of food its opening night. In 1957 the restaurant was expanded to its current size, and in 1965 a self-service location at 82nd and Grover

was opened. Today the third generation of the family operates the business with the fourth generation waiting in the wings. La Casa remains famous for their original pizza, as well as pasta items and pizzas with a modern twist.

## 3 MANGIA ITALIANA - 6516 IRVINGTON RD. 402-614-0600



Mangia Italiana's slogan, "Taste the Cooking Traditions of Omaha's Little Italy," is what they strive for in their pizza, their authentic sugo & meatballs and their many Sicilian and Italian dishes. Everything is prepared from scratch from recipes

handed down through the generations, and their pride in, and commitment to, authentic Italian food shows in the quality of their dishes. Mangia is the perfect place to experience old-world Italian food in style.

## 4 ORSI'S ITALIAN BAKERY & PIZZERIA - 621 PACIFIC ST. 402-345-3438



Since 1919, Orsi's have been honing their pizza-making skills while staying true to the traditions of authentic Italian food. At Orsi's Italian Bakery & Pizzeria, they continue a time-honored tradition of baking incredibly delicious

hand-crafted pizzas and goudarooni. Each morning they begin by preparing their dough and fresh ingredients for the day. When you visit Orsi's restaurant, you know you are enjoying the some of the freshest Italian food in Omaha, from pizza to cannoli and everything in between. Why settle for chain restaurant delivery when you can pick up a fresh pie of true Italian excellence at their shop?

**5 PIZZA PIE GUYS - 5138 NORTH 156TH ST.  
402-715-5050**



Creating the best and most unique pizzas matters to The Pizza Pie Guys. They're the go-to pizza place when you're looking for something different and unexpectedly delicious. The Pizza Pie Guys are driven to continually update their pizzas and ingredients to make certain that your visit to them is more than just a meal – they want it to be an experience. To be sure that their customers taste every ingredient, they continuously sample new products and choose only the best, all-natural and freshest ingredients. With intensely flavorful homemade crust, sauce and toppings, The Pizza Pie Guys offer distinctive, fresh, mouthwatering pizza to satisfy the cravings you never knew you had.

**6 SALT - 3623 NORTH 129TH ST.  
402-991-9088**



At Salt, each of their pizzas is something special. They enjoy blending different sauces and ingredients in new ways and they've created some classic and distinctive combinations. Baking their pizza dough in a brick oven produces a tender center and a crisp, cracker-like crust. There are seemingly endless ways to make and bake pizza, and Salt has crafted some truly exceptional versions.

**7 SAM & LOUIE'S PIZZA - 2949 NORTH 204TH ST. IN ELKHORN  
402-575-5500**



Sam & Louie's is a casual Italian restaurant and New York style pizzeria that is dedicated to providing a dining experience based on tradition, good service, family and fun. Every Sam & Louie's pizza is made with a thin crust that is hand-tossed and stretched to create the familiar size, shape and taste that New York pizzas are famous for, with over 35 fresh and delicious toppings to choose from for pizza perfection, including gluten free. It all started with the Nolan family in 1994 as a small family run pizzeria in Omaha and continues till this day. Enjoy Sam & Louie's pizza by dining in or picking up. Earn rewards with Pinpoint too. Sam & Louie's pizza is perfect for all catering events and needs including Wedding Catering. Let us show you how to enjoy the limitless pizza possibilities from casual family fun to special events and magical moments.

**8 VILLAGIO PIZZERIA - 6922 NORTH 102ND CIRCLE  
402-502-4400**



Villagio Pizzeria is a perfect combination of really good food, a warm relaxing atmosphere and a staff that treats their customers

like family. Their menu is full of variety. Regulars know that they will never be disappointed in any of the menu choices. The restaurant has a great atmosphere; you can relax, have a glass of wine or beer, enjoy a great meal and have a conversation with your companions. The private party room is perfect for entertaining and celebrating any occasion. With a delicious menu and an outside patio that is as welcoming and charming as the inside area, Villagio is one of Omaha's best kept dining secrets.

All of these pizza places have something distinctive and delicious to offer. The Omaha metro area is lucky to have such a wide variety of pizzerias and Italian restaurants to charm the palate. Some are old favorites and some are enthusiastic new ventures, but whether you're looking for traditional Italian fare or just a place to grab a pepperoni pie and enjoy a cold beer, there's definitely a pizza for everyone. Food & Spirits Magazine's Pizza Map can guide you to the perfect slice!

## 2017 PIZZA MAP

**1** **FRANK'S PIZZERIA**  
711 N 132nd St.  
402-493-0404

**8** **VILLAGIO PIZZERIA**  
6922 North 102nd Circle  
402-502-4400

**7** **SAM & LOUIE'S PIZZA**  
2949 North 204th St. in Elkhorn  
402-575-5500

**6** **SALT**  
3623 North 129th St.  
402-991-9088

**2** **LA CASA**  
4432 Leavenworth St.  
402-556-6464

**3** **MANGIA ITALIANA**  
6516 Irvington Rd.  
402-614-0600

**4** **ORSI'S ITALIAN  
BAKERY & PIZZERIA**  
621 Pacific St.  
402-345-3438

**5** **PIZZA PIE GUYS**  
5138 North 156th St.  
402-715-5050



# Diversity in Japanese Summer Foods

by Michael Pickell

Japanese soups and noodles are the most versatile food ever, one dish served during the winter with a few simple changes can be enjoyed in a different way in the summer. In the colder months, the most popular dishes will be heavier on the broth. But during the summer months the same kind of food can be poached and presented in a lighter way. As with other Asian cultures, Japanese food is often communal, where food is prepared before everyone in the group and everyone just digs in, although these meals can be prepared individually.

Nabe or Nabemono means things in a cooking pot. In Japan and Korea this dish is cooked in what is called a donabe, or cooking pot, and is served communally. It is the most versatile Japanese dish ever and is easy to make at home. Nabe is basically a broth with vegetables and meat added to it. The base for this soup is what is called Dashi, which can be made with water, kombu or dried kelp and bonito flakes which is made of dried bonito fish. Once you are finished making the stock, just

add soy sauce and sake into the donabe. On a side note, Dashi can also be the base of Miso soup. And just by adding tofu, miso and chopped chives you can reproduce this excellent side soup.

Shabu Shabu, a type of Nabe is sliced prime beef and vegetables. To set yourself up for this meal slice up some prime beef tenderloin or marbled ribeye that has been cooled but not completely frozen. Chilled meat is easier to slice up and the beef needs to be cut deli style, extra thin. Then choose what vegetables you want and slice them up as well. Traditional vegetables for this tasty dish are Chinese cabbage, enoki mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, carrots and negi or Japanese scallions.

“As with other Asian cultures, Japanese food is often communal, where food is prepared before everyone in the group and everyone just digs in”



Once you have everything chopped and the broth is ready, all guests have their own soup bowl where they can dish from the donabe. Vegetables and mushrooms are then added to the bowls. Then, depending on how hot the remaining soup is, one dips the beef slices in either their own broth or into the communal donabe until the meat changes color.

As Americans like condiments with their food, Nabe has its own. Often served with Nabemono is Ponzu, a dipping sauce that can double as a marinade. This tart sauce is made of Mirin, which is a type of rice wine, rice vinegar, tuna flakes, seaweed and fruit juice like lemon. It is used to dip the meat in. Ponzu is a must have when it comes to Japanese cuisine and can be bought at the local Asian food market, I like to go to the **Asian Market** on 76th street near Cass.

On the flip side, Rei Shabu is the summer equivalent of Shabu Shabu. While Nabemono is more like a soup, Rei Shabu is like a salad. The similarity between the two is the sliced up vegetables. The vegetables often used for this dish are cucumber, carrot, daikon and tomato. For this rendition you will need thin sliced pork. Instead of dipping into a broth, the pork is dipped into boiling water until it is pink and then dipped into a plate of cold water. The process is similar to poaching an egg. Once everything has been prepped, then it all gets mixed into the dish. Miso soup make a good side for this summer version of Nabe.

For traditional Japanese food including Shabu Shabu, **Sakurabana** provides a wide variety of Japanese food. The restaurant may have a modernized appearance with Western style seating, but they serve the same delicious Japanese food you would be able to enjoy in Japan. Their menu has six different Nabe and a section for noodles, which includes the Soba and Udon.

Ramen made in restaurants is beginning to gain popularity. American people are now learning that Ramen is more than the instant noodles that they can buy for \$0.10 a package. After I would go hiking over the mountains of Japan, I would always stop at a Ramen shop and order a large bowl of ramen to regain my strength.

To prepare ramen at home, you can purchase the noodles at your local Asian grocery store or, if necessary, the bulk ramen at your grocery store. Throw out the packets that come with them and make your soup. You can prepare your own chicken, pork or miso broth. Add your noodles, most often it will only take three minutes to prepare them. Since it doesn't take a lot of time for the

noodles, it's a good idea to prepare everything else before and add to the soup. Slice up some green onions and throw in some nori, or dried seaweed. One element to ramen is braised pork depending on the broth you choose. If you choose a miso base, then shrimp is a good compliment. The final touches for Ramen is the soft boiled egg sliced in half.

Somen is the summer version of ramen. It is made with thin Japanese noodles which consists of wheat flour. Since vegetable oil is used to make these noodles extra thin, if preparing at home, it is a good idea to rinse the noodles, another process just like poaching. This dish was designed for summer and is served cold. And similar to ramen, you add sliced cucumbers, ham and egg crepes to complete the meal. Along with the noodles this dish is enjoyed with a dipping sauce called Tsuyu, which is a concentrated Dashi. They can also be dipped in Ponzu.

Another version of ramen made in summer time is Hiyashi Chuka, which means chilled in Chinese. This dish is made with poached ramen and includes many of the same ingredients mentioned for ramen and somen. All the cooked meat and vegetables are sliced and tossed onto the plate with the noodles.

For traditional ramen, **Ika Ramen and Izakaya** serves ramen just like a Japanese ramen shop. Izakaya in Japan are informal gastropubs similar to the Irish pubs. Located in **Benson**, they play trendy music and have a happening atmosphere. Along with ramen they also serve Donburi or Don for short, which is rice in an oversized bowl with meat and vegetables that have been simmered together.

Soba or buckwheat noodles is another variation on Japanese noodles, they have a nutty flavor to them. Like all the other noodles, they can be enjoyed either hot or cold. They can be served in a dashi broth with vegetables or they can be served more like spaghetti made with Asian style seasoning. After boiling the noodles, rinse and add them to the frying pan. Instead of spaghetti sauce, the soba gets seasoned with sesame oil

and then add the chopped vegetables. Popular vegetables for this dish are scallions, bamboo shoots, daikon radishes and ginger. One final touch for hot soba is the egg over easy. Adding the egg will add a bit of creaminess to this dish.

The cold version of soba is just like the other noodles or soups, the noodles can either be poached or chilled in the refrigerator after they are made. Then the noodles are tossed with the sliced vegetables of your choosing into a sesame salad dressing. They can also be dipped into Ponzu sauce and other dipping sauces for variety.

Japanese food offers many easy ways to make dishes and with some simple modifications can alter the way you enjoy the cuisine. Since they are easy to make and easy to alter, you will impress your friends and family at your next gathering.



# OMAHA RESTAURANT MATCHBOOK MEMORIES

by Oliver Pollak

Restaurant memories are intangible and tangible; taste, smell, ambiance, service, stand-out dishes, dining companions, a romantic evening, indigestion, disrupted sleep, heartburn, hangover, and weight gain, evidenced by increasing belt size. And, there is memorabilia. Toothpicks, menu, napkin, swizzle stick, doggy bag, mints and candies, the bill, and the ubiquitous matchbook.

A matchbook assemblage, by Alexander Girard, a matchbook and restaurant designer, at the Orange County Museum of Art "Pop Art Design" exhibition caught the corner of my eye. Later we ate at Vaca, one of 15 California's eateries on OpenTable's "Top 100 Hot Spot Restaurants in America." The cashier station at this Costa Mesa Spanish eatery had little matchboxes. California restaurants are smoke free. Retro shock evaporated, they held petite wood toothpicks.

During 42 years in Omaha I probably ate out once a week. Although I don't smoke, a trickle of matchbooks accumulated in a shoe box beginning with a 1956 California Redwoods vacation. The matchbooks kindle memories.

The golden age of the matchbook marketing flickered after the Surgeon General's 1964 report on the hazards smoking. Half a century later "no smoking sections" in restaurants and other public places are simply smoking prohibited. Matchbooks became relics. They conjured manliness, liberated women, and romance, not unhealthy addiction. John Wayne advertised Camels not Marlborough, lost a lung to cancer in 1964, and died in 1979.

My 38 matchbooks and matchboxes included **Bercima** (too short lived), **Bomba Dia**, **Boston Sea Party**, **Caffé Rose**, **Carnavale**, **Chi Chi's**, **Di Coppia**, **The Diner**, **E. J.'s Café**, **Elmo Fudd's** (many eateries at 19<sup>th</sup> and Harney across from my law office in the old library), **Friday's**, **Gallagher's**, **The Golden Apple**, **House of Cathay**, **Imperial Palace**, **J.B. Briggs &**

**Company**, **Jones Street Brewery**, **Le Café**, **Le Café de Paris**, **M's Pub**, **Noah's**, **Pefferoni's**, **Polos**, **Varieties**, and **Vivace**. Only eight remain in business; **Cascio's**, **Dubliner**, **Farmer Brown's**, **Flatiron**, **Greek Islands**, **Jaipur**, **Mahogany**, **Perkins**, and **Spaghetti Works**.

On eBay you can find matchbooks from **Angelo's Bar & Lounge**, **Anchor Inn**, **Anthony's**, **Arthur's**, **Blackstone's**, **Orleans Room and Plush Horse**, **Caniglia's**, **Cantoni's**, **Catfish Charlie's**, **Dixon's**, **Godfather's**, **Grisanti's**, **Harry's Restaurant** and **Key Klub**, **Henry VIII**, **Hrupek's**, **Jack and Jill's**, **Johnny's Café**, **M's**, **Marchio's**, **Maria's**, **Montana Mining Company**, **Nasr's**, **Nelsons Landing**, **Northrup Jones**, **Paradise Lounge**, **Ross'**, **Salvatore's**, **Silver Lining Eppley Airfield**, **Town House**, **Trentino's**, **Trini's**, **White Horse in Regis**. Most matchbooks cost \$3 to \$5.

The five best intersections of memories and graphics were Gallagher's at Shaker Place on my Pacific St. flight path; The Golden Apple, a silk covered matchbox, on Dodge with Brittany Crepes and Swiss Fondue where we entertained my parents in the mid-1970s, now a medical building; Café Carnavale on Pacific which also housed B. Piggs and Fernando's; Dundee's Bomba Dia at 50th and Underwood, with a sensual painting on the front, the site of our 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with 30 guests, site of several restaurants; and two different matchboxes for Le Café de Paris on S. 6<sup>th</sup> St,

a place to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and out of town guests, now **Chef Hattam Catering**.

Almost all the restaurants were locally owned. Matchbooks identify the manufacturer or distributor in very small letters. Local suppliers included Nogg Brothers, Art Wears, Ranelis' Sales Co., Roberts Adv, Diamond Match, Regal Advertising Specialties, Curt Ralston Co., J. Michael Murphy, All Amer Adv. Spec Co., Midwest Food Dist, and All America Match & Spec Co.

Matchbooks ignite memories of forgotten delights.



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# AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DELICIOUS

by Charles Schlusell, photos by Jacob Herrman

I was recently staying with a good friend of mine at an Airbnb in Texas and, since we had a full kitchen available, we decided to take turns cooking the evening meal. Aston had prepared an incredibly delectable meal the first evening and now it was my turn. I found some good looking fresh salmon at the local market and soon my mind meandered back to my nights assisting Chef Marlin in the kitchen of **V Mertz**.

Salmon with a strawberry mango salsa was always in the menu rotation for a good reason. The rich and earthy flavors of the salmon meld perfectly with the bright, fruity acidity of the salsa. I've recreated this dish numerous times over the years for friends and it always creates a pleasing chorus of 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from both the initial eye pleasing beauty of the jewel-like colors of the salsa, to its crescendo of palate pleasing flavors.

Everyone needs to have at least ten great meals they can whip up at a moments notice and this, my friends, is a recipe that I believe you should seriously consider for inclusion in your repertoire. This one is as easy as it is delicious and you really can have it on the table before your guests can even finish their first cocktail.

Speaking of cocktails, I was really excited to have **Doug Strain**, a good friend of mine, create a special cocktail to pair with our recipe for this issue. Doug has a liquoratory where he toils tirelessly creating his magical mixologist elixirs deep in the **Maven Labs** under the **Berry & Rye** craft cocktail bar in the **Old Market**. I had

asked him if he had a cocktail that would pair well with the recipe and I got to sample his newest creation at the photoshoot for the article.

This cocktail is the perfect foil for a hot summer day that probably goes down a little too easily. The real revelation came when sampling the drink along with the salmon and salsa. Separately they were wonderful, but together the sweet and sour slightly spicy flavors of the cocktail ricocheting back and forth with the counterpoint flavors of the salmon and salsa were quite mind blowing to say the least.

When picking out the ingredients for your meal always get the freshest and best ingredients you can. Take advantage of the great farmer's markets we have here locally and as for the salmon, I've always trusted **Absolutely Fresh Seafood** to provide me with top caliber seafood. When picking up the salmon for my test recipes, Brian the manager at the Pacific Street location suggested I try the Faroe Island salmon, I hadn't had this variety of salmon before but I must say that the rich buttery, succulent and earthy umami flavors of this salmon totally wowed me.

So, sometime in the next few sun soaked weeks of summer invite a few friends over for a deliciously easy patio party and create some wonderfully fun food memories.

Below is my updated version of the dish I cooked with Chef Marlin in the V Mertz kitchen many years ago.

## Salmon with Strawberry Mango Salsa Recipe -

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 ( 6 oz ) center cut skinless salmon fillets
- 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh cracked black pepper

### SALSA INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups rice vermicelli noodles, cooked per package directions then mix the cooled noodles with:
- 2 Tbsp. rice wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp. white sesame seeds
- 1/2 tsp. black sesame seeds
- Salt to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Mix all salsa ingredients in a medium sized bowl right before cooking the salmon.

Sprinkle the salmon liberally, top and bottom, with the salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a 12" non stick pan over medium heat until almost smoking, place the salmon top side down in the pan for 4-5 minutes, flip salmon and cook for another 4-5 minutes for medium/medium rare or until desired doneness. Spoon salsa over the salmon and serve immediately. Enjoy!

## "The Knights Who Say Ni"

A craft cocktail created by Doug Strain

Muddle 4 or 5 blackberries into the bottom of a 12oz Collins glass.

To this add 1.5 oz gin and 1 oz ginger celery shrub.

Add chilled soda water until the glass is approximately 3/4 full, then carefully add ice cubes to top. Garnish with expressed lemon peel.

## Ginger Celery Shrub

In a large wide mouth mason jar, add 1 cup celery and 1/2 cup peeled, sliced and seared fresh ginger to 1.5 cups xylitol crystals. Stir to incorporate and allow to soften and extract juices for a couple hours in the fridge. Lightly muddle. Add 1.5 cups red wine vinegar and whisk to incorporate. Seal and place in refrigerator for at least one week to rest. Shake up or mix the shrub once or twice a day until all the xylitol dissolves. Strain or leave ingredients to further infuse to taste. Keep refrigerated. Should keep for at least a few months but toss if it begins to smell fermented or develop an undesirable texture.



*It's a fine day for a Corn Dog!*



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# SWEET DESTINY:

## A sampling of the stellar dessert menus in Omaha to satisfy your sweet tooth

by Kent Cisar

It's a warm summer's evening and you've been out enjoying a dinner with friends, a date night, or perhaps you've either attended or hosted a barbecue and you're looking for that evening chaser, to satisfy a sweet tooth to cap an excellent day. Omaha has several restaurants throughout the city where a quick stop for a dessert or sharing one at the end of a multiple course meal leaves a smile on diner's faces.

**Plank Seafood Provisions** at 12<sup>th</sup> and Howard is known for their stellar seafood selection and preparations, but the desserts are the secret star of their menu.

Their selections complement their seafood focused first and second courses. "We want the desserts to make you feel like you're eating near the Gulf of Mexico, so our desserts reflect that" says Tony Gentile, corporate executive chef of Flagship Restaurants. "From the bananas foster to bread pudding, the key lime panna cotta and our cobbler, our desserts are rooted in coastal culture, and we hope that once guests have them, they'll ask for them the next time."

I've eaten at Plank for a happy hour, before a concert, and even on New Year's Eve. Tony is right. Their desserts are definitely worth saving room for and provide the perfect cap to a coastal dining experience in Downtown Omaha.

**B & G Tasty Foods** at 79<sup>th</sup> and Dodge is a step back in time to an old school diner and dessert stop. Their main menu is full of American classics that hit the mark on taste and temperature. The desserts are such an important part of their menu that their number two on their list of three specials includes a shake or float. "The number two is very popular, probably just about equal with

the number one," says Eddie Morin, owner of B & G. "By far our most popular flavor is the good old chocolate." In addition to shakes, B & G offers malts, freezes (root beer or orange), ice cream cones, root beer floats, even a banana Nutella frenchee.

I asked Eddie how they are able to maintain such high quality of their desserts on a consistent basis. "I'd have to give credit to our fantastic staff that is passionate about working at B & G. They do a great job and are a lot of fun to work with," he said. I agree with Eddie. When you walk into B & G, you get more than a

good burger and a shake. You feel like you've had a fun, friendly, and flavorful experience. While B & G may look and taste like a generation gone by, their marketing is cutting edge interactive by offering a unique flavor of shake to their social media followers. The combination of the atmosphere and attitude of the employees along with quality and cost of the desserts, B & G Tasty foods is as good a summer family dessert spot as you'll find anywhere.



It's hard to not think of macaroni and cheese when contemplating **Mark's Bistro in Dundee**. Mark's menu is solid from start to finish though, and I recommend taking home a little mac and enjoy a tantalizing dessert menu. Summertime and S'mores are a tried and true combination. Mark's offers a S'mores brownie that activates your mind to your best campfire memory. It's a warm, fresh brownie combined with a hot toasted marshmallow and a graham cracker crust with a touch of smoked sea salt. "The S'mores brownie has been on our dessert menu for about 3 years now and has seen some transitional changes and

modifications as we regularly change menus with the seasons. I like to call it a continuous work in progress! While our menus change to suit the time of year and season, the brownie has remained a constant on our menu. My business partners have agreed not to remove it from the menu due to its popularity!” says Chef James Davis of Mark’s Bistro. Chef Davis had been working on the S’mores concept for years before it made an appearance at Mark’s in 2013. “It has gone thru some different changes over the years and has been presented in various ways but the core flavor profiles have never changed” added Davis.

If you have a larger group, or would somehow be able to turn down a S’mores brownie, Mark’s has other fine choices as well. While it’s easy to find a charcuterie or cheese board in the city, Mark’s gives diners a dessert board. “Some of our more interesting and exciting new desserts this season include a dessert board with strawberry cream cheese mousse filled profiteroles and house made macaroons. We also have a delicious mousse duo with chocolate mousse and caramel mousse garnished with shards of broken ash salt toffee.” Davis says. Chef Davis and his team at Mark’s provide excellence, evolution, and innovation in not just dessert making, but the dessert dining experience.

**Dudley’s Tavern** is an anchor in **Aksarben Village**. I can be found there sharing a post bike ride pizza or downing a burger while watching a game. Cookie enthusiasts should check out their homemade chocolate chip cookies. They are a perfect mix of gooey, sweet, chocolaty goodness. You can take them home if you have that level of discipline, but they are best enjoyed right out of the Dudley’s oven. If the cookie just isn’t enough for you, Dudley’s offers a cookie sundae with French vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, and whipped cream.

**Goldberg’s** at 50th and Dodge has thousands of cars drive by during the hectic pace of a work day. The lucky or smart ones stop in and relax. Goldberg’s is a comfortable place to grab one of their burgers or share an appetizer. Their dessert menu is straightforward, affordable, and excellent, headlined by their bread pudding. It’s been a staple of the restaurant since I visited with my grandparents long ago and is popular enough that they offer up advance orders by the pan in 14 different flavors.

The pan serves six full dessert portions and must be ordered two days in advance. If you’re looking for a hit at a family gathering or friend’s potluck and don’t want to cook, a pan of Goldberg’s bread pudding is sure to make its mark. If bread pudding doesn’t start your dessert engine, they’ve got a home baked brownie ala mode, apple crisp, deep fried cheesecake, malts and a root beer float to offer.



Tiramisu has a few different schools of dining thought. There are those who love it, those who don’t like it, and those who don’t think they will like it. J. Coco at 52nd and Leavenworth only has one category. Their tiramisu will thrill those who love it, convert those who don’t, and set an unfair bar for those who try it for the first time there, as it will be difficult to match the J. Coco standard. The coffee flavor is both forward yet pleasantly lasting. The custard is smooth and enticing. The lady fingers bring balance and substance to your spoon as you cascade through the cocoa, custard, and coffee. Garnished with mixed berries, the J. Coco tiramisu is good enough to make it difficult to not rush your previous courses to reach your dessert destination.

**Eating at Lot 2** in Benson is never a bad decision. Dining there without saving room for dessert should not be allowed. The Lot 2 chocolate donut holes are a transcendent taste bud experience. Upon arrival, these dessert delights consist of chocolate cake, caramel, a dusting of sugar, and a cream cheese icing dipping



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9 Years In A Row

sauce. I suggest two orders per couple, and do so one at a time to prolong this majestic morsel's table life.

It's not often one thinks of a bar to order dessert, but **Barrett's Barleycorn** on 44th and Leavenworth is no ordinary bar. Their kitchen may be small but the output is excellent. Whether you're there for dinner, an after work unwind, volleyball or a late night snack, Barrett's was ahead of the funnel cake fry trend. They are hot, sweet, crunchy, and loaded with powdered sugar for a carnival style treat.

**Dolce** is a restaurant that is easy to cruise by at 12317 West Maple Road. Their menu however is destination worthy. It's capped by several stellar dessert choices. They take a couple classic dessert dishes, cheesecake and carrot cake, and take them to places not thought of. The carrot cake re-imagined combines carrots and granny smith apples with toasted pecans and tops it with a goat cheese cream cheese frosting. The cheesecake also uses granny smith apples but also includes a seductive combination of toasted honey marshmallows, white chocolate, and almonds. If breakfast for dessert is of interest to you then their "Coffee and Doughnuts" was made for you. Homemade buttermilk doughnuts, espresso whip cream, fresh berries and white chocolate seal the deal here. Dolce strikes a positive chord I've been fond of for years, which is using herbs in desserts. Their dark chocolate mousse has both rosemary and mint in it which takes an already enjoyable dark chocolate and makes each bite last a little bit longer.

A visit to **Railcar Modern American Kitchen** on 144th and Blondo Streets is worth the drive. The atmosphere is excellent and their servers know food and know their menu. Some of their desserts will change throughout the year, so I recommend asking what they have before ordering a main course. That way you can work your way through the appetizers and main courses with an eye on a take home box to allow room for a dessert. My favorite

within the last year was an apple galette with homemade ice cream. Galettes are not an easy creation when they are full sized, but to make one to serve a couple of people is remarkable.

Stop into any **Blue Sushi and Sake Grill** location in Omaha and the first thoughts that come to mind are sushi and a fine drink menu. If your table is up to the task of taking on a monster dessert, then step up to their tempura fried ice cream. It's a very large scoop of vanilla ice cream wrapped in a pound cake and fried. The dish is big on flavor as well. A chocolate sauce and blueberry ginger compote accompanies the ice cream and it's topped with powdered sugar. "We prefer desserts that can be shared, a social dessert that is visually appealing and tastes great," says Tony Gentile. This dish is well worth the extra exercise the day before or day after.

If your table shies away from the mountain of ice cream, Blue does have other innovative choices that include chocolate spring rolls with toasted cashews, cinnamon, raspberry puree and their vanilla bean ice cream. You can also give their chocolate torte a try with a chocolate ganache, hazelnut cookie crust and homemade ginger ice cream. Blue does an excellent job with their desserts of giving guests contrasts of hot and cold, sweet and savory, and balancing chocolate with the bursts of blueberry, raspberry, and ginger.

Summer in Omaha gives us a lot of warm weather and a lot of daylight. That gives us an opportunity to be active and earn a few extra calories to consume at night. We can spend these calories wisely and tastefully throughout the city in Omaha's dessert scene. If you're a fan of savory or sweet, fruity or herbaceous, you'll be able to find a dessert for you, your significant other, or your family that will satisfy your curiosity and appetite without breaking your budget.



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# OUR FAVORITE PATIOS IN OMAHA

With spring and summer making its appearance, patio season is now in full effect. The ability to enjoy some delicious food, beers and cocktails on a deck is, once again, ours for the taking. With that in mind, **Food & Spirits Magazine** has compiled a list of some of our favorite patios to be found in the **Omaha Metro**. Make sure to check out the accompanying map to find the best patio near you!

## 1 BRICKWAY BREWERY & DISTILLERY - 1116 JACKSON ST. 402-933-2613



Brickway, located in the Old Market, has one of the best patios in the area with the south facing deck insuring sun all throughout the day. Daily happy hour drink specials are available throughout the week and feature \$4 Session

Series beers. Weekend day-drinking specials include \$5 Bloody Mary's & Beermosas from open to close. Brickway offers a massive selection of local brews and spirits with over 15 Brickway beers as well as at least 6 of their own spirits, including their American Single Malt Whisky. Brickway is open 2 pm to midnight Monday - Thursday, 11 am to 2 am Friday - Saturday, and 11 am to midnight on Sunday. Free tours Thursday to Sunday. Check [www.drinkbrickway.com](http://www.drinkbrickway.com) for tour times.

## 2 AVOLI OSTERIA - 5013 UNDERWOOD AVE 402-933-7400



Avoli Osteria, located in the heart of Dundee, is one of the best places for al fresco dining. The beautiful patio is lined with flowers and complimented by an herb garden that is used by the kitchen all summer. Spending time on the patio at Avoli is reminiscent of meals enjoyed on a terrazza in Italy. Avoli creates the

Italian experience with their fare of homemade pasta and the best steak in town. The menu consists of many local and imported Italian ingredients. The carefully selected wine list contains wines you find in Northern Italy and they pair wonderfully with the fresh, vibrant food. Whether your plan is antipasti with cocktails, a quick pasta dinner, or you want to enjoy several courses with wine pairings, Avoli Osteria's patio is the spot in Dundee. Open Tuesday through Saturday from 5 pm until 10 pm and Sunday from 5 pm until 9 pm.

## 3 BRUSHI BISTRO & BAR - 721 N 132ND ST. 402-884-6878



While lounging in Brushi's incredible patio make sure to order some food with your drink. Brushi's daily happy hour is from 4 - 6 pm where they offer cocktail, wine and beer specials as well as appetizers that include pulled pork sliders with citrus barbeque sauce, or beef carpaccio with mustard aioli. Full lunch or dinner complete with chocolate mousse cake or fresh rhubarb strawberry tart is also available. "I want people to come in, sit at the bar or on our patio, and try it," chef and owner Paul Braunschweiler said. "I think they'll really like it." For those who were regulars at Prima 140, they'll be happy to know that their favorites are still available at Brushi. In fact, Braunschweiler keeps a Prima 140 menu on hand so customers can refer to it.

## 4 CHARLIE'S ON THE LAKE - 4150 S 144TH ST. 402-894-9411



Charlie's on the Lake, open since 1995 under the same management and ownership, provides an extensive list of appetizers and dozens of martini selections. It's also been voted best of Omaha in seafood, martinis, patio, and

steaks over the past years. Using only the best products available for their guests and having a kid-friendly menu is just one of the reasons. The patio atmosphere overlooking their private lake with waterfalls and fountains is something that guests can enjoy from May to October. Along with a great patio, they also have two beautiful private rooms that they use to host wedding receptions, private parties and holiday parties. And don't forget happy hour - Charlie's on the Lake offers happy hour every weekday from 3 to 6 pm with ½ price appetizers and \$1 off all adult beverages.

**5 DELLA COASTA - ADDRESS: 220 S 31ST AVE.  
402-614-5100**



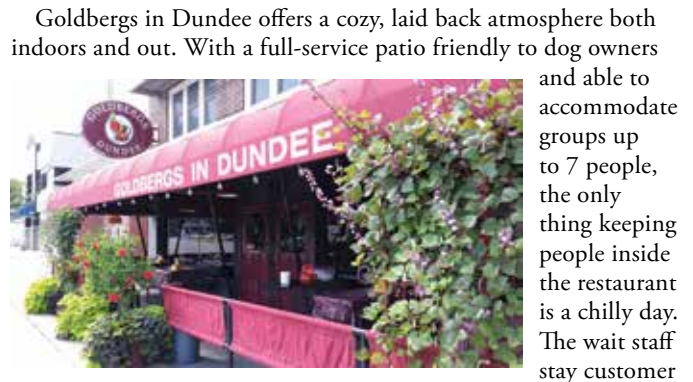
The patio at Della Coasta may just be one of the best patios in town. With an expansive view of not only Turner Park but also downtown Omaha, the patio at Della Coasta does not want for a vista. Choose between their three couch sectionals boasting built in fire pits and comfortable patio tables made of granite. They can accommodate groups ranging from 2 up to large groups of 50 or more! Enjoy their unique Mediterranean cuisine in an unbelievable setting overlooking Midtown Crossing.

**6 ENZO'S ITALIAN - 8510 N 30TH ST.  
402-933-9755**



Enzo Zurlo, owner of Enzo's Italian in the Florence part of Omaha is a first born American and New York native. He brings a traditional Italian cuisine with a new age flair to the Midwest. His menu consists of fresh and local ingredients that is all made in house and to order. Pastas, breads, brick oven pizzas and dressings are just a few to mention. This summer their 500 square foot patio will be open with a cozy fire pit and an exclusive al fresco food and drink menu and featuring a wide selection of Italian wines. Be sure to make a reservation on the weekends because, with a featured special on Fridays and Saturdays, they pack a full house. Enzo's is great for a fast casual lunch with mouth-watering paninis and salads. If you don't have time to sit in their quaint dining space, call ahead and place a to-go order (everything on the menu is available to go). Hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 11 am - 2:30 pm and 4:30 - 9 pm, Friday & Saturday 11 am - 2:30 and 4:30 - 10 pm.

**7 GOLDBERGS IN DUNDEE - 5008 DODGE ST.  
402-556-2006**



Goldbergs in Dundee offers a cozy, laid back atmosphere both indoors and out. With a full-service patio friendly to dog owners and able to accommodate groups up to 7 people, the only thing keeping people inside the restaurant is a chilly day. The wait staff stay customer focused throughout your meal, meaning prompt and friendly service; allowing you to enjoy the experience of going out to eat. From famous Bloody Marys, a full bar, and food choices aplenty, there is something for everyone at Goldbergs. To emphasize the food choices offered, since December 2016 Goldbergs carries a Range-Free burger that is gluten-free, vegan, and contains no GMOs. Many independent restaurants come and go but with the continued support of the neighborhood and watchful eyes of the staff, Goldbergs in Dundee will continue to welcome its customers with great food and a warm and friendly atmosphere for many years to come.

**8 HERBE SAINTE - ADDRESS: 1934 S 67TH ST.  
402-913-2396**



The patio at Herbe Sainte is small and intimate like the inside space. Offering 2 couch selections with fire pits and multiple tables, they can accommodate any size group. With an amazing view of the HDR development and the heart of Aksarben Village, the patio at Herbe Sainte is prime real estate for people watching, cocktail sipping and relaxing. Enjoy Cajun/ Creole fair in style on the patio of Herbe Sainte.

**9 LITTLE ESPANA TAPAS BAR & RESTAURANT - 11036 ELM ST.  
402-557-6738**



Inside the wood fence covered by red vibrant umbrellas of this Spanish oasis, it's as romantic as a night in Barcelona. Little España's patio opens it's 33-seat patio for both lunch and dinner, so you can start early drinking Omaha's Best Sangria, eating traditional tapas and listening to Paco De Lucia (best Flamenco guitarist in history) in the background. The patio has both low and high-tops and is full of summery flowers making the area cozy, inviting and fun. Stop by and enjoy a perfect summer night.

**10** MANTRA BAR & GRILL - 6913 MAPLE ST.  
402-933-1666



Summer has arrived and Mantra Bar and Grille's patio is ready for you and your dog to enjoy. Whether it's a brisk evening cozing up next to the gas fire pit with our famous cabbage and blue cheese soup or a warm Saturday/Sunday brunch cooling off with one of our many flavors of bottomless mimosas, Mantra has you covered. The Mantra patio also makes for a great spot to stop by after a movie, concert or play. The edgy yet elegant environment is attractive to all clientele. Happy hour is Monday - Friday from 4:30 to 6 pm and features \$4 margaritas and house wines, \$6 signature craft cocktails, as well as \$6 shareable plates. Looking for a fun brunch get together? Mantra's highly popular brunch offers a spread of delicious brunch food items with their own Mantra twist. They are open Mondays at 4:30, Tuesdays thru Friday at 11 am until 2 pm, then open back up at 4:30 for happy hour. Saturdays they open at 10 am until late night drinks and then do it all over again Sunday at 9 am. Sunday and Monday nights are half price bottles of wine. See you on the patio!

**11** PETROW'S RESTAURANT - 5914 CENTER ST.  
402-551-0552



Petrow's recently added one of the best outdoor spaces in Midtown Omaha. With seating for 65 and a bar capacity of over 200, their patio lends itself to accommodating any event or casual dining experience with a contemporary feel. Stay comfortable eight months out of the year with an automatic louvered and watertight awning keeping the area cool and shaded in hot weather and dry if rainy. Heaters warm the space on cool days and nights. Big screen TVs along with water and fire features complement their patio and bar menu. The fast casual menu features salads, wraps, homemade falafels and appetizers. Enjoy a beer or a drink with drink specials and a full bar. Petrow's on the Patio is open for breakfast (self-service), lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday during the outdoor dining season.

**12** SALT 88 - 3623 N 129TH ST.  
402-991-9088



The patio at Salt is tucked away on the south side of the strip. There are no streets with rush hour traffic hurrying past and the patio overlooks the golf course at Eagle Run. The feeling on the patio is an upbeat scene of people enjoying cocktails, catching up with friends and even laughing at the occasional bad golfer, making their way through the course in the distance. The patio is a popular spot at Salt and although they offer the largest patio in Omaha, their outdoor tables are available on a first come, first serve basis. Salt offers numerous styles of dining when it comes to al fresco. Enjoy seating under the cover, or next to one of their beautiful wood walls, crafted from 100-year old reclaimed wood. If you have the shades in toe and want to catch some rays they offer seating under the elegant patio lights or the stars of the night sky.

**13** SOARING WINGS VINEYARD - 17111 S 138TH ST. IN  
SPRINGFIELD  
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# FAVORITE PATIOS IN OMAHA 2017

FOOD *Spirits*

- |          |   |           |   |
|----------|---|-----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>BRICKWAY BREWERY &amp; DISTILLERY</b><br>1116 Jackson St.<br>402-933- 2613 | <b>8</b>  | <b>HERBE SAINTE</b><br>1934 S 67th St.<br>402-913-2396                            |
| <b>2</b> | <b>AVOLI OSTERIA</b><br>5013 Underwood Ave<br>402-933-7400                    | <b>9</b>  | <b>LITTLE ESPANA TAPAS BAR &amp; RESTAURANT</b><br>11036 Elm St.<br>402-557-6738  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>BRUSHI BISTRO &amp; BAR</b><br>721 N 132nd St.<br>402-884-6878             | <b>10</b> | <b>MANTRA BAR &amp; GRILL</b><br>6913 Maple St.<br>402-933-1666                   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>CHARLIE'S ON THE LAKE</b><br>4150 S 144th St.<br>402-894-9411              | <b>11</b> | <b>PETROW'S RESTAURANT</b><br>5914 Center St.<br>402-551-0552                     |
| <b>5</b> | <b>DELLA COASTA</b><br>220 S 31st Ave.<br>402-614-5100                        | <b>12</b> | <b>SALT 88</b><br>3623 N 129th St.<br>402-991-9088                                |
| <b>6</b> | <b>ENZO'S ITALIAN</b><br>8510 N 30th St.<br>402-933-9755                      | <b>13</b> | <b>SOARING WINGS VINEYARD</b><br>17111 S 138th St. in Springfield<br>402-253-2479 |
| <b>7</b> | <b>GOLDBERGS IN DUNDEE</b><br>5008 Dodge St.<br>402-556-2006                  |           |   |



# PARADIGM SHIFTS

## Changing local buying habits

by Edward G. Berna

It seems that the idea of a “traditional” spring has quickly come and gone to hot intense sunny days, followed by back-to-back storms, once again this year. This quick transition has affected the demands on local produce. As I write this, we have experienced two very successful Farmer’s Market weekends, blessed with beautiful weather and early spring limited bounty. It seems that most produce vendors have sold out quickly with what they had available. The much-needed rain had delayed some plantings for those that were not able to get into their growing areas and the quick transition to heat poses other challenges for crops. But, thankfully so far, most seem to have made it through the untimely wind and hail storms. I am extremely thankful for this.

In addition, Paradigm Gardens’ workshops and events were nicely attended. I have also noticed within the CommUnity, more and more educational classes on such things as: food growing, cooking, preservation, foraging, permaculture, fungi, composting, native plants, pollinator protection pieces and food related events keep popping up, awesome plant sales, International Herb Day, Earth Days and the list goes on and on. Wow, that is almost intoxicating, what does one do?

I am very pleased with the community support and various organizations’ commitment to provide these educational opportunities. These types of events and activities do take a number of organizational resources, people, money, space and time. This is an excellent indication of a change happening in our community. I believe that many more members of our community are stepping up and beginning to truly understand that we must begin to solve our local production challenge by beginning to educate ourselves, understand our current resources and begin to take small steps to support the local foods movement. We have created a momentum. We need to continue with this momentum to transform our lives, homes, communities and the world.

Now, we must begin to continue to challenge every aspect of our food buying decisions, and our commitment to our personal health and wellness, our loved ones, our kids, grandkids and the generations to come.

How do we do that? Well, we vote at least three times a day with our food dollars. If we could conveniently and strategically begin to incrementally support some factor of the local scene more often, this would have incredible residual effects.

- It may be as simple as supporting a local farmer’s market and buying local produce or a value added product, like a hot sauce or baked good for example.
- Buy into a seasonal Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program
- Buy through one of the local food hubs with the help of your friends on your block, church or bingo card club.
- We could also support local eateries that support local sourcing of product and people that have been educated to be qualified laborers in those fields. When one begins to ask how our local food service businesses run, you develop an extreme appreciation for more community members.
- Grow your own garden. This is by far the BEST OPTION! When one grows a garden they learn to appreciate nature, and when that happens we begin to learn more about ourselves.
- This next option is by far the easiest! Volunteer or donate your time, money or value added resources to a LOCAL group of food system development. There are many groups out there working hard each day to serve the various needs in our CommUnity!

Tap into the ability to make a difference in the world around us. We need to re-imagine what the food system should look like. Collectively, we must use the potential of food to transform our local environment.



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# Sodas in Which You May Not Be Entirely Aware of:

## Kickapoo Joy Juice

by Eddie Morin



Well, I have decided to write about Kickapoo Joy Juice, and I'm already regretting it. Sentence one, and I have all but given up hope. You see, usually there isn't much documentation on these sodas I write about, so I can just make stuff up. There is an abundance of information about Kickapoo Joy Juice, however, so I may actually have to do a little bit of work. Oh well, here we go...

Kickapoo Joy Juice was introduced as a fictional drink in the cartoon strip, "Li'l Abner" in 1934. It was alcoholic and claimed, "A liquor of such stupefying potency that the hardiest citizens of Dogpatch, after the first burning sip, rose into the air, stiff as a frozen codfish." And also, that the fumes alone were strong enough to melt the rivets off battleships. My favorite part about Kickapoo Joy Juice is that it was supposedly brewed by Hairless Joe and Lonesome Polecat, who certainly would not pass the political correctness standards of today. These dudes were backwoods poachers and of course Hairless Joe has tons of hair and Lonesome Polecat looks like the offensive Cleveland Indians' mascot.


Not surprisingly, Kickapoo Joy Juice no longer sports the two awesome poachers on the label, which is a big strike against it in my book. Sure, the name is great, but it looks like any other soda now. You see where progress gets you? Dumb, that's where.

As far as the flavor goes, it definitely will get put in the Mountain Dew category. It has a touch of lemon, a touch of lime, and just a hint of Mom's basement LAN Halo 2 Capture the Flag.

You can get this soda or many other weird flavors seven days a week at **B & G Tasty Foods**. There is no Mountain Dew on tap, so just get this one and be happy. If you really like it, you can find all sorts of goofy stuff on eBay related to it.

"My favorite part about Kickapoo Joy Juice is that it was supposedly brewed by Hairless Joe and Lonesome Polecat, who certainly would not pass the political correctness standards of today"

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# Employee vs. Apprentice THE VALUE OF 'HOW' VS. 'WHY'

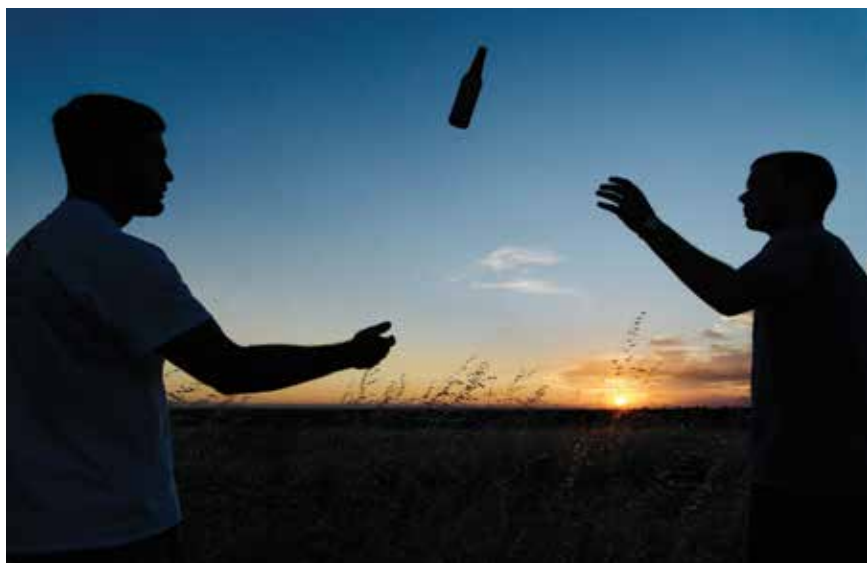
by Jill Cockson

I barely remember Jerome Didier. I remember standing in an aisle of the grocery store where my father worked. I was staring at the collection of sewing thread, in every color imaginable. My dad was talking to Jerome. That's it. That's all I remember of my father's business mentor. Not long after that brief moment of childhood sentience, Jerome suddenly passed away. His wife, Merna, approached my father with her need to keep the business running. Her children were too young to take over the operation, and my father was the only person with the requisite skillsets to keep the store afloat.

My father, James E. Cockson, worked the same job his entire life. He started out as a carry-out boy for Didier's Grocery as a teenager. He departed for Vietnam in 1967, and when he returned in 1969 Jerome began to show him the ropes of the business: inventory, accounting, customer service, ordering, meat cutting, etc. Post Jerome's passing, I watched my father build a successful grocery operation that supported not only our family, but also the family of the man who trained him. Much of his drive for that business was based on his constitution as a U.S. Marine to do the right thing. To show up and get the job done, without question. It was the right thing to step up to the challenge and to keep Jerome's namesake operation alive after his untimely death. My father's sense of obligation, however, was more than his military instincts. In accepting his new role as business manager, and breadwinner (times two), my father demonstrated the loyalty generated by the unique relationship between master and apprentice. It is a relationship that has all but disappeared in the business sector of our economy, and its disappearance is reeking havoc in every industry, especially hospitality.

The original master-apprentice relationship is based on a simple exchange of trust. The apprentice trusts that he/she will learn the required skills to successfully take over and carry on the business operation, thereby securing his/her future. The master trusts that his/her business will successfully be carried on, thereby securing his/her retirement. It was a principled, valuable investment for both master and apprentice.

Apprenticeships provide a much more holistic training program than degree/certification programs/quick OJT. Under a master, the apprentice has access to all aspects of the business. Universities and trade schools can teach valuable theories and skills, however, none of it is put to work until the student is actually on the job. In a sense, the student is the master of analysis, whereas the apprentice





is the master of application. The student knows 'how', but the apprentice understands 'why'.

In most industries, the product or service sold carries much more weight, insofar as the consumer's perception of value, than the vehicle of service. In hospitality, however, there is often equal value placed on the product and the service experience. For example, when I go to the hardware store to buy a pair of pliers, the clerk's lack of service skills might be annoying, but it does not devalue the pliers. When we go out for food and beverage, however, there is a built-in expectation for quality service, which accounts for a significant part of the mark-up. In short, if a bartender or server fails to do his/her job, it devalues the product they are there to sell. The switch from the apprentice model to the formal education model has more impact on hospitality, because the comprehensive role of service - often neglected in formal education and rushed training programs - is more significant in our industry.

Further, apprenticeships of the past resulted in employment loyalty. In an industry that relies on inter-personal relationships between guests and employees, turnover is incredibly expensive for hospitality. Again, I don't typically choose where I go for my tool needs based on service. I do, however, choose where to eat/drink based on the anticipated service (or, lack thereof).

The switch to corporate structure in hospitality has also disrupted the guaranteed opportunity for upward mobility. The master-apprentice ratio is 1:1. The apprentice will either take over that business, or move on with the adequate skill set to start his/

her own operation, per the arrangement. Unfortunately, employees are no longer invested in as valuable assets. Working for a large company does not guarantee upward mobility. Too often, workers are treated as replaceable cogs. As a result, employees do not feel a sense of obligation to stick with any particular employer. The jobs themselves become cogs, and employees move on as soon as they get bored, or as soon as the next cool place opens up. The result is a giant employment pool that simply circulates around, and lacks professional direction.

"Working for a large company does not guarantee upward mobility"

The good news is that our industry has a unique opportunity to revive the apprenticeship model. Smaller business models allow for a more intimate learning experience, wherein all aspects of the brand/business can be effectively communicated to all employees. There is entrepreneurial security in our industry, as F&B entertainment is one of a few industries that cannot be outsourced. (You can't conveniently go out to eat, or grab a beer, in China.) Essentially, if owners in the hospitality industry are willing to create employment positions based on a paid apprenticeship philosophy - to invest in what it takes to adequately communicate the 'why' behind the 'how' - and if employees are willing to see the value of job loyalty in exchange for a more holistic skill set, everyone wins.

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CHEESES

# BARTENDER PORTRAIT:

## Phoe Mess

I sat down with Phoe Mess for this issue's bartender portrait. Phoe and I have known each other for over 10 years. We've mostly gotten to know each other as customers at some of our favorite local bars, but she also been my bartender more times than I can remember (literally). She can serve up a great cocktail and pour an infinite amount of shots superbly, but her 'bar-side' manner also really stands out.

**Food & Spirits Magazine:** Where do you work and how long have you worked there?

**Phoe:** Cask Republic in Dundee. Since October 2016.

**FSM:** How long have you been bartending and what are some of the past places you bartended at?

**Phoe:** A little over ten years. In Omaha, 1912, Espana, Darios; one of my favorite places was Matthews Market in San Marco, Jacksonville, Florida. It was a gourmet market also, so as a personal shopping assistant, we'd basically get a little toasty on wine and buy pounds of purple carrots together.

**FSM:** When did you know you wanted to be behind the bar?

**Phoe:** Ever since I was a little kid. I didn't know what the people were doing back there but I knew I liked that they gave me plastic swords covered in cherries.

**FSM:** Have you had any people along the way who have helped you be the bartender you are today?

**Phoe:** Absolutely, you have to. The entire skill set is based just like any other, you are a sum of your experience. Shoutout to Nick O'Connor, Alex Jochim, & Ian Ranne.

**FSM:** Where do you find inspiration?

**Phoe:** Through my travels, definitely, and interestingly enough, at times, social media.

**FSM:** What is the best part of your job? And the worst?

**Phoe:** The immersion of yourself into not just your community, but into the culture of humanity itself. The worst? See above.

**FSM:** Do you think bartending will be any different in 20 years?

**Phoe:** Oh my God, I hope not! I feel like we're talking about robots here. Unless we get our AI game on lock I'd like to think the career has a bit more stability due to the idea that bars, pubs, and watering holes are a time-honored tradition where people go because we like talking to real people... more than a robot, maybe? There will, in my opinion, always be an evolution of the culture but the integrity will always remain.

**FSM:** What makes a good bartender?

**Phoe:** Someone who is always striving to be better than the shift before. Someone who has great empathy but also takes no \$\*#T.

**FSM:** What is your favorite drink to make?

**Phoe:** Shots. Okay, just kidding, probably a New York Sour.

**FSM:** What do you drink?

**Phoe:** I've never met a drink I didn't like. It varies depending on so many things, the weather, my mood, who my bartender is.

**FSM:** What's something you wished people knew about being a bartender?

**Phoe:** This isn't a fallback, 'things didn't work out for me', kind of job. I'd say most of us love what we do and have always wanted to do it.

**FSM:** Describe the perfect cocktail?

**Phoe:** The half drank bottle of wine found at home that morning that was left behind before going out on that summer nights adventure. Okay, a New York Sour. The wide library of whiskey plus the endless types of sour mix combinations, as well as a drink that shows the versatility of wine? That's a deal in my book.

**FSM:** What do you think some of the current trends are with bartending?

**Phoe:** Classic cocktails with modern twists. For instance, foam - substituting aqua faba for egg whites, now your cocktail is vegetarian and not potentially loaded with bacteria.

**FSM:** Where in Omaha are some of your favorite places to go out for drinks?

**Phoe:** I really like the **Down Under Lounge**, usually I can find a lot of innovative cocktails using new products on the market and the staff is super nice.



# NOSH SUMMER WINE FLIGHT

by Mark Gudgel

If you offered to pour me a glass of one of my favorite wines, or instead to pour me a glass of a promising wine I'd never before tried, I wouldn't hesitate to request the latter option. To me, the countless variables in aroma, flavor, and texture are what make wine so very interesting, and I absolutely love to try new wines. On a given week, I taste an average of 40-50 different wines, rarely drinking more than a sip, typically spitting and dumping until I find one that I truly love. But figuring out where you can sample new wines is often tricky. That being said, there are a number of places in Omaha that offer flights of wine, and among my favorites of those is **Nosh** in the **Old Market**.

Sometimes after a long day, I'll take a little detour on the way to pick my son up from daycare, and swing by Nosh for one of these flights. I enjoy the ambiance and the friendly staff, the parking isn't too bad, and they have a fine selection of wines by the glass. Of those wines, I can choose three for a flight, and receive a two-ounce pour of each one, which affords me the chance to taste wines I otherwise may have missed. For me, it's a combination of education and catharsis, a simple act by which to wind down before going home to mow the lawn or cook dinner.

My enthusiasm for the flights at Nosh being no secret, this summer I am excited to have the opportunity to curate a wine flight of my own, so that our readers in the Omaha area can come and try some of the wines that have impressed me the most in my never-ending search. With days in June already getting into the 90's, I've selected my favorite summer wines for Nosh's patrons to enjoy. In the spirit of trying new things, these wines are available in our market, but relatively uncommon. The wines will be available at Nosh as part of a flight, by the glass or by the bottle while supplies last. On Saturday July 1 from 6-8 PM, Nosh and I will be hosting a tasting event, so that you can come down and sample all of the wines for yourself.

I hope to see you there. And to whet your appetite, below are the wines we will be enjoying.

## **Smith-Madrone Riesling 2014**

Every time I taste this wine, I get excited. The Smiths, Stu, Charlie, and Sam, are some of the most genuine and amiable folk I've met, while this wine, in my opinion, is the single best expression of the varietal being done in North America. Crisp and dry, it blows the sweet grocery store Rieslings many of us are used to out of the water, and easily passes for an excellent Alsatian. It ages brilliantly, pairs diversely, and hails from one of the most serene places I've ever visited. The view these grapes have from their aerie on Spring Mountain is so spectacular, and their parents so nurturing, it's little wonder they grow up to be such terrific wines. If I could only have one Riesling for the rest of my life, I would want it to come from Smith-Madrone.

## **Optima Gewurztraminer 2016**

Mike Duffy, who hails from Healdsburg in northern Sonoma Valley, is among my favorite winemakers. This

may, in part, have to do with his passion for education, a passion that we share. But it also has much to do with his incredible gift as a vintner, and though Mike makes some really terrific Cabs amongst other things, I don't know that his prowess has ever been better showcased than in this amazing wine. The 2015 was Mike's first vintage of the Gewurz, and it really created a buzz. This year, Mike more than tripled his production, bottling 100 cases of this gorgeous wine. Complex and elegant, it has a beautifully delicate nature upon the palate, and boasts an array of gentle, spicy notes that mingle behind pears, tropical fruits, ginger, and stone fruits. This is easily one of the most interesting and exciting wines I've tried this year.

## **Salvestrin Sauvignon Blanc 2015**

Between Highway 29 and the Mayacamas Mountains in Napa sits a stately old manor that overlooks a sea of gorgeous vines. The house was built well over a hundred years ago by G.B. Crane, one of the founding fathers of the Napa wine movement, and the vineyards as well were his. Today, Rich Salvestrin and his family occupy the space and make great use of it, crafting beautiful wines that have recently emerged on the Omaha wine scene. A classic Napa take on Sauv Blanc, this wine offers citrus rind, stone fruits, tropical fruits, minerals, and more, all on a light, crisp body, making it a wonderful expression of the varietal.

## **Pellet Estate Unoaked Chardonnay 2015**

Pellet Estate and winemaker Tom Rinaldi are well known and rightfully admired for their incredible red wines, including Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Their Chardonnay, as well, is well known and widely appreciated, having gotten the favorable



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attention of Robert Parker amongst other famous critics. Though I love all of Tom's wines, this one stands out to me for its uniqueness; blind, I don't think I could have placed it as Chardonnay. Recently at a tasting I hosted, I poured it for a woman, alongside a more traditional, oaky/buttery Napa Chardonnay. Upon tasting the Pellet Estate, she remarked "Oh! I thought I hated Chardonnay. This is really good!" Whether you think you like Chardonnay or not, try this one for yourself.

#### **Calafia Verdelho 2015**

Calafia is the personal label of Randle Johnson, the winemaker for the Hess Collection. Founded back in the 1970's, Randle's Calafia wines have always been favorites of those who seek out special, quality, boutique Napa wines. This one, from a grape far more commonly associated with Portugal than the Napa Valley, is an eye-opening wine. In the right light, it boasts an almost greenish hue, and is round and supple in the mouth. A floral nose leads to a body of saline and stone fruit, apricot and tangerine. If you've never had Verdelho, Randle's is a wonderful place to start!

#### **Pride Viognier 2016**

Pride has a unique situation, atop a mountain that straddles the Napa and Sonoma county lines. This requires creativity, such as mobile crush equipment, but it also allows for Pride to blend fruit from both areas, often producing some stunning wines as a result. Best known for their Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, winemaker Sally Hunt has done something that I think is special with her Viognier. Golden late-summer straw in color with a nose that reveals traces of oak atop a floral pattern, the wine is vibrant and flavorful upon the palate, ranging from soft white fruits to tropical flavors, noteworthy minerals, hints of citrus, and more. Complex and sophisticated, this is one of the coolest wines I've tasted in a while, and pairs perfectly with summertime.

So now that you know what we will be sampling on July 1st, I hope you will join us at Nosh to share in the fun and explore some new wines. If you can't make it that evening, don't forget that you can try these wines any day this summer while supplies last. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

The poster has a white background with a red banner at the bottom. At the top right is a logo for 'HERBE SAINTE' with a decorative border. The main text in red and black reads: 'THE SPIRIT OF NEW ORLEANS LIVES IN THE HEART OF AKSARBEN VILLAGE'. Below this, the red banner contains the text: 'OYSTER BAR and CRAFT COCKTAILS', followed by a paragraph: 'Immerse yourself in the essence of New Orleans: the smells, the tastes, the sounds. Dive into one of our quintessential NOLA Craft Cocktails or indulge at our Gulf Shrimp and Oyster Bar. Don't forget to order from an array of New Orleans inspired dishes that capture the soul of The Big Easy.' At the bottom, in black text, it says: 'BRUNCH • LUNCH • LATE NIGHT', '1934 South 67th Street', '(402) 913-2396', and 'herbesainteomaha.com'.

# GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

by John Finocchiaro

I like a good movie. Hey, who doesn't? However, if I'm in the mood for a suspense filled action thriller only to find myself watching a romantic comedy I most certainly will be disappointed. Don't get me wrong, I can handle a well written cheese ball chick flick as well as anybody. But I have to be prepared. If I'm looking for "Saving Private Ryan", don't give me Meg Ryan. That's just wrong.

Fortunately, we usually know what to expect when viewing a movie. The homework is easy. There are reviews, trailers, star appearances on late night TV, newspaper and magazine interviews, online and offline ads, and news flashes galore. Minimal effort is required. Unless we're walking blindfolded into a theater, we have a fairly decent idea what we are in for.

Unfortunately, the wonderful world of wine is not the same. Far too many consumers seem bored, disappointed, maybe even shocked with unfamiliar wines. With no knowledge of what to expect, the plethora of flavors, subtleties, and complexities of newly explored varieties too often go unnoticed. Many an exclusive cabernet or pinot noir drinker will compare his first foray into malbec or zinfandel to the only wines they are familiar with: their tried and true cab or pinot. When a new wine does not taste the same, or at least similar in style to their favorite go-to, they may be left disappointed. Not every war movie is a "Saving Private Ryan". Not every cutesy romantic female lead will be a Meg Ryan. And not all wines are intended to be the same in style, body or taste. Nor should they be. Problem is, we too often expect them to be. Why is that?

During the last couple of decades in the 20th century we Americans felt the need to prove our wine machismo to the rest of the world. You see, our wine industry was modeled after the

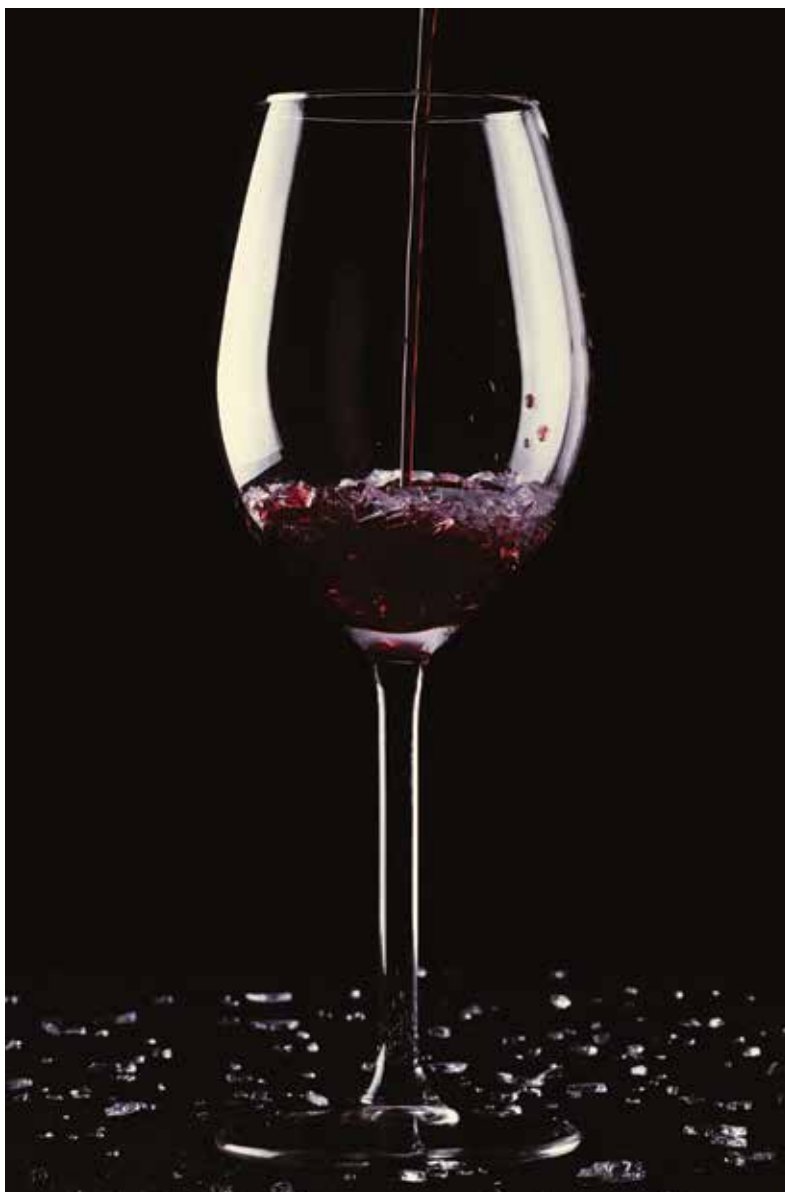
Europeans, but they had about a 500 year head start on us. We Americans, however, were not to be outdone. Our solution for our 'vin-security' was to supersize it. We began producing bigger, richer, stronger, sweeter, oakier, and fruitier wines. Style-wise, many domestic wines became homogenous. Consumers were practically tutored that "bigger" always meant "better". Finally, after a couple

of decades of muscle flexing, this trend subsided a bit. We now know that botox wines are not always better. Perhaps our initial misunderstanding of what makes for good wine can be found by looking across the pond.

Traditionally, French, Italian, and Spanish wines are made primarily to accompany and enhance the flavor of food, not as stand-alone cocktail beverages. As a result, these wines are often higher in acidity and a touch lower in alcohol content than ours. It's all about elegance, not dominance. Wine is not ketchup. They should not all taste the same. And it should never overpower the entrée. The fact that so many European wines are not as buxom as ours is not because they can't do it. It is by design. Subtlety and complexity of flavors is cherished. The different qualities and characteristics unique to the location of each vineyard can produce juice with its own unique characteristics. In general terms, wine was made to reflect its source, not molded to conform to a standard style. That is why French Burgundy will not taste the same as American pinot noir and chardonnay,

and Italian Barolo and Spanish Rioja will not taste like our cabernet.

This happens to be a very good thing. With wine, as with people, our differences are what makes us fascinating, appealing, interesting, and compelling - and never boring. If we are to alleviate our wine reservations we need to wander off of our wine reservations and explore the multitude of styles and flavors available to us.



As an avid protester of all things wine snobbish, may it be clearly stated that there is absolutely no shame in not knowing your Auslese from your elbow, or your Bardolino from your Albarino. This is a quick fix in the modern information era. A 60 second search online or in a wine publication, or a moment with a trusted wine consultant (fancy word for “waiter” or “retailer”) can steer your wine expectations in the right direction.

“Pop the cork, pop in the movie and enjoy your evening.”

In the meantime, do not expect every chardonnay to be loaded with oak. Do not expect French Burgundy to be as fruit forward as pinot noir from Oregon or California. Do not expect all wines to be created equal in quality, style or flavors. To quote a bad line from a bad movie, “Expect the unexpected” (Patrick Swayze in ‘Roadhouse’), and your enjoyment of wine will grow wine in leaps and bounds.



Now, go grab a friend and a bottle of vino - preferably something new – and pick out a movie. Pop the cork, pop in the movie and enjoy your evening.





# Wine Recommendation: **BARNARD GRIFFIN**

by Mark Gudgel

Rob Griffin graduated from the now-infamous UC Davis with the likes of Phil Wente and Tim Mondavi – names which, like his, we know from their wine labels, and having been advised by none other than the legendary Dinsmore Webb. Griffin was looking to make a name for himself in wine, and his pioneering spirit had him looking north. Webb advised Griffin against making wine in Washington's then unheard of Columbia Valley, citing erratic weather and a short growing season amongst reasons it didn't make sense. For a few short years after graduating, Griffin remained in California, working at Sonoma's Buena Vista from 1975 to 1977. That year, the year after the Judgment of Paris, sensing that opportunities were growing scarce as more and more people took note of California wine country, Griffin set out north, seeking better opportunities and greater autonomy than the Sunshine State could afford him. He valued the advice of his friends, but Griffin had always marched to the beat of his own drum, and he was looking for a place in which he could truly shine.

"I certainly moved here with some trepidation, based on Dinsmore's advice," said Griffin. But "There was an opportunity at the second largest winery in Washington, and I was anxious to be in charge of a winery, to actually make the wine rather than

watching somebody else do it. I figured I'd be here for a few years and then go back to California. It didn't quite happen that way."

What did happen was that Griffin quickly made a name for himself as a talented and industrious young vintner in a region that at the time had fewer than ten wineries. "I had a missionary zeal for growing grapes in a cooler climate that has more in common with Europe than California," Griffin told me. He soon opened a winery of his own, producing elegant wines and selling them at a fair price, and made his substantial contribution to putting Washington wineries and the wines they produce on the map and on our menus. Today, the Columbia Valley has more than 800 wineries.

Rob's own winery, Barnard Griffin, is today a world-renowned producer of excellent wines, wines that can be found in many an establishment right here in Omaha. An entirely family-owned operation, Rob's daughter Megan serves as his assistant winemaker, and together they craft wines that offer an extraordinary QPR, or Quality Price Ratio. "We have always been value-conscious. We have taken opportunities by increasing volume rather than increasing price. It may have been a bad business decision, but it felt honest, and we were comfortable doing it," Rob told me. For





my part, I've always appreciated the relatively low price at which I could pick up Rob and Megan's wines, and I especially appreciate the mark of quality that so clearly abounds from nose to finish.

As a huge fan of Rob's wines, I want you to try them for yourself. Below are my abbreviated notes on those available in our market, as well as a short list of places where you can expect to find them. Whether you're buying a bottle to take home for dinner, or out with friends and looking for a drink, I think Rob's wines will meet your needs in much the same way that they have always met mine. Here's what you can expect to find in Omaha:

#### WHITES

**Fume' Blanc:** To be clear, "fume' blanc" isn't really a thing. It's a term that Robert Mondavi made up forty plus years ago to distinguish his dry take on the varietal from his sweeter one. Call it what you want, this is a really nice wine. The editor of The Omaha Wine Review blinded this one down to the varietal and region; I was impressed. A beautiful wine, it's available at:

- Absolutely Fresh Seafood
- Beacon Hills Aksarben Village
- Cask Republic
- Dennison Dahlman
- Dundee Cork & Bottle
- HyVee Linden Market
- Jake's Cigars & Spirits
- Spirit World
- Vino Mas
- Wine Cellar 510

Chardonnay: A deviation from the "cougar juice" that saturates our market, the varietal is evident in this one, but the Columbia Valley terroir lends it a subtlety you may not be used to. Definitely worth trying, you can get it at:

- Corkscrew in Blackstone
- HyVee Linden Market
- HyVee at 180th and Q
- HyVee at Peony Park

#### REDS

**Rob's Red Blend:** Rob Griffin has an obvious knack for blending grapes. While we can't get the incredible Cotes du Rob in our market (yet), this one will tide you over until then. In Omaha, it's easy to find:

- Corkscrew in Blackstone
- Dennison Dahlman
- Dundee Cork & Bottle
- EVEN Hotel Downtown
- Holiday Inn Downtown
- HyVee Linden Market
- HyVee at 180th and Q
- HyVee at Saddle Creek and Center
- Wine Cellar 510
- Wohlner's

**Syrah:** I always enjoy the unexpected notes of cola and spice that I taste on this wine. Full in body yet less robust upon the palate than many, this is a Washington Syrah through and through, and you can get it at:

- Absolutely Fresh Seafood
- Corkscrew in Blackstone
- Dolce
- HyVee Linden Market
- Jam's
- Nosh
- Spirit World
- Wine Cellar 510
- Wohlner's

**Cabernet Sauvignon:** Typically, I shy away from budget Cabernet in favor of the pricier, often better stuff, but this one is truly outstanding despite its low cost. Soft in the mouth and teeming with classic varietal characteristics, it's a beautiful expression of the Columbia Valley that Rob helped to make famous. Available in Omaha at:

- Cedar
- Corkscrew in Rockbrook
- HyVee at 156th and Maple
- HyVee at 180th and Q
- Jake's Cigars & Spirits
- La Buvette
- Noli's Pizza
- Vino Mas
- Wine Styles
- Wohlner's

Others

***Rose' of Sangiovese:*** This wine has become famous over the years for winning countless awards and for drinking well above its price point. Elegant and flavorful, it's featured on several local menus, often by the glass. Find it here:

- Corkscrew in Blackstone
- Corkscrew in Rockbrook
- HyVee Linden Market
- Jake's Cigars & Spirits
- Spirit World
- Wine Cellar 510
- Wine Styles

***Syrab Port:*** I love this one, and wish that more people in town were selling it. The younger vintages, including the current 2016 release, are inky-dark, rich, fruit-driven wines, but in time they take on more nutty, almost tawny characteristics. Utterly beautiful fortified deliciousness, you can't go wrong with this one. Available here:

- HyVee Linden Market
- Twisted Cork Bistro


The diversity of this portfolio has a lot to do with why I love it so much, but just as important in my opinion is knowing that these wines were made by someone I find relatable, admirable, and interesting. Rob Griffin rebelled against common assumptions and social constructs to found one of the first wineries in what today is a world-famous wine region. His rebellious nature and spirit of adventure are a big part of why today you and I can purchase Columbia Valley wines in a grocery store or wine bar in Nebraska, and in many ways I feel we owe Rob a debt of gratitude for the risks he took. Thank you, Rob.

"Rob Griffin rebelled against common assumptions and social constructs to found one of the first wineries in what today is a world-famous wine region"

One last thing before I wrap up: for the connoisseur of fine wines, Rob makes some tremendous estate wines that are available only from the winery. Reach out to him at [www.barnardgriffin.com](http://www.barnardgriffin.com) and order an estate Cabernet, Zinfandel, or



Albarino. You won't be disappointed. My personal favorite is the Cotes du Rob, an elegant and easy-drinking blend of uncommon Rhone varietals. I already told you, this guy marches to the beat of his own drum. All we have to do is enjoy the tune and, if so inspired, sing along.



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# IN LIEU OF WINE

by Mark Gudgel

On Monday, April 24, 2017, my wife Sonja and I welcomed our second child, Zoëy Elizabeth Gudgel, into this amazing world. She arrived ten days late, took her sweet time coming out, and for a few terrifying minutes stubbornly refused to breathe, but by that evening we knew that she was our perfect little daughter and that our lives were forever improved by the role she would play in them. A day later, after nine months of Sonja being on the proverbial wagon, I popped the cork on a nice bottle of vintage Champagne, filled two flutes, and was reminded of how much my wife and I enjoy sharing a glass of wine together. In the weeks since then, we've shared several more.

The nine months leading up to Zoëy's arrival, however, were spent differently. I continued to imbibe, of course, writing reviews and articles for the various publications I work for and using that as my excuse not to offer solidarity to my dry partner. Though I rarely took part in drinking wine in front of my patient and beautiful wife, we no longer came together through wine., and

"An array of sparklers that range from Pomegranate Blueberry to sparkling Raspberry Spumante are widely available and reasonably priced"

quickly we began to feel that something important was missing in our relationship. Wanting to maintain the tradition, we had to find something else to imbibe. Much of the time, it was some variation of non-alcoholic wine. The following constitute what I thought were the best wine alternatives that we encountered

One of the things we drank together during Sonja's first pregnancy as well as this one was Fre'. A Sutter Home product, Fre' is readily available in many Omaha establishments, including **Corkscrew** and **HyVee**, and typically runs in the \$6-\$7 range per bottle. Fre' boasts a broad selection that includes a red blend, White Zinfandel, Chardonnay, and Moscato. Whereas many non-alcoholic beverages never underwent fermentation, Fre' is wine with the alcohol removed. This time around, we stuck with our favorites: Sonja's is the Merlot, and I like the bubbles. The last time we went into Corkscrew on a date while Sonja was still pregnant, I called ahead and Corey chilled a bottle for us.

Another sparkling option that comes sans alcohol but with plenty of fizz are the fruit-driven variations from St. Julian in Michigan. An array of sparklers that range from Pomegranate Blueberry to sparkling Raspberry Spumante are widely available and reasonably priced. The bubbles are familiar, the flavors a bit outlandish, and the sweetness enough to move you bodily toward the patio on a hot summer day. We paired them with a variety of things, including brunch, and found them a very favorable alternative to our usual Cava and Prosecco. Though I haven't seen them in Omaha, they're easy enough to order online.

On a trip to Napa and Sonoma, where I enjoyed the wine while Sonja enjoyed the tranquil beauty of the Mayacamas Mountains and the fog that rests atop the vineyards in the morning, we discovered that many producers will bottle the juices of their grapes unfermented, a friendly gesture towards pregnant women,

minors, designated drivers and other non-drinking patrons. The best we found were those of Castello di Amorosa and Palmaz Vineyards, both of which bottle grape juice that is not only pleasant to imbibe but also costs a modest \$12.00 per bottle. These are best obtained by ordering directly from the producer.

In that vein, Castoro Cellars also bottles an unfermented grape juice from their Zinfandel and Primitivo that we enjoyed a lot. Sweet and grapey as you might expect, it's nevertheless coming from quality California fruit and a producer I've become a fan of. While it doesn't taste much like the Zinfandel you and I know in this format, it is a flavorful alternative that Sonja and I enjoyed several glasses of while little Zoëy was incubating.

At **Wine Styles**, you'll find the ever-friendly Bob behind the counter, and you can also find Ariel non-alcoholic wines. The last time I was in, Bob had both the Cabernet Sauvignon and the Chardonnay, of which both Sonja and I prefer the Chardonnay, which comes off more like a crisp Chablis than an oaky, buttery wine. Online, I've also noticed that Ariel makes a white zinfandel, a red blend, and a sparkling offering, though neither Sonja nor I have ever tried any of those. I suspect that Bob may be able to order them for you if you ask.

And finally, in my searching, I discovered a company that is doing something that in my experience is unique by importing and distributing a variety of artisan, terroir-driven non-alcoholic beverages that are as expressive and distinguished as they are unfamiliar in our market. Delmosa has a beautiful assortment of nonalcoholic offerings, all of which impressed us for their quality and complexity. The Roomi Svarta Vinbaer, a red beverage that spends time on French Oak and comes off a bit like a cedary/spicy Merlot, was impressive, while the Aceto Niagara Icewine,

"Delmosa has a beautiful assortment of nonalcoholic offerings, all of which impressed us for their quality and complexity"

which spent 5 years in French Oak, was an outstanding after dinner drink. Further, the "Priseco" line from Jörg Geiger, were light in the mouth, bubbly, flavorful, and fun. The Winter Pear was our favorite, and we paired it with bacon and Belgian waffles over brunch. Visit [Delmosa.com](http://Delmosa.com) to view their entire, impressive portfolio.

While most doctors I have met will openly say that having a glass of wine once in a while during pregnancy is harmless, Sonja to her credit isn't much of a risk taker, and rarely had more than a taste of my wine. The drinks I've listed above helped us to weather what we knew from the beginning was a temporary storm. It took us two pregnancies and three years to find beverages that we thought were reasonable substitutes for wine, but those described above we enjoyed together... almost enough to think we could stand to go through this one more time. Almost. If you're a non-drinker, regardless of the reason for your decision, we hope you'll enjoy these alternatives to wine as much we did. For our part, well, we're back to drinking wine.

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402-390-6096  
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B&G Tasty Foods has been serving their delicious, original loose meat sandwiches and other tasty delights since 1953. Come in today for a satisfying meal or an ice cream treat. Unrivaled for fast, friendly, family dining! Dine in and carry-out available.

### Bliss Bakery

402-934-7450  
1031 Jones St ~ Old Market



Aromas Coffeehouse and Bliss Old Market Bakery (collectively AromasBliss) serve specialty coffee and made-from-scratch baked goods. With three Omaha locations, you can visit The Old Market, Benson, and Flagship Commons for a taste of this local business.

### Dixie Quicks

712-256-4140  
157 W. Broadway, Council Bluffs



Dixie Quicks features an ever-changing menu of Southern Cooking with Cajun, Tex-Mex and Southwest elements. We shop for ingredients every day so the food we serve is fresh. Comfort food, darn good flavors and plenty of personality help describe what you will find at Dixie Quicks.

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Omaha, NE



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### Herbe Sainte

402-913-2396  
1934 S 67th Street



A New Orleans inspired cocktail bar and restaurant located right in the heart of Aksarben Village. Herbe Sainte brings a New Orleans flair to the Omaha market. Open Monday-Thursday; 11am-2pm and 4pm-10pm, Friday-Saturday; 11am-12am and Sunday; Noon-8pm.

### Just Good Meat

402-339-7474  
4422 S 84th Street



Proudly serving Omaha and surrounding communities since 1959! Located just off the interstate near 84th & L, Just Good Meat provides the finest quality beef, chicken, pork and seafood. They also offer a full line of home made deli items, fresh sandwiches and foods ranging from Chili to BBQ meats.

### Little España

402-557-6738  
11036 Elm Street



Little España is Omaha's only authentic Spanish/Mediterranean restaurant, bar and club featuring over 60 tapas or "small plates". Featuring performances by flamenco guitarists, Latin jazz musicians & flamenco/salsa dancers. Select bar menu now available.

### Orsi's Italian Bakery

402-345-3438  
621 Pacific Street



Located in the heart of Omaha's Little Italy, Orsi's has been family run since 1919 and in the same location since 1934. Famous for our pizza and bread products, Orsi's now features an Italian deli including Italian cheeses, meats, homemade Italian sausage and imported olives.

### Paradigm Gardens

402-339-4949  
8949 J Street



Paradigm Gardens is a family owned local business, established in 1999. They are dedicated to providing superior horticultural and progressive organic gardening products. Paradigm Gardens also aims to create an educational environment that will set the standard in the 21st Century!

### Petrow's

402-551-0552  
5914 Center Street



A family owned Omaha tradition since 1957. The whole family will love this original diner's look and taste. The menu features all the classic staples, from hot beef and pork tenderloin to made-from-scratch pies and homemade ice cream. Open 7am - 9:30pm Mon-Thurs and 7am - 10pm Fri & Sat.

### Sam & Louie's

402-575-5500  
2949 N 204th Street



Sam & Louie's specializes in fresh, hand tossed pizza, pasta, burgers, chicken sandwiches, calzones, stromboli, salads and more. Gluten free? We have a wide variety of dishes for you to enjoy. Open 7 days a week for lunch & dinner. Catering is available for any occasion, weddings, meetings, graduations & birthdays.

### Shucks Fish House & Oyster Bar

402-827-4376  
1218 South 119th Street



Shucks Fish House & Oyster Bar is a locally owned restaurant that is inspired by many different areas along the coast. We've been opened for over eight years and now have three convenient locations in Omaha. We offer a very casual environment with Omaha's best seafood. Open 7 days a week.

### Soaring Wings Vineyard

402-253-2479  
1711 South 138th St, Springfield



Soaring Wings is one of the region's ultimate getaways just 10 minutes south of Omaha. Overlooking the Platte river valley, the view is often compared to Napa and Sonoma. Facilities include covered decks, outdoor seating for 3000, and indoor seating for 120. Come out and "Toast the Good Life".

### Ted & Wally's

402-341-5827  
1120 Jackson Street



Taste the difference of REAL homemade ice cream! Since 1984, we have been producing high-quality, homemade ice cream using only the highest quality ingredients, made the old-fashioned way. New flavors are continually being made in addition to several diabetic-friendly selections.

### Villagio Pizzeria

402-502-4400  
6922 North 102nd Circle



A family-owned restaurant where you'll feel right at home! Villagio's menu offers award-winning specialty pizzas, sandwiches, calzones, pasta, salads & appetizers. Tucked back in the corner of Cherry Hills Village, Villagio has been called "Omaha's best-kept secret". Dine-in and carry-out available.

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a blue sleeveless shirt, white pants with a tear at the knee, and a colorful patterned headband, is crouching on a paved surface. She is using a paintbrush to apply pink paint to a large, colorful mural on the ground. The mural features various abstract shapes and colors like pink, blue, yellow, and green. In the background, several people are standing and watching. One person is holding a smartphone, and another is holding a camera. The scene is outdoors, likely at a community event.

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\*Community Art piece by Norm4eva (photo by Sarah Miller)

# THE DUMPSTER

## Pie in the Sky: Space Food

by Michael Campbell

“Tang: breakfast of astronauts!” cried the TV ad.

Nope. Tang was never any part of their breakfast. Most astronauts couldn’t stand the stuff. Buzz Aldrin once said bluntly, “Tang sucks.”

Tang was concocted by Dr. William A. Mitchell—for General Foods, not NASA. In the fanciful world of food labeling, Tang is a “fruit-flavored drink,” which doesn’t mean flavored with fruit, but rather that it tastes fruit-ish. The only fruit-like ingredients in Tang are the first two on the label: sugar and fructose (which is sugar). Tang once introduced a version that advertised “half the sugar of 100% juice!” That sounds better than saying it has 100% less juice than juice. A single serving of original Tang contains six teaspoons of sugar.

At first, sales were not so sweet. Then John Glenn was given Tang in space to test whether a human could swallow in zero gravity. General Foods got wind of the experiment, and soon TVs were bleating that Tang was “breakfast of astronauts!” Kids like me clamored for Tang so we too could go to space, like wearing a hat might make us a cowboy.

With stars in their eyes, Pillsbury then advertised Space Food Sticks as “the first space food made available to the public!” They didn’t mention Space Food Sticks were never once eaten in space—the closest they ever got to NASA was the Space Center gift shop. Advertising the “nutritional balance needed for astronauts hard at work,” Space Food Sticks came in flavors like caramel and chocolate.

So what, then, is space food? There are a lot of challenges. You can’t use regular utensils, because if you drop a fork it won’t fall. It just floats around until someone, hopefully not your pilot, gets stabbed in the eye. The Space Food Sticks commercial showed the brown, cigarette-shaped stick being slipped easily through a custom-fit hole they added to the astronaut’s helmet visor, which in real space would have killed him.

There’s also a metric called “low residual.” It’s a nice way to say NASA wants food to go into the innies-end of astronauts without much coming out the outies-end. I imagine Space Food Sticks came out looking pretty much the same as they went in.

Humans lose their sense of taste in space. Without gravity, mucus doesn’t drain. Nasal congestion dulls one’s sense of smell, and taste goes with it. Conversely, smells linger longer in space, and travel farther. They learned this when Skylab once offered its crew Paul Masson Cream Sherry. Beyond the bad idea of drunks in space, the smell traveled throughout the ship triggering everyone’s gag reflex.

Today’s spaceships have hot water and refrigeration. Meals are tailored to each astronaut. Guest countries display local pride.

Italian astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti was the first to drink a fresh-brewed coffee, thanks to an International Space Station device designed by Lavazza called the ISSpresso. For Italians, good coffee is the difference between adventure and “I can’t live like this.”

Korea spent over a million dollars to create a space-worthy version of kimchi. It was served once, by astronaut Yi So-yeon, who retired from the space program as soon as she touched ground.

Swedish spaceman Christer Fuglesang was not allowed to bring reindeer jerky on board because Americans on the flight thought it would be “weird” so close to Christmas.

Carbonated drinks don’t work in space. Gravity separates bubbles from liquid in the stomach, but in space they stay mixed. A beer belch results in a kind of vomiting they call a “wet burp.” Nonetheless, barley grown in space was used to brew beer, just to prove we could if we had to.

Today, space food is still big business. While it was crafted for people who look to the heavens in wonder, most of it is bought by survivalists who stash it in holes in the ground.





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