

## SPECIALTY FOODS



KEELY WYAGONIK

### Quality makes Michaelene's Granola stand out

**W**e've all had this happen to us. Someone brings a dish to work or a party. It's really good, you ask for the recipe, and try to make it at home. You're disappointed though, because it doesn't taste as good when you make it.

This is how Michaelene Hearn got into the business of making gourmet granola 13 years ago.

"I used to be a Learning instructor," said Hearn. "I brought some granola in for my students. I told them it was a nutritious alternative to chips and cookies, and helped with morning sickness. I've been making granola for 20 years."

She gave her students the recipe. "They'd say, 'mine doesn't taste like yours, could you please make it?'"

The mother of four girls now ranging in age from 14 to 21, Hearn decided to give granola a try so she could stay home with her kids. "My older sister was one my biggest fans and encouraged me," she said.

Now the Clarkston-based company, Michaelene's Gourmet Granola, is available in 18 flavors, and sold locally in many specialty stores such as Vic's, Strawberry Hill, Papa Joe's, Westborn, Holiday Market in Royal Oak, Betty's Grocery, and Shopping Center Markets.

TWA serves it to their first class passengers, and special ordered it for Pope John Paul II during his last visit to the United States. The pope had Michaelene's apple raisin granola for breakfast.

#### Quality

In 1994 she won the award for the Best Honey-Containing Cereal from The National Honey Association.

"Our emphasis is on quality," said Hearn. "Everyone starts small and aspires to grow big. We really do want to stay small, we don't want to mass market. Once you do, it's not the same. We want to control our quality."

More Sweetnola is the company's newest flavor. "My daughter Elizabeth both invented it," she said. "She and her friends came up with the idea a year ago at her birthday party. I made a special granola for them with chocolate chips. They said, 'maybe you should put marshmallows and graham crackers in it.' I introduced it this June at the International Fancy Food & Confection Show in New York City."

Elizabeth, 14, and her friends attend St. Hugo of the Hills Catholic School in Bloomfield Hills. Michaelene's Granola is sold in the cafeteria. Attention to detail, and refusal to settle for less than the best, is what makes Michaelene's Gourmet Granola stand out from the rest.

"We use whole almonds, cashews, and walnuts," she said. "We're very particular about our ingredients. I don't use chips or pieces of fruit or nuts. I want everything we make to be the best. The flavor is so much richer."

Her Cherry-Almond Crunch Granola is made with dried Michigan cherries, Cappuccino Crunch and Rainforest Naturals are other flavorful choices.

Michaelene's Gourmet Granolas are a mixture of golden toasted whole oats sparked with wildflower honey and brown sugar (no sugar optional) with a selection of quality nuts, premium dried fruits and all natural flavorings.

Her product line also includes low-fat, no sugar, and fancy fruit varieties.

Simply Sunny & Honey consists of oats and sunflower seeds, sweetened lightly with honey and brown sugar. The Original Nutty Raisin has plump California raisins, almonds, cashews, walnuts and sunflower seeds.

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## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Lunch box cookies
- Build a better beef sandwich



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER

Breakfast favorite: Bernadette Van Lenten's Harvest Pancakes are a favorite with guests, especially in the fall when apples are in season.

## MICHIGAN INNKEEPERS SHARE Tasty Wake-ups

BY KEELY WYAGONIK  
STAFF WRITER

You can't ever be too late for breakfast at Willow Brook Inn Bed & Breakfast in Canton. Located on a wooded acre, the inn filled with antiques and childhood keepsakes, is a peaceful oasis. Guests enjoy relaxing in the hammock, or sitting on the swing watching ducks and other wildlife by the brook which runs along the back of the inn.

"I try to pamper people when they come here," said Bernadette Van Lenten who operates the inn with her husband Michael. "I serve breakfasts 6:30-10:30 a.m."

Bernadette fondly remembers the anniversary couple who lost track of time reminiscing about their 25 years together after she brought them coffee in the morning, and came down for breakfast late.

"She was apologizing for inconveniencing me, and here I'm thinking what an honor it is to have someone feel so comfortable in your home," said Van Lenten. "What could be more important than talking about your marriage?"

Providing the setting for happy memories,

and making good breakfasts too, is something the Van Lentens and other members of the Michigan Lake to Lake Bed & Breakfast Association do very well.

"These are people who have to get up early every morning to put on a good breakfast, and appeal to a variety of tastes," said Roberta Spanbauer of Amherst Press publisher of "Inn Time for Breakfast... Again A Cookbook & Travel Guide from the Innkeepers of the Michigan Lake to Lake Bed & Breakfast Association, released in June.

A line drawing and description of the inn precedes the more than 60 bed & breakfasts featured. Readers will get a feel for the place, and can turn to the directory in back for more information about Michigan Bed & Breakfasts.

"We wanted to address home cooks, and people who want to get away," said Spanbauer. "These are quick and easy recipes." Many recipe introductions include make-ahead tips and substitutions.

Van Lenten's popular Harvest Pancakes, made with wheat flour, buttermilk, grated tart apple, and pecans, was one of the recipes cho-

### Bed & Breakfast Inns

Get away from it all without traveling far from home. Here are some local bed and breakfasts to consider. For more information write to the Michigan Lake to Lake Bed & Breakfast Association, 19274 South Lakeside Road, New Buffalo, Mich. 49117 or look for them on the internet <http://www.laketolelake.com>.

- Ann Arbor  
The Artful Lodger - (313) 769-0653  
The Urban Retreat - (313) 971-8110
- Clarkston  
Millpond Inn - (810) 620-8520
- Farmington Hills  
Locust Manor Bed & Breakfast - (810) 471-2278
- Holly  
Holly Crossing Bed & Breakfast - (810) 634-7075
- Lake Orion  
The Indianwood - (810) 693-2257
- Plymouth  
Auburn on Sheldon B&B Inn - (313) 459-3022
- Rochester Hills  
Point Creek Bed & Breakfast - (810) 651-6785
- West Bloomfield  
Wren's Nest - (810) 624-8874
- Ypsilanti  
The Parish House Inn - (313) 480-4800

sen. They're popular with guests, and sure to become a favorite at your house.

"I'm not a real creative cook, but I enjoy playing around with recipes," said Van Lenten. "I'll take a basic recipe and dress it up."

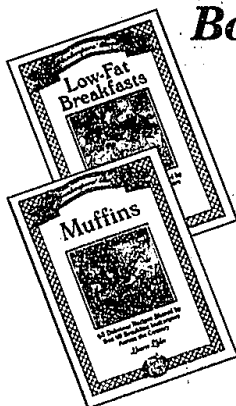
The pancakes were inspired by apple pancakes she and her daughter enjoyed in California.

Married for 29 years July 6, Bernadette grew up in California on the West Coast, her husband in Maine on the East Coast. Their three guest room inn, which includes one suite, with

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## COOKBOOKS

### Books feature innkeepers' best recipes



BY KEELY WYAGONIK  
STAFF WRITER

"Innkeepers don't need alarm clocks," said cookbook author, Laura Zahn. "They just bake, and people wake up."

Ten years ago she was writing guidebooks in Minnesota. Her first bed and breakfast cookbooks were the regional "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee Series."

She's just introduced a new one - "Innkeeper's Best."

"Innkeepers' Best Muffins," and "Innkeepers' Best Low-Fat Breakfasts," (\$9.95, Down to Earth Publications), feature favorite recipes from bed and breakfasts all over the country, including Michigan.

"I've been hearing more and more from innkeepers that they get requests for low-fat breakfasts, which are hard to do," she said. "The muffin one just seemed to fit with bed and breakfasts. I was surprised by the variety of recipes people sent me."

The recipes are practical, created by innkeepers who don't have a lot of time to fuss.

"Innkeepers have tried them over and over," said Zahn. "They are busy people. You can find the ingredients everywhere, and you don't have to be a professional chef to make them."

Both books in the "Innkeeper's Best" series include line drawings and descriptions of the inns whose recipes are featured.

Low-fat Date Bran Muffins, created by innkeeper Diane Shield who owns The Inn at Ludington, have a hint of orange, and can be made the night before.

Judy Bertram who operates The Lamplighter Bed & Breakfast with her husband Heinz Bertram in Ludington shared

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