

Michiganiana shop boosts state's food products

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

STATE PRIDE and Michigan heritage are expressed through the wonder of culinary fare artfully prepared by creative Michigan producers.

Such foods as dried tart cherries, bling cherry tea, Joy's pungent tomato relish or Carrie's aromatic curry dip are especially timely now, during the annual statewide celebration of Michigan Week.

What better time to explore and enjoy foodstuffs that are expressly Michiganian, and what better place to experience them than at Michiganiana, an attractive basement shop in Birmingham that carries only Michigan-made goods, including unusual mouth-watering fare and other unique cookery items.

Take Carrie Wagner's dip, a commercial enterprise based on a family recipe first marketed in 1935 by grandparents Stanley and Blanch

Wager of Pellston. Sold as Wager's Curry Dip, the snappy sauce comes in jars topped with polka-dotted cotton of deep green.

"It's a marvelous looking jar so it sells well," said shop manager Gail Bahl, a self-confessed native of the Buckeye State who settled in Bloomfield Township some 14 years ago.

Still, Bahl gushes forth with culinary detail of the Great Lakes State: Carp River of Leland produces the widest variety of genuine Michigan condiments, dried cherries by American Spoon in Petoskey are the most popular prepared food, and Michiganiana is the only retailer in the state to carry Malted Pancake Flour milled by F.S. Carbon in Buchanan.

"PEOPLE in MICHIGAN really take quite a pride in the state," Bahl said, based on the shop's success. "We opened our doors from scratch 18 months ago and response has been tremendous."

Michiganiana also displays blown

glass, puzzles, candles, pottery jewelry, books and more, all Michigan produced. These items are most often purchased by tourists yearning for an authentic touch of Michigan, according to Bahl.

"Foods are more for people who live here, for themselves or for friends who have moved away. They're thrilled to find it all in one place."

One popular find at Michiganiana is Michelle Marshall's Mucky Duck, a pub-style sweet and tangy mustard. Relying on her own expertise, Marshall created Mucky Duck through trial in error from the kitchen of her Franklin home some five years ago.

"At Christmas, I sell it by the case. It goes out of here hot," Bahl said, with Marshall delivering cases of newly prepared mustard nearly daily.

Other notable fare in the shop includes Christoff's tantalizing pasta and salad marinades prepared in Lowell, hearty Bountiful Bean Soup

Mix prepared by Fragrant Hill Farms in Clarkson and Sanders' excellent dessert sauces.

Jabar's vinaigrettes, meticulously bottled with select slices of lemon and snips of parsley or plump peach wedges, is prepared by Julie Stumbaugh of Farmington and partner Barbara Klaserer. Benjamin Twigg's of Traverse City is noted for colorfully packaged cherry teas.

Other rare finds include Green Pepper Preserves, tasty as a bread spread or served with cream cheese and crackers, by Brown-ods in Central Lake. American Spoon Foods' plum and cranberry ketchup or curvy Salad Splash; and Carp River's varied chocolate sauces, Wild Horseradish or Backwoods Barbecue.

"A UNIQUE LOOK at a little known corner of America" reads the cover of Mrs. Chard's Almanac entitled "Hollyhocks and Radishes." The volume, one of Bahl's newest edi-

tions in a varied collection of cookbooks featuring Michigan cuisine, costs \$14. It has quickly become a good seller.

Another popular perennial is "Best Recipes of Michigan Inns & Restaurants," featuring such delectables as Fettucine a la Maria from Ristوران di Maria in West Bloomfield and Mussel and Corn Chowder or Venison Steak with Mushrooms from the famed Golden Mushroom in Southfield.

Of particular interest is Carole Eberly's "Our Michigan: Ethnic Tastes & Recipes," printed in Lansing. Germans from Russia, seemingly a contradiction in terms, settled by the thousands in Saginaw where they founded Michigan's sugar beet industry at the turn of the century.

Eberly's book also contains adapted recipes from Michigan's first inhabitants: Corn Pone, Pumpkin Soup and Baked Acorn Squash perfected by Ottawa, Potawatomi and Seneca Indians.

Michigan's shape, a hardy hand complete with thumb, has been incorporated into cooking mitts — with detailed maps of settlements and byways — by John Kelly from Traverse City. Kelly also provides aprons with the same detail.

A cutting board of oak wood by Hickory Hickory Dock of Lansing and cookie cutters also incorporate the hand-and-thumb shape.

"WE CAN DO one for \$10 or for \$200," Bahl said of baskets or wooden crates specially prepared and packed with a variety of goods.

One deluxe breakfast basket is particularly eye-catching, containing Caron's pancake flour, American Spoon Foods' blueberries and Jasper's sugar-based syrup. A mit and cutting board complete the ensemble.

Prices of individually bottled condiments begin at around \$4 each. Michiganiana is located at 205 Pierce. For more information, call 647-1444.

Ethnic heritage, and recipes, too

Continued from Page 1

1 pound peas, shelled
Pinch sugar
Pepper
½ cup stock
Salt
1 cup dry white wine

1 pound vermicelli
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Put the butter, the fattest part of the ham and the chopped onion in a saucepan. Cook over low heat so that the onion does not brown. Add the peas, sugar, a little pepper and the

stock. Raise the heat to high and boil the mixture, stirring constantly, to cook the peas quickly. When the peas are almost tender, add the salt, wine and the remaining lean ham. Reduce the wine over high heat, then remove the pan and keep the contents warm. Cook the vermicelli in plenty of boiling

salted water. Cook until firm to the bite. Drain and turn out onto bright plates. Toss with the ham and peas mixture. Serve accompanied with Parmesan cheese.

"Our Michigan" is available from Michiganiana, 205 Pierce, Birmingham, at a cost of \$7.

Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Adjust seasonings, if necessary, to increase intensity of heat. Chill before serving for best results. Makes about 4 cups.

GAZPACHO SOUPY SALAD

2 cups tomato juice
1 clove garlic, crushed
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup chopped cucumber
Salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon paprika
½ cup fresh lemon juice
2 large tomatoes, peel and seed
½ cup chopped green pepper
½ cup olive oil
½ teaspoon sugar

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Chill for several hours before enjoying.

1 tomato, chopped
1 medium can peeled beans
½ cup fresh lemon juice

Soak bulgur wheat in hot water till soft, about 30 minutes. Drain well. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Chill before serving. Serve with pita.

NO-CAL GUACAMOLE SALAD

½ pound pea pods
1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
Juice of 1 lemon or lime
1 teaspoon cumin
½ pound fresh green beans
1 tomato, chopped
1 small onion, chopped fine
Salt and pepper to taste

Parboil pea pods and green beans till tender-crisp. Drain and chill.

Chef Larry Janes gives some recipes

See Taste Buds column, 1B.

When you bring your own bags to the grocery store, pick up the ingredients needed to make these recipes. They will make you feel good.

SPINACH AND BEAN SPROUT SALAD WITH A FRENCH VINAIGRETTE

½ of a 10-ounce package fresh spinach, washed and drained
1 pound fresh bean sprouts
½ cup French vinaigrette (see recipe)
fresh ground black pepper to taste

Rinse and pick over spinach well. Break into small pieces. Roll into paper towels. Just before serving at the picnic, release spinach from pa-

per roll and toss with sprouts. Pour over dressing, mix and enjoy. Season with black pepper.

Dressing:
½ cup olive oil
¼ cup vinegar
Dash Worcestershire, salt, pepper
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
1 clove garlic, finely chopped

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Makes 1 cup.

TABOULI

Serves 6-10

1 cup bulgur wheat
1 bunch green onions, chopped
1 bunch parsley, chopped
1 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups hot water

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