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CONTRIBUTORS

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / SAM PFEIFLE
DESIGN DIRECTOR / GLEN HALLIDAY
PRODUCTION & CIRC DIRECTOR / MARK SAYER
SALES DIRECTOR / GREGG SHAPIRO

CONTRIBUTORS

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS / KIRAH BROUILLETTE,
 KATHRYN SHAY; CARLA JEAN LAUTER; CYNDLE
 PLAISTED RIALS; RYAN PETERS; CALEB JAGODA;
 BRANT DADALEARES

COVER

PHOTO: MATTHEW ROBBINS
MODEL: JENNIFER KING
STYLING: GLEN HALLIDAY

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FEATURES



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BUY LOCAL. OR DON'T! BUT THINK ABOUT IT.



WHEN I'M NOT PLAYING THE GLAMOROUS ROLE OF MAGAZINE EDITOR, I'M SOMETIMES PLAYING THE ROLE OF BOOKSTORE OWNER. AND SO IT STANDS TO REASON THAT I AM A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF BUYING LOCAL. EXCEPT WHEN I'M NOT.

I was thinking about this while editing Cyndle's piece on trying to brew a 100%-Maine beer (see "ISO: 100% Maine Beer," page 16). What would we be missing out on if every brewer in Maine adhered to some kind of rule that all their ingredients could only be sourced from within the state? What flavors would be unavailable? It seems ultimately like a good thing that it's possible to source hops and yeast and malts and everything else that goes into great beer from all around the country and the world.

Our state's beer industry is richer for it (of course, it doesn't hurt that our local water is about the best you can get).

But I also find myself a big supporter of the idea that weed that's sold in Maine should be grown in Maine. Why would we want our flower shipped in from out of state when we have the ability to provide everything anyone in Maine could need right here at home? Do we really want THC-infused candies being shipped in from halfway around the world?

Of course not. What could you possibly want or need that isn't available in one of our hundreds of local shops?

But if we're not importing candy, does that mean it's wrong of me to enjoy the hell out of this Salted Nut Roll that was made in Minnesota and that we profile on page 10? Ought I confine myself only to foods that were made and packaged right here in Maine?

And does that mean it's wrong of me to enjoy a good tequila from Mexico or a Bordeaux from France or a spiced rum from the islands?

Of course not. Cutting ourselves off from many of the world's true joys seems pretty self-defeating.

So, what are we to do with this idea of "buying local"?

Like most concepts, the answer lies on a spectrum and requires a thoughtful analysis of just what and why we're consuming what-

ever it is we're buying. First of all, I think, we should be looking at whose pockets we're filling with our money. Every small business is local to somewhere and simply having a local presence doesn't make one morally superior. Just because Nestle owns Poland Spring and employs people in Maine doesn't mean I'd rather give them my candy money than Pearson's. And just because the tiny Canterbury Aleworks is in New Hampshire doesn't mean you're betraying Maine brewers by giving them some business.

Further, there are some things that just can't be replicated locally and I think it's a fundamentally good thing to experience tastes and flavors and ideas and experiences that aren't available here in Maine. It may not be the same as traveling the world, but downing a Delirium Tremens really does give you a taste of Brussels. And it can be fun to have a chilled bottle of Italian limoncello as an after-dinner aperitif on one those sparingly few hot days of summer and feel just a little bit like you've traveled to the Roman countryside.

Just imagine if the Chinese decided they wanted to buy local and not consume Maine lobster? That would be quite the unfortunate hit for Maine's working waterfronts.

One of the reasons buying from Amazon or Wal-Mart or wherever is less than ideal (and I'm no saint; when I needed diapers at 2 a.m., Wal-Mart was just great) is because sending your money to them is sending money to folks who don't really need it. Why help Jeff Bezos fly to outer space when you can help someone just like you pay the mortgage?

Even moreso, though, you're participating in the commodification of things, the cheapening of things, the reduction of craft and art to price and convenience. If we care about what we put in our bodies — or what we read or watch or listen to — we should care about who made it, who profits from its sale, and who benefits from its consumption.

Maybe instead of "buy local," we should say "buy small," "buy thoughtfully," or "buy carefully." Put the same care into your purchases that the people making our wonderful craft brews and flower put into their products.

 WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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MAINE BEER CO. IS ‘GOOD FOOD’



On March 4, in a ceremony in San Francisco, Maine Beer Co. will be handed a “Good Food Award,” as part of an effort by the Good Food Foundation to celebrate craft food across the United States, as well as the farmers who provide the ingredients.

Maine Beer’s Wolfe’s Neck IPA is one of just four products in Maine to take home an award, and just one of 10 national honorees in the beer category. In the company of Full-steam Brewery in North Carolina and Vista Brewing in Texas, no other New England brewery was deemed to similarly marry great taste with impressive contributions to the community and sustainable practices.

THIS JUST IN

COMINGS AND GOINGS ON THE BREWERY FRONT

The coming of winter saw a mash tun of activity on the brewery front in Maine, with news both good and bad for craft lovers. On a down note, the very nice people at **Jokers & Rogues** in Gardiner closed up shop right before Thanksgiving, citing an inability to find a way to serve folks outside. As the pandemic raged, they just weren’t able, owner John Callinan told the Kennebec Journal, to find a way to serve enough beer inside to keep things afloat.

Kai Adams similarly told the Portland Press Herald that a drop-off in foot traffic, due to so many people working from home during the pandemic, was at least partially to blame for **Sebago Brewing** closing its Portland brew pub on January 29. However, Sebago is selling its Fore Street building at the top of the Portland market and will use the proceeds to renovate its Gorham brewpub and to invest in more sophisticated canning equipment, so it’s not all bad news.

On the good news tip, **Geaghan Brothers** broke ground in January on what will be a brand-new production facility in Bangor, after buying 1.3 acres from the city, right on the waterfront. The new joint will replace their tap room and brewery across the river in Brewer (brewers leaving Brewer!), with all brewing conducted in Bangor by mid-March, along with a greatly expanded outdoor seating area. Somewhat similarly, **Batson River** has purchased **Hidden Cove Brewing Company** in Wells and is using that facility to greatly expand its brewing capacity (they also traffic in spirits). Look for that to be their brewing base of operations, with brewery tours and special can releases.

We also saw a couple of new breweries pop up this winter. In Lewiston, Peter and Nicole Ouellette are prepping to open the brand new **Rusty Bus Brewing Co.** any day now, after winning the JumpstartME business incubator contest run by the Downtown Lewiston Association and LA Metro Chamber of Commerce. The prize came with some free rent at a choice location, along with business services like marketing help and advertising.

Over in Lisbon, the number of women-owned breweries in Maine increased by one with the opening of **Olive Pit Brewing Co.**, right on Route 196. Honcho Christy Cain told the Brunswick Times Record they’ve got 12 beers on tap to start, with aims toward a Moxie-flavored porter to celebrate their central Maine location.

Finally, in a sign of things returning to normal, the **New England Craft Brew Summit**, which took last year off, returns March 31 to Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, with a full day event headlined by Maine Beer Co. head Daniel Kleban. It’s mostly for people in the industry, but if you want to know the ins and outs of the business, and hob-knob with brewers, it can be a fun event.



THIS JUST IN

DISTRIBUTION DISCOVERIES

EACH MONTH, OUR INTREPID DIRECTOR OF DISTRIBUTION, MARK SAYER, MAKES THE ROUNDS OF THE 150+ BREWERIES AND DISPENSARIES THAT MAKE UP OUR DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS. INEVITABLY, HE PARTAKES IN A VARIETY OF NEW PRODUCTS. BECAUSE WHY NOT? FEEL FREE TO OFFER SOMETHING UP FOR A TASTE TEST!

THIS MONTH HE REVIEWS A SELECTION OF FLOWER AND CONCENTRATE FROM BUDARD’S BUDS, IN LEWISTON:

Visiting over 100 shops a month can be a lot of fun, but getting there can sometimes be pretty scary. Take, for example, my latest voyage, on some backwoods Maine road, with a car driving directly toward me at 50 mph, three feet on my side of the road, the double yellow line merely a suggestion in his mind. Luckily I had my wits about me, and as the volume increased with each exhortation of “dude . . . Dude . . . DUDE!,” I was able to barely get to the side of the road and hang on to the snowy shoulder. So fun.

It’s after stressful situations and days like this that you really need to unwind. I was lucky enough to be near my buddy Kyle’s place, so I stopped by. Under the moniker Budard’s Buds, he operates a family business with his two sons, and, no joke, they grow some bomb-ass weed. After a tour of the grow, I left with a care package of flower and concentrates that I’ve been sampling in various combinations. A couple standouts on the flower side are the Wizcotti Bread, an energizing, sativa-leaning hybrid of Blissful Wizard and Banana Bread, and Dark Helmet, an indica-leaning cross between Girl Scout Cookies and Jawa Pie. On the concentrate side, I’ve been getting down with Trap Queen, a cross of Green Crack and Sunset Sherbet. They are all excellent and will get you where you want to be.

He’s currently sporting about 10 different strains of flower and five or six different concentrates, and is always adding more varieties to the mix. If you’re in the L/A area and have a medical card, you can get ahold of Kyle by email at budards-buds@gmail.com, message him on Instagram @budards-buds, or if you’re in the Bangor area, visit Rock Steady Remedies and pick up some of his fine wares.



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UMAINE GETS CANNABIS CURRICULUM

Undergrads in the University of Maine at Orono’s agriculture program can now get prepped for Maine’s biggest cash crop: PSE 262, “Introduction to Cannabis Cultivation and Science,” a one-credit class, is now in the course catalog. Offered in the spring, the course covers the history of cannabis, pest management, production techniques, legal issues, and reproduction, among other aspects of the plant. Students need to be majoring or minoring in sustainable agriculture, environmental horticulture, biology or ecology and environmental sciences to join.

THIS IS NOT YOUR FATHER'S NA BEER



THERE'S A NEW, RATHER COUNTERINTUITIVE TREND GROWING IN CRAFT BEER THAT HAS SOME FANS SHAKING THEIR HEADS IN CONFUSION. WHENEVER I BRING IT UP ON SOCIAL MEDIA, I ALWAYS GET SOME VARIATION OF THE SAME INEVITABLE REPLY: "EW, WHAT'S THE POINT OF THAT?"

The trend is craft's newest growth sector, but it is beer that is missing a key component that makes it actually beer: the alcohol.

Now, if you've crinkled your nose at the idea of that, you're not alone. Unfortunately, non-alcoholic (NA) beer has suffered in reputation, due mostly to early examples of it being pretty awful. At one time, most of us have had at a sip of someone's O'Douls or a similar brand from the '80s or '90s and found it lacking or even odd tasting. At worst, past examples were really foul, and were a sad consolation prize to anyone who missed the taste of beer but couldn't or didn't want the alcohol. At best, they were watery, bland, and rarely strayed from macro-beer styles of light lagers.

Recently, NA beer has made a somewhat surprising reappearance, but the new wave of options looks nothing like the first. Major craft breweries like Brooklyn Brewing, Lagunitas, and Samuel Adams (among others) have introduced a non-alcoholic beer to their lineup, and have included IPAs, pale ales, and more. Athletic Brewing Company, a Connecticut-based dedicated NA brewery whose distribution has expanded into Maine, makes only NA beer, brewing a variety of beer styles including IPAs, stouts, and pilsners — all without alcohol.

So what is driving this disruption in the industry — and who's drinking this new crop of beers? I have a few theories. First, the growth of health-conscious consumers is driving producers to offer choices with fewer detrimental downsides, and alcohol is something that many have chosen to abstain from either temporarily (as we've seen with the "dry January" trend), periodically, or permanently. Secondly, there is a generation of craft beer enthusiasts that are aging out of seeking intoxication as the end goal of their drinking, and hangovers hit quite differently after 30 (at least for me). Rather than giving up the social opportunities that alcohol affords, people my age, myself included, are spacing out their drinks with NA beers, or deciding to replace beer with NA beer altogether.

There are myriad reasons that someone may want to enjoy less, or no, alcohol, and their freedom to do so while out in so-

cial settings is greatly assisted by decent-tasting alternatives. In the past five years, we've also seen a swing down in ABV% in beer in general. Consumers enjoy having a few beers while enjoying other activities and are getting less inclined to do so with the intent of getting drunk. Session beers (under 5%) are now widely available. The next logical step was to have NA beers as an option as well.

The key stumbling block, however, was flavor. Now that consumers have a better and broader palate, especially for craft and fuller-flavored beer, they flat out would not accept the pitiful attempts at NA. This has been partly solved by some brewers by adding flavors that mimic other beer notes, such as citrus, bitterness, etc., but others take a more technological tact, by using specialized equipment to remove the alcohol from beer brewed in the traditional manner. Others use a process that mimics fermentation but does not produce any alcohol. And some rely on dilution and flavoring to simulate what a beer should taste like.

The good news is that the products of those efforts are not just passable, they can be exceptional and stand up side-by-side with alcohol-containing beers.

”

Consumers enjoy having a few beers while enjoying other activities and are getting less inclined to do so with the intent of getting drunk.

In January, Maine's first dedicated NA brewery was launched: Kit NA brewing. While a few other brewers in the state had endeavored to make an alcohol-free brew or two (notably Woodland Farms down in Kittery has some interesting options), Kit NA has no plans (or license) to brew anything containing alcohol. Their "On Your Mark" hoppy blonde has hit New England distribution. If you have seen it at a grocery store and have been curious, I have a spoiler for you: It is fantastic and indistinguishable from a nice, hoppy beer. There's no weird mouthfeel, there are definitely hops present, it has a nice citrus note, and it is probably more thirst-quenching than some beers I've had recently.

This certainly isn't the NA beer I remember — and it's more than worth a sip.



WORDS / **BEER BABE**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



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SALTY, SWEET, MYSTERIOUS

HOW CRAFT BREWERS CAME TO LOVE AN ARCAINE CANDY BAR

Ever heard of the Pearson's Salted Nut Roll? Marshmallow nougat insides surrounded by a crunchy layer of peanuts and caramel — it sounds like something you'd find in your grandma's purse, or piled atop a heavy glass bowl in the waiting lobby of a funeral home. It's an odd candy bar, right? Like, who actually eats them? But for craft brewers, the Salted Nut Roll has become a rite of passage — a sweet and salty way of life.

While the candy bar's history is shrouded in mystery, even among those who cherish it, here's what we do know:

For one thing, it's "a callback to just enjoying the simple things of life," says Juno Choi, craft brewing specialist on Brewers Supply Group's marketing team.

Brewers Supply Group, or BSG as they're colloquially known, is the distribution and supply arm of Rahr Malting Co. in Minnesota, and they provide craft breweries across the country with the ingredients they need to brew beer. Namely, yeasts, sugars, flavoring, and — most important to this tale — grain. When craft breweries receive grain shipments from BSG, they have to unload huge, plastic-wrapped pallets containing 40-and-50-pound bags. And, this, my friends, is where the miracle comes into play: After unloading bag after bag and pallet after pallet

of grain, the fortuitous, sweat-stained brewer stumbles across a bright red wrapper at the bottom.

Their hard work has paid off; they've been rewarded by the grain gods with a Salted Nut Roll.

"It was one of those things that when I first saw them, all of these veteran brewers were all excited, like, 'Aw, Salted Nut Rolls! The Nut Rolls are here!,'" says John Bergeron, head brewer at Portsmouth Brewery in New Hampshire. "I was fortunate to work with a guy who let me have one right away, because he realized I had never had one — and that's how you know you made it."

Now an over-10-year vet, Bergeron's started handing down the virtues of the Salted Nut Roll to his understudies, teaching them to respect and herald its simple joys. And when they don't quite get it, he tells them to keep it to themselves.

Kayla Chetney, Bergeron's assistant brewer at the Portsmouth Brewery, was a novice when she started, and thus, had never been initiated into Nut Roll customs. Giddy with excitement, he shoved a Nut Roll into her hands, passing down tradition. "She was like, 'What the fuck is it?'" he says. "And I was like, 'Just eat it!,' and she took a bite of it and was like, 'This is gross!' I imme-

diately told her, 'Whenever we're around other brewers, don't say that. Just pretend you like it.'"

As Chapel + Main (Dover, NH) head brewer Dave Yarrington explains, the Salted Nut Roll is less something you like or don't like, and more a gift that a brewer accepts graciously, with open arms and a grumbling stomach.

"If you work in a brewery, you're usually hung over," Yarrington says over the phone, laughing. "By like mid-morning you're kinda like, 'Man, I could really use fucking something in my stomach!' Or like late-afternoon you're like, 'Man, I'm so tired. I can't wait to get home. But — aw man! A Salted Nut Roll! Man that'd be great!' I mean, certainly not everyone eats them. But then those people are suspect, you know what I'm saying?"

This is a commonly-held sentiment among craft brewers. In fact, most brewers that I discussed the Nut Roll with all had strong moral beliefs on how to treat the peanut-laden delicacy, so much so that there's a pretty standard set of unwritten principles in place at breweries across New England.

Let's coin these tenets The Salted Nut Roll Code of Ethics and Moralities — and they go something like this:

1. Just like Yarrington says, nobody seems to exactly dislike the candy bar, but also, nobody seems to love it either — it's more about enjoying the odd tradition. "I don't know if anyone is like, 'Oh, I love this,'" says Courtney Kaslow, brewer at Goodfire Brewing Co. in Portland. "It's like, a specialty thing. So you're like, 'Oh, I can only have it right now—so I want it.' But it does taste good; I think a lot of people do like it."

Kaslow also explained meme culture's embrace of the Nut Roll, to the point of it becoming a "hype-y," overused joke on brewer social media accounts. While this might be beyond older brewers' embrace of the Nut Roll, nearly everybody in the industry has fun with them one way or another.

"I had some of these experiences like seven years ago, but I think people are really jazzed about (Nut Rolls) even more so now," Kaslow says. "It's literally something that people love so much that my ex-boyfriend and I broke up, and he's also a brewer but he didn't like Salted Nut Rolls, so when he was trying to win me back he left a bag of Salted Nut Rolls at my house. Which I appreciated, but..."

2. There's a very definitive pecking order that dictates who gets a Salted Nut Roll and who doesn't. Because only a handful of candy bars come in each grain shipment — and sometimes only one for smaller breweries like Yarrington's Chapel + Main — only a select few receive a Nut Roll blessing. Seniority is a big factor, and so is the actual discovery of a Nut Roll. Whoever unloads the grain shipment usually gets dibs, but, of course, there are exceptions to the rule.



"I'm the one who opened the grain bags, so I get them — just kidding," Kaslow says, reenacting a typical day divvying up Nut Rolls, "but I get one, and then we'll see who else gets them today. Usually I didn't want to have to deal with the politics of it, so I would just throw them all in the office and whoever got to it, got to it.

"There 100 percent is (a pecking order)!" she continued. "We had a guy who worked on the canning line who would take them out of our grain orders that we hadn't opened yet, and we were like, 'Dude ... you don't get that. I have to unload all of these grain bags, I get it! And if there's multiple, then whoever can have them. But you don't get to steal them from the grain bags.'"

Bergeron also recounted coworkers breaching the Nut Roll Code of Conduct; newbies digging through unopened grain pallets hoping to catch a flash of red and receiving a stern talking to, packaging guys demanding Nut Rolls with unearned authority. Traditions are steeped in respect — and the Nut Roll is no different.

"I did work with a packaging guy who gave me a hard time and called me 'The King of the Nut Rolls,'" Bergeron says, exasperated, "because I didn't give him one once, and he was like, 'What, you just get to decide?' And I was like, 'Actually, I do.' He used to hold his hand out and wait for one, and I was like, 'That's not how this works.' ... Everybody kinda works on the honor system. You know that you just grab one — you're not gonna grab two."

FEATURE : BREWING CULTURE

◀ FROM PAGE 11

3. Nobody seems to know when, where, how, or why the tradition of the Salted Nut Roll started, and nobody seems to care. As a seasoned veteran who joined the New England craft scene in 2001 at Smuttynose Brewing Co., Yarrington's first-hand knowledge of the Nut Roll's approximate timeline is unusually rare. By his calculations (who can say for sure?), Nut Rolls started popping up in grain shipments right around 2001 or 2002. But this is a known unknown for most; the majority of brewers accept them, love them, and don't ask questions.

"It's almost like, I would rather not know how it got started," Bergeron says with an audible awe. "Like I would rather live in that realm of it being just a complete mystery and leave it at that. It's like being a little kid and believing in Santa Claus. I'm just gonna accept this, that when this day rolls around, I'm getting presents from this mysterious person. So now it's just these Nut Rolls, they just show up."

This aura of mystery permeates everything about the Salted Nut Roll. It's become what Choi calls a "if you know, you know" situation, even for the limited knowledge brewers do have on the Nut Roll. Yarrington's been brewing for over 25 years and even he doesn't have a clue about the Nut Roll's origin story, conjecturing that it was probably a joke, but then again maybe not, or maybe that Pearson's Candy Company are a parent company of BSG ... or maybe not.

"It may be really common in the Midwest, I have no idea," he says. "Some people out there may have heard of this. But I'm from the East Coast, so no, I'd never heard of it before getting into brewing. And when they first started to show up, it was like, 'What the fuck's a Salted Nut Roll?' It just sounds so dumb ... It's definitely not something you'd come up with these days — you wouldn't call it that either."

Even when I began my research into the Salted Nut Roll, it seemed like I might come up empty-handed. Pearson's Candy Company declined to comment for the story, and for a couple weeks I couldn't get ahold of anyone at BSG. I couldn't help but wonder ... Is this some sort of elaborate gag put on by the brewing supply industry? Are they secretly putting performance-enhancing substances in these "candy bars" to make their brewers — unbeknownst to them — work harder and more efficiently, thus brewing more beer, ordering more grain, and eating more Salted Nut Rolls? Was I losing my mind? Are Salted Nut Rolls even real???

My wild conspiracy theories were put to rest when Choi reached out and happily agreed to talk to me on behalf of BSG. As it turns out, there's no grand conspiracy behind the Nut Roll, and to clear things up for Dave, Pearson's isn't a parent company of BSG. Rather, Pearson's and BSG are simply two companies that both share "a long and storied history in the state of Minnesota," as Choi puts it. Rahr Malting, BSG's true parent company, is coming up on their 175th anniversary this year, and Pearson's on its 110th of manufacturing its own products. The two companies don't even have a sponsorship deal — they just like to help each other out, and decided to embrace the way brewers ran with it. "Back in the day we used to have our company newsletter called, 'The

Salted Nut Roll,'" Choi says to me over the phone, "but we weren't really promoting it to the public or to our customers — it was just a treat, and really the customers have been the ones that have been elevating the Nut Roll, to the point where we have Salted Nut Roll beer in lots of different variations and homages. It's been pretty cool and just a pleasure how this candy bar has become so ubiquitous in the craft brewing scene."

WARNING: Any brewers who don't want to know the history of the Salted Nut Roll, and wish for its mystery and their ignorance to remain intact, should stop reading here.

As Choi recalls, the Salted Nut Roll started when BSG was Mid-America Brewing Supply, and a warehouse manager started putting hard candies in grain shipments as tokens of appreciation to the company's customers. At some point, this evolved into the Salted Nut Roll — most likely due to Pearson's mutually-rich Minnesotan roots — and the rest, as they say, is history.

TO PAGE 14 ▶

PEARSON'S SALTED NUT ROLL: WWW.PEARSONS.COM

SALTED NUT ROLL — REVIEWED!

The beat on the Salted Nut Roll is that it's a working man's snack; in New England, you can mostly only find it at hardware stores and in grain shipments for breweries. Luckily for me, there's an Aubuchon a mile from my apartment in Dover with a whole array of candy bars below the register. So that's how, on one brisk January afternoon, I found myself picking out a new ice scraper and buying two Salted Nut Rolls to put all the brewer's hubbub to the test.

The Nut Roll actually lived up to the hype.

I didn't really buy into all the talk that it was a legitimately filling snack; I'd never had a candy bar that made my stomach feel good, so why would a Salted Nut Roll be any different? Well, it's less of a candy bar and more of a portable-trail-mix. A thick layer of peanuts comprises its outside layer and hits you with a wave of salty; then, after working through the crunch, the sweetness of the caramelized nougat comes into play and evens the score for a sweet-and-salty contrast.

Not to mention that two Salted Nut Rolls only run you \$1.50, a ridiculously cheap price for a legitimately filling snack.

Although it's got a weird and outdated name, and a suspiciously-mysterious history, the Salted Nut Roll is simple, satisfying, and way more substantial than you might expect. Stop by your local hardware store and give it a go — just don't go digging through any grain pallets, and you should be good.

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SWEET DIRT

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But why the Salted Nut Roll? Why not another Pearson's Candy product?

"I think, really, it was kind of the ideal candy bar to include," Choi says. "It won't melt, it's packed with nutritious short and long-term energy — it's got the nougat in there for the quick energy and it's got the peanuts for the sort-of long energy — and it just caught on in popularity."

So there you have it. It's not that the Salted Nut Roll's necessarily kept a secret — rather, those who know about the Nut Roll keep it to themselves and don't explain its esoteric sweet-and-salty ways to every average Joe who waltzes into a brewery. But, then again, there are those rare, nearly-spiritual, ritual-like instances when a group of outsiders can become inducted ...

Bergeron, who's an avid backpacker and hiker, once found himself with a huge store of extra Nut Rolls and decided to bring a load of

them in his backpack on an overnight hiking trip. Setting up shop for the night at a public tenting site with an abundance of strangers, Bergeron sliced up Nut Rolls and passed them around the campfire, divying up slivers of history, tradition, hard work, memes, laughs, and the appreciation for the simple joys of life.

No, they aren't PayDays, they're Salted Nut Rolls, and as brewers, we get them in grain shipments ...

"I got to share it with people," he says. "I wonder if they talked about it after: 'We met this brewer in the woods and he gave us Salted Nut Rolls and he just disappeared.'"

"If you're having a shit day and you get a Salted Nut Roll, it kinda makes everything better."



WORDS / CALEB JAGODA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

WHAT ABOUT AN "EDIBLE" NUT ROLL?

When Jennifer King isn't being a good sport as our model on the cover and here in this feature, she's the head of Baked East, an edibles manufacturer in Maine's medical weed industry, creating treats like her signature Fruit Chews that are infused with full-spectrum hash rosin designed to provide whole-body benefits. She has a legacy in specialty foods, with a family that founded Stonewall Kitchen, one of Maine's true grassroots success stories.

"I grew up in the specialty food industry," she says. "I learned from a young age what is deemed high quality and what's not. ... I used to literally state home from school just cooking."

So, how does the Pearson's Salted Nut Roll fare?

"These are delicious," she says, right after her first bit for the camera. "It's like a homestyle Cow Tale meets nutty." A Cow Tale is apparently an old-timey caramel-cream candy. She knows her stuff.

At one point between shots she apologizes: "Sorry. I'm actually eating this. ... It's a classic. It's homestyle. Look at this — low ingredients. There's really not that much on here. Most candies have a big list of stuff you've never heard of."

Later, noting that Baked East prides itself on avoiding corn syrup and artificial dyes and sweeteners, King says, "I would use any of these ingredients. In my personal life, I wouldn't want that much soy, but these are all ingredients that people are comfortable with and know. This doesn't have any food dyes in it. This is an energy-based snack; this carries nutrition."

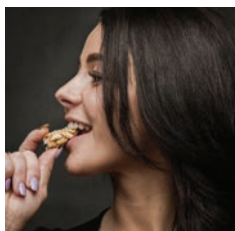
She's dropping into professional mode: "Yeah, the cream base. The peanuts are the number one ingredient. That's a major energy source for a lot of people. This is an amazing energy bar. This is still around for a reason. They haven't touched this for a reason."

Okay, but how would it fare as an edible? Could this be infused?

"Oh, totally," King says. "I have a caramel-based recipe that could be exactly this. I could even infuse the cream filling." But she settles on the caramel. "You do a line of the cream, weigh out the caramel and then pour it over the cream, rolling it until it's in a cylinder. Then the caramel would be tacky enough to pick up the peanuts."

Perfect for medical. Maybe 100mg per bar?

For recreational, it would be harder, she reasons, because you have to have portion sizes with no more than 10mg per portion. "But you could cut the bar up and use those little packages," she says. "Like the Halloween Snickers and Three Musketeers? That would be perfect."



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BAKED EAST
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ISO: 100% MAINE BEER

IS IT POSSIBLE TO TRULY BREW LOCAL? MAYBE.

WORDS / CYNDLE PLAISTED RIALS
PHOTOS / KELLY MERRILL

There are many things one might call “classic Maine” — those local elements that make tourists ooh and aah and inspire vicious homesickness in transplants who have decided for some crazy reason to leave this rambling, beautiful state. Lobster traps. L.L.Bean. But-loads of lighthouses (the second most in the country, actually). Some are things we love to hate, like Route 1 summer traffic. Or how in March it can be 20 degrees with the wind howling hard enough to near take off your screen door one day, and, the next, balmy enough for my dad to strip off his shirt for some mid-yardwork sunbathing, usually accompanied by a beer — though that might just be my particular dad and his particular habit of acting like it’s summer the minute the sun comes out and it’s above 45.

And then there is the working farm and Maine’s agricultural tradition. You know, like those famed Aroostook potatoes we’re admonished to dig out of our ears when we’re not listening. The blueberries and blackberries you can find wild by the side of seemingly every trail. Or all that weed being grown in the state now.

Plus, all those other crops being cultivated in Maine and put to delicious use: yeast, grain, and hops – everything you need for a great beer. A brew that’s purely, 100% local from the ground to the glass has a special appeal. Grow local, buy local, drink local. But, if that’s so, why isn’t every Maine brewery making beers with completely local ingredients?

It turns out the answer is a little complicated.

If you know anything about brewing beer, you know the four basic ingredients in every beer are water, grain, hops, and yeast. Anything else is extra, but you’re not gonna get anywhere without those core ingredients. When I started my exploration into the quest for a 100% Maine beer, Bill Stinson was an immediate recommendation. As the brewer/owner at The Pour Farm in

Union, not only does he know a lot about brewing beer, it seems like he knows or has at least heard of just about every beer and beer-adjacent business in Maine.

Part of that is because it’s pretty important to him to support the local economy. He gives Maine Malt House in Mapleton and Blue Ox Malthouse in Lisbon Falls about two thirds of his grain business. “It’s not 100% because there are specialty grains they don’t produce,” he says. “It’s also about 30-40% more [expensive] if you buy local instead of from Minnesota. But I wanna do the right thing and give them more than half my business.”

When he started The Pour Farm, he had a vision: “My original idea for the brewery hasn’t panned out exactly. It was to have a sort of estate brewery, where everything we make comes out of the ground there. But barley needs large amounts of land, combines, big equipment, bigger tractors than I have.”

Stinson also found out there are other impediments to such a homegrown focus when it came to growing hops. He cleared one acre out of his 25, with the hopes of planting the hops there in year two, once the brewery was set. That didn’t quite go according to plan either. “I’m a much better rock farmer than a hops farmer,” he says. “There’s plenty of rocks out there, and I think it’s good that way.”

Not to mention, hops meant more costly equipment for the various phases of production — he had the poles, cables, and irrigation, but then there’s harvesting, cutting, “then most folks would want to pelletize it, separating cone from vine — all take machinery,” Stinson explains. “That’s why you don’t see a whole lot of people doing hops and beer production. Bigelow Brewing does, but I don’t know how much is ornamental and how much actually goes into their beer.”

So it’s become clear that a brewery both growing all their ingredients and then making beer with them is pretty darn cost-prohibitive. But what about if you widen the scope to include just Maine-sourced ingredients, from companies that specialize in grains and yeast and hops?

Grains are pretty well covered in Maine, actually, dating all the way back to the mid-19th century, when Somerset County was the breadbasket of New England, producing 239,000 bushels of wheat per year at its peak in 1837. A couple big players in grain today are Maine Malt House and Blue Ox, as Stinson mentioned. There’s also Maine Grains, a Skowhegan company that, according to founder/owner Amber Lambke, gets about 20% of their business from brewers. They provide raw, unmalted grains for enhancing flavor, texture, color, and mouth feel to a beer. “We sell wheat, flaked corn, rolled oats, buckwheat, flaked rye, spelt, and heritage grains to brewers,” she explains. “Our locally sourced grains help brewers successfully market their beers as part of the ‘local food’ movement.”

I wondered if there was anything special about Maine in the quest to grow grain, and Lambke had an answer for me. Farms here tend to be smaller than they are out in the Midwest, where a lot of grain is grown, and we also have more varied topography, with a mix of fields, hills, and trees, which can increase production costs. Additionally, she says, “Maine has a cool moist climate which makes it particularly well suited for growing grains like oats, buckwheat, and rye for sweet-tasting grains. Many farmers are noticing a change in climate in Maine resulting in hotter temperatures and longer growing seasons. This will bring both benefits and challenges as plants begin to adapt to climate change.”

Another adaptation that is likely to happen is more brewery experimentation with unexpected heritage grains, which Maine Grains is excited about. Seed restoration projects are ongoing across the state of Maine thanks to folks like Will Bonsall at the Maine Grain Alliance — they’re working to increase the availability of rare and heritage seeds in Maine. Lambke says, “Where only small handfuls of [some of this] seed existed just a few years ago, now several tons are available for commercial production. This is giving bakers and brewers a chance to explore the

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WICKED LOCAL BEERS, BUB

My search for beers brewed with 100% Maine ingredients turned up just a few results. One was Rising Tide’s Octo, a retired potato IPA brewed in 2017 for Otto Pizza’s 8th anniversary. But there are still several beers you can enjoy if you’re on the hunt for a fully Maine beer, and there may even be more I didn’t encounter. One can only hope more fully local beers will turn up on the scene.

Oxbow Brewing: Maine State Lager

From what I could tell, this beer is only available on draft in their Oxford Beer Garden, but if you have a hankering for an American lager made with a pale malt and Cascade hops, this one’s for you.

Fogtown Brewing Company: Foglight

Foglight is a Maine pilsner that’s full of what hopheads crave, with its inclusion of three different Aroostook-grown hop varieties.

Sasanoa Brewing

You can pretty much take your pick here — the ingredients for seven of the eight farmhouse ales and saisons they currently offer are 100% grown in Maine, and all are MOFGA certified. Back River Farmhouse Ale is described as having “a wonderful spiciness with a hint of clove,” and it seems worth the summer drive for the seasonal Jordbaer, a tart strawberry saison brewed with “72 lbs of organic strawberries per barrel and a touch of lime basil for some citrus notes,” both of which are grown right on Tarbox Farm where the brewery is located.

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differences in flavor and performance of heritage grain varieties. As more heritage grains are restored to commercial scale, experimentation and flavor discovery in beer and baking is sure to explode.”

I think we can all agree innovation in beer and new flavors to try is always a good thing.

Hops offer a lot in terms of bringing something new to the table, too, from beers that contain multiple varieties with different flavor profiles to the technique of dry hopping in an effort to preserve delicate flavor oils that can be lost in the boil. Hops are a big factor, especially, with hops-forward IPAs, still one of New England’s reigning beer styles, with a huge increase in double and triple IPAs available on the market. When the beers are hop-heavy and you want to stand out, you might need to have some options at your disposal.

While there are hops producers in Maine, like The Hop Yard in Gorham and Aroostook Hops in Westfield, only 15 acres of Maine soil are currently growing hops, compared to 63,529 in the U.S. as a whole. With just .02% of the country’s hops growing here, you can see why brewers might venture out of state for at least some of their hops needs. Bill Stinson is familiar with that desire when he explains why he’s ordered some of his hops elsewhere: “It’s cost, it’s variety – I wouldn’t say it’s quality. There’s a half dozen varieties of hops in Maine, but I can get 100 elsewhere.”

While that might feel like a limitation to some, there are others who enjoy working within the parameters of using only what’s grown in Maine, hops included. At Sasanoa Brewing, nestled at the end of Westport Island, Kyle DiPietro and his wife Angela Trombley brew unique and delicious-sounding saisons and farmhouse ales, with seven of their eight current beers made with 100% MOFGA certified organic Maine ingredients.



DiPietro has always been a saison fan, and that fact coupled with his determination to keep things local made the style an obvious choice for Sasanoa. “For Belgian-style farmhouse beers,” he says, “they didn’t have a lot of options historically when they were brewing those beers. They used what was growing there. The first beer we brewed we were kinda limited off the bat, so we just had to look at what was available to us at the time and had to develop a recipe. Instead of making a beer with all the ingredients that are out there, making a beer with just the ingredients we have available is kind of a challenge, but it’s also fun.”

Some of the ingredients they grow on their farm and add to the usual equation of grain, hops, and yeast they source from Maine businesses, including ginger, strawberries, lime basil, coriander, marigolds, rhubarb, blueberries, and more. Sasanoa particularly prides itself on being fully organic. “I think beer has always been overlooked as a certified organic consumable product,” DiPietro says. “There’s not a whole lot of certified organic breweries in the country. When you look at the mass amounts of land that go into producing grain for beer, that’s a lot of land, so if you can support organic farmers, that’s a good thing.”

In fact, for everyone I talked to, the drive to keep things local isn’t just a marketing scheme. Each person, in their own facet of the beer industry, is invested in making sure Maine’s businesses and rich history are supported so they can survive for the future. Amber Lambke summed it up like this: “Rebuilding a robust grain economy in Maine provides opportunity for Maine’s small farms while shortening the supply chain for food producers and helping to steward the soil for generations to come.”

Bill Stinson has found that tourists especially love to hear that the ingredients they’re looking at are sourced from right here in the Pine Tree State. “They don’t come in and ask for that, but I’ve found that people like that and appreciate it,” he says. “When people come in for a tour, I get to tell them most of what they’re looking at is sourced from Maine and they light up.”

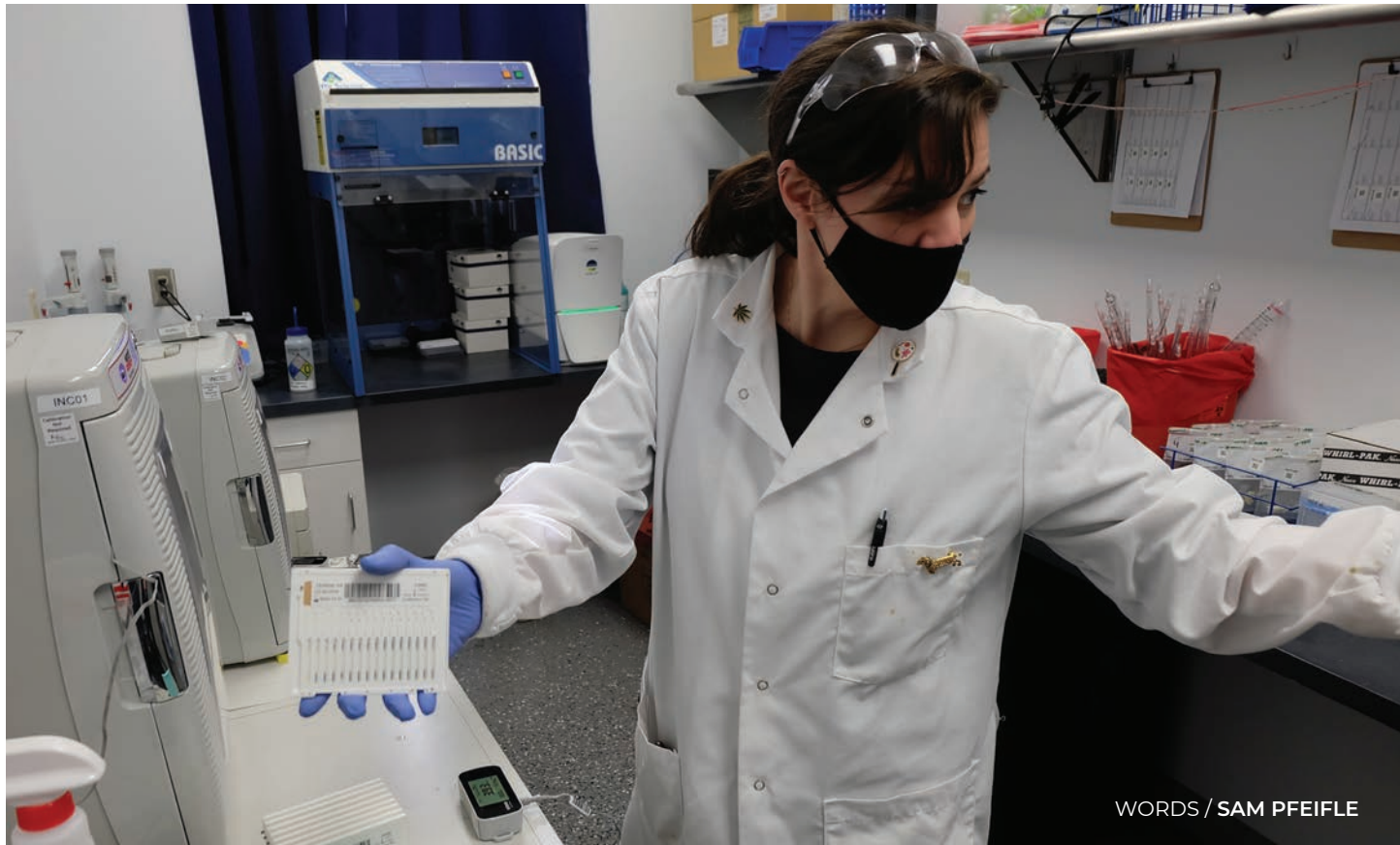
For DiPietro, the importance and appeal of sourcing from local farms can’t be overstated, and it’s not just limited to what goes into a beer. “I love supporting the whole agricultural system in Maine, being a farmer, buying local food and local ingredients. It conserves land, keeps a vibrant agricultural economy going ... I love seeing farms thrive and keeping that landscape the way it is. Just driving by a well-kept farm — that visual experience is very satisfying.”

Just imagine standing in a field of barley as the sun sets in vivid oranges and golds, cracking the cap off a chilly beer filled with the fruits of this ancient soil and the ancestral energies of all the people who’ve worked the land before. I bet you can almost taste the satisfaction.

 WORDS / CYNDLE PLAISTED RIALS
PHOTOS / KELLY MERRILL



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WORDS / SAM PFEIFLE

TESTING THE LIMITS

LEARNING TO READ THE LABEL AT NOVA ANALYTICS

More than one of you out there has seen a strain of flower described as 22% THC and wondered to yourself: “22% of what? The actual plant matter?”

Greg Newland, chief science officer at Nova Analytics, says, yeah, it’s as simple as that. If you’re holding a jar with 3.5 grams of flower in it, and it says on the label that it’s 22% THC, then you’ve got yourself .77 grams of THC, or 770 milligrams.

“We’re seeing flower come through that’s up close to 30 percent,” Newland says. “That’s an extremely hot weed. There’s a certain point where the plant just can’t produce any more without its cellular structure breaking down. It’s crazy. And it’s a little bizarre. Until the craft cannabis world came about, they were growing weed that was like 10 percent, and that was normal, and that’s what everyone was used to smoking. It was low-grade weed and you’d smoke a joint and you’d have a good time.”

That kind of gap is one reason testing is mandatory in the adult-use marketplace, especially. Just as brewers are required to include ABV% (percentage of Alcohol by Volume) on every container, so that you can evaluate how intoxicated you’ll be by consuming a certain amount, so too do cannabis growers need to keep you informed of how strong their product is.

For new users, it can be disorienting that edibles aren’t similarly labeled: Shouldn’t there be a THC%? In the world of manufactured items, though, that percentage just comes in the form of the number of milligrams of THC contained in the package or dose. If it says 10mg per dose, that’s 10mg of THC (or sometimes “full-spectrum” concentrate, meaning you’re also getting other cannabinoids in addition to THC, but more on that later).

So, smoking a whole “eighth” (short for eighth of an ounce, even though it’s actually weighed in grams, due mostly to legacy drug-



dealing nomenclature and practice) of 22% THC is like eating 77 doses that are each 10mg. Got it?

Getting a tour of Nova Analytics, however, quickly makes it clear that the testing regime for adult-use cannabis is a lot more sophisticated than just discovering potency and that there’s a lot of untapped potential for consumer education and understanding.

In fact, it’s part of the law that for every strain of flower or edible intended for the adult-use marketplace, the full testing results have to be available upon request. If a producer uses Nova Analytics for their testing, they should even have a QR code they can put on labels that you can scan to get the full results right on your phone. Once you go down that rabbit hole, you might find yourself shopping in a completely different manner.

Firstly, there is so much more in cannabis than THC that can affect your mood and experience.

“These craft cannabis growers are learning how to grow CBG, and CBN, and all these minor cannabinoids,” says Newland, “and they’re starting to create strains with rich amounts of these minors in them. From a health perspective, there are multiple sources that indicate some of these minor cannabinoids have their own health benefit.”



Just see Kirah Brouillette’s piece on cannabis and covid in this very issue.

Then there are the terpenes, which Nova and other testers also can produce reports for. These terpenes can affect the taste and smell of flower and you’ll find many connoisseurs hunting for those strains that have the lemony or gassy smells they enjoy in a smoke, which are produced by specific terpenes (they have names like myrcene and limonene). While many consumers just want to “smoke weed and get high,” says Newland, he and others predict the market will become more sophisticated, just as craft beer has seen people seeking new and different flavor profiles.

Perhaps more importantly, though, testing is meant to protect you from bad actors and make sure certain things don’t appear in your flower or edibles at all. Mandatory testing includes reports for:

- **Microbials:** Things like bacteria, yeast, mold, etc., that you don’t want in your weed.
- **Moisture:** You want to make sure weed isn’t too damp, which invites mold, and you want to make sure the weight of the product you’re buying isn’t water instead of weed.
- **Water activity:** Different than moisture, this is the water that’s on the outside of the product, whether flower or edible. “That’s ex-

FEATURE : ORIGIN STORY

◀ FROM PAGE 21

tremely important on the edibles,” says Newland, “because if you have moisture on the outside, that can lead to bacteria and yeast and mold and affect shelf life.”

- **Foreign materials:** You know, like mouse poop or insect parts, and that sort of thing.
- **Homogeneity:** This is mostly for edibles, but it’s a test to make sure one dose is the same potency as every other.
- **Heavy metals:** Mercury, lead, cadmium, and arsenic. None of which you want in your body. Cannabis can be good at sucking these things out of the soil and passing them on to you.
- **Residual solvents:** Since many extraction processes for THC use solvents like butane, it’s important to make sure there’s no butane left over in your concentrates.

Nova also performs a number of other tests for clients that aren’t necessitated by law. They test for pesticides, for example: “We’ve found a lot of interest in making sure products are safe before they’re sold,” Newland says. Before a retailer will bring in a new strain from a new grower, they may test to make sure they’re as “organic” as they claim. “We’ve found a lot higher failure rate than we expected,” he says.

It can even be a wake-up call for a grower who thinks they’ve done everything right. Sometimes it can reveal a water source or a soil source isn’t as clean as they claim. Especially in the medical side of the business, this can be of vital importance, where patients might be sensitive to pesticides and other contaminants.

While testing isn’t mandatory in medical, Nova does more revenue with medical providers than adult-use providers.

Mic LeBel, Nova’s head of sales and marketing, says he often finds the testing lab acting as a sort of R&D partner for brands trying out new products, too. “There’s a lot of trying and re-trying,” he says, with people especially trying to get edibles to be uniform and the appropriate strength. “Sometimes it’s back to the drawing board. We give them some input and we have experience in what can go wrong and what can fix it.”

One peek into their intake room makes that pretty clear. There’s every kind of candy imaginable, plus drinks and snacks, concentrates and flower. Each item is put into a lightbox for photographing and then input into software that anonymously tracks the specimen so that no one in the lab is inclined to put a thumb on any proverbial scales in order to influence the outcome as the product moves through the lab.

And, yes, Nova, like all labs in the state, is periodically audited by the Maine Center for Disease Control to make sure the tests are being performed accurately.



For Newland and his partners, this is all par for the course. They got their start in drug-testing toxicology centers, where accurate testing and high volume was vital to the business model. Whether it’s law enforcement or giant corporations or professional sports leagues as the customer, getting it wrong can be a life-altering thing.

But then the competition and some reimbursement changes made toxicology into a low-margin business, so Newland and partners Chris Altomare and Barry Chaffin decided to pivot to cannabis, a market they saw going in the opposite direction. “We agreed that if we were going to do it,” Newland says, “it would be to the standards of the toxicology world.”

From the look of the lab-coated employees and the apparent sophistication of the technology on hand, it’s easy to believe. At one point, Renee Ferrazzulolo, with a PhD from Cal State, walked me through her lab work, inside a room pressurized to make sure samples didn’t cross-pollinate, and my brain just about shut off. Not enough of the words made sense. But it sure sounded impressive.

Which raises the question: Will cannabis companies actually use these test results in their marketing? Or will all of this always simply be in the realm of compliance and business-to-business transactions?

Clearly, that remains to be seen, but Nova thinks the label will become an increasingly important part of the sales process, regardless of the cannabis product, as the novelty of just being able to buy weed in a store wears off and the reality sinks in that not all highs are built the same.

“If I was a savvy customer,” says Newland, “I’d want to know the potency and I’d want to know what the terpene and cannabinoid levels were. That’s going to tell me how I’m going to be affected by the product.”



WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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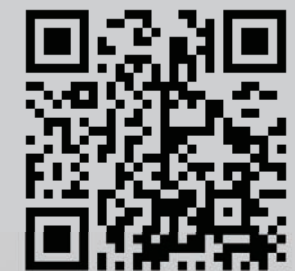


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CANNABIS FOR COVID?

WORDS / KIRAH BROUILLETTE

ONE WOMAN'S USE OF WEED TO GET BACK ON HER FEET

"I got up to get it last time. It's your turn."

We said it to each other with a sigh, in cycles of four, through cracked lips and sandpaper tongues, our limbs too heavy, muscles too torched with pain to offer to get up out of bed in our family-share single-room hold out against the virus. It became the mantra in my household during our quarantine last month, when Covid 2.0 hit — second pass for myself, first go for the others. By day three, it felt like an out-of-body experience. The symptoms were so foul and all encompassing that the mind had to separate itself from the sickness of the body in an almost-dissociative way.

"Fine, I'll do it . . . Again"

My fiancée mustered the slimmest smile as he hoisted himself up from the beds we had made on the floor to stay close together. None of us had eaten more than a bite of cream of rice or chicken broth in days (more on how Covid absolutely eviscerates not only your appetite but your ability to taste and smell food later). Water hurt the throat to consume beyond the merest sips and sleep crept up behind our eyes, luring us to black out into dreamland even as we sat in the bathroom to pee. I could see how much weight Adam, a pro bodybuilder, had lost

in such a short time and the way his usually strong, straight back had curved into a comma as he schlepped out for one more round of water we all would struggle to consume, despite how our bodies ached for it.

Though he had it bad, as a lupus warrior, I had it worse. And after my first experience with the virus the previous year (where I was hospitalized, pumped with opioid painkillers for the crippling pain and intravenous steroids, were meant to stop my kidneys and heart from a Covid-induced lupus flare-failure, that caused me to puff up like the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man), there was no way I was ever going back to the ER if I could help it. I was committed to home care. The hospital had traumatized me and I refused to leave my family.

But Lupus SLE, an auto immune disease where the system built to protect and defend the body from things like viruses and bacterial infections actually causes the body to turn on itself in attack mode, destroying healthy bodily systems instead, seemingly just for fucks, is one of the worst possible physical accoutrements to have when battling Covid in any form. The symptoms of covid and lupus are similar, yet on shout with Covid on board — bone-deep muscular, joint, and skin pain

(yep, your skin feels like someone is unendingly slicing it with tiny razors), blinding headache, and the additions of upper respiratory bullshit that includes a cough so deep and heavy your lungs feel the way they do when you dive too deep into a pool, only to barely make it to the surface before you run out of air, except it's that way for every, single, breath. Plus a fatigue/lethargy that means you can't lift your arms to blow your nose without feeling as if you just did 50 push-ups.

Incapacitating doesn't begin to explain it.

"You need medicine, babe," Adam said to me a hundred times. "Let's go to the ER." But I refused.

On day five, I decided to pick my phone up for the first time since diagnosis and check the news to be sure the world hadn't ended in an apocalyptic fit and came upon a Bloomberg article on new scientific research: "Cannabis compounds prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from penetrating healthy human cells."

So I decided to offer myself up to the Weed Gods as medical tribute and see if the headlines met the hype. And boy did they.

I began by reaching out to my good friend and mother figure, Mrs. Good Acre of Fairie Village Grow (neither of those names are real; they grow weed and create as a hobby and don't want business or nosy neighbors up in their piece). I asked her to bring me a batch of capsules they refer to as Chill Pills (containing pure dried and finely ground Indica flower that has been heated to bring out the terpenes, lemongrass, and sugar leaf crystals of Golden Dragon CBD flower) and took two a day for the next two days, then one a day until the end.

Another friend went to the Sweet Spot on the corner of Forest and Congress in downtown Portland (a newer place that I adore — they represent multiple boutique Maine canna brands in a relaxing, sun-filled, high-end space) where I had her grab a bomb ass Ice Cream Cake badder concentrate from Landrace, a spot also on Forest Avenue that focuses on pure, old-school strains yer mom used to puff, but tweaked with new genetics for modern tastes. I cold vaped that every hour or so to knock down the joint and muscle pain

Then, I needed some of Maine Cannabis Exchange's hyper-mentholated and silky smooth 600mg Timberline CBD body balm from their adorable storefront in South Portland's revamped Ocean Street downtown — love this place by the way, they only let one customer inside at a time, not only for Covid-distancing reasons, but also to make sure each buyer feels they are heard and honored in their cannabis purchase needs and questions. You have to check it out.

I used the balm liberally on every limb in the house, cats excluded.

By day seven of this regime, I was able to eat, though still not taste or smell food (the headlines don't exaggerate). By day 10 I was able to fully shower, not just splash hot water on my parts, clean the Sick

Room a bit, and sit up straight in a chair to enjoy sunset in the window. On day 15, I actually left the house to grocery shop. Though I ultimately didn't feel 100 percent myself, as healthy and as ambulatory as I was pre-Covid, until around day 20, I completely believe that a heavy application of cannabis in its all forms is what not only helped my symptoms, but also kept me from what my rheumatologist called, at my follow up visit last week, a "complete lupus systems meltdown and long-term hospitalization" urged on by a battle with Covid.

So remember: Weed is fun, sure, but its primary superpower is medicinal, period. That's why we were made with a built in cannabinoid receptor system as humans. Before you run to our already overcrowded hospitals when you get Covid (and you should definitely do your best to avoid it!), send a friend to any one of your local rec shops at the first sign of illness and use cannabis to make your way through the hellscape that is Covid-19.

WORDS / KIRAH BROUILLETTE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

WHAT DO THE DOCTORS SAY?

The Bloomberg article mentioned here in this article created a lot of buzz online, but was probably a bit misleading. No, no one is saying that smoking weed keeps you from getting covid.

However, there are studies showing cannabis can help prevent the virus that causes Covid-19 from infecting healthy cells. For example, in that Bloomberg article, they detail a study produced at the University of Oregon found CBGA and CBDA — two compounds found in cannabis in varying levels — blocked covid from infecting people. However, these compounds break down when heated (in what's called decarboxylation) and would not be found in inhaled smoke.

In fact, the researchers only tested their effects in a laboratory environment. No actual people were involved.

However, in another laboratory setting and in mice and humans, another set of researchers publishing in Science found that CBD inhibits infection, though, notably they found that when THC is present as well the protection is muted. In fact, they found that — contrary to the Oregon study — CBDA and CBGA had no noticeable or helpful effect.

What they did find, though, is that taking a daily dose of 100mg CBD in a 100 milliliter solution "had a significant negative association with positive SARS-CoV-2 tests." But that's all they tested. They caution against using edibles or inhaling smoked flower in trying to get the same effect.

As for CBD and THC as a means to control symptoms, there are as yet no significant studies. Just the experiences of users like us.

TIME TO ORDER YOUR BEANS!



THE VERNAL EQUINOX IN MARCH MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE SUN'S TIME IN ARIES, RULED IN THE NIGHT SKY BY MARS, THE GOD OF ACTION. IT'S TIME FOR EACH OF US TO GET OUR MARS ON, CHANGE THE CLOCKS, AND GO AFTER WHAT WE WANT. MAKING A BACKYARD GROW-PLAN IS A GREAT GET-UP-AND-GO. HERE IN THE STATE OF MAINE, WE HAVE A LOT OF CHOICES AND PLACES TO GATHER SOME BEANS. THE CANNABIZ HIT THE GROUND RUNNING AND WE ARE LIKE KIDS IN A CANDY SHOP!

Of course, it would be awesome to have a bank of beans to pick and choose from without purchasing seeds every growing season. They run about \$10 per seed. Usually, seed orders come 10 seeds in a packet, roughly costing \$100 and up. Some distributors offer 2-5 seeds for about \$20.

Searching online, I fell into a rabbit hole, which presented me with Will Bonsall, a vegetable farmer in Industry, Maine, via an intriguing article in Down East's April 2020 issue. This dude has a stash of the world's rarest heirloom seeds. He's inspirational, saving and sharing his seeds like a good doobie. Yup, he's the quintessential land steward, which in return gifts him with an affluence of satisfaction and a treasure of seeds.

Outdoor growers of outrageous weed, let's be like Bill and collect outrageous weed seeds!

Having only a few seeds left over from last year's purchase, I decided for this upcoming season it would be great to invest in one or, okay, maybe two new strains. Wouldn't having a reserve of various cannabis seeds on hand be much cooler? Collaborating with our outdoor weed-growing friends and encouraging them to share the expense would benefit our economics and support us with a diverse selection.

But I have fantastic news: You don't need a medical marijuana card to buy seeds! Because cannabis seeds do not contain THC. This opens up more options for recreational backyard weed growers.

The following Maine-based shops carry organic-certified cannabis seeds from Humboldt Seed Company/Nymera, a breeder farm in Humboldt County, California, and Westwold, BC (Canada). It is a partnership company that developed Pine State Seeds LLC here in Maine. Looks like Humboldt/Nymera has properties for experimental cultivation here in Maine and so organic supplies of cannabis seed are locally available.



- **Seed and Soil Farm in Monroe**
(These folks are organic growers who distribute their own seed brand and seedlings along with Humboldt/Nymera/ Pine State Seeds and seedlings.)
- **OMG Cannabis Co. in Portland**
- **Theory Wellness in Bangor, South Portland & Waterville**
- **River Driver Cannabis Co. in Brunswick**
- **ORIGINs Cannabis Co. in Manchester**
- **Sweet Relief Shop in Northport**
- **Caniba Naturals in Portland and Farmington**
- **BlueSky in Farmington**
- **Matterhorn Apothecary in Turner**
- **Cannabis Farmers Union in Oxford**

You can find additional cannabis seed brands at these locations here in Maine at:

- **207 Genetics in East Sebago**
(Multiple brands and offers free seeds for any order over \$20!)
- **Cannabis Seed Bank of Maine in Farmington**

To determine which organic bean to sow in your backyard garden, look for seed strains with genetics that have been tried and true to resist the harsh elements that nature can throw at them. Lean towards strains that produce heavy yielding plants with strong roots and thick stalks. No need to get stressed out about the flowering time; any strain that harvests as late as November most likely is fine to grow in the Northeast. However, I'm not writing that in stone. A touch of frost has been known to sweeten the terpenes, and there have been times when weed plants had been harvested after an unexpected snowstorm and thankfully they were fine, but heavy frosts do happen in November.

Cannabis is amongst the most ancient cultivated crops, which tells us cannabis thrives outdoors. Photoperiod strains are intended for outdoor cultivation because the strain relies on natural daylight rhythms to mature flowers for autumn weather, which is a must for growing outrageous weed outdoors.

Feminized seeds are photoperiod and are highly favored outdoors because they are bred to produce flowers that thrive in

natural environments. Definitely use feminized seeds; they are so convenient and productive. The choices are of Indica, Sativa, and hybrid genetics. There are so many choices it can make your head spin or encourage you to practice growing different flavors over a lifetime.

Regular seeds will produce female or male plants, which require a lot of attention. Male plants pollinate surrounding cannabis plants with seed. This is annoying because who wants buds full of seeds? And yet it allows one to reproduce and develop new strains of seeds (which you can use next year).

Landrace seeds are "original" strains that usually have been named after the place they were historically grown. Landrace strains have never been crossbred. You won't find a hybrid landrace; they are either 100% Indica or 100% Sativa. True landrace strains are less potent than the current hybrid strains, which have been bred for higher THC levels.

Finally, there are autoflower seeds, which are not a photoperiod genetic. These plants flower automatically and are likely to flower within 8 weeks of germination, depending on the strain. Some autoflower strains have a higher CBD content and are weaker in THC levels since they may be a crossbreed of Ruderalis/Indica/Sativa. Ruderalis is high in CBD and has low to no THC.

Autoflower cannot be cloned or pruned, they are very sensitive to damage. They are a discreet dwarf weed plant, which is great if you want to hide them on your patio. Autoflower cannabis plants yield less than a photoperiod weed plant, but you get smokable flower a lot quicker.

You can also avoid seeds altogether and buy clones, so you don't have to focus on timing the seed germination, making it easy for last-minute planting. However, clones are more susceptible to disease and pests, not knowing the exactitude of their journey, and they tend to lose their potency over time since they are a cutting off the mother plant. Clones also have no tap root system, which can make it difficult to support the weight of a heavy yield.

Growing seedlings from seeds allows the grower to have a complete understanding of its roots, is less expensive, and will harvest a larger yield.

Weed has been bred outdoors forever; most strains are intended to grow outdoors, so don't sweat it. Enjoy picking and choosing your beans to practice your craft of growing outrageous weed outdoors.

And Yay! Spring is here!



POUR SOME SUGAR ON ME

WHAT GOOD IS MAPLE SYRUP WITHOUT PANCAKES, FRENCH TOAST, AND WAFFLES?

Old-school, local diners are a vital part of the Maine cultural experience. But they are dying out. The pandemic, especially, has been hard on the restaurant business, and without to-go cocktails or big-ticket items to keep them afloat, and with it increasingly difficult to find staff, many of Maine's out-of-the-way diners are going out of business for good.

In Gray, one of Maine's more iconic spots, Cole Farms, closed up shop last year. In South Portland, the 66-year-old Uncle Andy's called it quits in 2020. Same thing with Bangor's Fabulous Nicky's Cruisin Diner, which had 33 years under its belt. All of them cited a combo package of covid, staffing, and being too old for this shit.

And these are only the spots that make the news. How many small towns throughout the state have lost their local gathering spots without any news organization around to pay attention? How many formica counters and red-pleather cushions are gathering dust, waiting for a renovation that may never come? These spots are vital to small-town culture, not all that different from the town dump as places where information is disseminated and acquaintances maintained and renewed.

Of course, diners are pretty central to beer and weed culture, too. There are few places in the world where you will find less judgement for whatever you happened to get up to last night than a diner, where the refills on the coffee are always plentiful and the waitstaff pays no attention to what your hair looks like

right now. Are the buttons on your flannel in the right holes? Some schmutz on your pants? Don't worry: They've seen worse.

This March, when we all have the coming spring and fresh maple syrup on the mind, make an effort to get out to someplace in Maine you've never been and hit a diner to fuel up before going exploring. There's always likely to be something on the menu that will taste even better when smothered in syrup and you just might learn something about the local culture along the way.

Everyone knows eavesdropping in a diner is fair game. If you're solo, sit at the bar and make an effort to comment to your neighbor or join an ongoing conversation. If you're with a partner or friends, have a chat with a table across the way about something you found in the paper this morning (maybe avoid talking covid or politics, though — up to you). And never forget to ask the waitstaff how they're doing; they've always got some kind of good story for you if things aren't too busy.

Even better: Take the time to ask for local recommendations. No one knows a good spot to let loose like the waitstaff at a diner. If there's a secret beach, trail, or drinking spot in the area, they've likely got a line on it and will share their thoughts if you ask nicely.

Regardless, tip everyone heavily. If you're reading this mag, you can afford it.

And while you're in town, hit a local brewery or dispensary that happens to be nearby. That way you'll really get a flavor for the place.

MAINE DINER

2265 Post Rd., Wells
207-646-4441
<https://mainediner.com/>

Open daily at 7 a.m., there are few diners in Maine more iconic and well-known beyond Maine as Maine Diner, which tends to show up when New York media types make their way up here in the summer. Started by Socrates "Louie" Toton back in the 1940s, this place stays authentic by continuing to keep up the one-acre kitchen garden that was Toton's pride and joy. With fresh veggies coming through the omelettes in the summer, it's almost worth fighting with the tourists for a seat. But if you're a Mainer and want a more leisurely pace, you might try this place out first when it's off-season.

● BATSON FISH CAMP WELLS

73 Mile Rd., Wells
<https://batsonriver.com/wells-maine/>

We don't have a phone number yet, because this location wasn't all the way open as of this writing, but there's a good chance it's open by the time you're reading this. The former Hidden Cove Brewing Company, Batson River purchased this location and is renovating it to feature its brewing operations, with a tap room, brewery tours, and limited-release bottles and cans. And look for a casual, outdoorsy experience.

★ NATURE'S MIRACLE [MEDICAL]

161 Ogunquit Rd., South Berwick
207-752-6694
<http://naturesmiraclemaine.com/>

One of the few medical dispensaries where everything sold in the shop is created on site, from the flower to the edibles to the distillates, this is a place wholly invested in cannabis' medical potential. They've got Rick Simpson Oil at \$60 a gram if you or a loved one is in need of some serious attention, but they've also got less powerful ice cream and other treats, pain salve for those with sore muscles or arthritis — even "women's sexual enhancement spray."

MARCY'S DINER

87 Oak St., Portland
207-774-9713
<https://marcysdiner.com/>

As cozy as diners get, you definitely have to cross your fingers if making your way to this Portland nook. Open from just 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays through Sundays, at the moment they go take-out only if it's raining because it's unfair to make people wait outside in the wet for so long. But if you can time it just right, there's always something good on the radio, the Oreo and cream-filled pancakes are straight fire, and you'll never leave disappointed.

● LIQUID RIOT BOTTLING COMPANY

250 Commercial St., Portland
207-756-4454
<https://liquidriot.com/>

There aren't a lot of places where you'll find a greater variety of housemade booze, as Liquid Riot is a full restaurant with on-site brewed beer on tap, in cans, and in bottles, plus its own distilled bourbon, whiskey, rum, and vodka. Oh, and bierschnaps. Who has bierschnaps? You've got to try it. Right at the open of Portland's bustling Commercial Street, you can start and end a night here if you plan it right.

★ STAGE CANNABIS

5 Spring St., Portland
<https://stagecannabis.com/>

Located in the spot where one of Portland's few gay nightspots used to host drag shows and big-time DJs, Stage pays homage by casting its cannabis in a musical costume. Hit their web site for curated playlists designed to go with any intended experience, and their signature THC beverage, Paloma, looks a whole lot like the High Life you might want out on the lawn at a hot summer music festival.

GOOD & PLENTY DINER

53 Main St., Anson
207-696-1049
<http://good-plenty-diner.edan.io/>

Just before you get to the bridge over the Madison, and just across the street from the big old mill that doesn't quite run like it used to, the Good & Plenty is a great spot to hit before finding some fun on the Kennebec, where the kayaking and fishing is first rate. If you're a golfer, the nearby Diadema nine-holer is one of Maine's best-kept secrets. They're only open 6 a.m. to noon, though, so make sure your brunch plans don't run too late.

★ GARDENGIRL420 [MEDICAL]

282 Village Rd., Smithfield
207-362-2080
<https://www.gardengirl420llc.com/>

Nestled right in the middle of East Pond, Great Pond, and the Narrows, this is a hidden gem on the way to find other hidden gems. If you've got your medical card, there are some fun outdoor strains to be had here, from old-school Northern Lights to Purple Urkle, and at prices that will let you do some experimenting. And if you get lucky, they'll have some raspberry Bismarcks warm and waiting for you.

● OAK POND BREWERY

101 Oak Pond Rd., Skowhegan
207-474-3233
<https://oakpondbrewery.com/>

Among the few women-owned breweries in Maine, owner Nancy Chandler and son Adam are eager to show off how they do things, with frequent brewery tours that go heavy on the education. This time of year, you'll want to try the Laughing Loon Lager, available from St. Pat's to Labor Day, a Munich Dunkel-style lager full of chocolate malts.

KEY: ● BEER | ★ WEED



- 1 **MAINE DINER**
2265 POST RD., WELLS
- 2 **MARCY'S DINER**
87 OAK ST., PORTLAND
- 3 **GOOD & PLENTY DINER**
53 MAIN ST., ANSON
- 4 **CROSSROADS DINER**
24 MAYVILLE RD., BETHEL
- 5 **JEANNIE'S GREAT MAINE BREAKFAST**
15 COTTAGE ST., BAR HARBOR



LISTINGS FEATURE

◀ FROM PAGE 29
CROSSROADS DINER

24 Mayville Rd., Bethel
207-824-3673
Nope, no website.

Maybe not your classic diner in the strictest sense — New York-style pizza? — but they never miss with their breakfast menu and people who like corned beef hash say this place knocks it out of the park. And it's definitely a spot where you can bring the whole family; no one's going to notice your screaming kids over the general good-times atmosphere.

● **STEAM MILL BREWERY**
96 Sunday River Rd., Bethel
207-824-1149
<https://www.steammillbrew.com/>

This place is jammed every time we stop in, one of the fastest-growing breweries in Western Maine. They seem to have a lot of fun. They recently launched their Pride Beer with a drag show featuring Cherry Lemonade and Gigi Gabor — with 8% of sales going to OUTMAINE. Look for live music Thursdays through Sundays and a large list of rotating brews.

★ **THC MEDCO**
119 Skiway Rd., Newry
207-824-0420
<https://thcmedco.com/>

It's hard to think of a more convenient adult-use location for skiers visiting Sunday River. Nestled right inside the Bark-ing Dog grocery store, you can grab your beverages, snacks, and pre-rolls all in one place. Talk about one-stop-shopping! With a variety of brands on-hand, you'll find something you like, but the budtenders say the Gele stuff is worth the extra spend.

JEANNIE'S GREAT MAINE BREAKFAST
15 Cottage St., Bar Harbor
207-288-4166
<https://www.jeanniesbreakfast.com/>

We mean, their commitment to their craft is right there in the title. Obviously, Bar Harbor is a tourist disaster in the summer, which explains the "Sign up for our Wait-list" button on the website, but if you get yourself up there before May 1, you should be alright. They're committed to being open by sunrise, so get there early, order some of Betty's famous blueberry pancakes, and get your day started right.

● **FOGTOWN BREWING COMPANY**
33 Cottage St., Bar Harbor
207-801-9165
<https://www.fogtownbrewing.com/bar-harbor-location>

Open for the season as of March 4, this is one of the newest spots in Bar Harbor, opened as a second location to match Fogtown's flagship in Ellsworth. Don't worry: They brought a similar vibe with them. These folks love live music, never get too pretentious, and always deliver 18 taplines of interesting varietals. If you're lucky, they'll even be running a vax clinic so you can grab your booster while you sip.

★ **MERISTEM**
11 Seal Cove Rd., Southwest Harbor
207-244-8789
<https://themeristem.com/>

The very first adult-use retail outlet in Hancock County, this is the closest weed shop to Acadia National Park and the only joint on Mount Desert Island, so you can expect a brisk business in the summer time. Here in the spring, you should be able to leisurely peruse the wares, featuring locally grown strains — this place is so new, that's really all we know!

KEY: ● BEER | ★ WEED

SELLING MAPLE BY THE POUND

WORDS / BRANT DADALEARES

Sure, you can go to a Maine Maple Sunday event this month and stock up on pancake and waffle topping, but Maine's sweetest agricultural product is good for a lot more than simply slathering breakfast items. Before cane sugar was widely available, maple was the sweetener of choice for much of North America, and by combining maple sugar and syrup in this pound cake, you can be sure it packs quite the maple-sweet punch.

It might be counterintuitive, given their native origins are thousands of miles apart, but maple and ripe persimmon are a great combo package of flavors. In Maine, you might have to make do with whatever you have available, but for this recipe I recommend the Fuyu persimmon over the Hachiya, as I've found it to have the perfect sweetness and crunchiness to eat fresh or even sprinkle with a bit of turbinado and caramelize the slices slightly with a torch — should you have one handy.

And I'll pass along this tip I learned from a friend who picked it up from his grandmother: The old schoolers used to remove the cake from the oven, let it cool for a few minutes, then wrap it well in aluminum foil and put it in the freezer for a few hours. It makes the pound cake insanely moist as it traps all the steam into the cake as it cools.

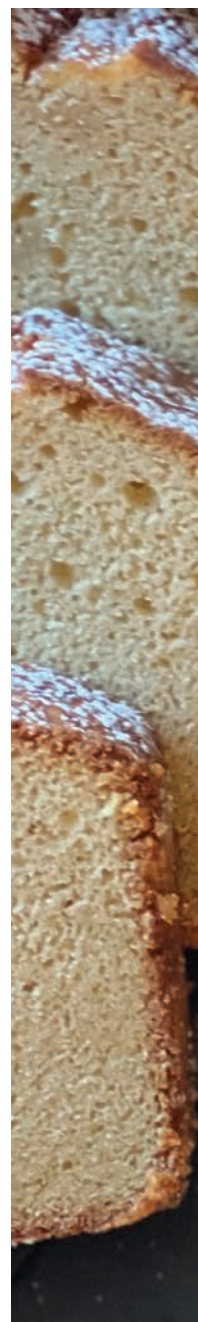
Ingredients:

154g. unsalted butter
92g. sugar
68g. maple sugar
174g. maple syrup
150g. eggs (roughly 3)
211g. all-purpose flour
2.5g. baking powder
5g. salt
113g. milk

Directions:

For this recipe, it is imperative that all the ingredients are at room temperature for best mixing, so start by scaling all the ingredients out and letting them stand at room temperature for a couple hours before making the cake.

When you're ready to begin in earnest, preheat the oven to 325°F and position the oven rack to the center of the oven. Then butter and sugar a 9"x4"x3" loaf cake pan and set it in the fridge.



MAPLE POUND CAKE WITH FRESH PERSIMMON

YIELD: SIX SERVINGS

In a bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt and set aside.

Now set up a Kitchenaid mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and add the butter and both sugars to the bowl. Begin creaming the butter and sugars on speed 5 for about 5 minutes, then increase the speed to 8 and mix for an additional 3 minutes.

Once that's done, remove the bowl and paddle and, using a rubber spatula, scrape down both very well, then reassemble and mix again for an additional 5 minutes, or until the butter is very light and fluffy. Now scrape down the bowl and paddle again, reassemble, and begin mixing again on speed 5 while slowly drizzling in the maple syrup. Once all the syrup is added, scrape down the bowl once again.

While mixing, add the eggs one at a time, allowing each egg to incorporate fully before adding the next egg. Thoroughly scrape down the bowl again.

Now, with the mixer on low speed, add one third of the dry ingredients, followed by one third of the milk. Continue mixing in the dry and wet ingredients in two more additions, ending with the dry. The batter may look a bit broken, but do not fret, it will come together when baked.

Pull your prepared pan out of the fridge and pour in the batter, then put it in the pre-heated oven for 30 minutes. For a nice even texture, spin the cake after that and bake for an additional 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean.

Remove cake from the oven and let cool for 10 minutes before inverting onto a cooling rack to cool completely. Or, if you've got the patience, do like grandma and wrap the still-warm cake in foil and pop it in the freezer for a few hours.

When it's ready, slice and serve with unsweetened whipped cream and fresh ripe Fuyu persimmon.

Brant Dadaleares is the founder and owner of Gross Confection Bar, which features a bakery, dessert restaurant, and bar in Portland's Old Port. Find it at www.GrossConfectionBar.com.



I READ ALL THESE BOOKS SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A READER. IN SECOND GRADE, I REMEMBER TRIUMPHANTLY WALKING OUT OF THE SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR WITH TWO GOOSEBUMPS CHAPTER BOOKS. THESE BOOKS WERE THICK (THICC?) FOR SECOND GRADE. I SPENT THE WHOLE CUSTODY-EXCHANGE CAR RIDE FROM SPRINGFIELD, MA, TO MAINE THAT FRIDAY EVENING READING ABOUT A WEREWOLF AT A SUMMER CAMP. I FINISHED IT BY MONDAY AND I WAS HOOKED. I'VE BEEN READING THICK-ASS BOOKS EVER SINCE.

These days, I mostly read as medicine. The real world often drives me to sleeplessness. I can have a great day and then at night, when my head meets my pillow, I plunge into anxiety (especially if I just smoked a bunch of weed). All my insecurities, worries, and fears unite to produce a scary movie in my head until I mercifully fall asleep. I don't like it. So to avoid it, I often transport myself out of the present — and sometimes even out of the planet — by reading books on my phone in bed.

As a result of my escapism, I have read a bunch of books. I know not everybody has the time or interest to read books, so I figured I'd tell you some shit I learned from books in the last year to save you the trouble. Here's four things I learned recently from books:

1. In reading Dave Grohl's memoir, "Storyteller," I learned that Grohl (legendary frontman of the Foo Fighters, documentarian, and obviously the fucking drummer in Nirvana) almost joined Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers instead of releasing the first Foo Fighters album. A year or so after Kurt Cobain died, Petty invited Grohl to fill in as a drummer for two songs on Saturday Night Live. It went so well that Petty invited Grohl to join the band full time and go on tour. He was interested, but ultimately decided he wanted to see if his solo music would work out. Turns out it did. This whole book is pretty interesting especially if you're a fan of Nirvana, the Foos, or rock history in general (Paul McCartney, AC/DC, and Pantera all make appearances).

2. Since I'm a big nerd, I just finished reading "Ahsoka," a Star Wars book by E.H. Johnston. Ahsoka, if you aren't a nerd, is a bad-ass Jedi who is getting her own live action TV series soon but has otherwise shown up in animated Star Wars shows and "The Mandalorian." It was great. I like reading Star Wars

stuff because I know the parameters. It's all gotta fit within the Star Wars brand they created with the films. The sex is all off camera, they can't say "fuck" (although I would love to see a Tarantino Star Wars movie with many fucks in it), and occasionally there's planetary genocide. The books fall within these same guidelines. Usually the violence is described vaguely or seen from afar. In this book, however, a dude gets sliced in half down the middle in front of kids. So, that was pretty hardcore for Star Wars.

3. In "The Meaning of Mariah Carey," by singer and lord of Christmas Mariah Carey, I learned that Mariah Carey used to drive around with Cam'ron and Dip Set late at night in New York City after she left her abusive relationship to bang Derek Jeter. I'm pretty sure that's how it went. Either way, glad she got out of abusive, controlling relationship with her first husband because fuck that guy (record executive Tommy Mottola).

4. In "Stillness Is The Key," by self-help guru Ryan Holliday, he says the three things you should do everyday to achieve inner peace and clarity ("stillness") are: do some sort of physical activity, go for a walk in nature with no phone, and write down what you did everyday in a journal to reflect on your choices, successes, and mistakes. I have followed this advice several times for about three days before I fuck up and forget to do one of those things.

”

That was pretty hardcore for Star Wars.

Hopefully this valuable information I've gleaned from my books saves you hours of reading and enriches your life. Thanks for reading. Also, if you do read books feel free to hit me up on Twitter @spizzyspose to send me book recommendations because the world isn't getting any less worrisome anytime soon.

bw WORDS / SPOSE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

beer&weed.
MAGAZINE : MAINE

PINT & PUFF

SUBSCRIBER APPRECIATION EVENT

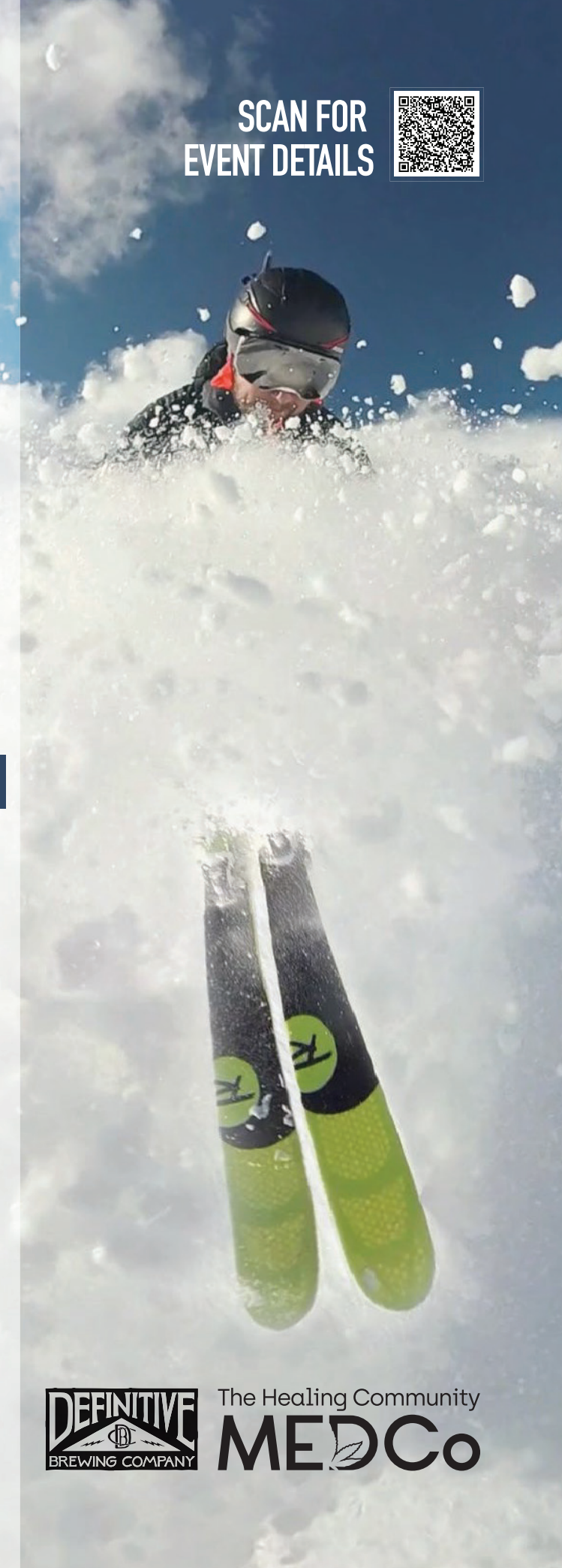
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