

# savor

## THE GORGE

*A celebration of fresh, local food*

### **A Strawberry Story**

Dead-cool party strawberries

### **Cooking With Kids**

Puff Pastry Pizza

### **At Home in the Orchard**

Hood River U-Pick Organic

S U M M E R 2 0 1 8

Who's your  
**FARMER**  
INSIDE

# Why Buy Local?



IF 20% OF THE FOOD WE EAT WAS PURCHASED DIRECTLY FROM A LOCAL FARMER, WE'D KEEP *\$9.6 million* EXTRA IN THE GORGE  
When you buy local food, you invest in our community.

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## SUMMER 2018

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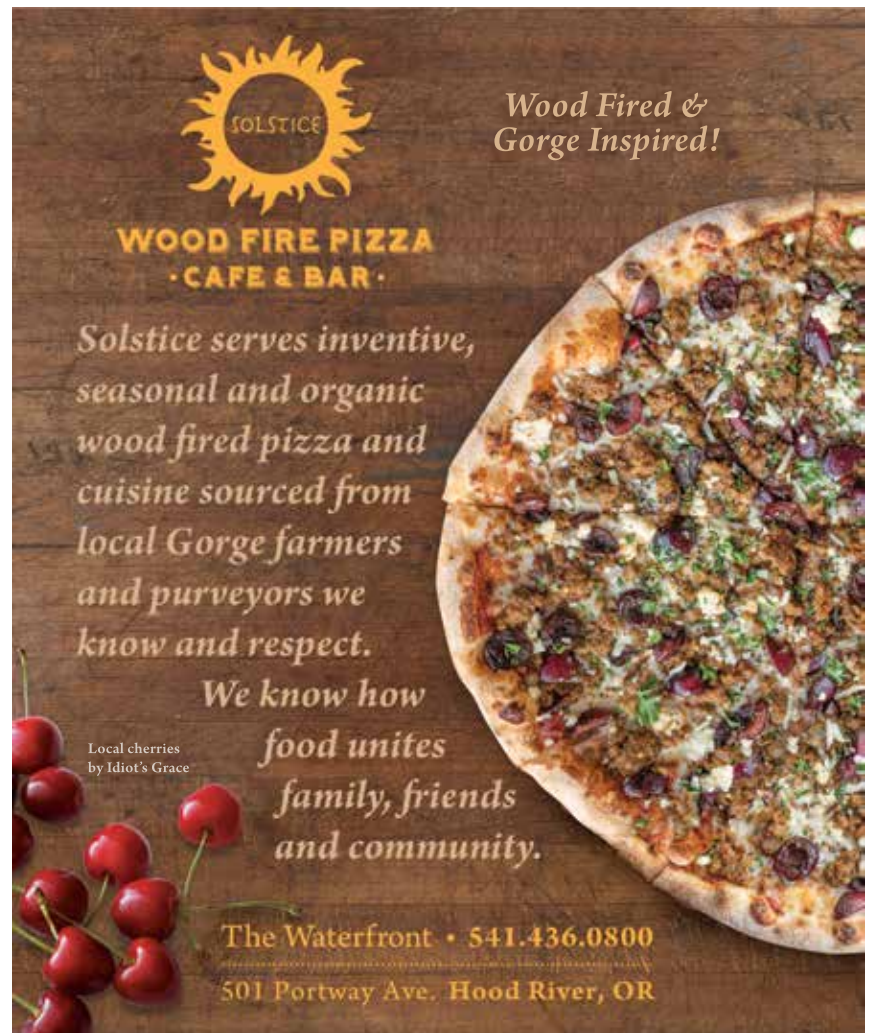
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The Dalles Chronicle, 315 Federal Street  
The Dalles, Oregon 97058



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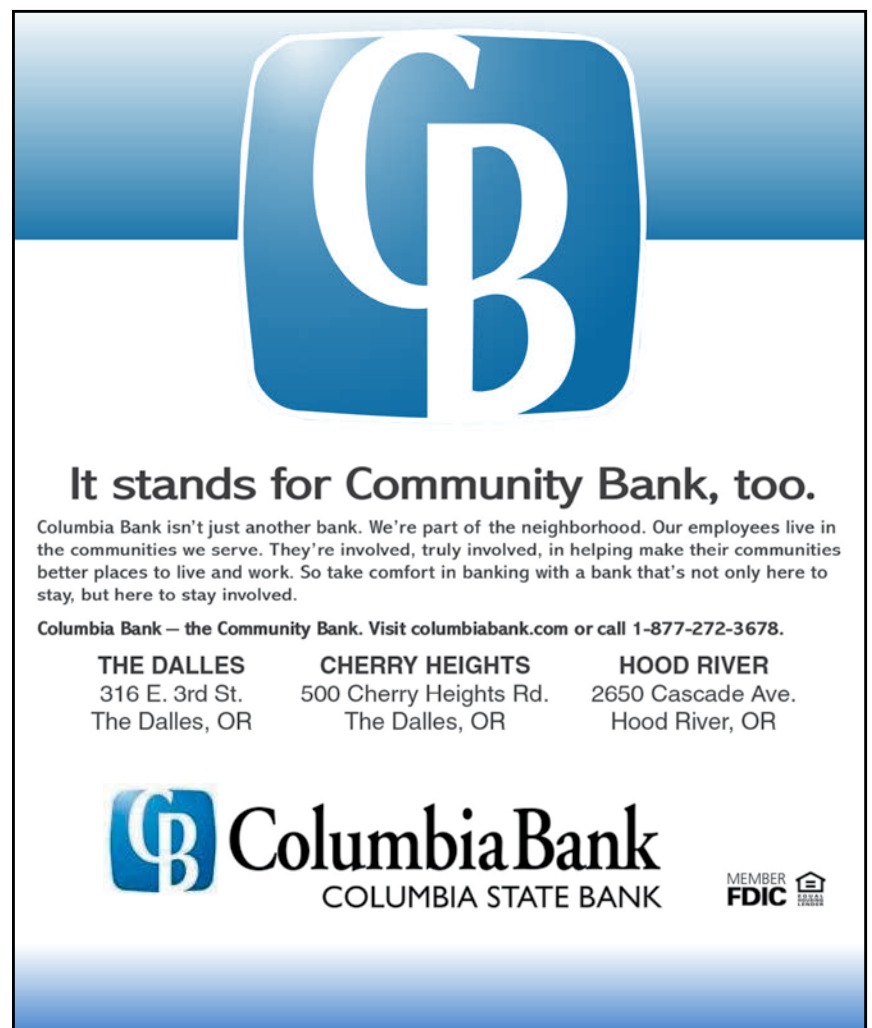
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*We know how food unites family, friends and community.*

Local cherries  
by Idiot's Grace

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# editors Note

When I was growing up in Colorado, we had a few flowerbeds around our house but we grew nothing remotely edible. This was partly because we lived in the mountains and any kind of vegetable garden would have required hefty fencing to keep out the wild critters, but mostly because my mom grew up on a farm in Iowa and by the time she left home, she wanted

nothing to do with growing food. The grocery store was her friend. I'm only half-joking when I say that as a kid, I thought vegetables came into existence in the produce aisle of King Soopers.

By the time I had my own first home here in Hood River, I was much more tuned in to the local food movement. During a visit from my parents one spring years ago, my dad helped me build a couple of simple raised beds in our backyard. It was my first foray into vegetable gardening, and by the time I was plucking lettuce leaves from my plants and tomatoes off my vines a couple of months later, I was hooked. I've since moved and now have six raised beds, where I grow a variety of veggies and herbs as well as strawberries and tomatoes. Happily, my kids not only know where their produce comes from, they help pick it right from our garden.

Rachel Suits from the OSU Hood River and Wasco County Extension Service offers a primer on starting your own home garden (page 14). As she conveys — and I can attest from experience — it's pretty easy and very rewarding. Suits provides some basics and also notes that the local Master Gardeners are a great resource for providing guidance and helping solve gardening problems.

Lori Middleton has taken her experience in growing edible things to the next level (page 12). Her Hood River U-Pick Organic farm is a favorite summer destination of locals and visitors for its abundant cherries. The farm, on Hood River's west side, also has raspberries, heirloom tomatoes, flowers and, in the fall, Honeycrisp apples.

In celebration of yet another of summer's delights, Lindsay Gott writes a fun story about one of her favorite strawberry recipes (page 8). And, for the long summer days when you're looking for a quick dinner, Kacie McMackin offers an easy recipe for pizza — with a twist (page 10).

In this issue you'll also find a listing of all of the Gorge farmers' markets as well as information on FISH Food Bank's Summer Lunch Program, which provides free lunches to kids in Hood River twice a week from the end of July through August (page 6).

Whether summer finds you working in your own garden or simply enjoying what others in the Gorge grow, we wish abundance for you.

—Janet Cook



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FARMERS' MARKETS  
OF THE COLUMBIA  
RIVER GORGE

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Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm  
5th and Columbia parking lot,  
downtown

**MERCADO DEL VALLE**  
June thru October  
First and third Thursdays, 4 to 7 pm  
Atkinson Drive, downtown Odell

**MOSIER**  
Third week of June thru second  
week of October  
Sundays, 10 am to 1 pm  
First Street, downtown Mosier

**MT. HOOD TOWN HALL**  
June thru September  
Second Thursday each month,  
4 to 7 pm  
6575 Highway 35, Mt. Hood

**THE DALLES**  
June thru second week of October  
Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm  
City Park, Union and E. 5th Street

**GOLDENDALE**  
May thru first week of October  
Saturdays, 9 am to 2 pm  
Ekone Park, Broadway and  
Wilbur streets

**STEVENSON**  
Mid-June thru first week of October  
Saturdays, 10 am to 1 pm  
199 2nd Street

**WHITE SALMON**  
Third week of June thru first  
week of October  
Tuesdays, 4 to 7 pm  
White Salmon's City Park

**KLICKITAT SUMMER MARKET**  
June 30, July 28, August 25,  
September 29  
9:30 am to 1:30 pm  
Depot Park

more information at [gorgegrown.org](http://gorgegrown.org)

fresh  
BITES

**Free Summer Lunch Program**  
FISH Food Bank's Summer Lunch Program will run for five weeks this year, Tuesdays and Thursdays from July 30 through Aug. 30. The program will run during the weeks after the Hood River County School District's summer school and lunch program. Free lunch will be served from 11:30-12:30 at Indian Creek Apartments and Hood River Mobile Manor. All children age 1-18 are eligible for a free meal. Participating restaurants are Boda's Kitchen, Divots Restaurant, Pine Street Bakery, and Taqueria Los Amigos.  
Vouchers will be available to kids for a meal on the weekends. Kids in Hood River can redeem vouchers at either New York City Sub Shop or Pine Street Bakery for a specific meal. Voucher meals will be available to kids in Cascade Locks and Odell more than once per week. By redeeming vouchers, kids will receive a

complete meal through either Columbia Market in Cascade Locks or Taqueria Los Amigos.  
Hood River Dairy Queen, Hood River Dental and Mike's Ice Cream are donating goods for this program. In addition, grants for the program have come from Hood River Elks Foundation, Hood River Lions Foundation Trust, The Joan Burchell Fund of the Gorge Community Foundation, May Street Elementary PTO,

and Oregon Department of Education. Gently used books will be passed out to kids on Tuesdays at each location.  
For more information or to volunteer or donate books, contact Katie Haynie ([ekhaynie@gmail.com](mailto:ekhaynie@gmail.com)) or Marianne Brevard ([mariannebrevard@yahoo.com](mailto:mariannebrevard@yahoo.com)).



Produce by Season in the Gorge S U M M E R 2 0 1 8

Apples	Cabbage	Garlic	Onions	Salad Greens
Apricots	Carrots	Gooseberries	Peaches	Shallots
Basil	Cauliflower	Herbs	Peas	Spinach
Green Beans	Chard	Kale	Pears	Squash
Beets	Cherries	Kohlrabi	Peppers	Strawberries
Blackberries	Corn	Marionberries	Plums	Sweet Potato
Broccoli	Cucumbers	Melons	Potatoes	Tomatoes
Brussels Sprouts	Eggplant	Mushrooms	Radishes	Turnips
Boysenberries	Edamame	Nectarines	Rhubarb	Zucchini



# 6 reasons to support your local farmer

## FRESH TASTE AND VARIETY

Produce picked and eaten at the height of ripeness has exceptional flavor and is packed with nutrients. Also, local farm products are chosen for the best flavor, not for their ability to withstand extended travel.

## SUPPORTS THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Buying locally keeps your money circulating within your community, supporting economic prosperity in the Columbia Gorge.

## SUPPORTS FAMILY FARMERS

Family farmers who sell their products through national and international distribution chains receive little profit due to the cost of transport and advertising. When you buy from local farmers, the farmer receives a larger portion of the food dollar.

## PROTECTS OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND

Economically viable farms are a necessity if we are to keep the pastoral views of the Columbia Gorge. Supporting local farms helps ensure that the beautiful farmland surrounding our communities will remain into the future.

## BUILDS COMMUNITY

When you buy directly from the farmer, you have the opportunity to ask about their farming practices or just socialize over a juicy ripe peach or a fresh ear of corn.

## PROTECTS NATURAL RESOURCES

Food traveling through our current distribution system is resource intensive. The average food item grown and eaten in the United States has traveled 1500 miles.



### Mobile Farmers' Market

The Gorge Grown Food Network Mobile Farmers' Market is hitting the road with fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables. The Mobile Market makes stops in Cascade Locks, Hood River, Lyle, Wash., Moro and Wasco all summer long.

"The goal of the Mobile Farmers' Market is to make fresh locally grown produce more accessible to everyone, strengthen our local food system, and support small farmers throughout the Gorge," says Silvan Shawe, Gorge Grown's food access coordinator. This project, which was originally started in 2008, operates out of "Pippin," a refrigerated van that serves as a farmers' market on wheels.

Every week, the selection will vary as local produce comes into season, with each item picked at its peak, making it more nutritious and flavorful, as well as keeping better than produce that travels an average of 1,500 miles before making its way to grocery stores. The Mobile Farmers' Market is also working with rural restaurants, schools, small stores, Hawks Ridge Assisted Living and others to increase the availability of local produce.

"Partnering with Gorge Grown has been a win all around for our residents, our chef's healthy meal plan, for the neighborhood and for local farmers," says Victoria Cauldwell, marketing director at Hawks Ridge. "We couldn't have asked for more."



The Mobile Farmers' Market accepts cash, checks, Veggie Rx and WIC, as well as Senior Farmers' Market Vouchers. The Mobile Farmers' Market makes the following stops throughout summer:

#### Cascade Locks

Sundays, 11am – 1pm  
Cascade Locks Farmers Market /  
Brigham Fish Market (681 Wa Na Pa Street)

#### Hood River

Fridays, 2pm – 3pm  
Hawks Ridge on the Heights (8th &  
Pacific Avenue)

#### Lyle

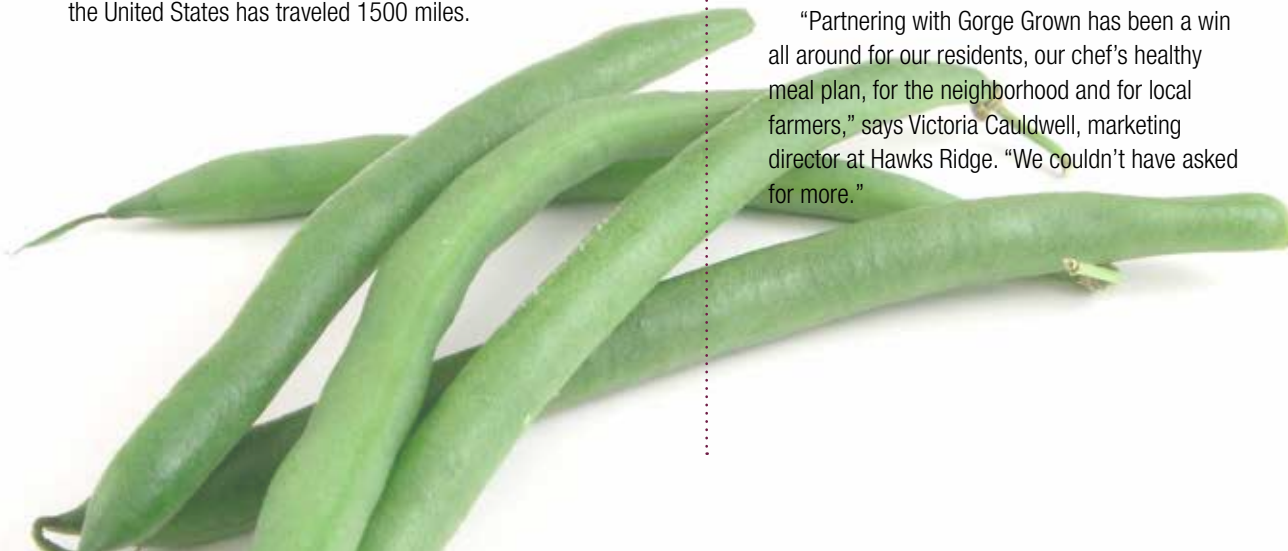
Fridays, 4pm – 6pm  
French's Farm Nursery (620 State Street)

#### Moro

1st Saturdays, 10am – 1pm  
Sherman County Farmers Market  
(Main Street)

#### Wasco

1st Saturdays, 2pm – 4pm  
The Depot (Clark Street)





# *freeform kitchen* a strawberry story

BY LINDSAY GOTT

If your reality rarely lives up to your expectations, spring is your opportunity to feel rewarded for managing your disappointments gracefully during the rest of the year. As our valley, both dramatic and bucolic, sheds its dreary attitude and reveals its true calling, we are infused with a sense of promise and potential. We can see and feel that, if nothing else, life is about to get a whole lot tastier.

It is really our only guarantee in life — the sun will rise and spring will come. This perennial truth offers deliverance but also the risk of disappointment lest we squander its gifts. I have more grasshopper than ant in me than I would like to admit, but my biggest worry is missing out on flavor. I'm sure I'm not alone when I look back at the end of June and think, *Oh no, I never made strawberry shortcake!* This thought can depress me more than the tenth in a string of cold, rainy afternoons in January.

One of the virtues of fresh, local strawberries is that they deliver equal parts panache and soul. I think of them as the Jackie Onassis of fruit. When they are truly ripe and truly fresh, they are shiny like polished chrome, a bright cheery red,

and are both resplendent and darling in their micro polka dots and Sunday-best hat. When sliced or quartered, they delight you with their display of ingenious organic design. Other berries can start to feel like one-trick ponies in comparison (cough... blueberries...cough cough).

My appreciation for perhaps the most beloved berry did not begin in childhood like it probably did for most. I thought strawberries were supposed to taste like the Smuckers jam that was smeared on my Wonder bread PB-and-J sandwiches (hey, it was Pittsburgh in the '70s). Instead, it began when I was first playing adult. I was fresh out of college and had landed a job at a big advertising agency in San Francisco. Never did I feel more like a fraud and a hero in the same moment than in my first few years at FCB making television commercials for Clorox bleach products.

One weekend, our team of grunts and client hand-holders was invited up to our creative director's weekend home in Sonoma County for a team-building sort of affair. Although our CD, Kenny, was probably well into his sixties at the time, he had the kind of cool that just could not be helped. He would ride into work in his Jag, the head of his Rhodesian Ridgeback sticking out of the sunroof like Dino from the Flintstones. He parked illegally on the curb and never got a ticket. He had his own personal espresso machine in his office — which, in the '90s, was novel.

He was rumored to have a rich and storied history in "real" advertising in New York City. He even claimed the popular 'got milk?' campaign was his idea. A rival agency was producing the campaign at the time, but I believed him. Because,

even though he was hawking toilet cleanser and steel wool pot scrubbers, he could rattle off stories of hanging with Bowie at Studio 54 and once told me he knew I wore cotton underpants just by the look in my eye.

So the normal awkwardness one might feel when being forced to socialize on your precious day off with people who were way cooler than you and toyed with you as a form of entertainment on slow days, was at eleven on the dial.

Despite my junior status at the agency, I felt, after merely a year of overspending at the city's farmer's markets and dining on expense accounts, like a budding food aficionado. I was in the middle of an awakening — far from cynical but no longer easily impressed. This I knew at the time and still believe: David Bowie himself can show up at your party with a tall drink of supermodel on his arm, but people will recall it with lackluster and think of you simply as social climber if the food you serve is "meh."

So I went in with both a feeling of unworthiness and my inner critic on full charge. The setting delivered, all the way down to the hand-crocheted alpaca-yarn hammock swinging between the bay leaf trees. It was a shingled "cabin" that could have commanded a feature in *Architectural Digest* as easily as one titled "Cozy Wine Country Hideaways" in *Sunset Magazine*. And the food, I wish I could report otherwise, was phenomenal in that way that some cooks and entertainers have of making it all seem totally remarkable and completely effortless. (Are people born with this?)



After attending a world-class cooking school, interning at Chez Panisse, and having several of my own food businesses, I now know that there is no great professionally guarded trade secret or recessive gene behind this. You simply let the ingredients do the work for you. In other words, using exceptional ingredients and letting them shine will notch your cooking (and perhaps your reputation) up ten levels compared to a fancy recipe with a novel presentation that is made with mediocre ones. The reality has to meet the expectation or people walk away feeling indulged but unfulfilled.

The dessert Kenny and his wife served that day crosses the “T” on this point. It was a huge earthenware bowl filled to overflowing with straight-from-the-field local strawberries. No accompanying bowls even. You were to pick them out with your fingers, savoring one at a time. And when you did, you discovered not just their juicy, sweet perfection, but also a little surprise that you wouldn’t have guessed they would benefit from. It still strikes me today as a fitting tribute and treatment of this universally beloved fruit.

For the next few weeks, opportunities abound to get yourself some deliciousness — the kind that shows up for a fleeting, rapturous moment. Your taste memories need to be replenished lest they fade completely, and you certainly deserve a break from mediocrity. That is a big reason why we live here, after all. If you can’t make it to the u-pick fields, make it to the farmers’ market. Find the

biggest bowl you have, invite a bunch of friends (or rock stars, what-have-you) over, and give this #nonrecipe a try.

**DEAD-COOL PARTY  
STRAWBERRIES  
A LA KENNY DUDWICK**

1 to 2 pounds of freshly picked strawberries that are ripe but on the firm side (They can be picked up to one day before you will serve them. Keep out of the refrigerator if possible.)

1/2 cup of Cointreau liqueur  
Handling your berries very gently, lightly rinse them to remove any sand. Let dry in a cool place over paper towels. Refrigerate if they are on the verge of mushy, but bring them back to room temperature before serving.

Place them in a shallow container, sprinkle the Cointreau over them and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Toss very gently a few times, every hour or so. They should macerate in the Cointreau for at least 2 hours and up to 6.

Remove them with washed hands to your serving bowl or platter, pouring off any extra liqueur (er...into a glass reserved just for you and your foodie bestie).

Supply some large paper napkins for guests to wipe the boozy juice off their chins and fingertips.

(A separate bowl with unmacerated fruit is a must if there are kids around.)



**Lindsay Gott is a local foodie and irrepressible entrepreneur. Her latest venture is a gift basket business featuring Gorge products exclusively: Basquette.com. She also blogs at: amoozboosh.com.**



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# cooking with kids

As spring transitions to summer, I find myself gravitating toward easier meals. I prefer to spend as much time outside soaking up the Vitamin D as possible while the sun is shining. We're often out all day playing and adventuring, and come home with just a little time to whip up dinner.

One thing we love to make is puff pastry "pizzas." Using pre-made puff pastry as a base for them feels elegant and different, but is really easy. We buy frozen puff pastry and keep it on hand for dinners and desserts. If I know we're going to use it, or we have a busy day on the horizon, I transfer it from the freezer to the refrigerator for it to slowly thaw for several hours and it's ready when we need it.

The kids absolutely love making their own pizzas, and they can't get enough of the flaky, buttery crust. One thing that's really fabulous about these pizzas is how versatile they are. I generally avoid

using a tomato based sauce and opt for a garlic-olive oil base (see recipe below). They can be topped with anything: caramelized onions and blue cheese and fresh pear; garlic sauce and cherry tomatoes; fresh mozzarella and fresh summer herbs; roasted garlic, feta, and baby spinach. The variations are endless, and I find that my kids will use anything I put in front of them and eat it happily.

For assembly, I get all the ingredients washed and prepped and put them out on our dining room table. I find the kids bicker less and have more fun when there's more room to move — a small kitchen counter mid-meal prep isn't always the best place for kids to cook and get along. I only put the ingredients on the table that they're meant to use; for example this recipe calls for fresh basil and cherry tomatoes at the end, so I don't put those out when they're working on the base layer of the pizza. Anything that I can do to avoid getting frustrated and saying in exasperation, "NO! You weren't supposed to do that yet!" I find worth doing.

I really love cooking with my kids, and I want them to love cooking with me. Beyond that I want them to love cooking, period. After all, it's a life skill they'll need to use several times a day and if I can instill some basic principles and some enjoyment for it in them now, then I'll feel like I did something good.

## Puff Pastry Pizza with Slivered Garlic, Tomatoes, Basil and Burrata

### Ingredients:

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 5-6 garlic cloves, peeled and very thinly sliced
- 1 cup very finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 2-3 ripe plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
- several ripe cherry tomatoes, halved from top to bottom
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves (leave half, thinly slice half) burrata cheese (or fresh mozzarella), torn into small bits

### Directions:

In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil over low heat, add the thinly sliced garlic. Swirl gently until the garlic becomes fragrant — about 1-2 minutes. Carefully pour the oil into a heatproof dish and allow to cool.

Preheat the oven to 425° F.

Roll the puff pastry out on a parchment lined rimmed baking sheet (frozen puff pastry often comes lined with parchment paper). Spread the garlic oil evenly over the pastry. Top with the Parmesan cheese, plum tomatoes, and some of the basil.

Cook the pizza for 10-15 minutes, until golden brown. Allow it to cool for a few minutes before topping with the fresh basil, cherry tomatoes, and burrata cheese. Enjoy immediately.

**STORY & PHOTOS BY KACIE MCMACKIN**









# at home in the orchard

*With Hood River U-Pick Organic, Lori Middleton lives and works the farm life*

**STORY BY GINGER SHEPHERD. PHOTOS BY LORI MIDDLETON**

Lori Middleton has 7 and a half acres of happiness. Those acres are filled with cherries, apples, flowers, tomatoes and fun. Those acres are also providing a way for Middleton to support her farm and family in the form of Hood River U-Pick Organic.

Middleton bought her farm on Royal Anne Drive because it was filled with beautiful cherry trees and she loved it. She did remove some of the trees, so she could build a home for herself and her two children. But she loved the trees and worked hard to maintain them. She began thinking of a way to make the trees help pay for the farm — and their maintenance — and the answer came from happy childhood memories with her grandfather.

Her grandfather, Keith Middleton, had his own u-pick farm in Michigan, near Detroit. During the summer months, he sold strawberries and

raspberries. He also grew pumpkins. Middleton said she can remember selling those pumpkins as a child and having fun doing it.

“He did it,” she said. “It is in my blood.”

The connection to her grandfather isn’t the only thing that makes the u-pick farm the right business for Middleton. It allows her to involve her children in the endeavor — making it a true family farm and family venture. When she started in 2008, her children were two and four. Now they’re 12 and 14. During the three to four weeks of cherry season, her children are there helping. Her farm is a way to teach the value of hard work.

Hood River U-Pick Organic also lets Middleton be a hostess. When she was growing up her parents ran a restaurant, and she learned the value of customer service and making people feel welcome. When customers arrive at the farm, they find a big tent outside of Middleton’s home. From there, they’re encouraged to explore, pick and enjoy

the space. Middleton has picnic tables and chairs scattered throughout the orchard and visitors are always welcome to bring a blanket. Some spots offer a special double mountain view of Mount Hood to the south and Mount Adams to the north.

“It is peaceful,” she said — even when it’s busy, because everyone can find a spot to relax and enjoy their visit. “It is an escape from the city.” Middleton opens her barn so the pigs and goats can entertain children. It’s popular with children and parents, she said.

“The vibe is very ... it’s special,” Middleton added. In her role as a hostess, Middleton gets to show off her hometown. Most of her customers come from the Portland-Vancouver area and are looking for more things to do in the Gorge. Middleton loves giving her customers recommendations on where to go next on the Fruit Loop and where to eat. She even makes sure that information is available on her website.





The connection with customers during cherry picking season even includes sharing ideas on what to do with the cherries. Middleton grows Bing, Rainier and pie cherries. Many of the people who come to pick already have a plan for the tasty tart treats — like using them in pies or jam, or freezing them. But Middleton wants to know what else people are doing with the cherries, so she puts out a chalkboard asking what people are going to do with their haul. One of the most unique responses she's had was cherry ice cream.

In addition to cherries and Middleton's other big crop, Honeycrisp apples, customers can pick raspberries and dahlias and can also purchase heirloom tomatoes that she grows in abundance. Tomatoes are also the basis of her wholesale business; in addition to being available at the farm, Middleton sells them to several local restaurants including Double Mountain Brewery & Taproom and Pine Street Bakery.

Tomatoes aren't the only crop she has sold as a wholesale product. Last fall, there were very few apple pickers visiting the farm due to the Eagle Creek Fire. Middleton had apples that she wanted and needed to sell. She had a good relationship with Whole Foods Market, so she offered her Honeycrisps to the grocery chain. She delivered the apples to eight stores via State Highway 14 on the Washington side of the Gorge. They were a hit. Whole Foods bought all the apples and gave her rave reviews.

Middleton's farm is certified organic by Oregon Tilth. She made the decision to do organic farming because of the sprays. Her home is nestled in the middle of her orchards and she didn't want the sprays around her children. "It was a healthier choice," she said.

But the choice has meant more work and higher cost. The costs for organic sprays and fertilizer are higher, and there is also additional physical labor in

applying compost and removing the weeds. Middleton acknowledges that her cherry prices are probably higher than other places, but her customers don't balk and they keep coming back.

In addition to the costs, Middleton also had to spend the time converting her land from conventional farming to organic — which took about three years. And there is scrutiny, with Oregon Tilth conducting thorough audits at the farm, inspecting every detail.

"It's a tough process but it's totally worth it," she said. "It's healthier for my family to live here. The fruit tastes so good. It's clean. And I feel like I am contributing to our Earth in some small way.

"Overall, I love my farm. It brings me happiness," Middleton said. "I can't stop — it is too awesome!"

**For more information,  
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# *gardening* 101

*With some planning and know-how,  
it's easy to start and maintain a home garden*

**BY RACHEL SUITS**



Having a home garden can be a rewarding experience because it gives space for creativity and nourishment.

Gardens come in all shapes and sizes and the most successful ones are those that fit into the life-style of the individual or family. When thinking about starting a garden, start small and grow into your space. When you start too big, it can become overwhelming, especially later in the summer when harvesting and maintaining weeds feel daunting, leading to garden burnout. Success is important for future garden enthusiasm.

Setting up the garden is the first step to starting a garden. Choose a location that has full sun, ideally a south facing location, if possible. Spend a full day observing how the sun moves across the space. If you have the time, observe how the sun moves for an entire year before putting any garden beds in place.

Once you've figured out the best place for the garden, shape your beds. There are multiple ways to construct beds, like raised beds with wood or stone borders, permanent beds with pathways, or a garden plot that is plowed every year. You will want to limit tilling, if possible, to preserve soil biology and prevent creating a hard pan.

Next, you will want to get a soil test to understand nutrients that naturally exist in your soil. Soil test results will tell you more about what you will want to add to your soil for ideal plant growth. For example, because of our wet winters, nitrogen

leaches out of our soils and soils need a nitrogen source added each year.

Once you plan and lay out your garden, then it is time to plant! If you're working with a small space, think about how to grow the best plants for the space. For example, herbs like parsley and basil can grow in containers or take up little space in the garden and hold a high nutritional value. Both preserve well if dried or made into pesto for winter meals. If you are working with a larger space, but are new at gardening, I still recommend starting small.

Grow foods that you would eat or flowers you enjoy. If you are interested in experimenting with new foods, like fennel or kohlrabi, only plant a few seeds and learn how to cook with them to determine if you like the flavors. If you have the space, incorporate flowers, both perennials and annuals. Flowers provide habitat, food and shelter for beneficial insects that will help you manage pest insects, and they are beautiful to look at and smell.

The best advice I ever got as a beginning gardener was to observe your garden. Create a space that you want to spend time in and watch your plants grow.

Most plants, especially vegetables, need some sort of irrigation. It is work up front, but putting in an irrigation system will help you avoid headaches during the hot and dry part of the summer. If you are unable to do that, hand watering or using sprinklers can work. Some plants like your cucumbers and squashes prefer to be watered just at their base because they get powdery mildew easily when their

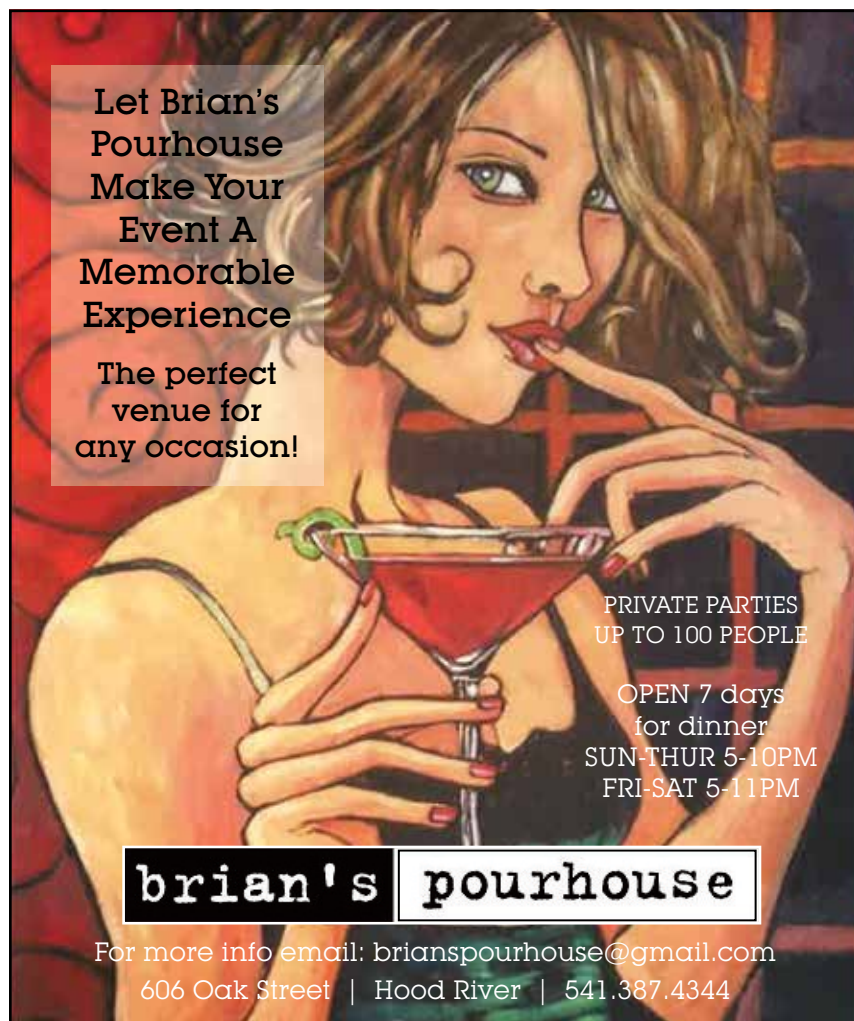
leaves are wet from a sprinkler.

Learn the best time to harvest your produce. Some vegetables can be deceiving as to when they want to be harvested. If you wait too long, then the vegetable might not be good anymore. When vegetables start to flower or bolt, like radishes or lettuce, they become bitter and woody. If you have an abundance, produce is easily preserved for winter meals — like tomato sauce, dehydrated herbs, or pickled beans and cucumbers.

When the first frosts hit, you will want to "winterize" your garden by cleaning up the dead plants so you have an easier cleanup in the spring. Or you can cut the plants at their base and leave plants in place to incorporate more organic matter into your soil. Another way to incorporate organic matter is to sprinkle straw or uncomposted manure like chicken manure on your beds in the fall. By the time spring pokes its head around the corner, the manure will be composted. Lastly, you will want to turn off and drain your irrigation systems to prevent winter cracking in the pipes.

Gardening is an extremely rewarding experience, watching plants grow and eating the fruits of your labors. If you ever have questions about gardening, come find the Master Gardeners at the Extension Office, farmers market or Hood River Supply where they can give you gardening guidance and help you solve gardening problems that may arise.

**Rachel Suits is Outreach Program Coordinator for Master Gardeners and Small Farms with the OSU Hood River and Wasco County Extension Service.**



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# Q & a

## JEFF HEATER

### Crop Consultant

#### Tell us about your job.

I work with the team at Western Ag Improvement in Hood River as a crop consultant dealing with mostly Hood River pears and Wasco County cherries. I started this job in January after 29 years as a packinghouse fieldman for Underwood Fruit in White Salmon. I spend most of my days walking orchards looking for pests or problems to solve and finding ways to improve my growers' quality and quantity of their crops.

#### What is your background?

I grew up on a family farm in the Willamette Valley that grew sweet corn, bush beans, strawberries, wheat and grass seed. After moving to Hood River in 1989, I dreamed of having my own orchard. My first orchard was 24 acres of pears and apples near Odell starting in 1996. I now have 80 acres of cherries and apples where I now live in The Dalles.

#### Your occupation can be “the pits.”

##### How do you keep a rosy outlook?

When things look bleak like they did last year in cherry harvest due to a very poor market, I look forward to the next year being much better. I've always been the eternal optimist and I think you have to be an optimist to be a farmer. Looking forward to a good hike, climb or ski trip also helps to ease the pain of a tough year. My involvement with the Crag Rats is another distraction from farming that helps. And the best part of my job is the farmers I work with. Most of them become lasting friends.

#### You're known as “the cherry man” for your years of work as a fieldman for Underwood Fruit Company.

##### What does this title mean to you?

The “cherry man” title was given after years of trial and error. Being able to see my growers' successes and learning from their mistakes as well has given me some insight I use in my own farm and spread to the other farmers I work with. We all need to work together to keep us all successful in this competitive business.

#### Tell us about your role as president of the local United Way council.

I have a passion for giving back to my community. That's why I'm involved with United Way. Gordy Sato is a great friend and he twisted my arm a number of years ago to join the local council.



**Jeff Heater and his daughter, Brooke Baldwin.**

#### What is your go-to meal during harvest?

My go-to meals during harvest usually involve corn dogs or taco truck burritos for lunch. Sadly, dinner can be Resers potato salad but I can put more effort into corn on the cob cooked on the BBQ and a steak.

#### Do you cook at home or prefer to dine out?

I do cook occasionally. I love meatloaf and have a family recipe called “Onion Shortbread” that is always a big hit. Sometimes it's just easier to swing by Clock Tower or River Tap on my way home.

#### What are people most surprised to find in your kitchen?

The extensive collection of condiments. Sometimes that is the main contents of my refrigerator.

#### Describe your sense of humor and how people react.

I can find humor in almost everything and most folks say my laughter is fairly distinctive and carries quite a distance.

#### Do you have any cherry wisdom for us?

The best cherry wisdom I can pass along is this: Don't count on the income till the check is in your hands.



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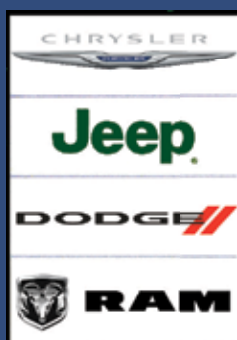


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