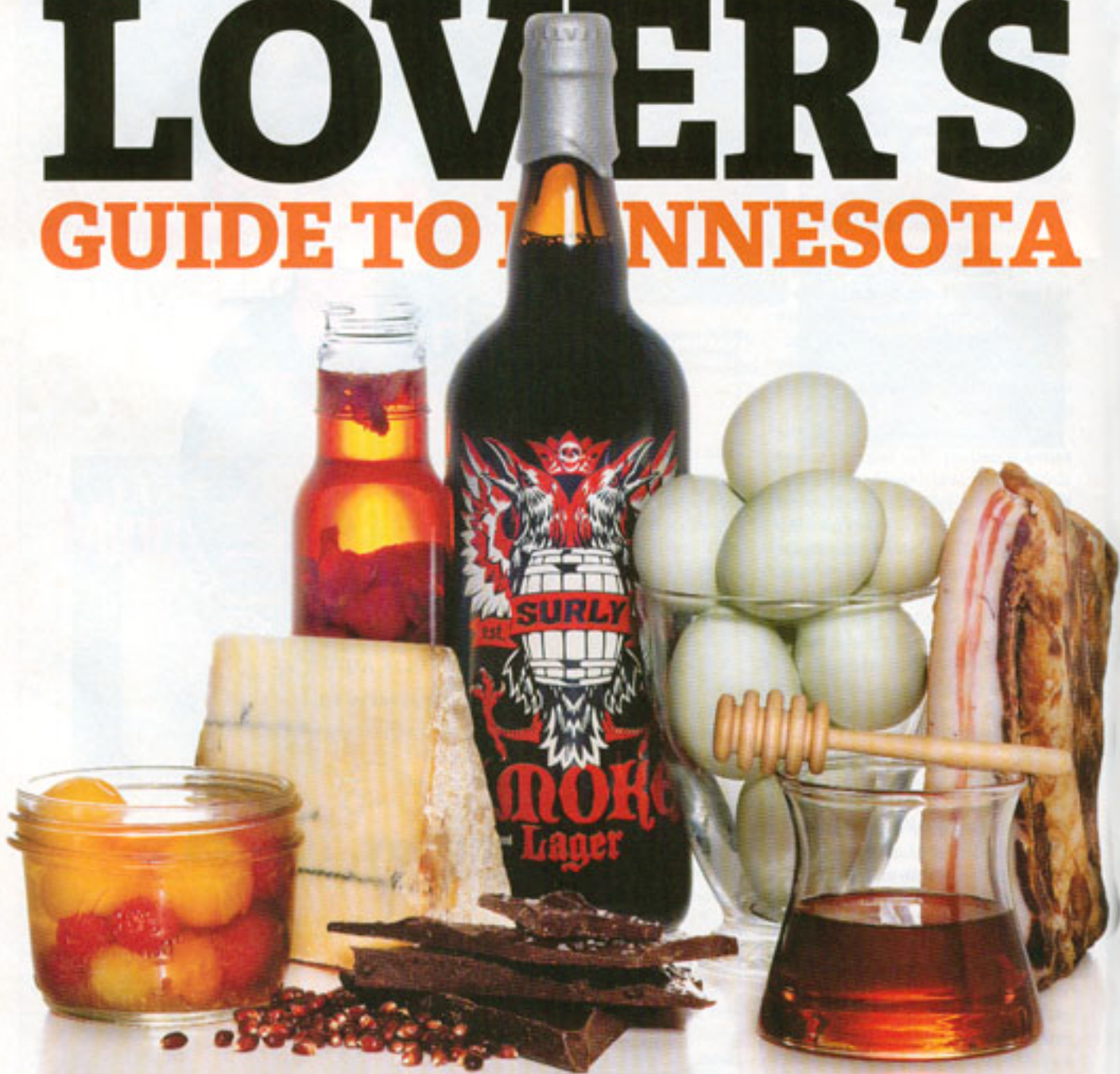


The
**FOOD
LOVER'S**
GUIDE TO MINNESOTA



BY Dara Moskowitz Grumdahl
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY BRENNAN



Shepherd's Way Farm, Northfield

Best Food in the country?

I've suspected for a while that Minnesota was busy forging a unique and uniquely excellent food culture. But after spending the last few months searching out the best locally produced edibles in the state, I'm completely convinced we've got close to the best food in America. We have some of the best cheeses in the world (like the Dunbarton Blue), some of the best beers in the world (like the Surly Smoke), and some of the best meats in the world (like the hickory-smoked slab bacon from Corner Table), all of which take advantage of our beautiful natural environment as well as our rich cultural heritage. The cornucopia presented on the ensuing pages is meant as evidence to prove my point: We live in the tastiest place in the country, if you only know where to shop. Take a look. But first, a note on my methodology: Most items come from Minnesota, but I couldn't resist including a few from border states (everything came from within 300 miles of Minneapolis-St. Paul, however). Also, I omitted produce. If you have a methodology for figuring out the best sweet-corn farm within 300 miles, I'm all ears. What's more, I figured if you can't find sweet corn in July in Minnesota, well, no magazine article can help you. Now, caveats aside, turn the page—to eat local, and live gloriously.

Eat Local (Dairy, Eggs & Grains)



MILK IS MILK, RIGHT? WRONG. Taste your way through the nearest dairy case and you'll find as much difference as if you were sampling vintages of wines. Consider these milk products, from left: For the apex of pure and plain dairy, try **CEDAR SUMMIT WHOLE MILK**. It's meadow-scented, fresh as morning dew, and one of the top products in the state—buttercup ambrosia. But **KALONA CHOCOLATE MILK** is something completely different. Not gummy, not cocoa-ish, it's like a chocolate milkshake, but more luminous—a chocolate milk for chocolate connoisseurs. Remember the cult yogurt Cultural Revolution? It hasn't vanished. The Iowa dairy Kalona simply re-branded it to bring the product into harmony with other offerings. **KALONA SUPER NATURAL YOGURT**, with its thick cream top and pure tang, will get your morning started right, but the **KALONA SUPER NATURAL SOUR CREAM** will transport you to another realm of food reality. If it's not the best sour cream in the country, I'll eat my hat—with a dollop of sour cream, of course. Meanwhile, the local coffee elite are clamoring for **AUTUMNWOOD MILK**. Why? Because it's homogenized and has natural biscuity and wheaty notes, which make it perfect for killer lattes. But the cream of the cream? It's **CEDAR SUMMIT CREAM**, so complex it has umami meatiness. Use it to top blueberries, or add mustard and salt for an instant pork pan sauce.

BUY IT: **CEDAR SUMMIT FARM** MANY GROCERY STORES, INCLUDING LUND'S AND BYERLY'S, KOWALSKI'S; **KALONA** SOME CO-OPS AND WHOLE FOODS; **AUTUMNWOOD MILK** SOME CO-OPS AND FESTIVAL FOODS. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 89.



EGGS AND BUTTER CAN BE SO MUCH MORE THAN EGGS AND BUTTER. They can be as different as a dozen shades of white on an artist's palette, hues that allow you to paint majestic snow or quiet dawn. Here, the best eggs and butter for your palate, from left: **JOHNSON QUAIL EGGS** are adorable, produced in Mankato, and scrumptious served poached on toast points. **AURACANA BLUE CHICKEN EGGS** have naturally blue shells and deep orange yolks, and garner oohs and ahs simply served coddled. **LTO DUCK EGGS** from Osceola, Wisconsin, are much richer than chicken eggs, and make cakes and cookies better than you'd believe. **HARMONY ORGANICS** chicken eggs get their expansive flavor from the birds' life in vast green pastures. Like our eggs, local butters reveal profound differences. From left: **HOPE UNSALTED** makes cookies and bars so good they practically sing, but **NORDIC CREAMERY BUTTER** is so concentrated and savory it tastes not like a butter but like a stand-alone appetizer. **ROCHDALE FARMS HAND-ROLLED BUTTER** is a table butter fit for a five-star restaurant.

BUY IT: **JOHNSON QUAIL EGGS** VALLEY NATURAL FOODS AND OTHER CO-OPS; **AURACANA BLUE EGGS** HEARTLAND; **LTO DUCK EGGS** S2WARD CO-OP AND OTHER CO-OPS; **HARMONY ORGANICS** THE WEDGE AND OTHER CO-OPS; **HOPE UNSALTED** LUND'S AND BYERLY'S; **NORDIC CREAMERY BUTTER** EAST-SIDE CO-OP; **ROCHDALE FARMS BUTTER** LINCOLN HILLS CO-OP. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 89.

MILLING AND BAKING SHOULD BE OUR STRONG SUIT, but we lost our way for a few decades, settling for generic grain-based goodies. No more! Check out these delectables, spiraling out clockwise from center: The **PÂTISSERIE 46 NICHE**, a long-fermented, part-whole-wheat bread made from locally milled flour, is so intense and meaty it can hold its own with any bread in the world. **COUNTRY CHOICE ORGANICS DUPLEX SANDWICH CREMES** hail from Eden Prairie, and they fit the recipe for new-wave food: no trans fats, no pesticides, lunch-box perfect. Nutty **POTTER'S CRACKERS**, from Madison, Wisconsin, are critical for enjoying local cheeses, while the **NEW FRENCH BAKERY'S SESAME SEMOLINA LOAF** may be the greatest luxury available in local big-box grocery stores. **WHOLE GRAIN MILLING COMPANY'S CORN CHIPS** made in the southwestern Minnesota town of Welcome are miraculous. Made from high-lysine non-GMO corn (choose yellow or blue), they've got complete proteins and are shatteringly crisp and crunchy. **BITTERSWEET FARM RUBY RED POPCORN** tastes better than regular popcorn, sweeter and rounder, while **NATIVE HARVEST WILD RICE** is probably the best wild rice on earth—nutty, smoky, slightly cedar fragrances. All proceeds benefit the White Earth Land Recovery Project in Callaway.



ST. PAUL BAGELRY EVERYTHING BAGELS strike the perfect balance of sweet and chewy. Almond-rich, **RUSTICA'S BOSTOCK** are made from the landmark bakery's astonishingly good brioche. **BIRCHWOOD GRANOLA** is light as a feather and as tasty as one of the Minneapolis cafe's pies. **SALTY TART CROISSANTS** are airy and scrumptious, while **RUSTICA'S BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE** and **GINGER COOKIES** are so vivid with chocolate (or ginger) that eating one is like taking a dip in a chocolate (or ginger) bath. **SURDYK'S PRETZELS** are chewy and perfect with one of the microbrews sold by the store, and **SUN STREET'S BAGUETTE** is the talk of the town, milky and airy inside, perfectly crisp outside.

BUY IT: PÂTISSERIE 46 PÂTISSERIE 46; COUNTRY CHOICE MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING LAKEWINDS CO-OP; POTTER'S CRACKERS MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING VALLEY NATURAL FOODS; NEW FRENCH BAKERY MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING RAINBOW FOODS; WHOLE GRAIN MILLING CHIPS MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING THE WEDGE CO-OP; BITTERSWEET FARM POPCORN GOLDEN FIG; NATIVE HARVEST WILD RICE MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING LINDEN HILLS CO-OP; ST. PAUL BAGELRY MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING WHOLE FOODS; RUSTICA RUSTICA; BIRCHWOOD GRANOLA MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING THE WEDGE CO-OP; SALTY TART SALTY TART; SURDYK'S SURDYK'S; SUN STREET BAGUETTES SUN STREET BAKERY. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 89.

Eat Local (Sauces, Ice Cream & Candy)



EVER SINCE CANDY GIANT MARS GOT ITS START IN MINNEAPOLIS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, chocolate and candy have been local strengths. Is it because we were a manufacturing and transportation hub, the place where chocolate logically met cream and machines? Perhaps, but taste your way through the aisles of local stores today and you'll find our legacy deliciously carried forward. Here's a sampling of such sweets, from left: **GROVELAND CONFECTIONS HAZELNUT CHOCOLATE SPREAD** makes Nutella taste so yesterday—this is so much more chocolatey, so much nuttier, so much better. **GOLDEN FIG SALTY CARAMEL SAUCE** combines fresh cream (it must stay refrigerated) and homemade caramel, spectacularly. **MINNESTALGIA BLUEBERRY SAUCE** is the perfect way to gild pancakes or ice cream, with deep, dark, good Minnesota fruit. Combine **LAURA'S CANDIES MARSHMALLOWS** and **GRAHAM CRACKERS** with local **BT MCELRATH MILK CHOCOLATE** to create the one thing no one thought they needed, but in fact, we all did: artisanal s'mores. Want something more adventurous? **HAUTE HABAÑERO SAUCE** from Kayak Kitchens gives lush chocolate a slight burn. Use it to frost chocolate cupcakes for chef-tasting treats in a flash. **RIVER CHOCOLATE COMPANY'S KUMBE' AFRICAN CHOCOLATE SAUCE** has a haunting, spicy piquancy. Serve it in a fondue pot, accompanied by berries.

BUY IT: GROVELAND CONFECTIONS HAZELNUT CHOCOLATE SPREAD LAKEWINDS CO-OP; GOLDEN FIG CARAMEL SAUCE GOLDEN FIG; MINNESTALGIA SYRUP MINNESOTA-AM; LAURA'S CANDIES NOWALSKI'S; BT MCELRATH CHOCOLATES WHOLE FOODS; HAUTE HABAÑERO SAUCE ANONNA GOURMET; RIVER CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE SAUCE COBORN'S DELIVERS. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 88.



WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT LOCAL ICE CREAM? EVERYTHING. Fresh local cream, fervent local producers, and curious consumers have come together to create a truly vibrant ice-cream scene that both showcases great Minnesota dairy and great Minnesota flavors and allows us to enjoy them even more. Left to right: **RING MOUNTAIN GELATO** from Eagan is super-saturated, ultra-flavorful, all-around knee-weakening. **HEARTLAND RED FRUIT SORBET** and **STRAWBERRY MINT** are revelations. The red fruit is mostly rhubarb and it captures that just-from-the-garden tart brightness in a way that no other rhubarb dessert ever has, while the strawberry mint is the pure taste of spring innocence. On the other side of the flavor spectrum, behold the top ice cream of dudes and rock-and-roll, all dark cool and deep intensity: **IZZY'S PEACE COFFEE ICE CREAM** and **SUMMIT OATMEAL STOUT ICE CREAM**. South Minneapolis Pumpphouse Creamery is distributed in many co-ops now, which makes it harder to choose between the **SALTY CARAMEL PUMPHOUSE** and the **VANILLA**. The vanilla is perfect for adding sauces or fruit, but the other has rich nuggets of salty caramel. Get both? **SONNY'S SPUMONI** and **BLOOD ORANGE SORBET** are equally easy to make a case for as the best frozen treats in the state. The spumoni is four flavors of very Italian ice cream (pistachio, cinnamon chocolate, dark-cherry/dark-ram, and, of course, vanilla). The blood orange sorbet is a zingy arrow of pure resonant citrus. Which is your favorite? Grab a spoon!

BUY IT: RING MOUNTAIN GELATO RING MOUNTAIN AND BEON GIORNO (ITALIA); HEARTLAND ICE CREAM HEARTLAND; IZZY'S ICE CREAM MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING NOWALSKI'S; PUMPHOUSE MANY LOCAL CO-OPS, INCLUDING MISSISSIPPI MARKET; SONNY'S ICE CREAM AND SORBET MANY LOCAL GROCERY STORES, INCLUDING LIND'S & BYERLY'S. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 88.

MEET THE NEW KINGS OF SWEET, THE TOP SWEET-TOOTH PLEASERS IN THE STATE. Clockwise from top left: **PATISSERIE 46 LIME CORIANDER BARS.** Pastry chef John Kraus doesn't just make killer breads, he also has an ever-changing line of terrifically sophisticated chocolates, like these little batons, filled with a lime zest, coriander, and hazelnut praline. **THOMASINA'S CASHEW BRITTLE,** so buttery, so old-fashioned, so unadorned. Can something you've never tasted before swamp you with nostalgia? Try these, then answer. **VERY PRAIRIE DOUBLE VANILLA AND DOUBLE CHOCOLATE MARSHMALLOWS,** how chocolatey, vanilla-y, tender, sticky, homemade, and wonderful can a marshmallow be? Very. **BT MCELRATH'S PRAIRIE DOG CHOCOLATE BAR** and **BLOOD ORANGE BLOSSOMS,** the newest offerings by homegrown chocolate star Brian McElrath, play with a wide range of flavors, including buttery toffee and almond, or piercingly perfumed white-chocolate-and-blood-orange ganache.



SWEET JULES SEA-SALT CARAMELS are homemade, buttery caramels by a former Cordon Bleu instructor. **BT MCELRATH STRAWBERRY BALSAMIC CARAMELS** offer silky caramel, given depth by the vivid flavorings. The **VERY PRAIRIE WILD MERINGUE MUSHROOMS** are adorable puffs that can be used as cake decorations that would impress even Martha Stewart. **MADAMOISELLE MIEL HONEY BONBONS** pair very dark chocolate and Ames Farm honey to create a locavore bon-bon with a finish as long and complex as that of a fine whiskey. **VERY PRAIRIE VANILLA AND CHOCOLATE MERINGUE STARS** are plain, pure little gems—just egg whites, the best vanilla (or chocolate), sugar, and yum. **SWEET GODDESS BUTTER ALMOND TOFFEE** and **SWEET GODDESS PEANUT-BUTTER CUP** are made in Savage by the current toffee champion of the north; real butter gives the toffee a richness other toffee makers can't touch; the peanut-butter cup is wholesome and deeply chocolatey. **GROVELAND CONFECTIONS'S DARK CHOCOLATE, COFFEE, & SEA SALT BARK** may be the purest, darkest, most wonderfully bitter adult confection in town.

BUY IT: PATISSERIE 46 BARS PATISSERIE 46; THOMASINA CASHEW BRITTLE MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING KOWALSKI'S; VERY PRAIRIE SUGAR SUGAR; BT MCELRATH MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING LINDS; SWEET JULES LOCAL D'LISH; MADAMOISELLE MIEL GOLDEN FIG; SWEET GODDESS LOCAL D'LISH; GROVELAND CONFECTIONS MANY LOCAL STORES, INCLUDING LINDEN HILLS CO-OP. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 89.

Eat Local (Honey, Jam & Hot Sauce)



PUTTING UP SUMMER'S BOUNTY FOR THE WINTER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MINNESOTA PASSION, for obvious reasons. A new generation is taking up the call to preserve, doing things on a smaller scale, but majestically. From left: **AMES FARM HONEY** is among the most interesting honeys in the world. It's single-sourced to various Minnesota micro-climates, which allows you to taste the exact difference between a locust tree and a basswood tree, through the filter of bees. **JOHNSTON HONEY** is light and flowerful, while **AMES FARM DUCKWHEAT HONEY** is molasses dark. **LUCIA'S PECAN-NUT HONEY** pairs beautifully with cheese. **BIRCHWOOD STRAWBERRY PRESERVES** tastes wild, like something from a forest of ancient strawberries. **RED LAKE NATION BLUEBERRY JAM** is deep and dark with a Zinfandel edge. **LUCILLE'S KITCHEN JAMS**, **STRAWBERRY RHUBARB BASIL**, and **MEAD** are unique, cheese-friendly, wonderful offerings.

BUY IT: AMES HONEY MANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING LINDS AND EVELY'S; JOHNSTON HONEY MANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING KONALSKY'S; LUCIA'S HONEY LUCIA'S; BIRCHWOOD PRESERVES BIRCHWOOD CAFE; RED LAKE NATION JAM BIRCHBERY NATIVE ARTS AND FOODS; WILL CITY FARMERS' MARKET; LUCILLE'S KITCHEN JAMS LOCAL DELISH. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 80.



MINNESOTA'S HOT SAUCE SCENE IS ON FIRE. Are the scores of local bottlings meant to counteract our historical reputation for all-white foods? Mission accomplished. Here's what's hot, from left: **WEE WILLY'S** is the best barbecue sauce in the state, mellow and pure. **LUCKY'S HONEY MUSTARD** from North Mankato is a kitchen workhorse, a glaze for pork chops, a base for salad dressings and more. **LUCIA'S PLUM KETCHUP** turns the simplest chicken breast into dinner for company. **FANFRINKIN TASTIC BUFFALO WING SAUCE** makes chicken wings worth driving across town for, though they'll come out of your own oven. **LUCKY'S JALAPENO AND GARLIC HOT SAUCE** is purely spicy, but not overly vinegared. **KAYA KITCHENS HAUTE HABANERO PASTE** is not just hot, it's a vivacious seasoning with flowery heights. Try a touch in sour cream. **SADIA'S GOURMET HOT SAUCE, MILD** is a Somali sauce made with tamarind—to deep, lyrical effect. **DADDY SAM'S SALMON GLAZE** is the ideal barbecue sauce for salmon as well as vegetarian offerings, such as big steaks of eggplant, or fat mushrooms.

BUY IT: WEE WILLY'S MANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING KONALSKY'S; LUCKY'S MANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING BAY TREE; LUCIA'S PLUM KETCHUP LUCIA'S; FANFRINKIN TASTIC SEWARD CO-OP; KAYA KITCHENS CROSS ROOTS GOURMET; SADIA'S SEVERAL LOCATIONS, INCLUDING THE EAST SIDE CO-OP; DADDY SAM'S, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, INCLUDING LINDS AND EVELY'S. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 81.

(Syrup, Vinegar & Pickles)



SWEET AND SOUR ARE TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BUILDING BLOCKS OF CUISINE. But you don't need to look to cane sugar or Old World vinegars to flesh out your local cooking. Instead, use something spectacular, like these, from left: **RED LAKE NATION CHOKECHERRY SYRUP**, made from wild chokecherries, has a funky bacon-like taste. Pair it with venison for something they've never tasted in New York. **WALETZKO FAMILY 2011 MAPLE SYRUP** is vintage dated. Sure, winter 2011 was rough, but it created great flavors. **STANLEY'S SUGAR BUSH GRADE B**, a darker syrup, has fantastic spice-box and caramel notes; add it to spicy dishes for depth. **ANDERSON'S APPLE SYRUP** is a simple, but brilliant apple reduction. Pair it with pork or add it to sparkling water for a fun summer spritzer. **LORENCE'S BERRY FARM RASPBERRY SYRUP** is pure local berries and some sugar. Pour it over ice cream or use it in cocktails. **LEATHERWOOD VINEGARS** are a must-try: the **GARLIC IN MIXED FRUIT** is woody tasting, while the **RHUBARB** has a lively lightness, like a good white balsamic. **GOLDEN FIG ROSE RASPBERRY VINEGAR** is so fruity and rose-petal fragrant you can make an original lemonade-variant with it.

BUY IT: **RED LAKE NATION CHOKECHERRY SYRUP** BERCHERRY, **WALETZKO MAPLE SYRUP**, **LEATHERWOOD VINEGAR**, AND **GOLDEN FIG VINEGAR** GOLDEN FIG; **ANDERSON'S APPLE SYRUP** KITCHEN WINDOW; **LORENCE'S BERRY FARM SYRUP** JUST FOOD CO-OP; **LEATHERWOOD VINEGARS** VINAGRETTE. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 69.



NOTHING MAKES PLAIN FOOD FANCY FASTER THAN A PANTRY FULL OF GOOD PICKLES. Some of the best, from left: **TALMADGE FARMS SPICY GREEN TOMATOES** are crunchy, lightly fiery, and perk up everything. Add to mayonnaise for a great sauce for fish, or tuck into a hot dog. **HEARTLAND PICKLED BURDOCK** will forever change your regard for the common garden weed. Did you know it's traditional to pickle the roots in Asia? Brilliant. **TANGLETOWN GARDENS BASIL BEAN PICKLES** and **CORN RELISH** are made by Sandi Younkin, a cook known more for her baked goods (at her Bars Bakery) than her pickles. Add her exotically herb-scented green-beans to a locavore martini, and serve the corn relish over grilled salmon. **PAPA PAT'S SWEET BREAD AND BUCKLE PICKLES** are so sweet they're practically Southern. Add them to salmon salad or serve with barbecued chicken and watermelon for a perfect backyard feast. **HEARTLAND PICKLED CHERRY TOMATOES** are traditional to serve with vodka as Russian appetizers, though they're also lovely on winter salads. **HEARTLAND SAUERKRAUT** is just right—sour and crunchy, but not too sour—and carrots give it a sweet garden aspect.

BUY IT: **TALMADGE FARMS** GOLDEN FIG, **HEARTLAND PICKLES** HEARTLAND, **TANGLETOWN** TANGLETOWN, **PAPA PAT'S PICKLES** GOLDEN FIG. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 69.

Eat Local (Beer & Meat)



SURLY MADE BIG NEWS BY GETTING A BILL THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE TO ALLOW BREWERIES TO SELL GLASSES OF BEER. Hooray! Now watch an already national-class local-brew scene kick into high-gear. The hippest in hops, from left: **SUMMIT UNCHAINED GOLD SOVEREIGN ALE** is energetic and clear as a bell. **LIFT BRIDGE FARM GIRL** is the consummate food pair, spicy and robust. **FURTHERMORE FATTY BOMBALATTY** is a white beer so unfiltered it's practically bread. **SURLY BEERS** may be the one thing you can pack into your packed luggage that would be gratefully received by both rock stars and British princes: **DARKNESS STOUT** is black and flavorful as chocolate; **SMOKE LAGER** is smoky like a fire pit. **ABRASIVE ALE** is nervy, scouring magic. **DAVE'S BREWFARM MATABARRAS** offers scents of tomatoes, apples, and coffee, a rebuke to any thought that beer is simple. **RUSH RIVER IPA** is brisk as a cold bubbling stream.

BUY IT: **SUMMIT GOLD SOVEREIGN** LIQUOR STORES, INCLUDING HAZZELL'S, **FURTHERMORE** AND **LIFT BRIDGE** LIQUOR STORES, INCLUDING LAKE WINE & SPIRITS; **SURLY** LIQUOR STORES, INCLUDING MGM LIQUOR WAREHOUSE; **DAVE'S BREWFARM MATABARRAS** LIQUOR STORES, INCLUDING THE FOUR FIFTHS; **RUSH RIVER** LIQUOR STORES, INCLUDING SARDON'S. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 60.



LAST JUNE IT WAS ILLEGAL TO BRING HOME A GROWLER (A HALF-GALLON) OF BEER FROM A MINNEAPOLIS BREWERY. Now it's not, and Minnesota's beer-scene has gotten turbo-charged. Want to try the best? Left to right: New Brighton brewpub **BARLEY JOHN'S OLD EIGHT PORTER** is chocolatey, weighty, and deep, but not at all sweet. **HARRIET BREWING** is a Belgian-style brewer making fragrant, eminently elegant beers like a snappy **PILS** and signature **WEST SIDE BELGIAN IPA**. **TOWN HALL BREWERY** serves beers so fresh they taste alive. Try their **MASALA MAMA IPA** for a crisp and peppery brew. **BRAU BROTHERS BANCHE AGIE** is made with peat-smoked malt, giving it the uncanny scent of a fine Scotch whiskey; the **SHEEP HEAD ALE** is so hoppy it's full-on spicy.

BUY IT: **BARLEY JOHN'S** BARLEY JOHN'S; **HARRIET BREWING** HARRIET BREWING; **TOWN HALL BREWERY** TOWN HALL BREWERY; **BRAU BROTHERS** MANY METRO LIQUOR STORES INCLUDING FRANCE 44. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 60.

WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF WATER AND TALL GRASS, MINNESOTA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A NATURAL FOR RAISING TOP-QUALITY ANIMALS.

But the last few years have seen sudden and wonderful growth in the ability of regular metro-home cooks to get world-class products from local farms. Here's the best of the best, clockwise from top left, spiralling in. **WHETSTONE GOOSE** from just over the border in Sisseton, South Dakota, is gamey and delicious and just what we should be eating in this lake-covered state, especially when covered with **LORENTZ PEPPER BACON**, raised down in Hormel country. In southern Minnesota, **CALLISTER FARMS CHICKEN** is the greatest luxury: a free-ranging, never-frozen, utterly succulent bird. **WILD ACRES DUCK** is the pride of Twin Cities restaurants; the meat is ideally fatty and tastes as rosy as a distillation of Cru Beaujolais. **PASTURES A PLENTY PORK** from Kerkhoven is custardy, apple-y, and sweet. **AU BON CANARD FOIE GRAS BUTTER** is rich yet energetic, more complex than the offerings of many other regions. Many critics argue that Caledonia produces the best foie gras in the United States.



CORNER TABLE PATÉ and **CHICKEN LIVER MOUSSE** are what happens when a great chef like Scott Pampuch confronts great ingredients. They're confidently rustic and not overseasoned—perfection next to a local beer on the deck. (Get them from Corner Table's new to-go case.) **CLANCEY'S PEPPER BACON PATÉ** is made with splendid Hidden Stream pork. Is **CLANCEY'S DUCK PROSCIUTTO** Minnesota's most perfect food? It showcases both our ducky landscape and our ever-improving local butchery skills, and it tastes like great Syrah made flesh. You could also argue that the best food in the state is **HEARTLAND'S MANGALITSA BACON**, a rangy, wild-tasting, knee-weakening bacon from an ancient pork breed. **HILL AND VALE LAMB CHOPS**, from Wykoff, are berry-sweet, but have that hint of minerality that makes lamb taste regal, not flabby. **HILL AND VALE RIB EYE** is from cows raised on grass pastures who are also given access to corn, resulting in steak that has both the wild flavor of grass-fed beef but oh-so tender marbling, too.

BUY IT: WHETSTONE GOOSE, WILD ACRES DUCK, HILL AND VALE LAMB MANY CO-OPS, INCLUDING THE SEWARD CO-OP; PASTURES A PLENTY PORK MANY CO-OPS, INCLUDING LINDEN HILLS CO-OP; LORENTZ BACON MANY GROCERY STORES, INCLUDING MISSISSIPPI MARKET; CALLISTER FARMS CHICKEN LOCAL O'LISH; AU BON CANARD FOIE GRAS BUTTER AND HEARTLAND MANGALITSA BACON HEARTLAND; CORNER TABLE PATÉ AND CHICKEN LIVER MOUSSE CORNER TABLE; CLANCEY'S PATÉ, DUCK PROSCIUTTO, RIB EYE CLANCEY'S. FOR STORE AND PRODUCER DETAILS, SEE PAGE 89.