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# LOCAL ICE CREAM WORTH SCREAMING FOR

## Moo Roo, Isaac's and Heyn's

BY EUGENIA E. GRATTO

Vernetta Kayser of Waterloo used to avoid ice cream. She's not a fan of preservatives, after all. But once she discovered the preservative- and hormone-free ice cream at Waterloo's Moo Roo, she decided to succumb.

On a recent Saturday, Kayser settled in to Moo Roo's cheery seating area, holding a homemade waffle cone packed to the brim.

Jeanne Hansen, one of the owners of the ice cream and dairy store noticed Kayser's cone. "Is that butter pecan?" she asked Kayser.

"It is," Kayser said. "I get that every time. One of these times, I'm going to change. Then, with a sly grin, she admitted "That's my lunch."



At Moo Roo, making waffle cones from scratch is a daily activity.

Kayser started purchasing milk at the store, and then tried the ice cream. Now she's a regular, although she won't disclose how often she stops by.

Like any good product, Moo Roo's ice cream arose from supply and demand.

"We were selling a lot of skim milk, which left us with a lot of cream," said Hansen, who runs the 150-head J&J Dairy in Hudson, Iowa, with her husband, Jay and four sons. They opened Moo Roo in June 2006 to provide a location from which to sell products from their Hansen Farm Fresh Dairy business.

Prior to that, the Hansens sold their products exclusively from their farm. They also supplied milk to 25 grocery and convenience stores and more than a dozen coffee shops and restaurants within 25 miles of their property.

The Moo Roo shop has a variety of products, including pre-packed and dip ice cream, ice cream pies and cakes; milk, cream and white cheddar cheese curds from the dairy; ground beef; and Iowa Farm Families pork and ham products ([www.Iowa-FarmFamilies.com](http://www.Iowa-FarmFamilies.com)). Cheese from small creameries in Wisconsin, range-fed eggs from a local farmer, hormone-free yogurt and sour cream, local honey, and locally-made soy candles round out the inventory.

The store got its name from their son Blake's fascination with wallabies, a small species of kangaroo that he first encountered on a trip to Australia. The Hansens now keep five wallabies on their dairy farm, and their company logo features a wallaby drinking a glass of milk with a small calf in its pouch - incorporating elements of both the animals the Hansens hold most dear.

"It's a fun place," Hansen said. "I come in here and I can't help talking to people. This is the perfect place for me."

The Hansens take pride in the fact that many other ice cream makers said you couldn't make smooth, creamy ice cream from non-homogenized milk. The cream in non-homogenized milk is not dispersed evenly before it is sold. The cream rises to a layer on the top, and can be mixed in by shaking.

When asked if customers notice any difference between ice cream made from homogenized milk and the Moo Roo ice cream, and Hansen shakes her head vigorously. "Never," she says. "It's as smooth as any other ice cream."

Chris and Andrea Roberts of Coralville also sport an addic-



Photo at left by Eugenia Gratto, at top by Kurt Michael Friese

tion for locally-made ice cream. The couple visits Isaac's Creamery in North Liberty at least once a week. They shared tastes of cappuccino and mint chocolate chip ice cream with their toddler as they explained how they discovered Isaac's Creamery. Chris had simply noticed the store after a softball game on the fields across the street.

"Every flavor we try has been delicious," Roberts said. "We love to come here because we run into other families. And on nice nights, we get to plan a whole evening around it."

Isaac's Creamery focuses exclusively on hand-scooped hard ice cream, providing 16 flavors at a time. It is attached to Naomi's Kitchen, a "make, take and bake" business owned and operated by Troy and Lora Miller. The Millers opened Naomi's Kitchen three years ago, but added Isaac's Creamery just last April.

"My wife and I really like ice cream, and we saw it as a great opportunity to better use our facility," Troy Miller said. "It's a really nice fit."

Isaac's Creamery is named after Troy and Lora Miller's son, following in a tradition that started with their naming Naomi's Kitchen after their daughter.

The Millers renovated the 100-year-old Koser's grocery store to accommodate their two businesses, and decided to sell ice cream after Liberty Cones, a North Liberty stand-by, decided to close last year. They buy their ice cream from Paul Heyn of Heyn's Ice Cream in Iowa City.

"Paul Heyn had the best ice cream that we tried," Miller said. "We try to shop locally as much as possible—you get a level of service that's better."

Miller said he appreciates that he can get "just-in-time delivery" from Heyn. "If I run out of a flavor, I call him up," Miller said. "It's likely he has some right there that he just made."

Heyn says that, indeed, he and his staff will happily deliver ice cream to Miller—or any of his other ice cream store customers throughout the area—seven days a week. After all, Heyn's Ice Cream makes its product daily in its First Avenue store in Iowa City, starting with a mix produced by Anderson Erickson Dairy in Des Moines, and adding in a variety of ingredients. During the 20 years Heyn's Ice Cream has been in business, Heyn said they have made more than 400 different flavors.

Heyn used to sell his product in approximately 300 grocery stores, but eventually returned to selling ice cream from his retail store and supplying other ice cream parlors. He says he has a passion for the product, and loves the positive environment. After all, he points out, no one's in a bad mood at an ice cream store.

"The best thing is letting people try stuff they've never had before, and to see their face when the experience something new and the light bulb goes off," he said. "I've seen three-year-olds do it, I've seen 80-year-olds do it. Everybody loves ice cream. It breaks down all barriers."

Moo Roos, Isaac's and Heyn's also offer seasonal and special flavors. At Isaac's Creamery and Heyn's Ice Cream, you can buy a scoop of Oatmeal Cream Pie, or, when the season is right, Ap-

ple Pie. Apple Pie is also available seasonally at Moo Roo, along with Pumpkin Pie, Eggnog, and Candy Cane, which Hansen reports is particularly good topped with hot fudge sauce.

"The hardest thing is picking which 38 or 40 flavors to have in the store," Heyn said. He reports Mama Heyn's Cookie Dough, Cake Batter, Peanut Butter Chocolate, Cappuccino and Blueberry Cheesecake are also big hits.

"I asked Paul Heyn for his recommendations on flavors," Miller said. "But you've also got to provide the basics for people."

Chuck Quirks of Waterloo has a dog who is a particular fan of the basics. It gets its own dish of Moo Roo ice cream—vanilla—each week when Chuck stops by the store. He also picks up a waffle cone with two scoops of butter brickle for his wife, and, when he's feeling indulgent, "a small sundae" for himself.

"This is the place to be," Quirk said. "The dog is very insistent, and my wife is, too."

## THE SCOOP ON SCOOP SHOPS

### Heyn's Ice Cream

811 South 1st Avenue  
Iowa City  
319.354.1981

### Isaac's Creamery

25 East Cherry Street  
(Corner of Dubuque and  
east Cherry streets)  
North Liberty  
319.665.4707

### Moo Roo

3015 Kimball Avenue  
(Corner of Kimball  
and Ridgeway)  
Waterloo  
319.234.3309  
[www.HansenDairy.com](http://www.HansenDairy.com)

