



edible TIDBITS

WHOLLY CREATIVE

Osteria at the new Whole Foods Market in Union features family-friendly fare, ample seating, wine, beer and a separate entrance. “I want it to be a destination,” says Michele DiPietro of the eatery, whose menu includes pasta specialties and hearth-oven pizza.

She’s the one to make it happen. As WFM’s culinary concepts coordinator, DiPietro is the creative energy behind the retailer’s presentation of freshly prepared foods throughout the stores in its Northeast region. Whether it’s a panini station or freshly cut shawarma, she oversees every detail from menu development to signage. DiPietro, who grew up in Cherry Hill, joined Whole Foods Market ten years ago, after leaving a career in accounting to pursue her passion at The Restaurant School in Philadelphia.

With the new Union store and plans underway for the March opening of Whole Foods Market Paramus, DiPietro is a busy woman. What does she do in her spare time? Cook, of course. That’s when she created this winter recipe for *Edible Jersey*. Served hot or cold, it “goes really well as an accompaniment to any protein or on its own for a light lunch.” Enjoy. —N.B.P.

Osteria at Whole Foods Market, 2245 Springfield Avenue, Union, 908-688-1455

LET THEM EAT CAKE

For a busy parent, watching what your kids eat can be difficult, especially when it comes to desserts. Without the time to make things from scratch, it’s easy to get frustrated by the artificial ingredients in mixes and prepackaged products. What do you do?

If you’re Nora Schultz, founder of **Naturally Nora All-Natural Baking Mixes**, you create your own alternatives. With a background in marketing and a lot of time spent in test kitchens (including that of Campbell’s Soup Company), Schultz, who lives in Princeton, set out to develop cake and frosting mixes that combine speed and simplicity with a truly homemade, all-natural taste. Her products contain few ingredients and no artificial colors, flavors, preservatives or hydrogenated oils. Currently, there are five cake mixes and four types of frosting. The cakes’ texture and good flavor will fool people into believing they’re made from scratch; try the Cookie Cookie (yellow cake with bits of chocolate cookie) or Sunny Yellow.

One more plus: if desired, all Naturally Nora mixes can be prepared without butter or milk. —Stephanie Zonis

Available at Eden Gourmet, McCaffrey’s, Whole Earth Center and Whole Foods Markets (Princeton and Marlton stores). Naturallynora.com

FOOD JOURNAL

NORTH: Finally, a well-designed, attractive place to have a kid’s baking birthday party. **Cookie Party** (422 Ridgedale Avenue, East Hanover, 973-585-6066, cookieparty.us) offers a variety of party packages where kids can roll out dough, decorate cookies and take their baked masterpieces home with them. We love the decorations as well as the separate room for parents to relax and enjoy coffee and homemade baked treats. Speaking of treats, stop into the year-old **Brownie Points Bakery** (3 Beechwood Road, Summit, 908-464-2253) near the Summit train station for a donut muffin or other baked goods, all beautifully presented under the creative eye of owner Bob Conway, a former merchandising executive with Macy’s....

CENTRAL: The spectacular new **Laurita Winery** (35 Archertown Road, New Egypt, 609-758-8000, lauritawinery.com) is a great day trip destination. Owners Ray Shea and Randy Johnson, who have produced wine from the 44-acre vineyard for ten years, have built a location inspired by all things Jersey. Recycled elements used throughout the 22,000 square foot building include double front doors salvaged from an old schoolhouse in Trenton and tasting room light fixtures that once hung in a north Jersey convent. If you want to spend the weekend, look no further than their nearby **Dancer Farm B&B** (609-752-0303)

BUTTERNUT SQUASH QUINOA SALAD

2 cups quinoa
4 cups water

3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons honey
1/4 cup fresh thyme, chopped
5 tablespoons canola oil
1/3 cup dried cranberries

1 lb. butternut squash, peeled and large diced
2 cups shallots, julienned
12 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced
1/4 cup olive oil
salt
black pepper

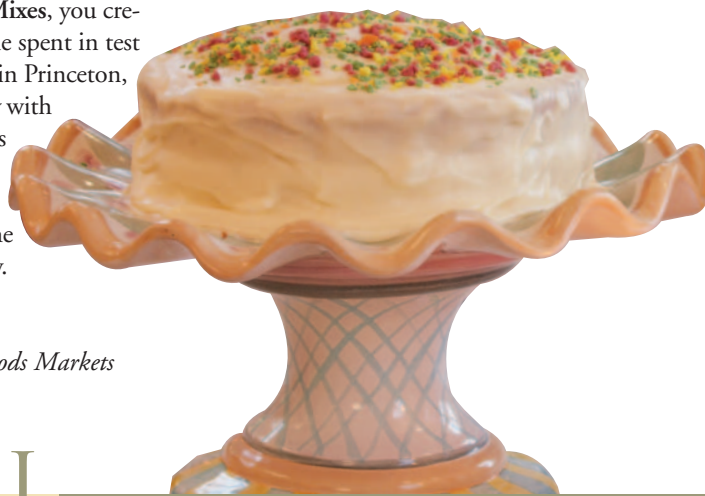
Place quinoa in a small saucepan with the water. Bring to a boil, then cover and reduce to a simmer until tender (approximately 10-12 minutes). (Note: The grains can be cooked one day in advance and stored, covered, in the refrigerator.)

Make the dressing by whisking together the apple cider vinegar, honey, fresh thyme and canola oil. Pour over the dried cranberries and set aside.

Toss, separately, the butternut squash, shallots and mushrooms with the olive oil, salt and pepper.

Lay each vegetable, separately, out on a sheet pan in a single layer, then roast in a 350° oven until tender (approximately 15-20 minutes for the mushrooms and shallots and 25-30 minutes for the butternut squash).

Remove the vegetables from the oven and combine with the quinoa. Toss all together with the dressing and cranberries and season with salt and pepper to taste. (Serves 4)



Photographs (clockwise from top left): Ray Painter, Artisan, Naturally Nora