



SWEET SUMMER HEAT

Rich Nassaney had been doing barbecues for friends and family for a half dozen years before it dawned on him that party-goers were actually requesting take-home baggies of his homemade sauce. His wife, Melissa, encouraged him to think beyond the sticky pots and pans in their kitchen, and **Rich's Sweet Heat** was born. The sauce is sweetened with molasses, brown sugar and honey, allowing its fiery spices to gradually wake up your taste buds. Alluring and mouth-warming, all in one. Great for steak, chicken wings and sausage but also for grilled Portobellos, roasted quahogs, even pasta and rice.

And this sauce's sibling, Chocolate Heat, made with Ghirardelli chocolate and hot pepper spice, is as much a winner for pork or chicken as for cheesecake, cocoa or a dip for fresh strawberries. These products will definitely make you rethink your summer menus! Find them both at independent grocers from Westerly's Sunrise Market or Hope Valley's Ma and Pa to Providence's Eastside Marketplace. 401-265-2667; richsweetheat.com.

PICNIC YOUR WAY

You know how it is when you order a deli sandwich to go? You're asked for all your preferences but never how *much* ham or provolone or veggies.

At the **Charlestown Mini-Super**, you can have it your way. In addition to a different homemade soup every day and a salad bar, there's a sandwich bar, with cold cuts and sliced cheese, plus house-made salads (ham, chicken, tuna or seafood). If you're in the mood for something more filling, take a look at the daily homemade specials, such as roasted Italian chicken, sausage and peppers, macaroni and cheese. The in-house bakery turns out pies, cakes, small pastries, calzones and pizza. And, in case you can't wait to eat that custom-built hero at the beach, there are picnic tables right outside!

The Mini-Super also carries plenty of local products, such as pepper biscuits or sopressata made in Westerly, and oysters from nearby Ninigret Oyster Farm. 4071 Old Post Rd., Charlestown; 401-364-6600.



LOCAL HOUND

Dear departed Jack, a 10-year-old black Labrador retriever, inspired Marni MacLean-Karro to create the dog bakery **Jack's Snacks**, "treats your best friend can't resist." MacLean-Karro wanted to make a biscuit from ingredients found in her own kitchen, and her first success was Ginger's Chicken and Garlic Bone-anza, in 2004.

She took her product on the road to local farmers' markets where your trusty companion will find Jack's Snacks this season too, including Caesar's Pizza Pies, Simon's Beefy Hydrants, Winnie's Wee Wafers and Jack's Nuts About Squirrels biscuits. The latter, along with the original Bone-anzas, are Fido favorites.

All of the products are made with certified organic, human-grade—not animal-grade—ingredients, and there are no additives or preservatives. MacLean-Karro recommends freezing them for up to three months if you do not expect your own pooch to gobble them up within two weeks.

Find Jack's Snacks at: Aquidneck Growers' Market; Whole Foods—Cranston Farmers' Market; Goddard Park Farmers' Market; University of Rhode Island Farmers' Market; or order them online at jackssnacks.com.

FINISHING PINCH

Picture coarse gray salt crystals hand-gathered on the shores of Brittany, ground with Rhody-grown herbs and lemon zest, to create a finishing salt that opens all your senses.

Mor-Sels Finishing Salt creator Peter Morse—sculptor, interior designer and cook—gets his organic sea salt from Guérande, France, and grows his organic herbs in Little Compton. He recommends sprinkling his mixture on food while it's still hot, to allow the volatile oils of the herbs to tickle your olfactory senses before sliding across your palate. He also suggests rubbing Mor-Sels into meats before grilling, sprinkling it over soft cheese and fresh tomatoes or even delicately strewing a soupçon over an omelet.

Morse's creativity (he's a RISD grad) knows no bounds, with his culinary designs now competing with his artistic ones. Mor-Sels is available at Farmstead in Providence, Milk and Honey Bazaar in Tiverton, Sweet Berry Farm in Middletown, Whole Foods and online at mor-sels.com.



THE BIG PICTURE IN LITTLE RHODY

In the spring of 2006, the Met School in Providence added a fourth R to its curriculum: “running a business.” A group of students at the Peace Street campus launched the **Big Picture Soda Company**, an all-natural, vitamin-C-enriched passion fruit soda, and by December of that year they began production at Yacht Club Bottling Company in North Providence.

By January 2007, the soda hit the shelves in stores up and down Broad Street including Crespo Market, plus Eastside Marketplace and Whole Foods Markets.

Yesenia Mercado and Daryll (DJ) Hall were two of the first students on the Big Picture team and they secured \$10,000 from a private investor to launch the company. Jean Merlain, a high school junior who plans to study business and entrepreneurship in college, is now CEO of Big Picture Soda. He touts the soda's clean taste—“it's really light, just spring water and sugar, not a heavy glucose syrup”—and he is proud of the number of stores where Big Picture is sold. bigpicturesoda.org.

