

BLACKWELL'S BEST-DRESSED DESSERTS

A RED BANK COUPLE MAKES THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, THROUGH GELATI AND SORBETTI

To indulge or not to indulge, that is the question.

Whether in the heat of summer or by the fire in winter, ice cream reigns as America's comfort food. But who can bear the gluttonous remorse, that scornful inner voice that whispers *My god, I just ate a whole pint of Chunky Ice Xanthan Gum Chocolate Cherry Guar Gum Berry Butterfat Fruity Fifty Percent Air Citric Acid Tooty Cream!*

The mind says *Mmmm*, while the body says *Hmmm*.

Enter BLACKWELL'S ORGANIC, a newly established maker of creamy gelati and zesty fruit sorbetti, based right here in Red Bank. Operating from their headquarters on Catherine Street, supplying to independent health food stores throughout New Jersey, committed to superb taste and quality without taxing one's health (or the environment), owners Marcia and Tom Blackwell strive to make the world a better place — and a more delicious one — by using only 100-percent organic, whole-food ingredients.



Marcia Blackwell

"PEOPLE LOVE IT BECAUSE IT'S DELICIOUS," SAYS MARCIA OF THEIR PRODUCT. "THEY LOVE THAT IT'S GOOD FOR YOU AND THEY LOVE IT BECAUSE IT'S FROM RED BANK."



Photos courtesy of Blackwell's Organic

"'Less is more' flows through all phases of our business," Marcia says. "Our products are preservative-free and extract-free — every ingredient is truly a whole food."

The couple's passion for making great cuisine in the Italian tradition inspired them to try creating their own gelato and sorbetto desserts at home, writing and testing recipes with an eye toward their environmentally responsible, vegan lifestyle.

"We were dissatisfied with what was on the market," Marcia explains. "Tom loves to experiment with recipes, so we made (gelato) for birthday parties and special events...our friends loved it."

When Marcia lost her job in telecommunications, their culinary pursuits became more than a cottage industry. She enrolled in a self-employment assistance program, and within months Blackwell's Organic LLC was incorporated.

As members of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, the Blackwells work with suppliers and distributors whose professional ethics are in harmony with their own — a set of beliefs that includes fair wages, supporting small family farms, clean water initiatives, and working conditions that are free from pesticide toxicity. All of their ingredients are certified organic — from the Swiss chocolate to the coffee from Mexico — and the farms with which they do business are certified fair trade. "We set our goals high," Marcia said. "You can't just get these ingredients in any store."

The proof, of course, is in the product. Taste Blackwell's Strawberry Sorbetto and you'll sense the flavor of berries fresh from the fields. The Lemon Sorbetto is sweet, light and innocent — like a ray of sun in springtime.

The Chocolate Soy Gelato, smooth as the most savory of chocolate bars, satisfies the connoisseur — while the Peanut Butter Soy Gelato awakens the inner child. Blueberry, Raspberry, Orange, Vanilla, Mango, Pineapple, Coffee, Holiday Nog and other flavors are also available, and all are cholesterol-free.

Blackwell's Organic creations are available at a number of area markets and restaurants (an updated list can be found at www.blackwellsorganic.com). Marcia and Tom also present regular tasting events at their retail locations — and plans are in the works to introduce a "Gelato by Mail" service for individual customers in the near future. In keeping with the Blackwells' socially conscious policy, a percentage of all their profits goes to charity.

As Marcia sums up, "Our commitment is to creating a product that is better for your body, your soul and the planet."

So, to indulge or not to indulge?

Alas, pleasure is as indulgence does. *Hmmmm*.

And indulgence is what pleasure begets. *Mmmmm*.