

MARTHA STEWART Living

A
SPECIAL
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THE TASTEMAKERS

MEET THE CULINARY ARTISANS WHO ARE PUTTING A MODERN SPIN ON TRADITIONAL METHODS AND TURNING OUT EXTRAORDINARY FOOD ACROSS AMERICA.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE between a good meal and one that's truly great? A foolproof recipe doesn't hurt. A cook with a deft hand and a knack for seasoning helps, too. But the universal factor is using great ingredients: an incomparably creamy ricotta, a fresh and flavorful pork chop, an artisanal chocolate to linger on the palate after dinner.

Such remarkable products can take a little digging to find, however. So when our food editors discover a purveyor they love, they buy from it again and again.

On these pages, you'll meet nine of our favorites from around the country. A few are continuing long family traditions. Others are trailblazers in their chosen culinary fields.

But the common thread among them is passion. Whether they're brewing beer, baking bread, or growing tiny, addictive tangerines, all are perfectionists; they do one thing (or a few), and they do it very well.

With a focus on quality rather than quantity, many of these purveyors limit their production. While some are able to ship long distances, others are necessarily local. If you can't find these particular products in your area, don't be discouraged. Seek out a tastemaker near you. Ask around for recommendations, or sample items at a farmers' market. The producers you develop relationships with might just become your best friends in the kitchen.



McCLURE'S PICKLES

THE STORY After growing up making pickles each year as Christmas gifts with a pickle-loving father and grandfather, brothers Bob and Joe McClure decided to give the pickle business a try. Using their great-grandmother's recipe, they launched in 2006—Bob in New York City, Joe in their hometown of Detroit. Success came quickly, but they've kept their small-company philosophy. "We still cut every cucumber and pack every jar by hand," Bob says.

WHY WE LOVE THESE PICKLES Whether you choose spicy or garlic-dill, the pickles are deliciously seasoned, well balanced, crunchy, and fresh.

LEARN MORE mcclurespickles.com

SALVATORE BKLYN

THE STORY There's probably a Salvatore somewhere in Brooklyn, New York, whipping up his own ricotta, but you won't find him at Salvatore Bklyn. Betsy Devine (a chef) and Rachel Mark (a wine importer) named their business after a friend in Italy who inspired their entrée into ricotta-making. "He had an *enoteca* and served us the cheese," Devine says. "It was dense and milky, and we couldn't find anything like it at home." Salvatore carries on the tradition in the New World.

WHY WE LOVE THIS CHEESE It has a silky texture, a lemon undertone, and none of the graininess you find in grocery store varieties.

LEARN MORE salvatorebklyn.com

S. WALLACE EDWARDS & SONS

THE STORY Dry-cured, hickory-smoked, and aged for 18 months in Surry, Virginia, Edwards Surryano ham is akin to prosciutto or serrano (hence the name) and meant to be enjoyed the same way: uncured and sliced paper thin. Sam Edwards III follows the same curing methods used by his family for 84 years (his grandfather sold ham sandwiches on a ferryboat), with a little help from modern technology. Climate-controlled rooms maintain proper temperatures and humidity for the aging process, which lasts more than 400 days.

WHY WE LOVE THIS HAM Pasture-raised Berkshire hogs—not too fatty, not too lean—yield great meat that can keep for months in the fridge.

LEARN MORE surryfarms.com



THE PERFECT LITTLE LUNCH We combined several of our favorite treats: a slice of country bread, fresh ricotta and ground pepper, a handful of greens, and ribbons of dry-cured ham. Serve them with a spicy pickle on the side.



BETSY DEVINE AND RACHEL MARK
SALVATORE BKLYN

THE CHEESE MAKERS ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT: Betsy Devine, left, and Rachel Mark of Salvatore Bklyn. Simple high-quality ingredients, such as locally sourced whole milk (not whey, which some manufacturers use), along with a cheesecloth-straining technique, make Salvatore ricotta memorable.

THE CURE MASTER RIGHT: Third-generation Virginia pork producer Sam Edwards III with his dry-cured Surryano ham. **BELOW:** After the meat is hand-rubbed with Edwards's salt cure, it rests for 30 days. The curing is followed by seven days of smoking before the long aging process begins.



SAM EDWARDS III
S. WALLACE
EDWARDS & SONS