

Kittery's Tucked Away Gourmet

BY JENNIFER HAZARD

Just south of the Kittery Outlets on Route 1, a stretch of road referred to by locals as Gourmet Alley has become something of a beacon for travelers seeking culinary enchantment. An unexpected collection of specialty shops dedicated to delicious food and warm hospitality beckons the traveler with artisan breads, homemade pastas, local produce, fine meats, and handmade chocolates prepared in the European tradition. The destination is a treat for those in search of an escape from typical roadside fare, so if all that apparel shopping has made you hungry, just head on down the road.

First, stop by the Golden Harvest, a 60-year old market with a focus on fresh fruits and vegetables. Owner Jim Spencer takes pride in the Golden Harvest's bountiful choices as well as the old-fashioned shopping experience the market offers (the friendly staff knows many customers by name). During the New England growing season, most of the produce at the Golden Harvest is supplied by local farms in Maine and New Hampshire. In addition to fresh fruits and vegetables, shoppers will also find staff recommended wines, local cheeses, and coffees.

perfect spot for a casual breakfast or lunch. Owner and baker Mariah Roberts focuses on simple, all-natural foods. All of the specialty cakes (\$28-\$35) and pastries are made from scratch, and sandwich meats are roasted on the premises.

Roberts, who began selling bread at local farmers' markets, also bakes a variety of artisan breads each day. Customer favorites include traditional baguettes as well as Fougasse—an elegant flat bread flavored with olive oil, rosemary, and sea salt (\$5.50).

Get your pasta fix directly across the street at Terra Cotta Pasta Company. The tiny shop, located in a refurbished garage, is a feast for the senses. Visitors will immediately be tempted by the colorful array of Mediterranean specialties, including eggplant parmigiana with roasted vegetables and hand stuffed cherry peppers. The friendly staff is ready to offer suggestions for food pairings, and samples are often available for tasting.

Hand-cranked pasta and raviolis are standouts here. Customers can purchase everything from traditional four-cheese ravioli to seasonal choices like pumpkin cheddar and cranberry. A variety of fresh sauces are also available, including a popular caramelized onion and roasted red pepper sauce. Owner Kevin Cambridge, who originated many of the pastas and sauces in his Dover, New Hampshire-based kitchen, encourages



Next door, Carl's Meat Market is a carnivore's dream. Also owned and operated by Spencer, the traditional butcher shop offers everything cut to order, and the market welcomes customer requests for exotic meats. In the mood for venison or elk? How about alligator? The shop has an impressive selection of BBQ sauces, marinades and spice rubs, as well as specialty beers from around the world.

For something sweet to keep you going, head over to the Beach Pea Baking Company. The open, airy café is the





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feedback from customers and even offers first time guests a complimentary bag of fresh pasta to take home.

Searching for dessert or a special gift? Nearby Byrne & Carlson Chocolatier is well worth a visit. Husband and wife team Ellen Byrne and Chris Carlson make truffles and a variety of fine chocolates in their kitchen every day. The shop, located next to the kitchen, also offers artisan chocolate bars from Belgium, Venezuela, and France. Customers can choose 50-gram tasting bars such as French 68 with Sea Salt for \$3.50. Or if you're willing to splurge, try the hand-decorated bars adorned with candied fruits, flowers, and roasted nuts (\$8-12). Byrne & Carlson's most popular items are their handmade truffles made with fresh cream, fine liqueurs, coffee, tea, and spices. Specialty truffles, such as passion fruit lavender, are also available weekly.



Carl's Meat Market, 25 State Road, Kittery 207.439.1557
Golden Harvest Produce Market, 47 State Road, Kittery 207.439.2113
Terra Cotta Pasta Company, 52A State Road, Kittery 207.475.3025

Beach Pea Baking Company, 53 State Road, Kittery 207.439.3555
Byrne & Carlson Chocolatier, 60 State Road, Kittery 207.439.0096
www.byrneandcarlson.com