

Scouring a Spiel for a Deal

A Peek Into Buying Wine With the Co-op's Mick Mitchell

By David Plechl

The first thing Mick tells Glen Adams of Divine Wine is that he's just sampling, and likely won't be buying much today.

That's okay, says Glen, the meeting gave him a chance to get out of Portland for the day. The off chance to land a new account is more of an afterthought.

"I'm just showcasing a couple wines with good price points and good quality under eight dollars on the shelf."

"These are simple, straightforward varieties that are enjoyable with any type of food,"

He's got four varieties on the table, all produced by Crow Canyon, a winery that boasts ownership of its own California vineyards.

Glen has a 2008 Chardonnay, a Syrah, a Merlot, and a Cabernet. All produced with the vineyard's "estate fruit."

Mick gives the Merlot a swirl in the glass, takes a long sniff that seems to brighten his eyes, then finally swirls a bit around in his mouth.

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The Co-op's Mick Mitchell stocks up for another busy day in the wine department

Hybrid on the Road for Local Foods Bringing the City to Astoria

By Matthew Stanley

Our location on the banks of the Columbia River, near the lapping waves of the Pacific Ocean, makes our co-op unique, and our way-of-life distant from the hectic streets and crammed highways of Portland and its surrounding communities.

But being located nowhere near a major interstate corridor also has its draw-backs.

Our off-the-beaten-path location makes it somewhat difficult to work with the ever-growing number of local producers and small distributors that call Portland home.

These distributors don't often find making a coast route to be a profitable venture.

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Hours of Operation

Mon-Sat 9-7pm
 Sunday 11-5pm

Board of Directors

President: Merianne Myers
 Vice President: Tom Duncan
 Ute Swedloff
 Tiffany Turner
 Bennett Garner
 Mindy Stokes

Management & Staff

Matthew Stanley, General Manager
 Marin
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 Nels Olson
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Newsletter Committee

Tony Giglio
 David Plechl

The Seven Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic governance
3. Economic participation by owners
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education and training
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for the community

Want to Help the Co-op?

For volunteer opportunities, call
 503.325.0027.

Mick's Picks: Beer & Wine Recommendations

by David Plechl

BISON ORG. IMPERIAL BROWN - \$2.35 12 oz bottle 7.0%alc Bison Brewing, Berkeley, CA Full of roasted chocolate malt goodness, Mick is happy to share this "big and unique" beer. "More ingredients give it a more intense flavor," says Mick. At 7%, this Bison packs a wallop. "Brown is usually less than 4%."

TITAN ORGANIC IPA - \$1.79 12 oz bottle 7.1%alc Great Divide Brewing, CO Aggressive, assertive, and aromatic, this triple award-winning IPA is not your granddaddy's ale. "The piney, hoppy aroma is probably what I love most about it," says Mick, who has a hint for would-be drinkers. "This is one that should be consumed just below room temperature, so 60 to 65 degrees, otherwise you'll miss a lot of its flavor."

WANDERING ANGUS SEMI-DRY CIDER - \$10.99 25.4 oz bottle, 6.8%alc Wandering Angus, Salem, OR "There is no other organic Oregon product like this," says Mick, who recently introduced this crisp apple cider to the co-op. "You're getting a premium product at a really reasonable price." Support the Oregon economy and support sustainable agriculture. This cider should be on everyone's spring shopping list.

BARRICAS MALBEC 2008 \$6.49 ea, 750ml bottle, 13.9%alc. Barricas, Mendoza, Argentina Mick says this is a "nice fruit-forward, stand-alone, table wine," Mendoza grapes rarely disappoint, and at \$6.49 a bottle, you really can't go wrong. "Not only is it fantastic for Julia Child's boeuf bourguignon, it's also a great wine for drinking."



Making room for exciting and new products in the beer department.

ILL-TEMPERED GNOME BROWN ALE - \$4.85 22oz bottle, 6.8%alc. Oakshire Brewing, CA "Chocolate malt gives it the really big flavor brown ales are known for," says Mick. "You're probably not going to want a brown ale in the middle of summer. This is a winter ale. It's a warming beer."

HELL or HIGH WATERMELON WHEAT BEER - \$1.89 12 oz can, 4.9%alc 21st Amendment Brewery SF, CA Yum. Yum. Yum. This refreshing watermelon brewed ale goes down crisp, but is never bubbly. The fruit notes are mild, yet delicious. No strange aftertaste or cloying sweetness. This is a premium any-time beer! ★

Craft beer in a can? You bet. Cans fully defend against beer spoiling light and air.



Announcements

By Matthew Stanley

Food Bank

Due to the enthusiasm of a co-op member and the example of other co-op's in our region, the Astoria Co-op is organizing a unique and healthy way to contribute to our food bank system.

Because cash donations to the food bank go toward processed foods high in sodium and unhealthy fats, the co-op will purchase organic bulk foods such as dried beans and rice.

Volunteers are needed to help choose appropriate products, create instructions and recipes, and repackage the bulk foods into bags that are ready for food bank distribution.

Volunteers involved with food packaging will require a food handler's card which can be obtained online for \$10. Please inquire with Matthew if you are interested in participating. If you don't have time but would like to ensure a healthy donation to the food bank you can contribute financially to our purchase of bulk items.

Co-op Movie Night!

Information is Power In an effort to provide access to knowledge of our food system, the Astoria Co-op will be featuring movie and documentary films with themes that relate to our mission. Come have some snacks on the co-op and share this learning experience with fellow community members. Then take what you've learned and apply it to your shopping practices.



Sunday, February 28th, 5:30 PM
Food, Inc.

The movie Food, Inc. asks us to take a hard look at the story behind the food we purchase and feed to our families. Filmmaker Robert Kenner explores the highly mechanized and centralized U.S. food system and exposes a complicit regulatory system to boot. This is a movie to share with our children and families. It isn't all doomsday scenarios, however, as the film ends on a positive and inspiring note that suggests shopping at your local co-op is certainly a step in the right direction.

Member Spotlight

Zoe Fenton & Tiffany Boothe

members since: 2007

How did you find out about the co-op?

"I grew up here." - Zoe

Why did you become members?

"Because we shopped here often.

We get all our produce here. It just made sense." - Tiffany

Favorite food item from the co-op?

"Kelp noodles!" - Tiffany

"Produce! Actually, that's a tough one, could be the beer selection." - Zoe

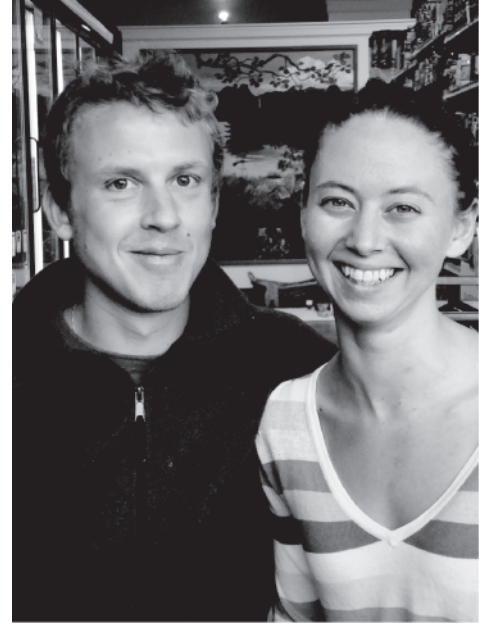
"Cheese!" - Tiffany

"I really like the coffee you carry too." - Zoe

Why would you recommend the co-op?

"It's the best selection of healthy foods around." - Zoe

"I like to shop locally anyways, so it's nice to support a local business that's not big and commercialized." - Tiffany



Tim Paradies & Kathleen Paradies

members since: 2005

Why did you become members?

"Because we were happy that there was a co-op here, and we wanted to support it. We're vegetarians and we found it had the stuff we liked." - Tim

"We wanted to support something positive in the community." - Kathleen

So you feel the co-op has a good selection of vegetarian foods?

"Definitely. Even better since we've moved over to this building." - Tim

What is your favorite thing about the co-op?

"We like the good organic veggies." - Tim

"We also really like the people here." - Kathleen

Is there a product you get here that you don't get anywhere else?

"Quite a few things I guess" - Tim

"We buy all our produce here" - Kathleen

Why?

"Because it's a fresh, good selection of organic produce." - Tim



New Products

By Matthew Stanley

New Products at the Co-op! Of course the co-op doesn't go long without bringing in new products, especially when they support small businesses in our region. Many new products are the result of customer requests as well, so don't hesitate to let us know what you'd like to get at the co-op. If there is a product you are getting elsewhere, even the big stores, let us know what and how much and we'll see what we can do. Certain ingredients we do try to avoid, such as GE corn and soy (if it's not certified organic or at least labeled GMO free then you are getting genetically engineered crops in your food). I recently spoke with a customer who decided to really take her time and take in all that the co-op has to offer. She was amazed at how many things she was unaware the co-op carried. We encourage you to do the same! To good health always!

Nasoya Won Ton Wrappers and Egg Roll Wrappers – After several requests the co-op tracked down these tools to make your very own egg rolls, wontons, and endless ravioli creations. Staff reviews are in and they work great! Check them out in the cooler!

Whale Tails Organic Tortilla Chip – A great company is making a great tasting tortilla chip! Shaped like whale tails both for functionality (great for dipping) and to remind you that a portion of the company's proceeds go to marine conservation efforts. Made with Alaea, or Hawaiian sea salt, these chips are packed with flavor. Now in the grocery aisle.

Wilderness Poet Nut Butters - Made in small batches at low temperatures these Portland produced nut butters are rich,

creamy, and delicious. A wonderful alternative to peanut butter on your morning toast. Choose from raw macadamia nut butter, Oregon hazelnut spread, chocolate cashew (a wonderful dessert spread), raw pistachio butter, sesame pistachio, or hemp nut butter (a great source of Omega-3's).

MegaFood Whole Food Vitamins – In the supplement aisle you'll notice the co-op is trying to bring attention to the importance of whole food vitamins. The majority of vitamins on the market are made from isolated vitamins, things that don't occur by themselves in nature. Being void of nature's cofactors and infinite complexity, isolated vitamins are difficult for the body to absorb, create acidity in the body, and can leech nutrients from other vital systems. Megafood vitamins are potent whole food supplements that are readily recognized by the body. Lower potencies give gentler and more powerful results. Because they are food they can be taken on an empty stomach. All megafood supplements are tested free of soy, gluten, dairy, and pesticides and fertilizers. Read more at www.megafood.com

Wild Carrot Herbals – Hand crafted in Rickreall, OR these body care products are top notch quality and 100% safe for your family. The majority of the plant botanicals in Wild Carrot products are grown on Jody Berry's own organic farm. She also uses personally wild crafted ingredients. Choose from Wild Carrot's facial cleanser, facial toner, vanilla bean butter cream, and sore muscle salves. Thanks for supporting local body care producers!

Cheese Department – The co-op has added some wonderful new additions to the cheese section. Check out Rivers Edge creamery's Astrae, an aged local goat cheese,



Nels Olson recently completed an internship with River's Edge and brings that knowlege to his work at the Astoria Co-op. He has his own goat cheese farm eventually, and specialize in hard cheddar and raw goat's milk.

or the Spanish raw goat cheese seasoned with paprika. Ancient Heritage Dairy, based in Scio, OR, has also made a showing with their soft ripened Adelle cheese made from cow and sheep's milk. Asiago is now available too!

Symbblueology – Described as functional art, these Italian blue glass bottles are sand blown with beautiful positive inscriptions. Try making solar blue water to help cleanse and purify. Place in sunlight for one hour and enjoy! These make a great refillable option for those wanted to avoid plastic consumption and BPA. Remember, the co-op has filtered water for customers to use their stainless and glass refillables!

Casper Candles – You may have noticed the delicate scent of fresh beeswax during your holiday shopping at the co-op. We now sell hand made beeswax candles that are made in Oregon from 100% Oregon produced beeswax. They are more affordable than our previous candles and are made days before the co-op receives them. Create



Edge Cheve Farm, co-op. He intends to start and cheese made from

some mood and clean your indoor air at the same time with Casper Candles!

Seeds – This year the co-op will be featuring exclusively organic or biodynamic seeds. We'll source a selection from Territorial Seeds Abundant Life Seeds collection. These seeds are 100% certified organic / biodynamic. Did you know that in order to have an organic compliant garden it is necessary to begin with certified organic seed? 100% certified organic seeds are harvested from plants grown without synthetic

chemical fertilizer, pesticide, and fungicide and therefore, harbor no residues from these chemicals. As an organic gardener, you are supporting the entire cycle of sustainable organic agricultural practices, which begins with organically grown seed. We will also feature a new line of 100% organic seed from the Seeds of Change company. Seeds of Change is an amazing company that works hard at promoting organic and sustainable food production. All Seeds of Change seeds are completely free of GMO constituents and are all open pollinated varieties. Open pollinated seeds are from plants pollinated naturally by insects, wind, and birds. These seeds are "true to type" to the original plant variety. Happy gardening! ★

Spiel for a Deal

Continued from page 1

"It's good for drinking," he finally declares with a smile.

All four go for about 6.99 right off the shelf.

As Glen pours the wine and runs through

a enthusiastic spiel, dropping words like "price point" and "top-seller," Mick peruses a catalogue of the distributors wines, which features many domestic and international wines, plenty of which are biodynamic or organic.

"We try to focus on small, family-oriented wineries that have small production," says Glen. "And these wines are great for people looking for a good after work drinker."

When Glen presents the Chardonnay, Mick lets him know that he's looking for an organic Chardonnay.

But the variety is hard to come by in an organic option, and Glen doesn't have one available. He let's Mick know he'll keep looking.

Mick tries the one he's got, another Crow Creek wine from California, and Mick seems pleased. Then he tries the Cab, and doesn't hesitate to let Glen know that it's not one of his favorites.

"Kind of watery," says Mick glumly. "I'm pretty tight on space, so I only want to pick the best varieties."

Mick has grown silent, and I can tell he's calculating an inner algorithm of price points, bouquet, taste, and cost.

Glen puts the four Crow Creek varieties away and slams four more bottles down on the table. Stonecap also grows their own grapes, on 1600 acres, near Richland, Washington.

He has a Chardonnay, Cab, Syrah, and Riesling which he says are "slightly more expensive, but still very affordable."

But Mick is still mulling over the Crow Creek wines and thinks he might bite on one or two of the varieties.

"I'm not looking to fill the shelves, I'm looking for bomber deals," he says.

But there's still more wine to sample, and Mick has done a bit more sipping and spitting, and is onto the Stonecap Cabernet.

"I'm liking this one," he says, "it's got a lot of those blackberry and plum flavors going on."

Glen agrees and starts into his sales pitch again, but Mick interrupts him.

"I'll take two cases of the Crow Creek Chardonnay. Two cases of the Crow Creek Merlot. Three each of the Stonecap Cabernet, and Syrah," he declares.

He also orders one case of a Charles & Charles red wine, a more upscale label with a slightly higher cost.

Glen seems happy that his trip was more than a sight seeing excursion, and Mick seems happy that he's found some very drinkable wines at some very reasonable prices.

The whole meeting took less than 20 minutes. ★

Produce Report

By Tony Giglio

As winter winds down so does the domestic apple supply. Don't fret, I expect to have a full complement of domestic apples for you for quite some time yet but you can expect slight price increases on some popular varieties as well as blowout deals on others that packing sheds have too many of.

Right now its all about the citrus fruit. Navel Oranges, Murcott Tangerines, Minneolas, and Golden Nuggets are all great buys. By mid-March we should see good quantities of great eating Pixies.

Bunched greens have been a tough item this winter. Severe weather around the country has made it difficult to find really great kales and chards and has driven the price up on what we can get. The good news is the very mild weather we have been having has brought in some great local kale. This in addition to increasing quantities from our distributor have put us in a much better situation for greens. ★

Food For Thought

Did Your Know....?

By Jennifer Rigley

Zinc is essential for maintenance of vision, taste, and smell. Zinc deficiency results in impaired functioning of these special senses and can also contribute to night blindness. In addition to oysters, zinc is found in seeds (especially pumpkin seeds), nuts, legumes, and whole grains. Have you tried the sprouted raw pumpkin seeds by Go Raw? They are lightly seasoned with sea salt and taste amazing! ★

Tasty Tidbits

By Jennifer Rigley

Salads are wonderful dishes to create. With just the right ingredients they become as inspirational as one dares, and the end result is a rich fusion of colors, textures, and tastes. The co-op kitchen's Mango Spinach and Kale Salad tantalizes the taste buds by combining nuts (both raw walnuts and slivered almonds) and fruit (dried mango, currants, and sometimes a fresh fruit or two) with sheep's milk feta cheese and luscious organic vegetables that are firm to the touch and vivid in color. These combinations guarantee a wonderful salad experience that is endlessly healthy too. Soon the co-op kitchen will begin sharing recipes with shoppers. Look for them by the sandwich and salad cooler door and take one with you! ★



Eats & Treats

Delicious Valentine

By Merianne Myers

A gift of homemade food and a handwritten note of affection or appreciation cannot be trumped by store-bought anything. It says something telling and true about you, it confers 'specialness' on the receiver in a way that all gifts should but often don't and it keeps your money close to home which is a gift to our greater community. Toast your favorite nut or a combination of them, toss with a whisper of chili powder and dip into melted chocolate (a few seconds in the microwave to melt the chocolate, then put the dipped items on wax paper in the fridge for about 20 minutes until set). And/or dip Turkish apricots, dried cranberries, raisins, prunes, shortbread, pretzels and lots of other stuff I can't think of that would be delicious dipped in chocolate.

Chocolate dipped nuts and a bottle of good red wine is a gift that simply oozes luxury and romance.

If you've a bit more time, consider making an apple cake for dessert.

This week's recipe is one that many of you have requested. Serve it warm with a lovely cup of tea or coffee, a snifter of brandy, a little candlelight. It's love on a plate. ★

Apple Cake

By Merianne Myers

Ingredients:

2 cups granulated sugar

2 cups unbleached flour

4 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking soda

2 eggs

1 cup vegetable oil

1/4 cup fruit juice - apple, pineapple, orange, mango - your choice

4 cups apples, peeled cored and chopped - I like Braeburns

1 cup chopped walnuts, pecans or hazelnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 325.

Butter and flour a 10" cake pan.

Combine the dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, whip the eggs until frothy, add oil and juice and mix again. Add dry ingredients and mix well. Fold in apples and nuts and pour into pan.

Bake for an hour or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in pan for a few minutes then turn onto a rack to cool completely.

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

This cake is lovely without a topping and over-the-top with a drizzle of caramel sauce, a scoop of vanilla or butter pecan ice cream or a dollop of this simple but luxurious frosting.

1/4 cup of your favorite jam or jelly. You can use apple butter or jelly, crabapple jelly, guava or pineapple jam. You make the call

1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lime juice

4 or 5 ounces of cream cheese at room temperature

Mix everything to a creamy consistency and ice the cake or serve on the side.

Hybrid *Continued from page 1*

In response, I have taken to the habit of making weekend trips to Portland, to bridge this logistical gap in our relationship with distributors and sustainable producers.

Luck would have it that my partner in sustainability crime owns a hybrid vehicle. Yes, not the fix all solution, but I go long distances without having to fill up, and many of the products that make the co-op truly unique, have made it to the shelves this way.

These include all Hummingbird Wholesale products, (excellent almond butter at a great price, local dried fruits, etc. Have you tried their raw granola from the bulk section?), Thai and True curry pastes, Falafel Chips, local kombucha, raw chocolates, Wilderness Poets nut butters, raw ice cream and much more.

Soon, regional meats may make it to the store this way, in order to provide members with locally-sourced, sustainably-raised chicken and pork!

These trips are worthwhile for several reasons. First, they help keep costs down for co-op members. We save on shipping and, when we source product directly from producers, we often forgo the mark-ups added on by distributors.

But even more importantly, these trips are educational and a true pleasure to undertake. It gives the Astoria Co-op a direct connection to the dedicated people producing sustainable foods in our region. They provide a depth of knowledge of where our food comes from and how it is produced. In turn, we are able to pass this information on to discerning co-op members who desire more information.

The people I meet on these excursions are the counter-culture to the industrial food system. They are even a sustainable response

to “Big Organic,” the steady handing over of once mom-and-pop operations into the hands of company’s like General Mills or Kellogg’s.

We know the merits of small-scale production done by people we can meet in person. Food safety concerns alone are all the more reason to decentralize our food production. If a product quality issue does arise, it is easy to trace the source and minimize widespread exposure.



Manager Matthew Stanley utilizes hybrid technology to shuttle new product to our store from Portland.

Yet making trips to Portland and driving all around the city to pick up product cannot be a sustainable long-term solution to supporting these producers. Of course, we often time these trips to coincide with trips we’d be making anyway, either to visit the city for leisure or to drive to Eugene for a family visit. But even for stores located in the metro area, vendors all individually making weekly deliveries seems like a carbon footprint nightmare.

We can make the same point about farmer’s markets too. Each individual farmer driving his produce to market

compounds the amount of fuel needed to get fresh produce. If it is true that our society’s many woes will only begin to be addressed when we restructure and re-prioritize our food system, then finding a sustainable and efficient way to do so is a pressing goal.

The co-op community has an amazing opportunity to fill this need, one that certainly comes with organizational and logistical challenges. Our produce distributor, Organically Grown Company, saw a similar need when it first began sourcing produce from Oregon farmers. When the growing season is in full swing we have an amazing selection of Oregon grown organic produce. Maybe instead of subsidizing gas prices and genetically engineered crops, our leaders can support a true answer to sustainability and widespread nutrition of our population by financially bolstering distribution of small-scale food production.

Unfortunately, waiting around for corporate-backed politicians to solve our food system crisis for us probably won’t work. If you’ve seen Food Inc. (playing at the co-op on Sunday February 28th at 5:30 PM) you know the revolving door associated with important USDA and FDA positions. Work for Monsanto one day and head the FDA the next. This habit of having the fox guard the henhouse is common practice regardless of who is in office.

In the meantime, we’ll keep firing up the gas electric and going out to meet the people that help keep us a unique and interesting place to shop.

I cannot imagine a better way to truly know where our food comes from than seeing the kitchens and warehouses that produce and distribute it. Thank you to all the members who seek out the products made by these industrious and dedicated individuals. ★



1355 Exchange St. Astoria OR 97103

Astoria Co-op Calendar of Events

- Thur., 02/25** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.
- Sun., 02/28** Co-op Movie night: Food Inc. 5:30PM @ the Co-op
- Sat., 03/13** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.
- Thur., 03/25** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.
- Thur., 03/25** Board Meeting: 6:30PM at the Co-op
- Sat., 04/10** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.
- Thur., 04/22** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.
- Thur., 04/22** Board Meeting: 6:30PM at the Co-op
- Sat., 05/08** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.
- Thur., 05/27** Owner Recognition Day - Owners receive 5% off all purchases.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Food Tasting

Don't miss our food tasting events on the night of the board meeting starting at 4 pm. We will be sampling new products and dishes prepared from ingredients available at the Co-op. The board of directors invites you to stick around and attend board meetings starting at 6:30 pm.

Owner Recognition Days

Owner Recognition Days are every second Saturday and every fourth Thursday of the Month. Members enjoy an additional percentage off all store purchases these days!

- February 13th
- February 25th
- March 13th
- March 25th

- April 10th
- April 22nd
- May 8th
- May 27th