

from Thunder Bay, so they brought it in. Now it's their most popular hot sauce.

Fiks estimates that half of the Black Market customer base comes from their South Osborne neighbourhood.

"They range from young professionals who don't have time to cook and seniors who don't want to cook for only one person to busy families who are rushing their kids from here to there and want to feed their families something wholesome."

The most popular products change with the seasons at Black Market Provisions, where Farkas runs a full commercial kitchen at the back of their shop.

"Soup is our top seller in the fall and winter," Fiks says. "We have a whole assortment of picnic salads, like curry chicken salad and miso crunch salad. Our all-vegan ice creams are popular in the spring and summer."

It seems, nowadays, that people are looking for quality food that's delicious, nutritious and ready to eat.

"We don't pretend to be healthy," Fiks says. "But our products are healthier because they are real food. People know they are getting something that is homemade."

Both companies also offer food for gluten- and lactose-intolerant customers. The 2020 pandemic has made the consumption of healthy food a priority for many people and these local companies are prepared to deliver what people are craving — literally, delivering what they want, right to their door.

Mouth-watering meals can be enjoyed with ease, whether you're on the go or relaxing at home. Black Market Provisions photos (far left and top right) by Jenn Kostesky.



local DIRECTORY

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Putting the SIZZLE back into the pan

BY BRANDI JOHNSON

In a time when many local businesses are struggling to stay open, kitchenware is in big demand. d. a. Niels Gourmet Kitchenware, the quaint and much-loved St. James kitchen store, is a destination for loyal supporters, foodies and chefs alike.

"It's been incredibly heartwarming," says store associate Daphne Boon. "The support from our gourmet community, first-time shoppers and those in the food industry has been overwhelming."

d. a. Niels is the largest privately owned, warehouse-style kitchenware store in Western Canada. Open to the public, this past January, they celebrated 20 years in business. To celebrate, they are pleased to announce a new website coming soon.

"Food brings people together," she says. "In life, sometimes we are forced to try new

LOCAL FLAVOUR



things, step out of our comfort

zone or, better yet, step into it. Cooking is a beautiful exploration of that journey. There is nothing we love more than being a part of that."

Looking to winter on the prairies, as we dust off recipes that have been in our families for years, d. a. Niels has the perfect accompaniment to cold, dark nights. As we learn to appreciate the art of savouring a well-made meal or as we think about shopping for new gadgets to improve our food prep, d. a. Niels is prepared to help you make dinner better, make your shopping experience more convenient and make you look like you learned a thing or two when the world was on lockdown.

SO, WHAT'S IN DEMAND? HERE ARE A FEW ITEMS THAT CAN TAKE YOUR NEXT CULINARY ADVENTURE TO NEW HEIGHTS.

Made in France, Staub's Dutch oven is an ideal pairing for a glass of Burgundy and Julia Child's beef bourguignon recipe. Whether baking bread or simmering soup, cooking with a cast iron Dutch oven not only ensures food cooks evenly, it is guaranteed to deliver a dish of comfort.

The Ooni pizza oven is zaa dream. Designed to reach to heat up to 950°F, the temperature you need for crispy-on-the-outside, airy-on-the-inside perfect crusts, the Ooni is ideal for making perfect pizza at home. To top that off, d. a. Niels also sells Emile Henry's barbecue safe pizza stone and a variety of cutters to make everything from dough to delicious a slice!

Makers rejoice! From ice cream makers to pasta makers and even waffle irons, every family knows few things appease the heart like a bowl of ice cream, a bowl of pasta or a warm and chewy waffle with tiny indents bathed in butter. Foods that transport us to another time or place are what's featured on 2020's menu, it seems. Suddenly gluten-free, dairy-free or vegan options are feasible for all.

From measuring cups to baking mats, even grandma would be impressed with the largest selection of cookie cutters, scoops and more. From icing tips to bakeware, pie, squares, slices and tiered cakes, they are all balm for whatever ails us.

Not surprising, craft cocktails, small batch beers and local spirits seem to have put barware front and centre. After all, if we cannot be bellied up to our favourite bars like we used to, we might as well beef up the barware we have at home. Manufacturer Arrke has made a super sexy, super sleek soda machine that has mixologists going mad — so eye-catching you'll want to put it on the counter. Never worry about running out of tonic water again.

"Life can be challenging," says Boon, "At d.a. Niels, we love being a part of what makes people come together and if we can help make that part of your day easier, we're more than happy to."

This year, we know absence. We understand limitations. We recognize what's at stake. This year, we've honed our culinary skills, have mastered the art of conversation, and are taking one day at a time. In the words of David Sedaris, "In terms of emotional comfort it was our belief that no amount of physical contact could match the healing powers of a well-made cocktail."

With the right kitchen essentials and fresh, quality ingredients, being in the kitchen never felt so good.

