

http://www.gazettextra.com/archives/milton-man-is-emperor-of-exotic-ice-cream-flavors/article_cff90d7b-9763-57bf-aa9d-0a73bb962e4a.html

Milton man is emperor of exotic ice cream flavors

Neil Johnson Jun 28, 2013



Dan Lassiter/dlassiter@gazettextra

MILTON — Andrew Osmond's wild ice cream creations are like jazz music that people can taste.

Each flavor is a piece of culinary art spun from out of Osmond's imagination, through improvisation, experimentation and flights of fancy.

Osmond, a Milton resident, is an ice cream hobbyist with aspirations to someday become a professional ice cream maker.

His business, if he ever started one, would be called “Lil’ Cheeky Ice Cream.” That’s the name Osmond uses for Twitter and Facebook postings of his creations.

For now, his tools are humble; they include pots, pans and a standard Cuisinart ice cream maker.

Yet the flavors he concocts in the kitchen of his Milton home are beyond gourmet. It’s almost ice cream alchemy. Call Osmond the emperor of the strangest ice cream imaginable.

Take Osmond’s latest creation: roasted strawberry and black pepper ice cream with a honey red wine sauce in a balsamic reduction.

It seems illogical, pairing vinegar and black pepper with strawberries. Yet it works, somehow.

A Gazette reporter’s impromptu taste test of the flavor (and five other Osmond creations) revealed the following flavor evolution: First, there was the big sweet explosion of fresh strawberries. Then came a little tinge of black pepper.

Finally, the vinegar kicked in. It cut the sweetness of the strawberry and made the whole concoction seem somehow savory. Which isn’t normal when it comes to ice cream.

“The vinegar creates what I call a flavor imbalance,” Osmond said.

He was starting to get technical, but a Gazette reporter and photographer were too busy cramming down Osmond’s crazy-flavored ice cream to mind.

Some of the flavors Osmond has in his freezer at home are like punk-rock cousins of vanilla.

Some examples: salted lemon ice cream with bourbon rhubarb sauce; locally grown sweet corn custard ice cream; salted peach ice cream with whiskey caramel sauce (with huge chunks of fresh peaches); roasted apple ice cream with cheddar cheese; and citrus olive oil ice cream.

Osmond has been at the craft of home ice cream making for two years. It all started after a vacation during which Osmond and his wife, Kerry, sampled some offbeat, gourmet ice cream.

Then they came home, and it was back to Blue Bunny and Dean’s ice cream. For Osmond, it was a letdown. So he decided to start making his own. He uses only fresh ingredients and adds seasonal, locally grown fruits.

“I’ve always loved ice cream, and I love the creativity of making my own. It’s like music or art, except that you can taste it,” Osmond said. “It starts with a cocktail or a dessert, and you think, ‘How could I make that an ice cream flavor?’”

Osmond keeps his recipes in a leather-bound book and lets his mind roam free. It helps that he’s a cooking buff because he creates each of his flavors in the key of custard ice cream. Each one starts with a base of eggs and cream. That’s the hard part.

Osmond simmers and cooks the flavor bases on the stove before mixing in fruit, herbs and other flavorings and chilling the concoction before mixing it in a standard home ice cream maker.

Each “batch” takes about 12 hours (mostly chilling time) and makes about a quart, Osmond said.

Osmond’s vision for ice cream, as it stands, is in a closed loop. He doesn’t sell it. Instead, he makes it to give away to family and friends.

Yet Osmond, who works as a coordinator at a halfway house in Madison, says he’s had thoughts of turning his passion into an actual business. He’s even researched small business models with help from a friend who develops businesses.

He said there are a few strikes against making the jump from hobby to business; one is producing enough ice cream.

“It’s that kind of daunting thing. There’s red tape, dedicated licensure, regulations and questions about operations. I’ve never put it totally out of the realm. It is a tantalizing idea, but yet the thought of this being a business still kind of scares me,” Osmond said.

Also, Osmond pointed out, ice cream season tends to be relatively short in Wisconsin

“We don’t live in the best, prototypical ice cream climate, yet Culver’s does very well.”

Of course, Culver’s has the benefit of also selling hamburgers. Yet, someday, maybe Osmond will perfect a hamburger-flavored ice cream. He doesn’t rule out any flavor.

Some, such as Osmond’s English ale ice cream, have really flopped. But for him, it’s the learning process of painting new flavor portraits with ice cream. Mistakes aren’t a big deal.

“I’m willing to color outside the lines. I think ice cream lends itself to that,” Osmond said.

If he did go into business, he fears he’d lose the spontaneity of his craft. To Osmond, the mix of vinegar, wine, sweet strawberries and tangy pepper is like a fleeting moment of summer just before sunset.

“It’s that exact taste—you know once you’ve created it, you can never reproduce it quite the same way,” Osmond said.

Just a taste

Lil’ Cheeky Ice Cream’s

“Roasted Strawberry Black Pepper Ice Cream”

(With honey red wine sauce in a balsamic reduction)

3 1/2 cups strawberries, pureed with 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

1/2 cup fine chopped strawberries

2/3 cup sugar

4 egg yolks

2 cups cream

1 cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 teaspoon black pepper, ground

3 tablespoons lemon juice

Directions: Roast four cups of strawberries, lemon juice and 1/3 cup of sugar in pan at 375 degrees for eight minutes. Mix sugar and egg yolks. Heat milk and cream in pan, temper and cook with egg and sugar mix. Strain mix into a bowl, add vanilla extract, 2 teaspoon ground pepper two cups

strawberry puree (reserve 1/3 cup), and chill mixture. Mix in standard home ice cream maker. Near end of mix, add rest of strawberry puree, chopped strawberries and pepper.

Yield: Makes about one quart.

Honey red wine sauce

1 cup red wine

1 cup Balsamic vinaigrette

2 tablespoons honey

Directions: Cook in pan over medium/low heat until mix is reduced. Drizzle on top of ice cream as a sweet/savory sauce.

For more ice cream recipes and ideas by Andrew Osmond, visit Lil' Cheeky Ice Cream on Facebook and

Twitter.