

FRESH PROSPECTS

Week 18 – October 16, 2008

This Week:

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The Fourth Annual Vendy Awards

Pushcart vendors have it rough. They're on the street day and night in every kind of weather. They make little money. They navigate a mine field of potential violations. And they have to put up with any mook who wants a hot dog.

But this Saturday, the street vendors of New York get their chance to shine. The Vendies are a combination fund raiser, competition, and awards ceremony to honor "the best sidewalk chefs in New York City." We're not just talking about soft pretzels here, but tacos, crepes, kebabs, wafels, pupusas, falafel, jerk chicken, dosas, and more.

There will be an Iron Chef-style cook-off, beer and wine, live music, a raffle, and, of course, loads of street food. The tickets are pricey but tax-deductible, and proceeds benefit the Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center, a nonprofit that "provides a voice for the thousands of people who sell food and merchandise on the streets of our city."

Saturday, October 18, 3–7pm

Tobacco Warehouse at Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park in Dumbo.

\$100 / \$80 advance

<http://streetvendor.org/vendys>

Town and Country

If you're craving a farm visit, but can't make the trek up to Ted's, try Red Hook instead. Right across from Ikea, the Added Value Community Farm has been growing and selling over forty different crops a year since 2001, all on an old asphalt playing field in raised beds fertilized by compost from the Bronx Zoo.

The farm is the brainchild of activists Michael Hurwitz and Ian Marvy. Their radically successful idea was to employ local kids to grow the vegetables – teaching them sustainable farming techniques, entrepreneurial skills, and a deeper understanding of the food they eat.

When Red Hook's only supermarket closed, Added Value filled the vacuum with their own farmers' market. Since then, the market has expanded to include providers of pasture-raised poultry and lamb, locally caught fish, and baked goods.

And if you're worried about the safety of vegetables grown over asphalt, Marvy assures that "contaminants don't leach up, they leach down" and that farm managers test the soil regularly. He also points out that a "cap over the land can be very helpful in an industrial district."

The Added Value market (www.added-value.org/ [<http://www.added-value.org/>](http://www.added-value.org/)) is open twice a week:

Thursdays, 11am - 3pm
6 Wolcott (Wolcott and Dwight Streets)

Saturdays, 9am - 3pm
the Added Value Community Farm (Columbia and Beard Streets)

Half-share Fish Stew

If you don't already know about the thousand and one uses of the Japanese bonito and kelp stock called "dashi", check out this article in yesterday's Times: http://nytimes.com/2008/10/15/dining/15dashi.html?_r=1&ref=dining&oref=slogin [<http://nytimes.com/2008/10/15/dining/15dashi.html?_r=1&ref=dining&oref=slogin>](http://nytimes.com/2008/10/15/dining/15dashi.html?_r=1&ref=dining&oref=slogin) . Or better yet, head over to Sunrise Mart for a pint of Miko brand's dashi miso paste.

Here's a Wednesday dinner recipe, good for using up what's left of your share:

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon dashi miso paste
2 cups water
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 celery root, peeled and chopped into ½" cubes
1 turnip, sliced into 1/8" disks
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
1 pinky-sized fresh ginger, peeled and minced
1 clove garlic, minced
½ lb. red snapper fillet (virtually any fillet will do), hacked into 1" squares
1 bunch vitamin greens, coarsely chopped
sea salt and ground black pepper

In a medium pot, heat the oil, and sauté the celery root and turnip for three minutes. Add onion, ginger, and garlic, and sauté another minute.

Push the miso paste through a fork to dissolve it in the water. Pour this miso solution into the pot, adding more water if needed to cover ingredients.

Bring to a boil, and add the fish. Bring to a boil again, then reduce heat to low for ten minutes. Add the vitamin greens, and remove from heat as soon as the greens have wilted. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Serves two.

News from Windflower Farm

In this week's dispatch, Ted reports on how the internet lets small farmers around the world share tips and technology.

"You never know where you're going to find the cropping system of your dreams. I found mine on YouTube. It turns out that the Australians, having discovered Italian bed shapers, have mastered permanent bed vegetable systems. And the folks at Schreurs & Sons Farm have figured it out so well they've filmed it from every angle. I discovered YouTube not long ago (high-speed internet service has just become available in our area), and along with footage about virtually every human activity imaginable, they have an excellent collection of agricultural videos. The Schreurs, although not organic, have an elegant system, and now you can see it for yourself.

The Italians make the best equipment for the small farm. Their mountainous and rocky terrain has given rise to a host of innovative machinery companies that dominate the European farm equipment market. The piece of machinery I'm interested in is made in Italy's mountainous north. In college, instead of (or perhaps next to) posters of long-legged models, I had a poster of an old Italian farmer, smoking a pipe, his dog at his side, leaning against his Ferrari crawler, the Alps in the background, and a miserably stony soil beneath his feet.

Imagine farming on a stony soil, as we do, and that when you use your cultivating (weeding) tractor you kill a fair number of your vegetable plants because your sweeps (weeding shovels) knock stones onto them. You find yourself frustrated by your inability to mechanize, which could help you produce your vegetables more efficiently, and as a result, you cannot grow your farm business because your limited work force is busy hand-weeding. Now, imagine that a tool exists that buries those stones a few inches below the soil surface, and shapes your soil into a beautiful raised bed. You buy that tool because you know it will change your life forever. Now you plant your vegetable seedlings into stone-free soil. Your cultivating tractor hums along, destroying all the weeds that are close to your vegetables. Your work force quickly dispatches the few weeds left behind, and then moves on to other, more productive tasks.

We'll be able to quadruple our acreage!! We'll be rich!! We'll be so efficient we can cut share prices in half!!

In your shares are arugula, lettuce, vitamin green (a choi), carrots, potatoes, garlic, sweet corn, turnips, beets, and celeriac. Next week we'll probably send peppers, eggplants, fennel, various root vegetables, and salad and cooking greens.

Best wishes,
Ted Blomgren”

UNTIL NEXT WEEK, we wish you all happy veggie eating