

BEYOND THE LINE

Market owner is inspired by her travels

About five years ago, a colleague of mine brought me lunch. I remember it to this day:



MIDGE KNERR

roast beef and caramelized onions on ciabatta bread with a horseradish cream, preciously packaged, and a cup of delicious cream of mushroom soup. There was a heavenly slice of ginger cheesecake as well.

"Where did you find this lovely take-out lunch?" I asked. "A new spot on lower Thames Street called Max's Market," my friend said. We proceeded to have a few lunches like this one until she moved on to another job but I have never forgotten the glee at finding the new market in town.

It is 5½ years later and I have met owner Emily Wigutow at functions such as Taste of Newport and the Aquidneck Growers Market on Wednesdays in the summer and early fall. I happened to see her setting up her booth last week and it occurred to me there had to be a good story to tell about her owning the market.

Wigutow has a background with many twists and turns, quite worldly ones in fact. First of all, she told me she grew up with "foodie" parents and lived around the corner from the prestigious Dean & DeLuca gourmet grocery store in Manhattan, which many markets have tried to imitate. One of

her first jobs was there; it was a revolutionary time in food, as fusion, nouvelle cuisine and all kinds of trends were making their mark in New York.

She landed a job as an event planner for The Upper Crust and Maxim's in New York, which were owned by the same Parisian owners, where she organized and managed many "over-the-top" full-service events. Another New York job was at a Latin nightclub called S.O.B.'s (Sounds of Brazil) — quite an intriguing start to a career.

While working in New Zealand for the 1999-2000 America's Cup, she moved to Newport to work as the sailing secretary at New York Yacht Club, to her a "dream job."

She traveled to Europe to help organize and round up yacht club members and crew members during the America's Cup Jubilee and subsequent Grand Tour. "During my free time, I went to supermarkets and open markets. I can still smell the rotisserie chicken in the St. Tropez Market and am obsessed with the roast suckling pig from Sardinia, (which is) why I started doing pig roasts this year," she said.

"I honestly remember every place I've ever visited by the food I ate and saw," she said.

While back in New Zealand for the 2003 America's Cup, Wigutow began thinking about opening a market herself. She found the food in New Zealand inspiring. "There I explored all the gourmet shops. The food in New Zealand was fantastic —

fresh, interesting and there was Asian food — my favorite."

Five-and-a-half years ago, Wigutow opened Max's Market (both her great-grandfathers were named Max), using all she had experienced and keeping Dean & DeLuca in mind as a kind of template. After the first season, the market on Memorial Boulevard closed, which made Wigutow refocus on prepared food and catering, and she has been going strong ever since.

Q&A with Emily Wigutow

How would you describe your cooking style?

I really like ethnic food. I am a fan of simple preparations with great ingredients.

What is your favorite ingredient?
Pork.

What are the best sellers at the market?

All of our sandwiches, Thai chicken cakes, curried chicken salad, grilled Mexican corn salad and barbecue pulled pork.

I know the scene gets crazy in summer with the boats and people heading here and there. How early do you get up to prep everything?

When we have crazy mornings, with lots of boat lunches, all due at 8 a.m. — we've done up to 200 a day — we come in at the crack of dawn, turn on the coffee, the music, the oven, and get to work. Everyone has to be a morning person — at least for a few hours!

What kitchen tool could you not be without?

Kind of boring answer — my



Emily Wigutow opened Max's Market at 469 Thames St. in Newport 5½ years ago.

David Hansen photo

knife. It can do almost anything.

Goals for the upcoming season?

More! More catering, more boats (in the spring) and more locals!

Favorite late-night snack?

Leftover chocolate mousse.

Do you try to use local products?

I love to use them because both local and seasonal products taste better and because I want to support local businesses.

Do you cater holiday parties and meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas?

Our holiday menus always have been popular; I try to add some new items each year and still keep the classic ones. Although I offer whole meals, usually people just order all

their sides and desserts from us and cook the turkey or main course themselves. We do full-service catering for the holiday parties. I usually create custom menus for the full-service parties.

What is the secret to your success?

We are known for our creative, fresh and unique food. Some of the customers think the secret ingredient is love.

Max's Market is located at 469 Thames St. and open Thursday-Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Check it out at www.maxsmarket.com.

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