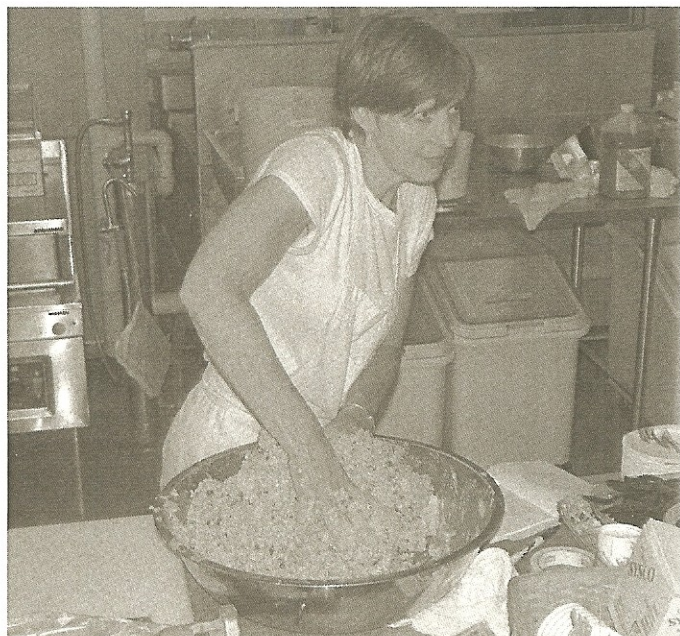


SWEET TALK

A Conversation with Salty Oats Creator Terri Horn

BY DIANNE LANGELAND



Terri, elbow deep in cookie dough

Photo by Doug Langeland

We first discovered Salty Oats a few summers ago and were wowed by the curious salty-sweet balance of the best darned oatmeal cookies we ever ate. And then, before we could get enough of them, they were gone, only to mysteriously reappear the following summer. We had to get the low-down from their inventor, Terri Horn, if only to persuade her keep baking in winter.

How did you get started baking professionally?

I baked my way through college while studying education in North Carolina and continued working at a restaurant when I began teaching. I soon discovered that my sense of fulfillment, my curiosity, my inspiration was in using my hands to create, so I left teaching to start a small dessert company.

What was the inspiration to add a sprinkling of salt on your cookies?

The inspiration for salting the cookie was something I had seen at a bakery I worked at in North Carolina. However, I consider this cookie “mine” after years of reworking the recipe and ingredients and making, who-knows-how-many cookies over 14 years.

Where else have you baked?

I first sold Salty Oats in DC in the 1990s when I was working at Marvelous Market, the first real artisanal bakery in DC. I worked at 21 Federal and Chanticleer on Nantucket, and spent a long season working for Todd English at Isola on Martha's Vineyard. I also worked for 1789 in Georgetown for eight years. In addition I was awarded two scholarships to study and work in Paris at the Ritz and Le Notre for five months.

Paris, Washington DC, North Carolina...what brought you to Cape Cod?

All my life I've had a special affinity for the Cape. It feels like home. I've been coming here for almost 30 years, but it's only been since I left the restaurant life that I have been able to stay for a whole season. This is my third.

How did you develop your distribution channel on the Cape?

I knew and loved Jean Iverson and was thrilled when we first discussed my baking for Kelly Farmstand [Route 6A in Cummaquid]. Each year I've expanded my offerings there. This year the Salty Oats will return, of course, along with their sister cookie, the Chocolate Salty Oat. The new cookie is something I have wanted to do for a long time. I also plan to bake pies, turnovers, scones, maybe granola, and, I hope, some breads. The beauty of baking for the farm is that I can wake up and decide what I want to create that day. I use Jean's rhubarb, raspberries, and veggies as I can in my baking. Jean is

getting me organic eggs from someone in her gardening club. This also will be my third year selling to Fancy's Market in Osterville and to the Lavender Farm in Harwich. I'll also be selling my baked goods at the Mid-Cape Farmers' Market and the Provincetown Fish & Farmers' Market for several weeks. [You can also order them by emailing Terri at saltyoats@aol.com]

Rumor has it that the Food Network was following you around one day.

They are developing a new version of Recipes for Success, which will most likely air in the fall. I am going to be featured in a segment about starting a cookie company. Since summer on the Cape is the highlight of my year, the producer and the cameramen came in May and followed me for a day: to Fancy's Market, to the bank to open an account, to visit with Jean on the farm, and to a meeting with Jim Miller who heads up the Hospitality Program at Cape Cod Community College. It included an interview with my mom, and closed with my dog, Clementine, and me walking into an amazing Cape Cod sunset.

What about your relationship with Cape Cod Community College?

Starting this summer, I'll be working out of the kitchen at 4Cs as part of their incubator program, which makes available facilities and expertise to local entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry, with emphasis on locally grown and produced foods.

When are you going to move to Cape Cod full time so we can always have access to Salty Oats?

That is something I think over seriously each summer and it seems each year I stay a little longer. Perhaps it will come down to finding the right space for my “summer bakery”, or perhaps it's just a matter of getting to the point in my life when I decide “This is it, this is where I want to be to do what I love most, and the time is now...” ★