

table talk

Ann Arbor may not have a world-class pharmaceutical firm much longer, but like New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, we do have our own cheesecake: baker Tim Edinger is turning out what he considers the definitive **Ann Arbor-style cheesecake** at his Old World Bakery on Plaza Drive. Compared to New York-style, he says, “Ann Arbor’s is lighter and creamier and has a definite and distinctive taste.”

While they may be light in style and texture, Edinger’s cheesecakes are formidable: some weigh four to five pounds and serve up to twelve people. At barely two pounds, the biggest Sara Lee looks positively scrawny alongside one of these local beauties. Plus, those industrial cakes have all that chemical gunk listed in the ingredients. Edinger’s plain cheesecake uses only fresh dairy products—cream cheese, sour cream, and heavy whipping cream—along with eggs, sugar, and Madagascar Bourbon vanilla extract. He builds twenty-six flavors by adding real ingredients, not just flavorings—the Black Forest cheesecake contains *wisniak* cherry liqueur from Poland and Balaton cherries from Hungary.

Edinger worked at Grizzly Peak and Zingerman’s Bakehouse before launching Old World in May 2005. In addition to cheesecakes, he has coffee cakes (he’s just now perfecting the recipe for a new chocolate-beer coffee cake); a carrot cake made with organic carrots; and a dozen different breads. But his mainstay is that cheesecake, available at twenty-six gourmet stores, cafes, and restaurants, including Amer’s Deli, Cafe Felix, Cafe Verde, Cafe Zola, Cottage Inn, Espresso Royale, Fresh Seasons Market, Mac’s Acadian Seafood Shack, Mediterraneo, the Quarter Bistro, and the West End Grill.

—*Bix Engels*

ANN ARBOR OBSERVER

March 2007

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