

food

52 LIQUID ASSETS 55 RESTAURANT ROULETTE

Giveable City

The treat of Austin eats

Looking for the perfect gifts for those food lovers on your list? The *Chronicle* food staff – Claudia Alarcón, Barbara Chisholm, Wes Marshall, MM Pack, Kate Thornberry, Mick Vann, and I – have already done plenty of research for you. We've checked out area farmers' markets, local independent specialty retailers, cooking schools, and Web sites searching for the most delectable and unique gift ideas. We say avoid those malls: Eat Austin for the holidays! – Virginia B. Wood

Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

This season, there's a mouthwatering selection of edible Austintatious gifts for every meal of the day. The holiday breakfast gift bag should include a **Kerbey Lane Pancake Mix Combo** complete with two bags of their famous pancake mixes, a mixing bowl, and a whisk, available at their restaurant locations while supplies last. **Spiceburst's** Pomegranate Orange Butter is magnificent slathered on pancakes, waffles, biscuits, or scones, and a jar of McKemie HomeGrown's Blackberry Jelly will be welcome on any breakfast table.

Look for Spiceburst products at www.spiceburst.com and at **Farm to Market, Grape Vine Market, Breed & Co.,** and the **Sunset Valley Farmers' Market** (Toney Burger parking lot on 290 West), where you will also find McKemie HomeGrown. The final component to the breakfast package should be a couple of attractive mugs filled with authentic Mexican hot chocolate cones from **Kakawa Whole Bean Chocolates**



GIFT GUIDE

Pickles for Hurricane Relief

While not exactly Austin-centric, think about some gifts of hot pickles that will support displaced food workers from across the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast.

Bill Kamman, veteran pickle-maker in Louisville, Ky., has teamed with the Southern Foodways Alliance to produce and promote a special sweet-hot pickle called SOS Sharpies (stands for Spicy Old Southern-style) to benefit food and restaurant workers in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Texas. Ninety percent of the money generated by pickle sales will be disbursed through the New Orleans Hospitality Workers Disaster Relief Fund. So far, pickle sales have raised \$25,000.

"Ever since I was a little kid," Kamman says, "I've loved homemade pickles and lots of other great things to eat that came out of Southern kitchens like the ones I grew up in. The food people of this region are a breed apart. They always show up at your door with something to eat when you're facing hardships. It's a barn-raising mentality – you just naturally want to pitch in and help."

Jars of hot pickles – what a terrific holiday gift. Order a case of SOS Sharpies by mailing a check for \$135 (\$15 is for shipping) made out to Pickle Relief Fund. Send it to PICKLES, 425 E. Burnett St., Louisville, KY 40217. For delivery by Christmas, the check must be received by Dec. 16. For more information, call 502/523-6154 or e-mail ssossharpies@yahoo.com. – MM Pack



(www.cocopuro.com). Just grate or chop into very hot milk, stir vigorously with a whisk or molinillo, and enjoy luxurious hot chocolate. They're offering this seasonal treat wrapped in festive gold foil at their booth at the **Downtown Farmers' Market** (Fourth & Guadalupe).

A selection of local cheeses and condiments can easily fill up the lunchtime gift basket. You'll know what it means to make a genuine New Orleans muffuletta with the marvelous Olive Salad Mix from **Sgt. Pepper's** and the herb-flavored cheese spreads from **Full Quiver Farms** will impress the most discerning palate. Look for these on Saturday mornings at Sunset Valley. Fans of grilling and barbecuing will rave about Spiceburst's Savory Pomegranate Glaze (great on chicken, pork, or beef), their fiery island-inspired Rocket Sauce (squirited on sandwiches or into soups), or a combo pack of their flavored salts for rubbing and sprinkling. Their newest product, a brilliant ruby syrup called Pomegranate Squeeze, adds color and zip to sparkling water, sodas, champagne, and margaritas.

Barbecue-starved displaced Texans will rejoice at dinner time when they open the package you ordered from the **County Line** by going to www.airribs.com. Customize a gift box with everything from beef brisket, ribs, or steaks to pork ribs, smoked hams, and smoked whole turkeys or breasts to their custom sausage, barbecue sauce, bread mix, or homemade pecan pie. Throw in a Cowboy Talkin' CD and hunger and homesickness will be assuaged all in one meal! – V.B.W.

continued on p.50



Sunset Valley Farmers' Market



Katrine evacuee Noel Martin helps to stock shelves at the Capital Area Food Bank.

FOOD-O-FILE

BY VIRGINIA B. WOOD

We've devoted this week's entire section to promoting Austin food products and specialty retailers as great holiday gift ideas, and we're proud and happy to do it. However, at this time of year, it's important to remember that the less fortunate among us need food simply to survive. The devastating events of the past year have put a tremendous strain on our area's food safety net. The **Capital Area Food Bank** (8201 S. Congress, 282-2111) and all the Central Texas care agencies and food pantries it supports are in dire need of food donations. Please include a grocery bag of nonperishable food items on your holiday gift list. If you can't make it to CAFB to drop off your donation, food donations are being accepted at area **Randalls** and **RunTex** stores, as well as the **Crown Plaza Holiday Inn**. It will be some of the easiest shopping you do all year, providing a gift the recipients are guaranteed to treasure.

EVENT MENU: DEC. 8-15

Ring in the season tonight with those whisky-loving merry malsters at **Opal Divine's Penn Field** (3601 S. Congress Ste. K100, 707-0237) at their third annual Whisky Festival. Brand ambassadors will be on hand to answer questions about the impressive line of malts they've assembled, appetizers will be served, and taxi vouchers will be available for a safe ride home. Tickets are \$45 at the door for a product sample card and commemorative Opal's logo tasting glass; 7pm, Thursday, Dec. 8.

Help the folks at **Boggy Creek Farm** (3414 Lyons Rd., 926-4650) celebrate the bounty of their winter crops and farmer **Larry Butler's** birthday this weekend. There will be hot soup and beverages, Breton music from **Bouree Texano**, artisan booths, and plenty of custom-made food products and organic produce. Go to www.boggycreekfarm.com for directions; 9am-2pm, Saturday, Dec. 10.

Meat lovers can learn the butchering and grilling secrets of Brazilian Churrascaria from Brazilian native **Tony Sousa** at a class titled **From Brazil to Your Grill** at **Casa Brasil** (5213 Evans, 407-9887). They promise the information and the food will be very satisfying. Tickets are \$45, and seating is limited, so make reservations now; 2-5pm, Saturday, Dec. 10.

The historic downtown home that houses the **Tea Embassy** (900 Rio Grande, 330-9991) is decorated for Christmas and ready to welcome guests to shop and attend three days of holiday teas this weekend. Enjoy holiday cheer and a three-course tea menu prepared by **Amuse Bouche Catering** for \$35 per person. Seatings at 1pm and 3:30pm, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Dec. 9, 10, and 11.

The chefs at the **Alamo Drafthouse** locations are preparing a mouth-watering lineup of holiday feasts to complement the movies opening this month. Go directly to the Web site at www.originalalamo.com for menus, prices, and screening times for the French feast accompanying *Moulin Rouge*, the exotic Narnian delights and wine pairings for *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and the wild island luau to be served with Peter Jackson's *King Kong*.