

WISCONSIN

Field to Fork

FARM-FRESH
RECIPES
from the
DAIRY STATE

LORI FREDRICH

Amy's Acre

Caledonia, Wisconsin
amysacre.com

Farming ran in Amy Wallner's family. Although her parents didn't manage one themselves, they'd both grown up on dairy farms. Her mother was also an avid gardener and stay-at-home mom who would often cook her way through the *Moosewood Cookbook* multiple times over a single summer. Having been spoiled by the bounty of fresh food she'd eaten at home, Amy says the transition to the processed cafeteria fare at the University of Wisconsin–Madison during college became a driving force in the direction she took with her education.

While she was a student, she took a job working on the research farm on the west side of Madison. Not only did she find the work inspiring, but she also found mentorship in her boss, who gave her confidence that there was a place for a woman like her in the agricultural sphere.

Her passions led her to intern at Milwaukee's Growing Power (an organization that led a national charge in urban agriculture and aquaponics for nearly thirty years) before pursuing agriculture work on the West Coast and eventually returning to Wisconsin to manage a garden for the Genesee Lakes School District in Oconomowoc. The garden supplied enough produce to operate a community-supported agriculture program for the teachers, with the goal of producing enough to supplement the fare in the school's cafeteria.

But she found her niche when she took a job in Milwaukee as a food runner at the former c.1880. Chef Thomas Hauck took an interest in the produce she grew and began purchasing items like Paris Market carrots, Dragon carrots, cucumbers, and tomatoes to use at the restaurant.

In 2014, when a farmer in Caledonia offered her land to start her own farm, she happily accepted. At the same time, she accepted a position as volunteer coordinator and farm hand at the Hunger Task Force Farm; the position assisted her in making ends meet while she built her



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business, Amy's Acre. By 2019, she was farming full-time at her current property.

For the first few years, she sold exclusively to restaurants and to the Braise Restaurant Supported Agriculture program started by Chef Dave Swanson. For three seasons, she partnered with Heather Haneline, selling produce at the farmers market under the moniker Fine Fettle Farm and picking up additional restaurant customers including Chef Gregory Leon of Amilinda. But when Haneline decided to start a family, Wallner bought her share of the business and changed the name back to Amy's Acre.

Today, Amy farms about one and a half acres of a twenty-acre tract of land in Caledonia, Wisconsin, using regenerative farming methods to steward its fertile soil. Her goal is to work with the land and alongside nature to preserve the ecosystem without synthetic inputs. More recently, she added laying hens as a form of land management; the chickens are rotated on pasture, giving them free range to feed on worms, insects, and



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vegetation while giving back to the land in the form of fertilizer. Her farm focuses on open-pollinated heirloom vegetable varieties, including Purple Dragon carrots, heirloom tomatoes, and varieties of chicory and culinary herbs.

She sells her produce at local farmers markets, through a farm stand right on the property, and to select restaurants. Although restaurant sales no longer constitute the majority of her business, they remain a critical component of the business that reminds her of the farm's origin. Rather than cold-calling on restaurant accounts, Amy focuses on working with chefs she knows, or those who come to her via word of mouth, and she takes the time each season to sit down with them to debrief

about the last growing season and plan for the next.

Amy says the joy of working with chefs is that not only do they value the power of fresh local food, but they also have the talents to turn her day-to-day products into dishes she would never have imagined. In addition, they share a similar lifestyle in which work is life and everything around it is intertwined.

Ultimately, farming is her calling. At its heart is the goal of nourishing others and connecting with humans who share her values in terms of the food they eat and the way it's produced. Farming is also a constant reminder that we are all connected to nature and even the littlest things can have a huge impact.

Beet Pate

Chef Gregory Leon, Amilinda
with beets from Amy's Acre

When you have lots of beets, why not make beet pate? This deep red pate is not only eye-catching but also sweet, earthy, and flavorful.

At Amilinda, they serve the pate spread on toasted sourdough bread with chopped tarragon, minced pickled shallots, and soft goat cheese. Feel free to substitute golden beets, which will give you a lovely pale yellow pate.

SERVES 10

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 pounds beets, roasted, peeled, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 large shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 large garlic cloves or 2 large garlic scapes, thinly sliced
- pinch of kosher salt and pepper
- 1 cup white wine
- 1½ cups cream
- 6 ounces goat cheese, room temperature
- 4 large eggs
- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F.

In a large sauté pan, heat up the olive oil. Add the beets, shallots, and garlic or garlic scapes. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper and toss to combine. Add the wine and cook until the vegetables are soft and all the liquid has evaporated. Transfer to the jar of a blender.

Add the next six ingredients in order to the blender with the vegetable mixture and blend until completely smooth and combined. Pour the mixture into ten 4-ounce ramekins, and place the ramekins in a large baking dish. Fill the dish with hot water, enough to come halfway up the ramekins. Bake for 20 minutes.

Remove the pate from the oven to cool. Refrigerate for at least 45 minutes or until cold before serving.



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Daria Jean's Popovers with Pleasant Ridge Reserve Cheese

Chef Adam Siegel, Lupi & Iris

with Pleasant Ridge Reserve from Uplands Cheese

These flavorful popovers are a favorite in the Siegel household. They've become a signature item of Chef Adam Siegel's wife, Daria Jean, who will frequently surprise the family with warm fresh popovers to enjoy for breakfast.

Serve these beautifully airy popovers with flavored butter and wedges of Pleasant Ridge Reserve cheese or serve them alongside prime rib or other meaty entrees. In the autumn, when Rush Creek Reserve is available, take them to the next level by filling the airy centers with the indulgently gooey cheese for a truly memorable treat.

MAKES 6 LARGE OR
12 SMALL POPOVERS

- 1½ tablespoons
unsalted butter,
softened
- ½ ounce melted
butter, unsalted
- 1½ cups all-purpose
flour
- ¾ teaspoon kosher
salt
- 3 extra large eggs
- 1½ cups whole milk
- 4 ounces Pleasant
Ridge Reserve
cheese

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Butter the popover pans using the softened butter and heat them in the oven. Whisk together all the remaining ingredients, except for the cheese. The batter should be thin. Fill the popover pans less than half full. Divide the cheese among the tins and bake for approximately 30 minutes. Keep the oven door closed until the popovers are ready. Once they are baked, remove them from their tins and keep them warm by covering them with a kitchen towel.



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