

SWEET FOR CERTAIN

Thanks to a plethora of sugared specialties being made right here in the Berkshires, it's a little too easy to develop a sweet tooth. Taking area coffee shops by storm are **Biscotti Babies**, bite-size morsels of the extra-crunchy Italian confection, conceived by Mat Hauck of Edible Adventures in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Hauck closed his retail bakery of the same name last January to focus on larger-scale production of the all-natural, whole-wheat treats. "I like the idea of it being bite-size," he says, "not having to commit to finishing off a full-size biscotti." Sampling all four flavors of the double-baked delicacies (including orange-almond, double chocolate, and cranberry-walnut, though cinnamon-hazelnut is absolutely obligatory) on your coffee run is definitely doable.

Klara Sotonova, a self-taught baker and Czech Republic émigré, however, focuses on tradition. **Klara's Gourmet Cookies**, based in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, have been a hit with the local sweet-edibles-as-gift industry. Her buttery recipes draw on those her grandmother once made while under the oppression of Soviet rule: bohemian coconut macaroons, honey-glazed hazelnut kolache, jam-filled linzers, mini chocolate-almond

tortes, and vanilla-walnut crescents dusted with confectioner's sugar. Need a spur-of-the-moment hostess gift? A gold tin layered with seven varieties (below left) is guaranteed to impress.

On the other end of the scrumptious spectrum are **Cookiehead Cookies**—USDA-certified organic miniatures stuffed with whole grains, sweetened with brown rice syrup (and Belgian dark chocolate, sometimes), and made nutty with crunchy flaxseed. Though they're not exactly diet-friendly—"Why not low fat?" poses the packaging, "They're cookies!"—they certainly keep up appearances, providing one official dose (about nine grams) of whole grains in each three-cookie serving. "Sweets should be sweet, made simply, and with nothing artificial," explains founder Lisa Newman, who launched the 20,000-square-foot test bakery for Over The Top Foods in Housatonic, Massachusetts, in 2006.

Finally, hit this sauce: **Tortured Orchard**—whose very name speaks against the sorry state of our environment—concocts condiments without additives or preservatives that top dishes both sugary and savory. The chutney-like Spiced Pineapple Zinger recalls a tropical Indian isle with a hint of curry and the slightest tongue tingle; Garlic Balsamic Drizzle is sweet and syrupy thanks to mellow, roasted garlic; Sweet Apple Blush recalls a Berkshire orchard come October, the best ice cream topper of the bunch. And the company, launched last summer by longtime vegetarian Sandra Walley, doesn't discriminate: "Vegan," the label proclaims. "Tested on humans." Oh, and happily so.—ARB

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THE GOODS

Biscotti Babies
Edible Adventures
955 South Main St./Route 7
Great Barrington, Mass.
413.329.8958
www.biscottibabies.com

Cookiehead Cookies
Over The Top Foods
Housatonic, Mass.
508.668.9434
www.cookieheadcookies.com

Klara's Gourmet Cookies
Great Barrington, Mass.
413.528.8209
www.klarasgourmetcookies.com

Tortured Orchard
Great Barrington, Mass.
413.528.1119
www.torturedorchard.com

