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Foraging for food has never sounded so delicious.

3 Things

By Jean Carpenter

Candy making is second nature to First Tennessee customer Rebecca Dinstuhl, who grew up sampling treats in her parents' candy store in Alabama.

In 1970, she married into the Dinstuhl family and started crafting confections at Dinstuhl's Fine Candies in Memphis, Tennessee. Now president of the company, the sports fanatic and busy grandmother of twin 3-year-old girls has her fingers in more gooey vats of sugar, whipped cream and fondant than ever.

"I'm in the kitchen sometimes," she notes. "I'm actually helping make candy or designing packaging or dealing with customers, or I may even be working in a retail store. I'm very involved in the daily operation."

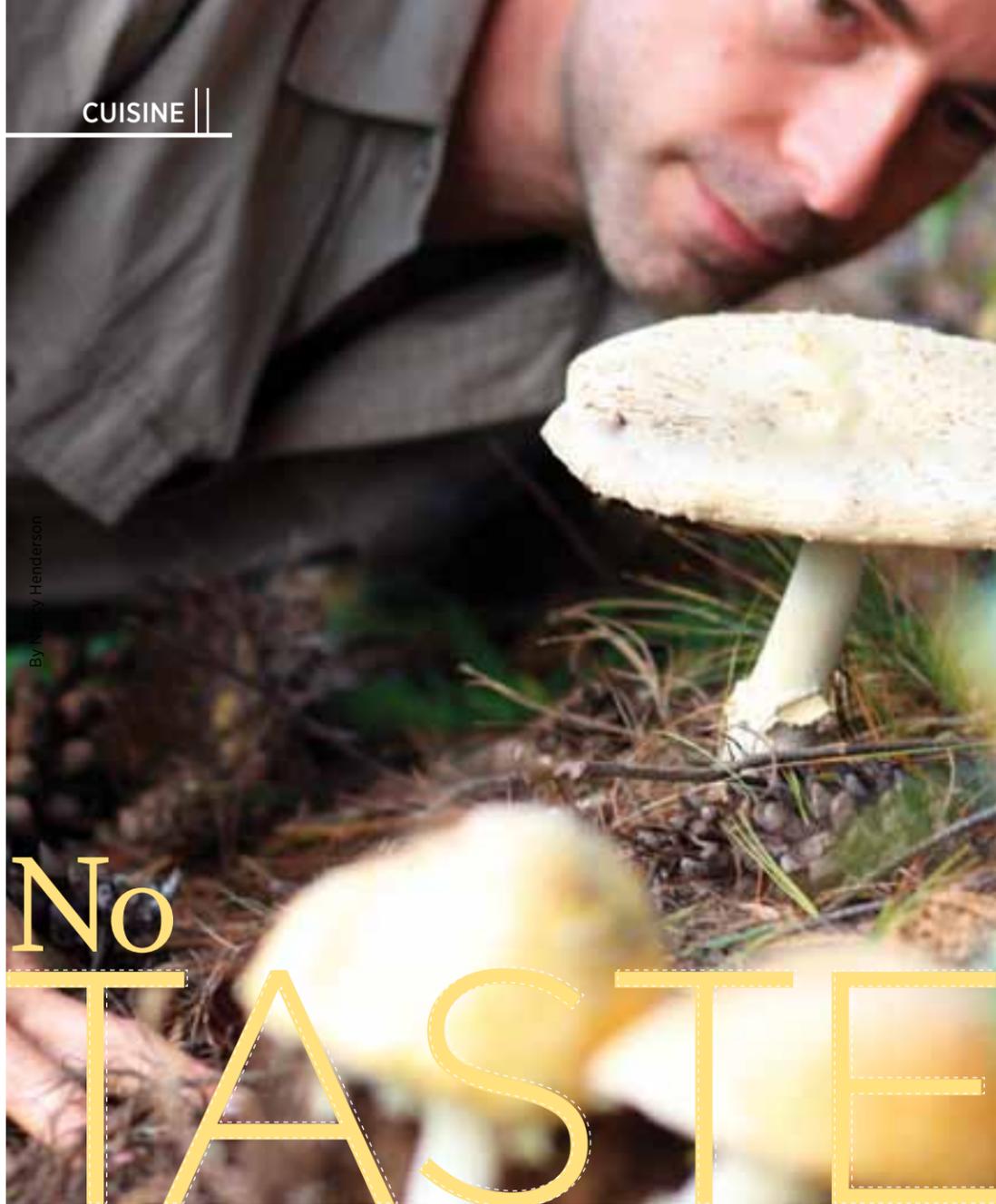
1. FAVORITE DINSTUHL'S CANDY: "Oh that's easy," says Dinstuhl. "The Chocolate Pecan Fudge covered in dark chocolate. To me, our Chocolate Pecan Fudge is just the best. It comes from the very best formula. And then when we enrobe it in our dark chocolate—it's just a delicious chocolaty taste. I also like our Mr. D's Truffles. And we make a chocolate ganache truffle and dip it in chocolate. That's another one of my favorites. I love chocolate."

2. HOW SHE RESISTS TEMPTATION: She doesn't. "I eat candy every day," she says. "I try not to overindulge—that's the key—but eating chocolate is healthy for you, and it helps with antioxidants. Our milk chocolate is about a 32% cacao mix, our dark chocolate is approximately 52%, and then we also have available the 72% cacao, which is heart healthy."

3. BEST PART OF HER JOB: "Dealing with the people within our company," Dinstuhl says without hesitation. "We're kind of like a giant family business. We have Tommy Washington, who has been with our company for 48 years. He's such an active and critical part of our staff that it's hard to think of making candy without Tommy. And then we've got Cathy, who's here in our packaging room and helps design much of our packaging. She's been here 30 years. It's rare for someone to work for us fewer than five years. It's a fun, happy business."

Turn to page 10 to read more about Dinstuhl's Fine Candies.





By Nancy Henderson

No Taste Like Home

By Nancy Henderson

Photography by Alan Muskat, Alissa Whealan and Kevin Gregory

Nature lovers and foodies learn how to find—and appreciate—gourmet ingredients in their own backyards.

Alan Muskat unclasps what appears to be a ventriloquist's dummy case, throws open the lid and proceeds to rummage through the contents: mushroom “ink” blots, postage stamps, art, books, photos, packets of spore dust and, of course, dried specimens of his favorite fungi. One looks like a dimpled golf ball, another a pointy elf hat. Others resemble smooth mahogany anvils, abalone shells and ladies’ ruffled skirts.

This is the same trunk of goodies Muskat, widely regarded as one of the most

knowledgeable experts in the rare field of mycology, uses to educate the curiosity seekers, gourmands and chefs who sign up for his exploratory walks through the forests of Asheville, North Carolina—a cool, moist region with an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 types of chanterelles, leatherbacks and other mushrooms.

During the guided tours, students learn how to harvest, identify and cook their culinary discoveries. They also hear the fun-loving Muskat tout the medicinal value of mushrooms, share myths and folklore, and challenge their misconceptions about the fleshy fungi.

A year ago, Muskat launched No Taste Like Home, a forest-to-table fine dining experience

that relies on wild foods: ramps and lobster mushrooms, daylilies and blueberries, turkey and trout. Private excursions, from morning walks to overnight camping trips, take place in the Pisgah National Forest, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and other natural areas near Asheville. During each outing, participants locate, identify, gather and learn how to use natural food ingredients not available in most stores. Hunting and fishing forays are available on request.

The program was born when Muskat and a few like-minded friends started tossing around the idea for group dinners based on wild food foraging, deemed “the latest culinary



Nibble on This

Alan Muskat’s self-published and somewhat tongue-in-cheek book, *Wild Mushrooms: A Taste of Enchantment*, is often used as a reference for practical advice on hunting, gathering and cooking, as well as how to avoid the proverbial poisonous ‘shroom.

Here are a few tasty tidbits:

- The best time to look for mushrooms is about five days after a good rain.
- The mushroom is only the flowering part of the fungus. The rest, which remains underground, looks like a tangle of cobwebs.
- Mushrooms are higher in protein than any other vegetable except soybeans.



Web Exclusive
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sensation” by *Time* magazine. Last summer, a local restaurant hired the wiry-haired “Mushroom Man” to conduct a walk and, that evening, a dinner for 35 people.

At the end of the day, as everyone savored the literal fruits of their labor, a gentleman at the table raised his glass and toasted Muskat, thanking him for connecting his family to nature.

“I was so flattered,” recalls Muskat, who has harvested wild mushrooms for Asheville’s Grove Park Inn and Biltmore Estate, as well as trendy downtown eateries The Market Place and Zambra. “It was such a warm feeling of camaraderie just in that short space of time.”

Before long, Muskat had assembled an army of distinguished regional chefs, caterers and “guest foragers” and begun hosting No Taste Like Home events, using the luxurious Laughing Frog Estate in Walnut, North Carolina, as base camp. The team now offers smaller, more customized gatherings at various venues, including clients’ homes.

Muskat characterizes the wild foods movement as “a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. It’s a step

beyond growing your own food to gathering it. The food not only tastes better and is fresher, but every bite is unique because you’re not mass producing things on a factory farm. Every mushroom is going to taste slightly different, and that keeps things interesting.”

Springtime excursions will likely offer such delicacies as nettle matzah ball soup, salads tossed with violets, chickweed and wild garlic greens, and coffee ground from roasted wild persimmon seeds.

“I don’t know of anything like this in the region,” Muskat says of No Taste Like Home. “There are a lot of dinners called farm-to-table. Rarely is there one called forest-to-table, which is about wild foods. The reason this is unique—in the whole country, actually—is that there’s never been a series where you take people foraging and then they have the meal. It’s one thing to serve people wild food, but it’s another to take them out to see hands-on where it comes from and to even gather it themselves.”

For more information about No Taste Like Home, visit www.NoTasteLikeHome.org.

