

SPECIALTY FOODS BOSTON

PROUD TO SUPPLY NEW ENGLAND'S BEST CHEFS SINCE 1989

news and highlights

February 17, 2006

We've just gone from the warmest January on record to 18" of snow in the course of a few days. Historically it's much more difficult for chefs to get excited about the first produce of spring during a harsh winter, while a milder winter makes those same items seem so much more appealing, so on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "I never get tired of Butternut Squash" and 10 being "bring on the Fiddleheads!", where do you stand? April is just six weeks away, and we are on the doorstep of a new season and multiple new menu options. Already, we are seeing beautiful 28# cases of California Asparagus, Hothouse Rhubarb and West Coast Fiddleheads. Next week, we expect Knoll Farm Green Garlic and Cardoon; Ataulfo Mangoes from Mexico should start in early March.

As winter winds down, we continue to have superb Blood Oranges, Cara-Cara Pink Navels, Meyer Lemons and Texas Star Ruby Grapefruits, all at their color and flavor peak, as well as good supplies of Seville Sour Oranges, Pummelos, Oroblancos, Kumquats and Key Limes ... fresh Cranberries and all varieties of local heirloom apples are done for the season ... Pomegranates and Quince are both from storage and are winding down fast ... Chilean Peaches, Plums and Nectarines are all available; as usual, they tend to be flavor-challenged ... Oregon Yellowfoots, Hedgehogs and Black Trumpets are going strong ... from Jim Cook, plenty of heirloom Chantenay Carrots and Sunchokes, as well as a limited quantity of LaRatte, Russian Banana and Swedish Peanut Fingerlings ... Equinox Yellow Kimbe Carrots are done for the season, as well as most varieties of pumpkins and heirloom squash.

As you must have heard by now, we moved our warehouse and offices from Chelsea to Boston's Newmarket Square at the end of January. Hopefully you are already using our new phone numbers; if not, we encourage you to get into the habit soon, as the Chelsea numbers will only forward to Boston for a few more weeks.

highlights & new items

Knoll Farm Organic Spring Garlic
Knoll Farm Organic Cardoon
New Zealand Greengage Plums
California Asparagus in 28# cases
Michigan Hothouse Rhubarb
Blue Sky Farm Primo Mesclun & Braising Greens
Fresh Blood Oranges, Seville Sour Oranges & Cara-Cara Pink Navels
Meyer Lemons, Kumquats, Pummelos and Oroblancos
Fresh Oregon Hedgehog, Yellowfoot & Black Trumpet Mushrooms
Jim Cook Organic Chantenay Carrots & Sunchokes
Bunched Vidalia Salad Onions
Western Fiddleheads(pre-order)
LaQuercia Prosciutto Americano & Pancetta Americano
Hudson Valley Duck Prosciutto
Fresh Hawaiian Yellowfin & Bigeye
Dayboat East Coast Canadian Halibut
Rogue Creamery Oregon Blue Vein Cheese - raw milk

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available by pre-order

Winter Black Truffles	Honshimeji Mushrooms	Onion Sprouts	Fresh Hearts of Palm
Buddha Hands	Shiso (Red or Green)	Fresh Crosnes	Fresh Wasabi Root

done/ending/gapping

Yellow Kimbe Carrots	Lychee Fruit	Romanesco	Fresh Chanterelles
Satsuma Tangerines	Fresh Porcini	Fresh Yuzu	American Chestnuts
Chilean Cherries	Fresh Red Currants	Fresh Cranberries	

produce market report

Allium - Bunched Vidalia Salad Onions from Georgia look sharp - they should be available until mid-April when the adult Vidalia Onions arrive. Knoll Farm Green Garlic due next week; Ramps arrive last week of March. Also Cipollinis, three colors of pearl onions and peeled white pearls in gallons.

Apples - All varieties of Alyson's Heirloom Apples are now done for the season. From the market, we can get Gala, Empire, Rome, Cortland, as well as the usual suspects. If your favorite variety is unavailable, let us know what you're doing with them and we'll try to direct you into the best sub. Don't forget the Cold Hollow Vermont Apple Cider!

Artichokes - Artichokes will be available throughout the winter, but as usual supplies will be light. As often as possible we will be trying to find Castroville chokes which may have some minor frost scarring but will be the best eating, while Artichokes from Oxnard & Coachella, which are grown from seed, are prettier but don't eat as well. We expect mostly medium sizes; babies will be in very short supply and will not be available with any consistency. This may get a little better or a little worse as we go through the winter, but don't expect them to be very cheap or very nice until late March.

Asparagus - Beautiful 28# cases of new crop California Asparagus are just getting started. If you can use it, the 28# cases are always a better value and the quality is far superior. Supply will increase and price will drop in March and April as productions shifts North to the Stockton area. Plenty of 11# cases from both Mexico and Peru; good quality Peruvian White Asparagus as well.

Beans and Peas - Fresh Cranberry Beans, Fava Beans and English Peas are hit or miss; quality and flavor is fair at best. Yellow Wax Beans and Chinese Long Beans are fairly available; Dragon Tongue & Fresh Garbanzo with a pre-order. Very nice cultivated Pousse-Pied from Mexico.

Berries - Strawberries are about to take a turn for the worst - Florida is about two weeks from finished and the California growing areas are cold and rainy. Other than Driscoll's Raspberries, all Raspberries, Blackberries & Blueberries are from offshore (Chile, Mexico); prices for Raspberries and Blackberries are high, but Blueberries are reasonable. Stem Strawberries only with a pre-order. Fresh Cranberries, Chilean Red Currants & Green Gooseberries are done for the season. Plenty of frozen Cranberries, Red & Black Currants, Huckleberries, Lingonberries and Boysenberries.

Brassicas and Winter Greens - Baby Brussel Sprouts, Lacinato/Tuscan/Dino/Black Kale, Rainbow Swiss Chard, Broccolini, Escarole, Braising Greens. Romanesco Broccoli is done for the season.

Citrus - Excellent Moro Blood Oranges, Cara-Cara Pink Navels, Meyer Lemons and Texas Star Ruby Grapefruits, all at their color and flavor peak, as well as good supplies of Seville Sour Oranges, Pummelos, Oroblancos, Kumquats and Key Limes. Florida Honey Tangerines(with seeds) are great for juice, but seedless Satsuma Tangerines are winding down fast. Fresh Yuzu is done for the season; Buddha Hands with a pre-order.

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Fall Fruits – Quince is done for the season; California Pomegranates are from storage and are winding down fast; Sharon Fruit from Israel for about two more weeks. Comice, Forelle, Sekel, Anjou, Bosc, Red Crimson and Asian Pears are all available; Bartletts are done.

Lettuces & Greens - Blue Sky has overhauled their pricing in order to be more competitive with the rest of the market. It's still more expensive than market mesclun, but the quality and flavor are far superior. Also Tuscan/Black/Dino Kale, Young Beet Greens, Ultra Baby Bok Choy (finger size), Red Endive, Radicchio Trevisano, Rainbow Swiss Chard (aka Bright Lights), Micro Greens of all kinds with a day's notice.

Mushrooms - Oregon Yellowfoots, Hedgehogs and Black Trumpets are going strong. Nice cultivated Maitake Mushrooms, as well as Honshimeji with a pre-order; Chanterelles are done for the season.

Potatoes - from Jim Cook and family, limited supplies of LaRatte, Russian Banana and Swedish Peanut Fingerlings. Also Garnet Yams, Japanese White Yams and Okinawa Purple Yams.

Pumpkins and Hard Squashes - All Heirloom squashes are done for the season - all that remain are the usual suspects, i.e. Butternut, Acorn, Spaghetti, etc.

Roots - Plenty of Organic Chantenay Carrots and Sunchokes from Jim Cook. From California, Baby Turnips, Baby Carrots (Red, Orange, Yellow & Round), Baby Fennel and Baby Beets in three colors. French Breakfast, Watermelon and Black Spanish Radishes, Large Chioggia & Gold Beets, Salsify & Parsley Root. Plenty of Celery Root, Taro Root, Yucca Root & Lotus Root. Crosnes and Burdock Root with a pre-order. Macomber Turnips are winding down; Yellow Kimbe Carrots are done for the season.

Spring Vegetables - Vidalia Salad Onions are readily available; West Coast Fiddleheads are available but require a pre-order at this point in the season. Look for Cardoon and Green Garlic from Knoll Farm to start next week, as well as Stinging Nettles.

Tomatoes - Prices have stabilized but remain on the high side due to damage to the plants from hurricanes. All little tomatoes are Del Cabo, half-pints from Mexico. Ugly Tomatoes are hit-or-miss, but mostly miss.

Tropicals & Misc. Fruits - Fresh Figs are done for the season. Chilean Peaches, Plums and Nectarines are all available but as usual, they are heavily flavor-challenged. Mangoes coming from Ecuador, Tommy Adkins variety; Ataulfo Mangoes soon. Starfruit, Passion Fruit and Florida Guava are hit-or-miss.

coming in late february/early march

Knoll Farm Cardoon & Green Garlic New crop California Asparagus ... Washington Hothouse Rhubarb Fresh Oregon Stinging Nettles ... Pacific Fiddleheads ... Champagne Mangoes