

Gardiner

at a glance

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Music, art and festivals on tap in Gardiner

BY DIANA TWOMBLY
Program Coordinator
Gardiner Main Street
Special to Downtown Quarterly

With a population over 5,000, historic Gardiner is a city nestled along the picturesque Kennebec River. It's a charming city with an active Waterfront Park, a weekly farmers market and a dynamic downtown that includes a mix of shops, offices, restaurants and a performing arts center.

Dubbed as a quintessential New England community, Gardiner's central location and proximity to Augusta and Portland makes it an ideal place to visit.

Gardiner's growth is, in part, due to its intentional efforts centered around building cultural connections, promoting wellness and recreation, growing local business, ensuring a vibrant and welcoming community for all and preserving its history and heritage.

Artwalk

Gardiner Artwalk takes place three times each year on the first Friday of May, August and December and features unique works of art ranging from paintings, drawings, fine art prints and photography to textiles, sculpture, jewelry and ceramics.

First launched in 2005 by Artdogs studios and a handful of other area artists, the mission of ArtWalk Gardiner is to increase community awareness and appreciation of the visual arts, to encourage interaction with local artists and the public, and to nurture a supportive network that also enhances the local economy. Visitors can experience Gardiner through the imaginative lens of local artists and artisans.

Car cruises and food festivals

You can also experience the intersection of past and present of Historic Gardiner with the Classic Car Cruise-In every Thursday evening, from 5 to 7 p.m. Locals and others throughout the state can explore the collection of rare cars without heated seats, CD players and automatic windows. Travel to downtown Gardiner with family and friends and talk with owners as they show with pride a Ford Mustang or Thunderbird.

News of Gardiner's welcoming community and efforts to expand its local foods and craft beverage movement have



attracted outside interests in the city.

On Saturday, May 20 for the first time ever in the Kennebec Valley region, Townsquare Media will hold its 2017 Food Truck Festival at Gardiner's beautiful Waterfront Park. This event, also co-hosted by Capital 95.9, Kool AM Radio Station, B98.5, Central Maine's Country, and 92 Moose, is a day of music, beer and food trucks; it features an all-day lineup of '80s and '90s rock, country rock and bluegrass music performances. For information on this event contact Townsquare representative Denise Jones at townsquaremedia.com.

As the summer unfolds, there are many events to enjoy.

On the Waterfront

Johnson Hall Performing Arts Center kicks off summer festivities on the waterfront's main stage with its waterfront concert series on Friday evening, June 16 with musical performances and fireworks. The fun continues Saturday with the much anticipated Greater Gardiner River Festival, which features arts and entertainment, games and giveaways, and local foods galore — all taking place at the beautiful Waterfront Park set along scenic Kennebec River.

In a day-long celebration on Gardiner's Historic Water Street and beautiful Waterfront Park, Gardiner Main Street and Johnson Hall present live music and entertainment on two stages, a craft fair, and activities for all ages on, near, and in the Kennebec River. The event is expected to bring thousands of visitors to the area.

The event kicks off of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce's annual summer celebration of its riverfront communities, affectionately known as the "Whatever"

Family Festival. The Greater Gardiner River Festival takes place on Saturday, June 17. Activities run from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. Festival organizers have continued to find ways to celebrate life on the Kennebec River — both from land and from the shore. Most activities are free to the public thanks to the area's generous sponsors.

Again this year, there will be several ways to get out on the river — from boat rides to Kayak and Paddleboard demonstrations. Historic Water Street in Gardiner will be transformed into a pedestrian mall with artists, crafters, and specialty food vendors exhibiting their products from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Throughout the day, there will be entertainment and children's activities at Gardiner's Waterfront Park.

Get up to date on the events, including community happenings and vendor applications in Greater Gardiner, by doing any — or all — of these: Visit gardinermainstreet.org to sign up for the newsletter and check out the Calendar of Events at gardinermainstreet.org/welcome-to-gardiner-maine/calendar-of-events/. Like and Follow Gardiner Main Street on Facebook for up-to-date information.

These next months are fun-filled with several fantastic ongoing and one-time events you don't want to miss: Friday beer tastings at the Craft Beer Cellar, art shows at the Monktree Art Gallery, store specials at 1 Brunswick Trading, exclusive local dining with The Butcher & The Baker, shows and performances at historic Johnson Hall, Open Mic Jam Night at Niche, Inc., and the monthly Facetime Social Networking event on the first Wednesdays, and much more!



Shared conference room at the Gardiner CoLab.

Contributed photo

Co-working labs catch on in Gardiner

BY DIANE TWOMBLY
Gardiner Main Street
Special to the Gardiner at a Glance

Flexible, imaginative workspaces have been shown to create more opportunities for creativity, collaboration and innovation. The growing trend of co-working spaces continues to gain popularity across Maine, and is making sense for more and more people in Gardiner.

Today's technology-driven economy allows remote workers to choose where they live based on a high quality of life — and many are finding what they're looking for in a community in Gardiner.

Many of these people are also looking to find a sense of camaraderie in their work environment that they wouldn't get working out of a home office or a coffee shop.

CoLab is a co-working and conference space and a program of Gardiner Main Street. Located at 149 Water Street in Gardiner's Downtown Historic District, CoLab offers its members typical amenities, including shared desks, private offices, a kitchenette, a private conference room and, from its rear windows, a scenic view of the Kennebec River.

The new and expanded CoLab was made possible thanks to the donation of historic buildings from Camden National Bank to Gardiner Main Street. The increased square footage has been instrumental in retaining and attracting new members to its finished ground floor with an accessible location at 149 Water Street.

CoLabs function as a downtown revitalization component focuses on its key attribute: bringing people to Gardiner. The varied membership options allow for affordability and flexibility for folks that come to Gardiner from all over, including freelancers, independent contractors and artists, most of whom are employed out of state or growing their own business. Recently, state Representative Gay Grant began hosting constituent office hours at the CoLab, which is quickly becoming an important community asset.

With a vision for long-term expansion and adding vitality to Gardiner downtown, GMS strives to redesign the CoLab space in a style that spurs

collaboration and innovation.

Gardiner Main Street Executive Director Patrick Wright said a CoLab offers multiple benefits. "People that utilize these shared spaces want more than a space away from their home office, they're looking for community and that inspired environment to foster their professional creativity," he said.

The space is already working for its established current members. GrowSmart Maine's Nancy Smith and Tyler Kidder have been comfortably settling into their personal office space within the CoLab.

"As a small nonprofit, we are always looking to be lean and reduce overhead, and the CoLab has been crucial in establishing cost effective and professional office space," said Smith.

For others, the mix of creativity and interaction work well for their inspired outlets.

"I wanted to find a place that is my own space relative to working with others. I was used to working with a lot of people around," said Robert Saunders, CoLab's artist-in-residence, who finds the space meets both his social and creative needs.

CoLab is geared toward businesses and individuals who seek energetic, flexible and collaborative workspaces and Gardiner Main Street is considering plans to scale what's already working by expanding its first floor.

Currently, the area includes shared spaces that have shared desks for one or group seating in addition to a private conference room. As demands increase for more private offices and reserved desks, however, Gardiner Main Street is looking to increase its physical capacity.

Two large spaces on the first floor are underutilized. One of the rooms — dubbed the Cabin Room because of its cozy, wood interiors and serene view of the Kennebec River — will be turned into additional space for drop-in, shared co-workers.

For people who would like a tour of the CoLab and to learn more about the vision for additional private office and shared spaces and current membership rates, contact Gardiner Main Street at 582-3100 or email: info@gardinermainstreet.org.

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A close-to-home adventure in dining awaits at Mughal Palace

New eatery offers fine Indian cuisine

BY NANCY P. MCGINNIS
Correspondent

Step inside the Mughal Palace, just over the Gardiner line at 730 River Road in Chelsea, and a visitor is immediately greeted by the enticing fragrance of authentic Indian cuisine. Just as warm and inviting is the welcome from Mohammed Alam and his wife Ummay, proprietors of this new family restaurant.

Hidden inside its modest exterior, a memorable dining experience awaits. Thanks to delighted diners' word of mouth, the restaurant's popularity has already spread like wildfire in just the few short months since it opened for business this past January.

And many central Mainers already have become loyal repeat customers, drawn to the artful preparation of intriguing ingredients, and the promise of a true dining adventure close to home. Mughal — pronounced moo-GULL — Palace has even become a destination for connoisseurs of fine Indian food who find it worth the trek to Chelsea from as far away as Scarborough and Camden.

The family-run restaurant is open six days a week, all day from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. The dinner hours are extended on Friday and Saturday until 10 p.m.

The interior décor features distinctive artwork, and the eye is drawn to gleaming copper vessels lining an entire table along one side of the main dining room. These vessels beckon diners with a serve-yourself assortment of piping hot home-made specialties during the popular Friday, Saturday and Sunday lunch buffet from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at \$10.95 per person. The Alams and their small but dedicated staff have earned the restaurant a reputation for excellent food, expertly prepared, as well as friendly service that is equally suited for a quick bite or a leisurely dining experience.

Every effort is made to accommodate, and even anticipate, customer requests regarding food allergies, requirements and preferences. All the items on the menu, with the exception of the house-made breads, are gluten free.

Meats are halal —prepared as prescribed by Muslim law — and there is an abundance of delicious vegetarian dishes, some of which are also vegan.

The buffet choices, all labeled, change frequently but always include two meatless entrees

“We want to show our support for the community by purchasing ingredients locally whenever we can, such as using meat sourced from a local farm for the goat curry we serve from time to time on our buffet.”

MOHAMMED ALAM, CO-OWNER MUGHAL PALACE



Nancy P. McGinnis photos

Mughal Palace lunch buffet: The mouthwatering fragrance of house-made Indian cuisine wafts through the air as guests select specialties from the buffet offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Here, a diner adds a lamb entree to the vegetable pakora (fritters) and naan (Indian bread) on his plate.

and two others featuring lamb, chicken or beef, as well as side dishes and accompaniments. One of those (also served with many menu dishes) is the basmati rice, enhanced with delicate threads of saffron and thoughtfully prepared with vegetable oil instead of butter.

For diner who choose from the menu, the fish curry has earned high praise from foodies. The appetizers include pakora — addictive vegetable fritters— prepared with a chickpea batter so they are both gluten free and vegan. The house-made dipping sauces range from mild to spicy hot, and extra spice can be added to any entrée as desired.

Some customers have remarked that they are thrilled not to have to travel to Portland or beyond to enjoy this level of ethnic cuisine. Ironically, Mohammed Alam was the owner of Hi Bombay! in Portland for almost three decades before selling the business last year and choosing to relocate to Chelsea.

Alam said he and his wife relish being away from the hustle-bustle of “big city” life. Most of all, he said they have been pleasantly surprised and humbled by the spontaneous, warm and enthusiastic welcome they have received as new business owners and community members.

Nor did they anticipate how popular their authentic cuisine would be with diners looking for a different experience, those who are already fans of Indian cuisine, or others seeking to expand their culinary horizons.

For example, Mughal Palace offers Tandoori chicken, prepared in a traditional clay oven. Large pieces of skinless chicken are marinated overnight in a mixture of yogurt blended with fresh lemon juice, ginger and garlic, as well as turmeric, cayenne, and other spices. They are then threaded on a skewer, and slow-baked in the tandoor oven, placed at an angle that allows the fat to drip down and baste the meat while the flavorful juices are sealed inside. The chicken is piled on a mound of freshly sautéed onions and green peppers, just before the mouth-watering entrée arrives, still sizzling, to “oohs” and “aahs” at the table.

Another recommended entree, Saag Paneer, is a vegetarian dish consisting of spinach cooked in a delicate, perfectly spiced cream sauce, enhanced with chunks

of house-made, firm ricotta-like cheese.

The latter ingredient also makes an appearance on the dessert menu as Gulab Jamun. Small spheres of the mild cheese are lightly sautéed and then drizzled with honey to create this unique and delicious dish.

“We want to show our support for the community by purchasing ingredients locally whenever we can, such as using meat sourced from a local farm for the goat curry we serve from time to time on our buffet,” Alam said.

The signature spices are imported directly from India to lend distinctive flavor. Many Mughal Palace dishes are distinguished by the artful use of seasonings that include ginger and garlic, turmeric, red chili powder, coriander, cumin and mustard seed, cardamom, peppercorns, fennel, cinnamon and cloves.

A selection of bottled and draft beers is available, including Taj Mahal and Kingfisher. Also popular are Sula Vineyards’ estate-bottled Nashik Indian wines, including Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc.



Mughal Palace. Inside this unassuming exterior, a feast for the palate awaits at Mughal Palace, a few minutes from downtown Gardiner at 730 River Road in Chelsea.



Skewers of delectable Tandoori Chicken, marinated in a mixture of yogurt and Indian spices, are slow cooked over glowing coals in a Tandoor oven.

Gardiner Upcoming Calendar of Events

- May 20:** 2017 Food Truck Festival, organized by Townsquare Media.
- May 29:** Memorial Day Parade, organized by Smith Wiley American Legion Post #4.
- June 17:** Greater Gardiner River Festival, 9 a.m.-9:30 p.m., Waterfront Park & Downtown Gardiner.
- Aug. 4:** Gardiner Artwalk, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Downtown Gardiner, Water St.

Gardiner Ongoing Events

- Facetime Social Networking Nights:** first Wednesday of every month at different downtown businesses, 5-7 p.m.
- Open Mic Night:** 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays at Niche, Inc.,
- Movies at Johnson Hall:** movies every Wednesday and Saturdays through June 3, Wednesdays at 6 p.m., Sat at 2 p.m.

For more info regarding Gardiner events, contact Gardiner Main Street at 207-582-3100 or email: info@gardinermainstreet.org.

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Emery's Meat & Produce buys locally

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

When Leon Emery opened Emery's Meat & Produce in Hartland in 1975, his goal was to provide fresh, healthy meat and produce from local farms.

His goal remained the same when he later opened stores in Augusta and Newport. Three years ago, he closed the Augusta store and relocated next door to Dunkin' Donuts at 35 Bridge Street in Gardiner. He said that he's seen a big increase in business since moving there and is now able to provide fresh, local meat and produce to even more customers.

"We're located just off the interstate now," Emery said. "We have people travel all the way up from Portland and Falmouth on the weekend. They take home coolers full of meat."

Emery was attracted to the Gardiner location when he was offered incentive money through Gardiner Growth Initiative — a collaborative program involving Gardiner Board of Trade, Gardiner Main Street, the former Bank of Maine and the city. He said that they put all of the money back into the business and purchased new equipment.

"We invested it in new energy-efficient equipment and modern cases, which are energy-efficient and eco-friendly," said Emery. "That's cut our electricity bill a lot."

This month Emery is opening a new store that will be located at 9 Water Street in Waterville. He said they decided to close their Newport store and open the Waterville store.

In addition to opening the Waterville store, Emery said that he recently has initiated another



Staff photos

Above, manager, Jessica Emery and meat cutter, Jake Theodore in the new Waterville store on Water Street. Right, owner, Leon Emery and his wife Denise show off their meat cave at the Gardiner store.



business venture in the central Maine area. He said that he's now partnering with Snow Pond Center for the Arts in Sidney to provide healthy, grass-fed, local meat for their patrons. In return, Snow Pond is promoting Emery's products.

Emery believes that the local economy is bound to improve when local businesses help to promote and support one another. He said that Snow Pond is a fantastic group and he's thrilled that they've been able to work together. He said that he's currently working with eight local farms to provide fresh meat. Local farmers have

been adding onto their herds as the result of his partnership with Snow Pond Center for the Arts.

Emery thinks that's just the tip of the iceberg. He hopes that eventually they'll be able to partner with other local businesses, which he believes will help improve the local economy even more.

"It will take some time," said Emery. "It takes about 24 months to raise an animal that's ready for market. The more people buy meat locally, the more the local economic benefits."

Emery's Meat & Produce received the Small Business of the Year Award from the Kennebec

Valley Chamber of Commerce this year. Emery said that was actually what united his business and Snow Pond.

Emery's Meat & Produce carries local beef, pork, chicken, fish, rabbit, goat, lamb and produce. They also offer their own line of barbecue and wing sauces, marinades and salad dressings.

"Local meat is raised in Maine, by real Maine farmers," said Emery. "These meats are GMO free and hormone free."

For more information about Emery's products, see www.emerysmeat.com or call 621-6328.

CR Farm Disc Golf remains popular

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

One of the sports that continues to grow in popularity here in Maine and across the U.S. is disc golf. The sport is played much like traditional golf except that, instead of using a ball and clubs, players use a flying disc or Frisbee®.

A golf disc is tossed from a tee area to a disc pole hole, which is a pole that is elevated above the ground with chains and a basket in which the disc lands. The object of the game is to complete each hole with the fewest number of throws. The player throws the disc from where it last landed. Disc golf courses are usually nine or 18 disc pole holes long.

According to the Disc Golf Association www.discgolf.com, disc golf started with people playing with Frisbees® and aiming them at trees, light poles, pipes and other objects. Members of the organization report that there are now more than 2,500 Disc Golf Courses in the United States. They estimate that between 7 million and 10 million people have played the game. More than 390 sanctioned tournaments and a World Championship are held annually.

A gentleman referred to as "Steady" Ed Headrick is considered to be the father of

disc golf. He was responsible for inventing the Frisbee® when he was an employee at Wham-O. He later invented the Disc Golf Pole Hole. He left his position at Wham-O in the '70s to help promote the sport. He founded the Professional Disc Golf Association and later organized some of the first disc golf tournaments.

One of Maine's often-frequented disc golf courses is CR Farm Disc Golf located at 702 Lewiston Road in West Gardiner.

Owner Catherine McDevitt reports that the course is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. She said that the sport is becoming increasingly popular in Maine. She said that the first disc golf course in Maine opened in the '70s at Beaver Brook Campground and she said there are now at least 75 courses in Maine.

McDevitt said she had never played disc golf before opening the CR Farm course. Her son, Randy Jr., who had played disc golf down south, was responsible for introducing her and her husband to the sport. She said that her husband, Randy Sr., did some research and got feedback from players here in Maine. Then they decided to open their own course. Her husband spent the next six to seven years preparing the property.

"I tried it and I liked it,"

McDevitt said. "I was 51 years old when I started playing. It's a fun sport for any age."

McDevitt and the owners of several other Maine disc golf courses now participate in women's tournaments. She said the first women's tournament was held at CR Farm earlier this month and they will be hosting a children's tournament later this summer on July 8.

"We're trying to get more kids involved and get them away from the TV and computers and video games," McDevitt said. "I'd like to see more schools in Maine get involved with the sport."

CR Farm has a 21-hole course that is open for business from sunup to sundown all year long. McDevitt said that it takes 1 1/2 to two hours to play a game, so players should plan to arrive at least a few hours before sundown to complete a game. The cost is \$6 a round or \$10 for a day. There are benches and picnic tables located throughout the course.

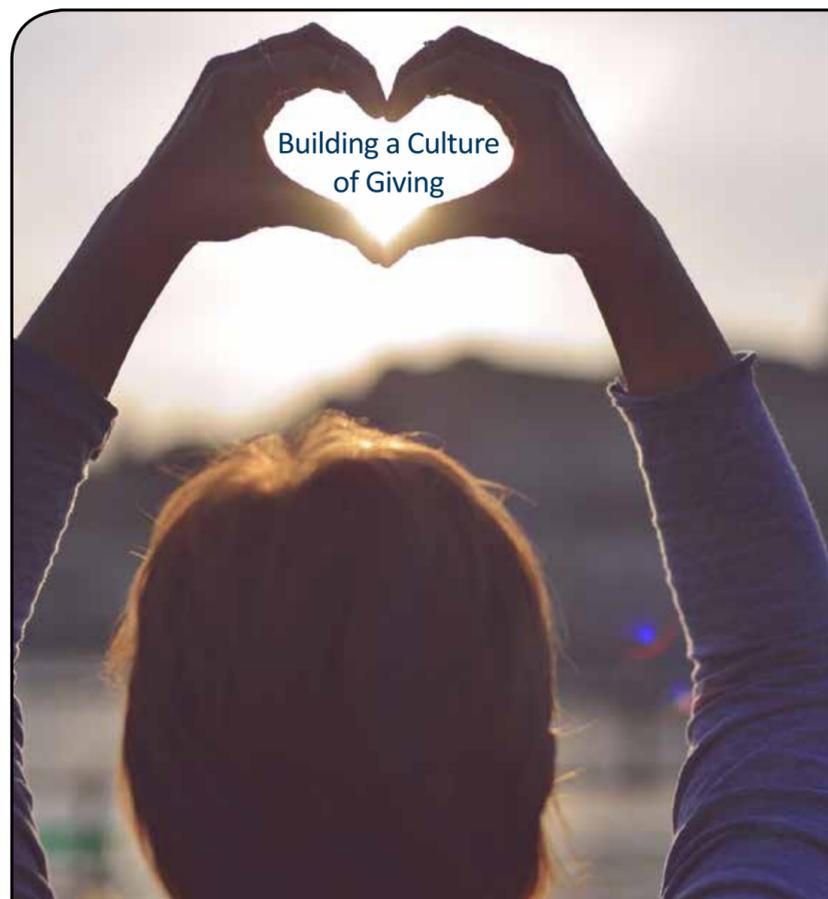
For those interested in joining a league, CR Farm is hosting a ladies' league on Thursday evenings and a doubles (any team of two people) league on Tuesday evenings.

More information about CR Farm can be accessed at www.facebook.com/crfarmdg or by calling 215-9508.



Photos by Wanda Curtis

CR Farm Disc Golf is located at 702 Lewiston Road in West Gardiner. Co-owner Randy McDevitt spent seven years preparing the property for the course. Right, Mike Fyfe is the pro that CR Farm sponsors to compete in tournaments.





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Mainiac Brewing & Supply celebrates five years

BY KATE CONE
Correspondent

The most frequently asked question Rick McCormick has heard about homebrewing is, "How hard is it to do?"

With a twinkle in his eyes worthy of Saint Nicholas, he replies: "If you can make a box of macaroni and cheese, you can brew beer at home."

About to celebrate its fifth anniversary, Mainiac Brewing & Supply, located in the heart of Gardiner's downtown, is the brainchild of longtime friends, McCormick and his partner, Tim Bowman.

Although the store opened in 2012, the interest in brewing their own beer began 20 years earlier in 1992. By then D.L. Geary's Brewing had opened in Portland.

"And we drank a lot of that," McCormick said. "I had my first Geary's Pale Ale at a Seadog's game. I wasn't quite fond of the Cascade hops used in that beer, though. I much preferred the flavor in their London Porter, which typically uses Fuggles or Kent hops."

A desire to control the flavors in beer often leads people to brewing their own. McCormick remembers exactly when he and Bowman decided to homebrew:

"A co-worker of Tim's brought a pale ale he had brewed into the office one day. Tim was amazed at how close in taste and flavor to Bass Ale it came. This was at a time when beers like Bass were almost impossible to come by here in Maine. You might have been



Mainiac Brewing & Supply stocks everything the home brewer needs to make beer, wine, soda or mead. Rick McCormick displays a poster that reads, "Relax, don't worry. Have a homebrew," at his store in Gardiner.



Photos by Kate Cone

able to taste something close to it if you went to Three Dollar Dewey's bar in Portland, but here in central Maine? No way."

McCormick smiled at the flashback and continued.

"When Tim told me about this brew, we brainstormed and decided to ask his co-worker a lot of questions: where did you get the equipment, supplies, ingredients? Was it hard to do? We bought "The Complete Joy of Home Brewing" by Charlie Papazian, founder of the Brewers Association, and studied it. Then we began brewing on our own, in the garage, like lots of others who loved great beer."

After 27 years working in various positions in the government sector, McCormick realized his long-held dream and opened Mainiac

Brewing as his full-time business. Bowman continued his career as superintendent of buildings for the National Guard. He's at the store to help whenever he's needed and helps host the big events.

With more and more women enjoying craft beer, McCormick estimated that 10 to 15 percent of his clientele are women.

"They like to brew with their husbands or significant others," he said, "but most women I serve come in to get wine-making kits."

As for the most popular styles of beers, McCormick said, "it's all over the place. India Pale Ales (IPAs) are big these days, so we sell a lot of New England style IPA kits. Hefeweizens are huge — people who were stationed over in Germany and got a taste for good

German beer; love making those."

To sweeten the pot, Mainiac Brewing offers a military discount. "There are a lot of retirees and reservists who are regular customers."

An added benefit to owning a homebrew supply store has been sampling the results of customers' efforts.

"Oh, yes, they bring it in for me to try," McCormick said. "Beer is very personal. I don't expect it, but if they want to bring it in, I'll taste it and answer their questions if they have any. For them to share it is a wonderful thing."

A big topic today, like wine and food before it, has been pairing certain beers with certain foods. McCormick was clear on the subject: "That's a bit fussy for me.

"If you can make a box of macaroni and cheese, you can brew beer at home."

RICK MCCORMICK, OWNER OF MAINIAC BREWING & SUPPLY

I don't cook, but anything my wife cooks goes well with our beer. In a restaurant, if I'm having something like a steak, I would love a nice brown ale or red ale. Stouts go well with almost anything."

As for the sour beers that have emerged in the frontline of craft beer in the past few years, McCormick was unequivocal: "I've never developed that flavor for a sour beer. It's just not something I'm attracted to.

Did that also apply to smoked beers? "Marshall Wharf makes a Smoke on the Water that's really nice, but after two of them, I was done," he said.

As for their location at 325 Water Street, McCormick said, "When we decided to open the store, we looked at other towns. But I grew up in Farmingdale and have lived here all my life, haven't strayed too far. Every Saturday, the mayor walks around and comes in, checks in on all the businesses. Where else do you go and have

that kind of attention?"

After five years of watching the downtown develop, McCormick has noticed marked positive change.

"When I opened, it seemed downtown was finding itself, not sure how to get where it wanted to be. It's improved a lot," he said. "There's an attitude that the city and Gardiner Main Street are doing everything they can to put people on our sidewalks. We have events like Festival of Lights, Riverfest and Swine and Stein, our very own Oktoberfest. At the store, we brew up 10 gallons of our Oktoberfest beer and give out samples to everyone who wanders in."

In a city that once made shoes and paper and harvested ice, Gardiner — with Mainiac Brewing Supply, Craft Beer Cellar a few doors down and Crooked Halo Cider House up the street — is emerging as a mini-hub of the craft beer and cider scene.

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