

Maine

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who grew up sprinkling sea salt on freshly boiled rounds of beets, and who fell for the intense flavor and sweetness of roasted beets. And it's for us who are tempted by the stunning, brilliant pink color and the unique texture.

Beets, their stems and leaves are sauteed with scallions, garlic and a hint of salt and pepper until they're all tender. Then sesame oil and rice are added, and fried up a bit. Finally, the whole thing simmers with soy sauce for a bold, unexpected dish that's unlike the fried rices of your corner Chinese joint.

Though this rice has the flavors you'd expect from fried rice — namely nutty sesame oil and the pungent, robust flavor of salty soy sauce — they are subtle and



SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Vegan Beet Fried Rice.

secondary to the bold beets. It's summer meets comfort food. Farmers market meets classic takeout.

And it's divine. Now, a few more things you should know: The vegetable-to-rice ratio is high. There are tons of veggies in this and, by comparison, less rice. That's deliberate.

The recipe celebrates summer's freshest produce. Head to the farmers market and get your ingredients. Pull out leftover rice (or, in a pinch, pick some up from your local Chinese restaurant for a few dollars), and make this. You could also make this with other grains ... perhaps some quinoa?

It's worth it. Speaking of farmers markets, cucumbers, Swiss chard, many varieties of kale and radishes and beets are all in season. So are scallions and early onions. It's a good time to visit your local farmers market. Last weekend, at the Bangor Farmers' Market, I filled my market bag high with all sorts of veggies from the farmers whose familiar faces make going every week extra special.

Hope to see you there this weekend.

Sarah Walker Caron is the senior features editor for the Bangor Daily News and author of "Grains as Mains: Modern Recipes Using Ancient Grains," available at bookstores everywhere including The Briar Patch and Bull Moose in Bangor. For more delicious recipes, check out Maine Course at mainecourse.bangordailynews.com.

Beet Fried Rice

Serves 4-6

- 4 beets, with greens (about 2 to 2½ inches in diameter), rinsed in cool water
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped (use both white and green parts)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 3 cups leftover cooked rice
- 1/2 cup low-sodium soy sauce

Separate the beets from the greens. Dice the beets (about 1/4-inch dice). Set aside in a large bowl. Separate the beet greens from the stems and set aside. Chop the stems and add to the bowl with the beets. Add the chopped scallions to the bowl, and the minced garlic.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet or saute pan with a lid

set over medium heat. (Mine is about 15 inches in diameter, and has a 6-quart capacity. A wok would work as well.) Add the beet mixture to the pan and season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the beets are tender — about 10-12 minutes.

While the beets are cooking, chop the beet greens. When the beets are tender, add to the pan and cover again. Cook for 5-6 minutes, or until wilted. Stir to combine.

Push the veggies to one side of the pan. Add the sesame oil, and then the rice. Toss together and let fry slightly, then combine with the veggies. Drizzle with soy sauce and stir to combine.

Leaving the pan uncovered, cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid evaporates.

Mason's

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out," Morley said as he sat at one of the picnic tables in Mason's Brewing's outdoor seating area.

What once was unoccupied waterfront territory in Brewer now houses the company, and though the building was erected in just over seven months in the middle of this past winter, Mason's Brewing has been in the works for about five years.

"I was a home brewer for about 14 years, and my wife and I, Barbara, who is also a co-owner, traveled extensively in pursuit of craft beer," Morley said. "In my hometown, just outside of Cooperstown, [New York], Ommegang Brewery is like this big, mythical creature. I watched it go from a very small farm in the middle of no place and become this craft beer destination. After a series of travels, I came to the conclusion that I wanted to bring something like that to this community, or to Maine in general, so I started looking at locations up and down the Penobscot."

Three years ago he began planning with the city of Brewer, which helped him settle on a property at 15 Hardy St. that was cleared by the city in 2004 and was previously the site of the old public works garage.

"After I engaged the city, I started working on coming up with a plan of what I wanted to roll out. It started with just basic beer recipes. I kind of had an idea of where I thought the craft beer movement might trend towards, so we approached our recipes with a lower ABV, not as hoppy, more sessionable beers," Morley said.

Various factors led the project to start and stall a number of times, including getting financing and a delay in the federal licensing required to open the brewery. Morley said U.S. Sen. Susan Collins played an important role in expediting the process to open the brewery. Collins even joined Brewer city officials and Morley for a ribbon-cutting ceremony in May, and Brother Don, a member of the Franciscan Brothers of St. Elizabeth of Hungary and familiar face at Friar's Bakehouse in downtown Bangor, also blessed the brewery in April.



LINDA COAN O'KRESIK | BDN

Chris Morley owns Mason's Brewing Co., which opened in May along the Penobscot River in Brewer.

Once Morley had recipes put together, Mason's Brewing secured a distribution deal with Maine Craft in Westbrook.

"We were the first non-production brewery in the state of Maine to have a distribution contract at that time," Morley said. "That was my golden ticket to go to the bank and request financing. And I got humble and thought that would be a no-brainer. That was the toughest part of getting this off the ground, was seeking financing."

Because of that distribution deal, Mason's already has more than 50 rotating accounts and has been in places including Nosh Kitchen Bar in Portland, Bar Harbor Beer Works and The Family Dog in Orono, among others. There are also plans for the beer to be sold in cans beginning in late summer.

Though beer was Morley's primary focus, he knew he needed something else to go with it.

"[Manager] Jake [Bridges] and I started talking and it was fortunate that the timing was about right. He was looking for a change and I was ready to bring someone on. The brewery part I had locked down — that was easy for me — not easy, but I know that. The restaurant part, which is more of what I call a pub, is a necessary evil. I didn't really want to do a restaurant. I really didn't at all. But it made sense with this concept — to pair the food with the beers we were rolling out," Morley said.

Morley's menu concept

started with pizza — something he missed as a native New Yorker. He wanted a unique selection of pies as well as burgers and a generous helping of pork.

"It was a West Coast gastropub meets East Coast," Morley said of his original idea.

It was manager Jake Bridges and head chef Randy Hutchinson who brought the menu to life.

"We cranked out the finalized menu in the end and took the concept Chris came up with and gave it a soul," Bridges said. Bridges added that a focus has been on using local products such as their pizza dough, which is made by Dabesta Pizza in Bangor and infused with Mason's beer, and their burgers, which they get from Maine Family Farms in Dover-Foxcroft.

From dishes like their Dirty Fries, which are tossed in garlic, cilantro, bacon and dirty house seasoning and served with hop sauce, to Pork Belly Panzanella — a salad of seared pork belly, roasted red bell peppers, cherry tomato, onion, parsley and tarragon-dijon dressing — and of course pizzas like the Penobscot, which is topped with smoked pork belly, figs, bleu cheese, arugula, egg and a balsamic reduction over what the menu calls the company's "signature sauce," there are plenty of options for a hearty pairing with any of the company's beers.

The beer menu includes Roggen Bier, Mocha Stout, Farmhouse Saison — which Forrest Brown says has

and they'll love it. I'll go, 'You're drinking craft beer.' That's what's neat — getting non-craft beer drinkers to drink craft beer," Bridges said.

Morley is hoping to ramp up his brewery's focus on sustainability in the future, and they've already gotten a solid start.

"We give our spent grain to a farmer who feeds his pigs with it. It doesn't go to waste. We don't charge him for it. It helps him out and it helps us because we don't have to throw it away," Morley said.

Throughout the project's process, Morley leaned on many of Maine's more than 70 craft breweries when he had questions or needed advice.

"The craft beer community as a whole has been extremely supportive," Morley said. "I think there's 76 of us now, and I think like anything some will grow, some will stay small, some will go away, but no one tracks in the same path."

Morley said he's excited that his business has started to change the city of Brewer and hopes to see more growth in the future.

"It's my goal to grow this

brewery here and grow the waterfront. There's tremendous growth potential here," he said. "My hope is that with this resurgence in this region with craft beer that we become the next Portland. I think we have a huge opportunity to do so," Morley said, adding that the Bangor-Brewer area is the gateway to popular tourist destinations such as Acadia National Park.

For now, he plans to enjoy the new space he has brought to Brewer.

"There's nothing like this in the state of Maine. You have an outdoor experience. It's 180 degrees of water. That's what this is all about," Morley said. "I'm a visual person. No matter where you are in this building, you can see something cool. You're seeing someone brew something or you're looking at the bar that I had family members make that has Allagash barrels built into it. You've got an industrial building with wood attributes, so it's like old meets new, which is kind of ironic because this was an old shipping yard where they transported lumber, and you have the stage right across the river."

Taste

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From time to time I experiment though, because I grow about a hundred cloves of garlic every year, and always have plenty of scapes to mess around with. This year the experiment was scape jam. This turns out to be pretty useful stuff as savory jellies and jams, like onion, garlic and red pepper, often are for appetizers and the cheese and cracker board. A plain block of cream cheese is transformed in a hurry with scape jam; a cheddar cheese sandwich, grilled or not, is delicious with scape jam added. I haven't done it yet, but I am going to use scape jam as a glaze for chicken as I have used onion jelly in the past.

The original recipe called for liquid pectin, but I had dry-packaged pectin which I

just dissolved in water. That slowed me down a little while I tried to figure out how many ounces of liquid pectin came in a bottle. You can make life easier for yourself if you just acquire liquid pectin in the first place.

If you like capsicum heat, consider using a fresh jalapeno or another favorite hot pepper in place of one of the green peppers.

Send queries or answers to Sandy Oliver, 1061 Main Road, Islesboro 04848. Email sandyoliver47@gmail.com. For recipes, tell us where they came from, list ingredients, specify number of servings and do not abbreviate measurements. Include name, address and daytime phone number. And make sure to check out Sandy's blog at tastebuds.bangordailynews.com.

Garlic Scape Jam

Yields 4 to 5 half-pints

- 1 cup garlic scapes, coarsely chopped
- 2 green peppers, coarsely chopped
- 5 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 3 ounces liquid pectin

Put the chopped scapes and peppers into a food processor and puree them.

Put the scape and pepper puree into a heavy bottomed cook pot or preserving pan, and add the sugar and vinegar and mix well.

Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat and cook for about 10 minutes.

Add the pectin and boil for a minute or until the jam sheets off a spoon.

Put into half-pint jelly jars, and seal.



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