

Robert Lambert



Dear Customer,

Welcome to the first Robert Lambert newsletter. This has been a long time coming, and I hope to make more frequent use of this feature to keep my customers informed of my latest products, events and news.

Silver and Gold Awards at the NY Fancy Food Show

The biggest news of this year is winning a Silver Finalist award, and eventually the Gold best-in-category award in New York for my Dark Cherries Preserved in Merlot Syrup in the category of Appetizer, Antipasto, Salsa or Dip by the NASFT; the group that stages the annual Fancy Food Shows.



Finalist products were considered by 400 judges during the first day of the Summer Fancy Food Show at the Javitts Convention Center in New York City. The awards were presented on Monday evening after a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception, followed by a keynote speech by Jaques Pepin, who handed me my award. Since the categories came up alphabetically, mine was the first. They announced my name and that was it! It was over! Very

fortunate for me-of course I was thrilled, deeply honored to be chosen by my peers and vindicated by the growing interest in the products I've been making for many years. This is the first time I've submitted products for judging and the first time I attended or exhibited at the New York Show.



Product Updates

The past year has shown terrific growth for my business. My current strategy is to streamline my product lines and stick with my best sellers in all categories. While this may mean that some of your favorites are no longer available, there will always be exciting, new products on the horizon, and I will never cease to innovate.

Of the new products I will soon be adding to my web site, I am particularly excited about my Membrillo, or quince paste. Quince is a pectin-rich fruit that figures in history as the original golden apples of mythology and the apple of the Garden of Eden. It is similar in appearance to apples but exudes a heady perfume and is so firm it must be cooked to be edible.

Quince paste has been made in Spain since the Middle Ages and is traditionally eaten with manchego cheese. It is the original marmalade. When the Moors brought the sour orange to Spain from North Africa it was discovered that this fruit was also high in pectin, and a similar paste was made from it that evolved into the citrus marmalades we know today.

My encounter with this fruit came about quite by accident. An auto repair shop was recommended to me to service my truck and I became friends with the owners, Karen Ruth and Mike Hoffman, whose quirky resumes also include a time as biomedical engineers. They became Farmer's Market customers when they weren't at their weekend place in Humboldt County, and even traded tune-ups for my products.

It turned out that on their 20 acres west of Garberville, they planted a certified organic quince and apple orchard, and were entering their first years of production. At first I had little interest in their fruit, but as I researched marmalade and discovered the link to membrillo, I thought this might be something I'd like to try.

On Christmas Eve last December I thought I might actually take a full day off, but I got a

call from Mike and a few hours later he showed up at my door with 500 pounds of end-of season fruit that was about to go off. I spent the next 2 weeks in a frantic race against time to process all the fruit before it decayed. But it was just what I wanted-the ripe fruit was superb, with waxy deeply colored yellow skin and a heavenly scent.

Making membrillo is an arduous task. I have calculated that it takes me 17 hours to produce one 20-pound batch, including hours bound up in gloves and gauntlets; constantly stirring the bubbling, spurting mass; and hours more of baking. Reduce, reduce. But my result, after a few trials, is far superior to any other version on the market, including imports, and has found great success at the fine cheese shops in California that now carry it. You can currently find it at Ray Baehr's Cheese Plus in San Francisco, Doralice Handal's Cheese Shop in Healdsburg, and Chris Pollan's Cheese Store of Silverlake in Los Angeles.

Other new products for fall debut: Look for Dark Chocolate Cognac Sauce, made with the finest old French cognac I've ever tasted; Apple Cranberry Relish, to replace the Cranberry Raspberry Relish I dropped last year; and whole Spiced Crab Apples, based on my grandmother's recipe, an updated revival of an American classic.

Finally, I'd like to let you know that I'm headed out to my family's farm in Wisconsin from July 31 through August 21.



During this time, I won't be filling orders, but I'll be in full production once I return.

My Best to you all---

Sincerely,

Robert Lambert