

Robert Lambert



Dear Friends,

Greetings From Northern California. While spring is only a few weeks away, our much-anticipated rainy season started late so it still seems like we are deep in winter, even with the sun returning. Cold weather in much of the country must make it feel the same there as well.



Moss home, England - 1875

I dedicate this issue of my newsletter to the Ascott Martyrs, my English ancestors from the Cotswold village of Ascott-under-Wychwood which I recently discovered online. In 1872, my great-great grandmother was one of 17 women imprisoned and sentenced to hard labor for protesting the hiring of scabs during a strike by their farm-worker husbands, who were attempting to form an agricultural union. This caused a riot, and they were later pardoned by Queen Victoria. There's even a memorial in the town square that commemorates their struggle.

My great-grandfather Caleb Moss was 8 years old when his mother was arrested, and I believe it made an impression so strong that he eventually emigrated from England with his wife and children to Northern Wisconsin, to buy their own land and start a farm. My grandmother was 10 years old when the family left that ancient village, which was settled before the Norman conquest. It was a huge leap of faith for them, and I am heir to the rewards of their courage.

New Products Available on the Updated Website

I hope you'll revisit my updated website. New products noted in my last newsletter are now available online:

- Five Mandarin Marmalade
- Membrillo, quince paste in 2 sizes, 1 lb. loaf and 1/4 lb. round
- Dark Chocolate Cognac Sauce
- Spiced Crab Apples
- Apple Cranberry Chutney

I've also added a media page for press coverage in newspapers, magazines and online sources. Come check it out at <http://www.robertlambert.com>.

Recent Happenings



Market conditions have not extinguished my growth. With the January Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco behind me, I am in the process of adding more stores to my nationwide roster. First to ship were my chocolate sauces to Cacao Drink Chocolate, a fine chocolate shop and café in Portland, Oregon.

The best story came from a buyer for Hubbell & Hudson in Woodlands, Texas; look for my products there soon. He first encountered my line in his mother's suburban Baltimore kitchen.

A shelf of jars caught his eye and as he reached for one a shout came from behind him: "Don't touch that!! It's my Robert Lambert!!"

My biggest hit at the show besides the Membrillo was the new Yuzu Syrup. What-zu? It's a variety of citrus popular in Japan and the base of the Japanese cooking sauce ponzu. They are rare and extremely expensive in this country, at least until supply catches up with demand. I have a source if I am willing to pick the fruit myself, and this syrup is the result. It is made like all of my syrups, from the peel and juice of the fruit, and blended with another called a Texas lemon and Meyer lemon juice. It carries sublime tropical notes of passionfruit, pineapple and mango and is superb as a dressing for fruit salad, in cocktails, tea, yogurt, you decide where else! I hope to add it to my online roster soon.



Picking Fruit and Oh! Those Rings!

I had a great day after the show with Mo Frechette, who's the manager and food finder for Zingerman's mail order. He stayed an extra day to tour my citrus orchard sources, including the Gene Lester collection, and volunteered to help me pick fruit. In our over-booked world it is rare to have a great block of solitude with a kindred spirit to spawn a new friendship, but the four hour trip to Watsonville has done this several times for me. Check his online blog for an excerpt from a piece he has written about our day at <http://zmojournal.blogspot.com/>, scroll down to *Robert Lambert*, and don't miss his great photographs! Click the word *photos* in the first paragraph.

Another product made its first public appearance at the Winter Fancy Food Show, but to only a few; my grandmother's Berliner Kranser, a ring-shaped Norwegian cookie that, along with Sandbakkels, an almond cookie baked into a shell, were the only two types of Christmas cookies she ever made, or ever needed to. *Rings* and *Dishes* we called them. I still think they're the best cookies I've ever had, especially the rings, and consider the recipe the prize of my inheritance.

I've been meaning to offer them to the public for some years now. I may this fall. For the rings; it's the odd coming together, I think, that gives them their ineffable texture-by beating sugar and egg yolks first, then kneading in alternately the butter and flour.

Here's Grandma's diary entry from 50 years ago about my family visiting the farm:

January 1959

"1 Thurs. Cold, -10*. Really had a surprise-Milly & family walked in at 10:30! The children went ice skating on the pond & had a good time. Ray went ice fishing & got some perch for breakfast. Made a batch of dishes again, to have on hand.

2 Fri. The children liked playing in the snow & Ray went on the toboggan with them on the hill behind the house. Made another batch of rings as it's a long time till next Christmas.

4 Sun. Started to snow, then a mix of snow & rain on & off all day-miserable so we just sat around & visited-so nice to have their company."

And eat rings, no doubt.

I'm 60 years old this year, and reflecting on my genesis. From the Ascott Martyrs to taming a Wisconsin wilderness 100 years ago...My 10 year old grandmother in a new world of English, Norwegian, German and Swede; where she'd one day learn to make rings. Myself at 10 in that same place 50 years later, eating them, one off each finger... And 50 years after that, a box of rings on the seat between two new friends on their way over the wet, green, wooded mountain to Watsonville...as many as we wanted, both of us murmuring, "Oh. The texture..."



My Best to you all---

Sincerely,

Robert Lambert

San Rafael, California

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