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By Lolli Johns
Feb 1, 2012

MOOD OF FOOD



Milk-and-honey-braised goat at Restaurant Six89.

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life. Whenever I pick up the phone to order goat meat, goats die so that people can eat. Many of the lessons I've learned in the kitchen have come from screwing up a recipe. But when you screw up something using meat that you've "met," the lesson becomes more profound.

At Restaurant Six89, we've always taken pride in being relevant and current, forward thinking, even. We've been serving goat for years. We get our animals from local ranchers, so we know where they've been and how they've been raised. From such dishes as goat nachos, made of

meat from the Nubian herd, to milk and honey-braised North Fork goat (tender as a Disney movie) served with house-made chevre agnolotti, we've found that goat fits with what we do and how we like to do it. A 21-year resident of the Roaring Fork Valley, chef Mark Fischer owns and operates Restaurant Six89, Phat That, and The Pullman. **AP**

THEY SAY...

"I absolutely love goat's cheese. We used to make our own at The Little Nell, both aged and fresh chevre. The fresh has such a light, delicate, fresh flavor. I love to use it in salads or with fresh radishes, a good Spanish olive oil, and sea salt. The aged adds its own complexity. It gets a bit of sharpness that's fantastic on a cheese plate with some homemade jam. The key is finding the best milk you can, and in Colorado that isn't hard."—Mark Zitelli, private chef



"At the Viceroy, we use goat cheese from Avalanche Cheese Company, a local business with an excellent selection of chevres. They don't use pesticides or chemical fertilizers on their fields. It's great to know that we're giving customers a hormone- and chemical-free product. This winter we'll feature Avalanche's Lamborn Bloomers on our Milagro Ranch beef burger. The cheese is a nicely balanced Robiola-style cheese with a creaminess that goes well with the burger. The whole dish is our salute to local: local beef, local cheese."—Will Nolan, chef de cuisine at Eight K at the Viceroy Snowmass



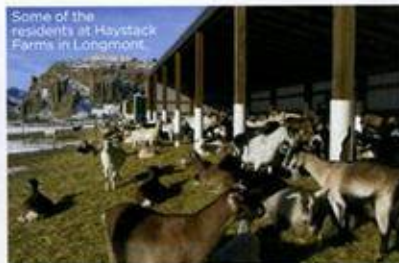
GOAT CHEESE, PLEASE

FOR MANY LOCAL CHEESEMAKERS, GOAT IS KING. BY AMIEE WHITE BEAZLEY

Raising goats and producing cheeses from their milk is more popular than ever. Much smaller than a cow, a goat is more manageable and easier to care for and feed. And the result is quite satisfying to the palate. Diners will find a type of goat cheese on nearly every charcuterie platter in Aspen-in salads galore, mixed with beets, added as croquettes atop greens, and included in entrees and even desserts.

"The milk ends up making very wonderful fresh and aged cheeses," says Michelle Kiley, Aspen's resident cheese expert and co-owner of Specialty Foods of Aspen and The Cheese Shop. According to Kiley, Wendy Mitchell, owner of Avalanche Cheese in Basalt, has "truly mastered her craft" in goat cheesemaking. Kiley calls Mitchell's selection of cheeses, which includes fresh chevre and Midnight Blue, "absolutely incomparable."

Chefs throughout the valley use Avalanche Cheese's products and those of another Colorado standout, Haystack



Some of the residents at Haystack Farms in Longmont.

Farms in Longmont. But while many diners savor goat cheese, goat meat is still underappreciated, says Jack Reed, who acts as a liaison between farmers who sell goats and restaurant owners who want them. Reed helps to supply goat meat to Mark Fischer's Restaurant Six89 in Carbondale and The Pullman in Glenwood Springs. Closer to Heaven Farm in Hotchkiss also sells goat meat to Restaurant Six89.

According to Reed, diners are reluctant

to order goat because they think the meat will smell bad, but the taste is actually closer to that of a wild meat dish such as elk. "Goats are pretty active," Reed adds. "They forage and get around, so they're lean. And they have a wild spirit about them; that's what I'm looking for in a meat."

Reed has been known to drive around the countryside of the Western Slope looking for Boer goats (the most desirable breed for meat). A relative few Boers survive into the autumn months because of the popularity of Mexican

summertime barbecues. Not many farmers on the Western Slope raise Boer goats, but Ken Miller of Cedaredge's Lone Pine Farm sells goat meat, raw goat's milk, yogurt, chevre, and feta. "The best way to prepare goat is by grilling or smoking," he says before turning whimsical. "We also grind a bit of it and make goat burgers. We try and not tell anybody until after they are done eating that [they just ate] Annabelle."