

+ THE BIG CHILL An Ice Cream Spectacular & SLICE OF LIFE A Dad's Take on Stamford Pizza

2015-2016
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School Guide
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TOP DENTISTS

STAMFORD

JULY/AUGUST 2015 | \$5.99



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SUNNY
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Summer Scoop

A night on the town touring Stamford ice cream joints

Human beings have been enjoying ice cream for centuries, with the treat's origins dating back to the second century B.C. In the summer of 1790, George Washington reportedly spent \$200 on ice cream (roughly \$5,340 today). Washington may have had a legendary sweet tooth, but who can blame him? We all scream for ice cream as soon as summer heats up. With that in mind, my girlfriend, Mandy Rondinello (an ice cream pro who worked at Cold Stone Creamery as a teenager), and I compiled a list of seven popular Stamford parlors, and spent an evening out on the town sharing and sampling their **MOST POPULAR FLAVORS**. Here's what we think.

Seven Ice Cream Joints

- 1 **Gofer Ice Cream** 869 High Ridge Rd.
- 2 **TropiGlaze** 864 Cove Rd.
- 3 **Gusnova Gelato** Stamford Town Center, 100 Greyrock Pl.
- 4 **Volta Gelateria Creperia** 30 Spring St.
- 5 **Sunny Daes** 633 Shippan Ave.
- 6 **Cold Stone Creamery** 1109 High Ridge Rd.
- 7 **Dairy Queen** 885 Summer St.



1. Gofer Ice Cream

SEA SALT CARAMEL ICE CREAM

MANDY

"Definitely my favorite. It tastes like I'm eating a salty caramel candy. It's hard to get ice cream flavors right sometimes, but this is on point. It's not too salty, there's not too much caramel—it's blended just perfectly."

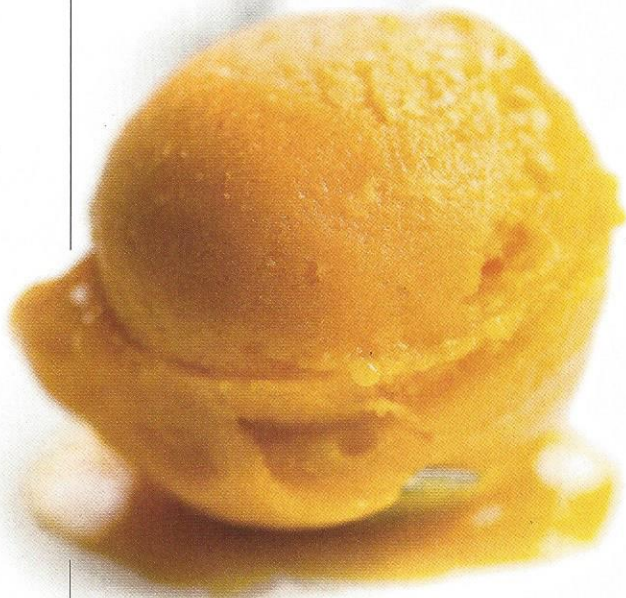
DAN

"Salty caramel, for me, is synonymous with school being out for the summer. Gofer transported me right back to my childhood. As soon as I took a bite into the cone, that salty caramel sent me to a beach near the boardwalk, a breeze at my back, my feet in sand. Top-notch, really." >>

Summer Scoop

These **MUST-TRY FLAVORS** are perfect as is

2



2. TropiGlace

MANGO ICE CREAM

MANDY

"Mango is still relatively new to me, but TropiGlace's mango ice cream made me a true believer. It's so refreshing! The owners and staff were so kind and welcoming, too. It's a real family, down-to-earth environment. I'd love to go and get this again."

DAN

"So interesting. South American-style ice cream? It really tastes like part Micalizzi's (of Bridgeport) Italian ice, part sherbet, and part ice cream. It's just so tough to pin down! But the mango flavor and chunks of fruit make this outstanding. Probably would be better in a cup, though. The cone flavor clashed a bit with the mango's fresh taste."

3. Gusnova Gelato

PINEAPPLE GELATO

MANDY

"This is so rare: a non-dairy gelato option, especially refreshing for lactose-intolerant ice cream lovers like me. It legitimately tastes just like ice cream. It doesn't feel at all dairy-free, and there are real pineapple chunks in it. So good."

DAN

"Probably the most surprising place we went. It's incredibly light and refreshing, and there's no doubt that—as we were told—they make everything here with fresh fruit. Outstanding, and the fact that it's non-dairy is mind-boggling!"

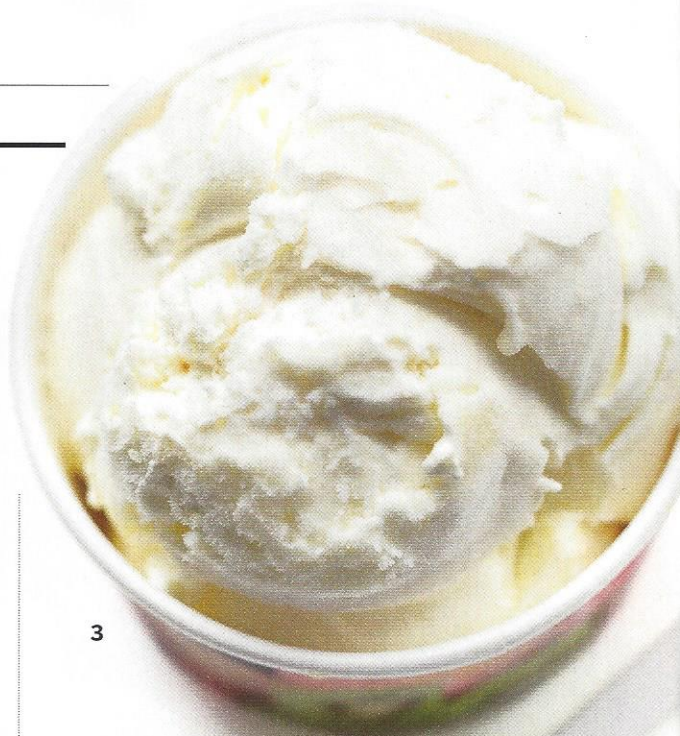
4. Volta Gelateria Creperia

HAZELNUT GELATO

MANDY

"I actually think it's light and airy, and it's so flavorful—it's almost peanut butter-esque! It's really good, but quite filling. It's a big serving; good thing we shared this."

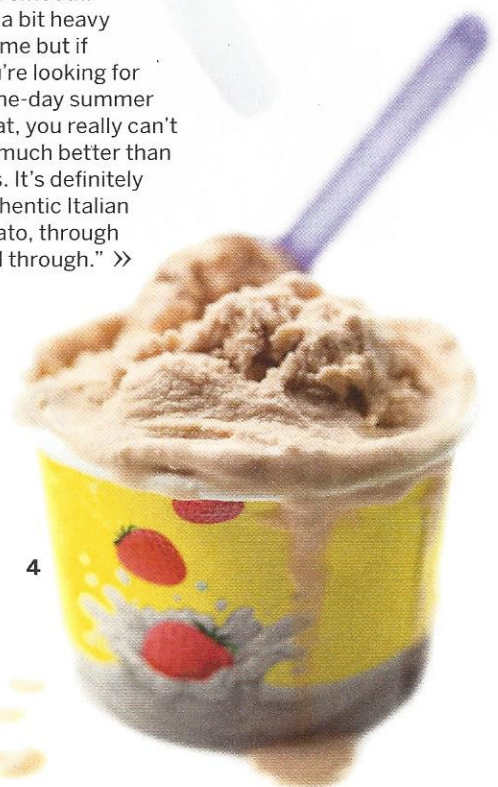
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DAN

"It's super-rich and smooth. It's a bit heavy for me but if you're looking for a one-day summer treat, you really can't do much better than this. It's definitely authentic Italian gelato, through and through." >>

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5. Sunny Daes

VANILLA SOFT SERVE

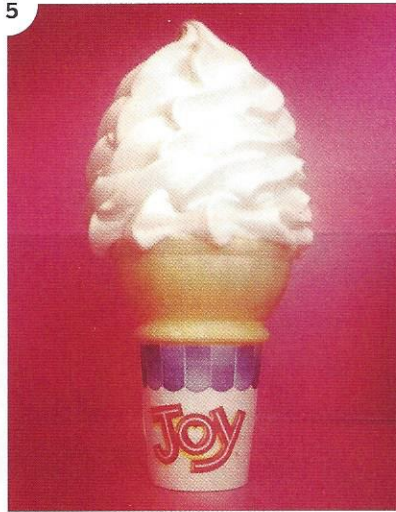
MANDY

"It's smooth and rich, but it's also pretty light. What I like most is that it doesn't melt too quickly—there's no dreaded drooping ice cream cone on a hot summer day to be found here."

DAN

"This is a flavor that truly lives up to what vanilla should taste like. It's one of the most flavorful soft serves I've had in my life, honestly. Tip of the hat to Sunny Daes."

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6. Cold Stone Creamery

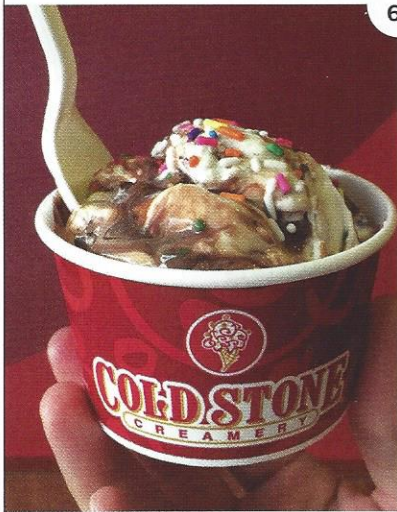
BIRTHDAY CAKE REMIX (Signature Flavor)

MANDY

"It's really a treat and a show. It's definitely an eight-year-old's dream and it's nostalgic. A little too intense for me but I can see why people like it."

DAN

"This is essentially a kid's birthday party rolled into a cup. It's an explosion. Cake batter ice cream with a brownie and hot fudge and topped with rainbow sprinkles. Awesome, but certainly not something to form a habit eating."



7. Dairy Queen

CHOCOLATE & VANILLA SOFT-SERVE SWIRL

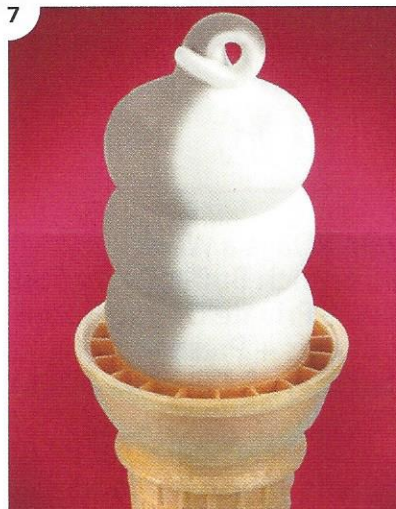
MANDY

"It really sends me back to hot summer days as a kid; my mom and dad would take my sister and me to the park and we'd go to Dairy Queen for chocolate-vanilla swirls after."

DAN

"It's a classic, just like the Stamford DQ—owned and operated by the same family since 1959. This ice cream cone is about as summer, and about as American as one can get."

7



DAIRY MATES

SUNDAE STYLE

The "kid's size" history of sweet toppings for ice cream

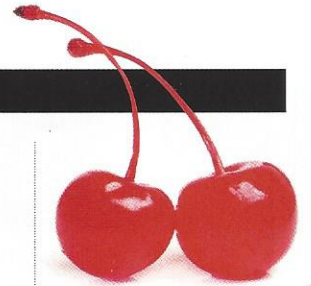


^ JIMMIES

The candy company, Just Born, responsible for manufacturing Mike and Ike, Peeps, and Hot Tamales, claims to have invented "jimmies," or chocolate sprinkles. Just Born states that the confection has been manufactured since around 1930, and was originally named after the employee who manned the machine: Jimmy Bartholomew.

^ BANANAS

David Evans Strickler, an apprentice pharmacist in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, enjoyed creating ice cream sundaes. In 1904 he decided to put bananas in his sundaes, and soon thereafter began splitting the fruit down the middle. Though Wilmington, Ohio, claims to be the birthplace of the banana split, Latrobe has been endorsed by the National Ice Cream Retailers Association and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



^ CHERRIES

In 1892, after going to church, Ithaca, New York-based druggist Chester Platt decided to put cherry syrup and a candied cherry on top of his and his reverend's ice cream. Baffled over how incredible Platt's creation tasted, the reverend suggested Platt name the treat after the day it had come into existence, thus calling it a cherry "Sunday." Since "Sunday" couldn't be trademarked, Platt settled for "sundae," though today, most sundae lovers opt for hot fudge instead of cherry syrup.



^ WHIPPED CREAM

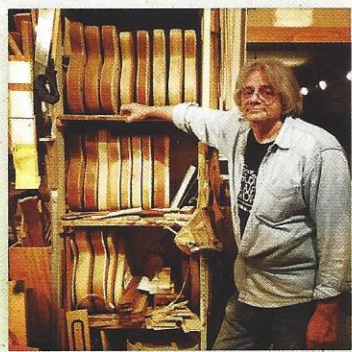
The first recorded appearance of whipped cream was in the middle 1600s. Famed French chef Vatel created a variation with sugar to serve to King Louis XIV in 1661 at a reception in the king's honor. **S**



Master Luthier

Rob Engel of Engel Guitars—
a one-man guitar factory

BY DAN HAJDUCKY



above: Engel in his Stamford studio; solid-body electric necks in progress

If you were to wander into the Glenbrook Industrial Complex looking for Engel Guitars, any passerby might cheerfully act as a guide: “The guitar guy? Around back!” Here, Rob Engel is chiefly known by the tonal aura that has filled the complex with pleasant music for nearly twenty years. He’s heard daily, but rarely seen, despite working from sunup to sundown.

Maybe if others working in the complex knew how renowned a luthier Engel is, or that he’s run a one-man, all-American-made guitar shop in Stamford for almost two decades, they’d understand why he’s always slaving away: he’s producing some of the most unusual jazz guitars on the market—thinner and more amplifier-friendly than conventional models.

Engel’s design yields a fuller-sounding instrument that’s virtually devoid of feedback, which he credits to the “honeycomb” design of the interior block (underneath the tailpiece and bridge). “I drill a bunch of holes [so] air flows through it [to] stiffen the top and back [and] to eliminate sympathetic vibration. That’s what causes feedback.”

Smooth jazz isn’t exactly synonymous with forceful guitar, so if a player wants to up the volume, the hollow body of the conventional jazz guitar yields feedback. Engel’s don’t. “With my guitars, you can crank the thing up and get little to no feedback at all,” he says.

It’s such a simple idea, yet still an unconventional one. How did Engel conceive this? “As a kid, I always made stuff,” says Engel, crediting jazz and



Engel’s well-crafted jazz guitars are combinations of many woods; this hollowbody has a spruce top, maple back and sides, and a Brazilian rosewood fingerboard.

blues greats like Wes Montgomery, Pat Martino and the late B.B. King for inspiration. “Wooden models, planes, boats, the whole routine, and I worked with my grandfather, who was a carpenter and workman. I [eventually became] a contractor in New Jersey and played guitar, so I played and worked.”

Engel had been working on a home studio for Paterson-based musician Lenny Argese when his fortunes changed. “One day he said to me, ‘Why don’t you stay over [and] I’ll show you some of the guitars I’ve made. He had a workshop in his attic and he started pulling out guitars,” Engel recalls. “He eventually said,

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‘You know, you could do this.’ I started to bring home scrap wood from some of the jobs I was working on, bought some books, got some advice from Lenny and started working.”

What started as a shop out of a two-car garage quickly blossomed into more. “Lenny got me a job working for Tom Doyle,” whose tech-savvy guitar innovations (including making his own pickups) impressed Les Paul of Gibson Guitar fame. Soon, Engel relocated to Stamford to open his own place. “I figured it was important to get some [physical] distance.”

While some companies are cutting costs through outsourcing, Engel keeps all of his work at home, and until two years ago, made everything by hand. Now he has a CNC (Computerized Numerical Control) machine—it helps cut and trim the guitar’s body and neck—but he’s still the master puppeteer. “I’ve had to change direction on the approach of how [I] actually produce stuff.”

The time and effort it takes to produce the amount of quality guitars he does by hand nowadays would be physically and mentally exhausting without some sort of mechanical aid, he says. “The days of being Geppetto in the workshop are pretty much over.”

Engel still finds ways to astound his customers; he uses a baffling variety of woods—maple, butternut, mahogany, cherry, spruce, redwood and figured redwood, and cedar—in what is still a one-room workshop. “[The wood choices are] about aesthetic, about ability, about sound, and some of them grow wild like any other wood in the United States.”

So if you drive into the Glenbrook Industrial Complex and beautiful melodies carom around your car, you’ve encountered the sounds of “the guitar guy,” perhaps still unseen but definitely heard, and hard at work.

