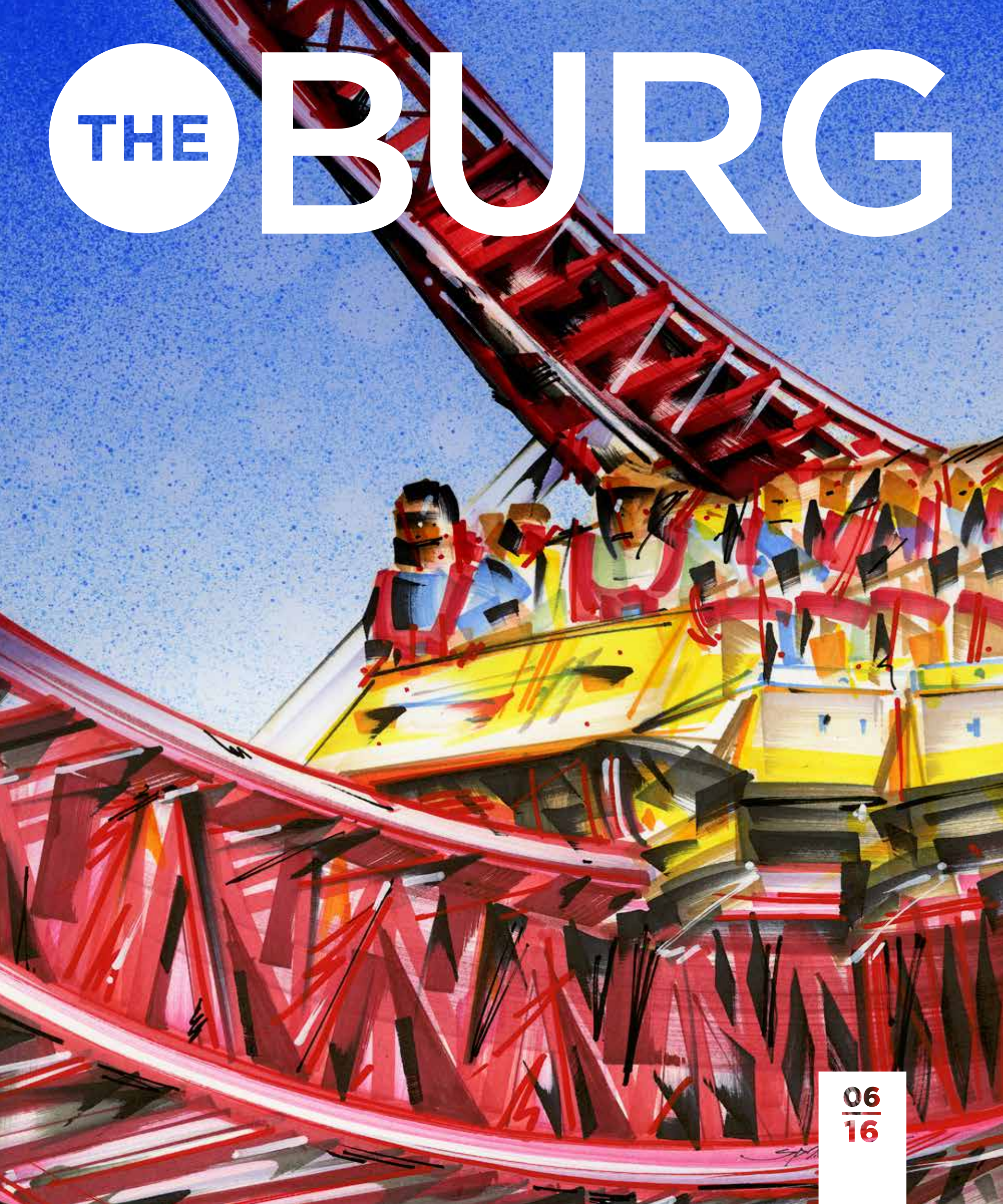


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FOOD NETWORK

Harrisburg's new craft food producers have formed a culture of cooperation, a web of support.

BY M. DIANE MCCORMICK

Maybe the chalkboard notice at Zeroday Brewing Co. says it all. "Add a scoop of Urban Churn vanilla to any beer/soda!" Or perhaps it's the Elementary Coffee mocha made with Frederic Loraschi chocolate. Oh, and you can enjoy Yellow Bird Café cookies at Midtown Cinema, and One Good Woman coffee at Yellow Bird Café. Can't get to Little Amps for coffee? Enjoy a sip at Garlic Poet restaurant or at the new Dalicia Bakery. If you haven't made it to Midstate Distillery yet, try their Iron and Ice vodka on Café 1500's summer cocktail menu.

As the Harrisburg-area craft food scene reaches a nice *al dente*, more and more vendors are partnering up to serve products created by their neighbors. They aren't just sourcing from local suppliers. They're cooking up new food pairings, cross-marketing their names, and cultivating new audiences hungry for unique tastes.


Through it all, they say, they're lifting the city's entrepreneurial spirit to new heights of innovation.

SUPPORT GROUP

Andrea Grove dreamt of more than just roasting coffee. The founder of Elementary Coffee Co. sought "to functionally be part of a community, and, with that, is finding solid partners to meet up with." "There's a lot beyond just local ingredients," said Grove at her Broad Street Market stand. "You become more than business partners. You become friends."

Grove flavors her hand-roasted beans and brews with spices from Calicutts Spice Co. in Lemoyne ("You can smell the difference," she says). Elementary Coffee is served at such establishments as the Millworks, City House B&B, Midtown Cinema and Chris and Val's Café in Lemoyne. And the hot chocolate and mocha on the Elementary Coffee menu are flavored with mixes from the local, nationally known Frederic Loraschi Chocolate.

Grove reached out to chocolatier Loraschi before launching her business in 2014. She found they could talk about business and life, establishing the

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WHERE CAN I FIND?

ELEMENTARY COFFEE

Chris & Val's Café
City House Bed & Breakfast
Midtown Cinema
The Millworks

FREDERIC LORASCHI CHOCOLATE

Elementary Coffee Co.

HUMMER'S MEATS

The Harrisburger

LITTLE AMPS COFFEE

Al's of Hampden
Café Uovo
Dalia Bakery
Garlic Poet
Radish & Rye
Rubicon

MIDSTATE DISTILLERY SPIRITS

Café 1500
Home 231
Lancaster Brewing Co.
Mangia Qui
Note. Bistro and Winebar

ONE GOOD WOMAN COFFEE

Yellow Bird Café

PIZZA BOY BREWING CO. BEER

The Millworks

kind of supportive friendship that justifies one-on-one dealings, instead of contracting with big suppliers for everything.

"It divides your focus a little bit and divides your time, but the payoff is there, because you're establishing something that gives longevity to your relationships and loyalty to the product as you move forward," she said. "When you grow, you can grow together."

Loraschi was well established, with customers in dozens of far-flung hotels and restaurants, when Grove called. Though Elementary Coffee Co. constitutes a tiny portion of Loraschi's accounts, "sometimes it's not about business," Loraschi said from his pristine shop in Colonial Park. "It's about connections with people, connections with the community."

Through collaborations, food specialists bond with like-minded entrepreneurs, the kind who work long hours and have a passion for their product, said Loraschi. Starting a business "takes a lot of courage."

"You don't know how it's going to work," he said. "You give it your best try. When there is a young entrepreneur like Andrea, you want to help that person. You want to give advice. It was the excitement of helping someone start something new."

IDEA EXCHANGE

Balsamic vinegar and kumquat ice cream, anyone? Sure, said Urban Churn founder Adam Brackbill. It's a favorite of his, and Garlic Poet chef Kurt Wewer inspired it. Exchanging ideas and customers is a welcome byproduct of collaborations.

"I get a lot of ideas for creative flavors from him," said Brackbill, who founded his business to bring old-fashioned churned ice cream to city living.

At Zeroday, Urban Churn is ready for floating in a brew or soda. In turn, Zeroday brews can be found on tap, depending on the rotation,

in such restaurants as Garlic Poet, Café 1500, Rubicon and Home 231. By working together and "figuring out ways we can intertwine products, it is allowing us to access a broader customer base," said Brandalynn Armstrong, Zeroday co-founder with her husband, Theo.

"Rubicon has a customer base that we may not get, and we have a customer base that Rubicon might not get," said Armstrong as she prepared to open the Midtown tasting room for the evening. "By working together, it expands our footprint, our marketing, our branding. We're all small businesses. Huge advertising budgets aren't really there. By supporting each other, it helps us all."

CHANGING HABITS

When Grove serves a Frederic Loraschi-flavored mocha, "There's a story behind his product that I can tell to customers, if they're interested." It goes something like this: Loraschi is French, world renowned, and "everything he creates is very pure. We know what goes into his chocolate."

"It creates a larger picture, which is where the trend is going," she said. "People want to know the story behind their products. We can honestly tell you what's in it, but it's also neat for the customer who's buying it. They say, 'I'm part of something larger,' and they're invited to enter into that story."

Sprinkling unique, lovingly crafted products around town encourages shoppers to escape the grocery-store grind, say vendors.

"We're going back to having the butcher," said Loraschi. "We're going back to having the baker. There is a resurgence. People want to know more about where their things are coming from, how they're made, who makes them."

Even Midtown Cinema taps into the craft food scene. The lobby is Urban Churn's scoop shop. Java comes from Elementary Coffee Co. ("The 'Elixir'





POPPED CULTURE POPCORN

Abbey Bar/ABC
 Little Amps Coffee Roasters
 Midstate Distillery
 Zeroday Brewing Co.

SHORT & SWEET BAKERY

Little Amps Coffee Roasters
 One Good Woman

URBAN CHURN ICE CREAM

Evanilla Gourmet Donuts
 Garlic Poet
 Grain and Verse
 Lancaster Brewing Co.
 Midtown Cinema
 Zeroday Brewing Co.

YELLOW BIRD CAFÉ COOKIES

Midtown Scholar Bookstore

ZERODAY BREWING CO. BEER

Arooga's (downtown)
 Café 1500
 Grain and Verse
 Rubicon

Note: Partial list. Check websites for all locations.

is delightful,” said Director of Operations Adam Porter, referring to the cinema’s espresso/ice cream/spice concoction). Zeroday acquired a can sealer that allows moviegoers to exit Zeroday’s tasting room and enter Midtown Cinema with an unopened can of craft beer (thank you, Pennsylvania liquor laws).

When customers can indulge in local tastes and BYOZ—yes, that’s “Bring Your Own Zeroday”—they get “an experience they can’t have at home or the megaplex,” said Porter. Naturally, a movie theater must serve popcorn (Midtown Cinema’s comes from Ephrata, by the way), but supplementing with local fare amps up the excitement and benefits all businesses “from a rising-tide standpoint,” he said.

RIGHT DIRECTION

Collaborations bring together people driven by “new energies,” said Armstrong. “You get to meet really awesome people who have the common core ideal of, ‘How can we make Harrisburg better?’ Sustainability can come from people living in the city, but growth comes from attracting outsiders to the city.”

The expanding “web of relationships” benefits businesspeople and customers, said Grove. Shoppers enjoy new tastes. Businesses find more opportunities

in an ever-growing pool of potential partners.

“More than anything, you always hope with Harrisburg that momentum’s going to continue, but the fact that more and more people are moving in here and focused here and willing to start up businesses here is proving that Harrisburg is moving in the right direction,” said Grove.

Today’s entrepreneur-driven renaissance “is probably going to stick better” than the mega-project mindset of past city redevelopment “because there are so many people doing projects independently of one another, but all with the same goal of making this neighborhood and this city a cool, fun place to be,” said Porter.

As a roaster, Grove occupies the heart of this foodie ecosystem because coffee is “a focal point for everything that’s happening around it, whether it’s just conversations or revolutions rising up over a cup of coffee or the fact that there are a lot of ingredients involved.” And whether shoppers buy local coffee, chocolate, beer or ice cream, they are community-oriented and “meeting over food.”

“You’re part of a larger picture, a larger meal that’s happening, a part of a larger drink that’s going on,” Grove said. “That’s exciting.” **B**