

# Tasty treats await at West Chester's Artisan Exchange

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Delightful made-from-scratch cheesecakes are the specialty of Anastasia & Patricia's Hand Crafted Cheesecakes.

Imagine a throng of food artisans gathered together in one convenient food hall, beckoning you to try out their many tasty

creations. That's what Saturday mornings are like at West Chester's Artisans Exchange.

The Exchange is a community of more than 50 entrepreneurs who serve up hand-crafted foods while helping the community connect to locally made goods. Nearly all hail from Chester County and on any given Saturday, you can sample and purchase an array of their foods including heritage breads, local cheeses, fresh ground coffee, tempting sweets and desserts or dishes made from heirloom recipes including American classics, Mexican, Italian, Hungarian, Argentinian and Chinese specialties among others.



Master baker Karsten Haigis of Haigis Fine Foods makes breads using traditional German baking methods and flour from local mills.

A visit to the Exchange is not your ordinary shopping experience. In addition to offering delicious goods, each crafter has an engaging story to tell, whether about the origins of their cookery or their aspirations for their businesses. The longevity of their businesses varies, from newcomers operating for as little as several months to

established veterans with years experience in food preparation. Principal Frank Baldassarre who also operates Golden Valley Farms Coffee Roasters with wife Maryann, calls the food hub a collaborative due to the commitment to shared success among the participants. Christine Rotteveel of Anastasia & Patricia's Hand Crafted Cheesecakes opened at the Exchange a little more than a month ago. She says the business, named for her Russian and Boston grandmothers, is close to her heart after 17 years of perfecting the cheesecake recipes. She hopes to grow to the point of being able to hire people who have had a rough start so they too can learn the food business. Her four cheesecake varieties are all made from-scratch in small batches.



BrendAmore Italian Catering's Brenda Read makes use of the shared kitchen space at the Artisans Exchange to prepare her traditional Napoli-style Italian foods dishes.

In addition to her stand at Artisans, Angie O'Brien of iSwich Gourmet Ice Creams runs a mostly wholesale business with products on sale at Whole Foods and served at Longwood Gardens. Her ice creams are made in the Philly Style without eggs but with all-natural ingredients. I sampled her Lemon Ice Cream, which was deliciously

light and satisfying.

Karsten Haigis, a German master baker, was among the first to start at the Exchange. He said that he brings 500 years of German baking history to his whole wheat, twelve-grain, white and rye breads which are all made in the traditional German way with flour from Castle Valley Mills near Doylestown and other local suppliers.

Brothers Barclay and Will Stanton own Jolli, “your local meal-kit provider,” and are seeking subscribers for their service. They aspire to be a nation-wide enterprise in the near distant future and described Artisans as “an amazing community.” Like many others I spoke with they talked about the knowledge-sharing that takes place among members and the support from the Exchange organizers who help them navigate the complex rules and regulations governing a food business. Such help is critical in starting a business for the first time, they said. It avoids the “stumbling around trying to figure it out for yourself” problems that often confront entrepreneurs, they added.

Not to miss upcoming events at the Exchange include April 14th’s Italian Fest and May 5th’s Cinco de Mayo Festa. I

t has operated year-round since 2012 and is open to the public every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 208 Carter Drive, Suite 13B in West Chester.

More information on the venue and the participating companies is available at their Facebook

page: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/ArtisanExchangeWCPa/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/ArtisanExchangeWCPa/about/?ref=page_internal)