

The Connecticut Table

By Beth Hillson



Culinary Adventurers

These Connecticut foodies have parlayed their first love into thriving careers.

student at the Hotel School in The Hague and Bryan helped open the trendy Asiate restaurant in New York. The newsletter comes with delicious tidbits from Bonnie, but the *pièce de résistance* is the boys' comments. Bryan and Eric tell about their proclivity for dried plums (aka prunes), and describe their memories of drinking hot chocolate in a Paris café. BOTB includes vignettes about the people who created the products as well as visits to food events and restaurants. The newsletter is free and subscribers can enter to win monthly giveaways like a KitchenAid stand mixer or a case of Swanson Organic Chicken Broth. The site is interactive and visitors are encouraged to post comments about the products, says Bonnie. Sign up at bitcofthebest.com.

Connecticut is home to many unique food businesses. The specialties run the gamut from organic pesto and devilishly spicy relish to a food family's Web site and an all-American restaurant-turned-gluten-free food company. Join us for a culinary adventure that is sure to be tasty.

A Bite of the Best, Hamden

A Bite of the Best (BOTB) is the creation of "seasoned food writer" Bonnie Tandy Leblang and her sons, Eric, 24, and Bryan, 27. This weekly e-newsletter gives readers a "food bite" about one product that the trio recommends. If anyone knows good food, it's these three. "I'm tired of reviewing things I don't like," says Bonnie. "Only the best make it into BOTB." Bonnie has been writing about food for nearly three decades, including a daily column, "Supermarket Sampler," that's in its 22nd year of syndication. Eric is a hospitality

Bear Pond Farm, Glastonbury

For prepared pesto without that overpowering preservative taste, you'll want to try Bear Pond Farm (BPF) Pesto. Bear Pond products explode with the signature taste promised on each label: organic basil and Sicilian Mintucha oregano in Premium Basil; vibrant lemon verbena in Lemony Pesto; dried tomato bits and a kick of garlic in Tomato Garlic Pesto; fresh cilantro in Rich Cilantro Pesto; and spicy arugula in the Robust Arugula Pesto. (All start with organic basil.) BPF is the brainchild of Craig Colvin, who discovered his "roots" and a green thumb when he started Sweet Pea Organics, a small organic farm in Washington Depot. "It was karma, pure and simple. I just seem to have a passion for gardening, knowing what to plant and how to take care of it," says Colvin.

His vibrantly flavored pesto spreads were discovered in 2003 by Florence Fabrikant, who featured them in her *New York Times* column and helped propel the company into a serious business. In 2004 Colvin joined forces with marketing expert Kathleen Lenane