

YOU ARE
HERE

BOYSTOWN

5 must-visit stalls at the Nettelhorst French Market

BY John Lendman · Thursday, May 5, 2011 9:00 a.m.



Spring's here, which means it's time for a unique farmer's market to take over the Nettelhorst School's front yard at Broadway and Melrose Street every Saturday.

What sets the Nettelhorst French Market apart from other farmer's markets debuting this month is its more than produce and pastries — this one is a community market of art, hand-crafted accessories and culinary confections, mimicking a chic Parisian market.

In its seventh year, the multicolored awning market is operates in conjunction with the fine arts-focused Nettelhorst elementary school, market supervisor Bob Parden said. The market was partially created to build a neighborly hub around the once-struggling Chicago Public School.

"The school started this years ago to build a community," Parden said. "Nettelhorst got revitalized and we grew along with it."

To help you along your first trip of the season we highlight five market booths worth checking out among the 17 or so vendors. And you'll have plenty of time — **the market runs every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. through Nov. 12.**

1. Katherine-Anne Confections

While working with local and organic farmers in Illinois, Katherine Duncan has been working the farmer's market circuit with her handmade truffles and caramels for about five years.

Duncan's Logan Square-based production studio doesn't have a storefront, like many of the other vendors here, she said, but she humbly prefers the farmer's market setting.

"We always trade with other vendors as well, like truffles for cheese," she said. "I give my employees a certain trade allowance, so we eat really well here."

You'll find citrus, hazelnut, cherry amaretto, toasted coconut rum and even carrot cake truffles, among others, for about \$2.50 each or four for \$9, as well as honey caramels for \$.75 each.

2. Mike Allen Fine Art

Abstract expressionist Mike Allen loves to paint the city's iconic skylines and street scenes while keeping his paintings affordable for his favorite neighbors, he said.

"When I first moved to Chicago in the '60s, I moved to Lakeview and fell in love with it," he said, which is evident in his intricate and vibrant brush strokes.

Allen's prices start at about \$75 for smaller pieces and range from \$125 to \$400 for larger oil on canvas works of art. The pieces are frameless but ready to be hung.

3. Stamper Cheese

How can you have a French market without an abundance of cheeses? At Stamper Cheese, a booth solely devoted to artisanal cheeses, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But the Stamper brothers, Bret and Brian can tell you exactly which cheddars or Goudas pair well with which dishes or even which beers.

Trucked in from what Brian Stamper describes as "the France of the United States" — Wisconsin — Stamper Cheese works directly with about 11 dairy farmers.

"It's a great environment," said Brian Stamper. "It's all about the interaction and bringing in a product that's perfect for a farmer's market — you can really talk to people here."

Some artisanal Wisconsin cheeses you'll find here: Baby Amish swiss, chipotle cheddar, pistachio cheese roll, garlic dill, and various blue cheeses, bries and mozzarellas, among others. Prices range from \$6 to \$10 for one-inch wedges.

4. B True Bakery

Everything you'll find in this Oak Park-based pastry line is all natural and whole grain, said owner Brady Braden, with each ingredient sourced from family farms within 250 miles of the city.

And even though there's no stand-alone shop, you can find B True's pastries and breads in specialty shops like the Coffee and Tea Exchange a block north on Broadway.

"We're everything you'd have from a traditional brick and mortar without the brick or mortar," Braden said. "But here buyers can support me directly, instead of through a wholesale partner."

What you'll find here is cranberry and red wheat breakfast loafs for \$6; whole-wheat banana and apple muffins for \$1; apple and cinnamon scones for \$2.50; and triple-chocolate wheat cupcakes for \$3 ; among other baked goods (and even "human grade" dog treats).

5. Solola Jewelry and Accessories

Christine Mitchell works the neighborhood festival and farmers' market scene with imports from India, Bali and Thailand. She describes her jewelry, accessories, scarves and handbags as "contemporary ethnic."

"I make some of the jewelry and chains myself," Mitchell said. "But I have a variety of items because it's all really hit or miss."

Some of what you'll find here are rings and bracelets (mostly metalwork) from \$4 to \$45; scarves and pashminas for around \$40 and multicolored handbags around the \$100 range.

BOYSTOWN HOOD TEAM



Ariel Alexovich
Neighborhoods editor
ariel@tribune.com



John Lendman
Boystown reporter
john.lendman@gmail.com



Tony Peregrin
Boystown reporter
tony.peregrin@gmail.com



Our Partners

435 Digital | ChicagoNow | Chicago Magazine | Chicago Shopping | Chicago Tribune | Chicago Weather Center | CLTV | The Mash | Metromix | Viveloy Hoy | WGN Radio



Privacy Policy | Terms of Service | Report a Problem | Advertise with RedEye | Frequently Asked Questions | Meet Our Staff | Submit an Event Listing | Subscribe | Weekend Edition | Feedback | Facebook.com/TheRedEye | Twitter: @redeychicago | ritaredeye@tribune.com | RedEye, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611

A Chicago Tribune Site