

LOCAL FLAVORS

*Delicious*  
**WCR**  
*Savory*

AT T AT THE GENERAL STORE

Story by Sarah Ensor | Photos by Jameson Harrington





For foodies and home cooks alike, late autumn ushers in new flavors. Gone are the tangy tomatoes and sweet watermelon of summer, replaced by hearty squash, sweet potatoes, and thanks to the opening of the hunting season in November, duck. A creative, knowledgeable chef can combine these November flavors to delight the palate.

At t at the General Store in Royal Oak, Chef Mark McGrogan prepares fresh, local, seasonal cuisine, and in the season of homecoming, hunting, and gratitude, he prepares a meal rich in fall flavors.

His pan-roasted duck is perfectly cooked, with a crispy skin and juicy meat. It is served sliced over mashed sweet potatoes prepared simply with butter, salt and pepper, the salty, savory and sweet flavors complementing one another. On the side are roasted Brussels sprouts in a bacon and balsamic glaze that offers some smoke and tang, while microgreens topping the dish add a fresh brightness.

Although the flavors on this plate are somehow both dramatic and well balanced and the aroma intoxicating, the textures are nuanced and complex. Consider the crunch of the microgreens, the crisp duck skin, and roasted Brussels sprouts (the best way to prepare Brussels sprouts — if you are still steaming or boiling your sprouts, change your ways). The smooth and buttery potatoes melt away in the mouth.

McGrogan recommends a Negroni made with ginger-tea-infused gin, Campari, sweet Vermouth, and an orange wedge. The bitter sipper is at once herbal and refreshing. It serves as a palate cleanser and as a lovely complement to the dish. The use of tea-infused gin is unique to t at the General Store, which has an extensive and interesting tea menu.

The Negroni is considered an aperitif, a dry beverage served before a meal, but ignore that suggestion and sip it with the meal — or even dessert. Order dessert.

McGrogan's apple Bundt cake is served with caramel ice cream from Scottish Highland Creamery in Oxford (all of the ice cream at t at the General Store is made by the creamery). The Bundt cake has a crunchy crust and soft cake center. The sugary apple makes the jaw tingle. Set off by the creamy ice cream, this simple-sounding dessert celebrates the sweetest part of autumn's bounty.

While the main course offers tastes of duck hunting season and autumn harvest, dessert hints at the pies and cookies to come during the holiday season. **S**

