



Record-Eagle file photo

Mimi Wheeler and her partner, Carlene Peregrine, make Grocer's Daughter chocolate truffles in Glen Arbor. The name comes from Wheeler's mother, Marie Louise Leth-Sorensen.

Food gifts

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and coffee and dark chocolate and ginger.

Their newest item is caramels, which are made using star thistle honey, organic cream and 75 percent cocoa chocolate.

6453 Western Ave., Glen Arbor; 357-0179; www.grocersdaughter.com.

The Chocolate Den

At The Chocolate Den in downtown Traverse City, chocolates are handmade and hand-dipped as quickly as owner Wendy Icard can in order to meet demand for holiday gift-giving.

"Truffles are probably our biggest seller," Icard said.

Truffles have a shelf-life of about three weeks since no preservatives are used when making the melt-in-your-mouth treats.

Other holiday favorites includes mint or almond "bark."

Gift baskets at The Chocolate Den are packed with hot chocolate.

324 E. Front St., TC; 935-3618; www.chocolateden.com.

Gifts for everyone else on your list

Cherry Republic

Cherry Republic, located in Glen Arbor but recognized world-wide, employs 120 people to keep track of its holiday mail orders.

Two predicted big-sellers this holiday season will be the "Dark Chocolate Covered Cherry Nut Mix (which includes dried cherries, whole jumbo cashews, pecans and almonds coated in premium dark chocolate) and the "Cherry Wonderbar" (a snackbar-on-a-stick with dried cherries, crispy rice cereal, crunchy chow mein noodles, chocolate chunks, mini marshmallows and peanut butter.)

The Cherry Wonderbar is complete with a real cherrywood stick, which are collected when the cherry trees get pruned.

The Bakery Sampler box contains an assortment of Cherry Republic favorites including the Boomchunka Cookie, Dark Chocolate Pecan Boomchunka Cookie, Cherry Wonderbars, Cherry Biscotti and Cherry Melt Brownies.

6026 S. Lake St., Glen Arbor; (800) 206-6949; www.cherryrepublic.com

Pop-kies

For a taste of Chicago right in downtown Traverse City, Popkies has just the ticket. Their "Front Street Blend" (also known as "Chicago-Style") is a blend of caramel and cheddar corn. The perfect blend of sweet and salty, according to owner Greg Gembis.

For a taste that's more Traverse City, the Cherry Capital Crunch offers caramel corn with cashews and, of course, dried cherries. Popkies also makes kettle-corn — generally a summertime favorite — year-round, which allows a taste of summer during the dead of winter.

Tin sizes range from one gallon on up to six and a half gallons.

147 E. Front St.; (877) 4-POP-KIES; www.popkies.com.

The Underground Cheesecake Co.

Portability might not be something you consider when thinking about a food item at Christmas, but for the person on the fun, The Underground Cheesecake Co. in Traverse City has the perfect solution.

Cheesecake-on-a-stick allows you to take your cheesecake and run. The sweet treat has not only been gaining in popularity in Traverse City but also nationwide after it appeared on the Food Network. In addition to their year-round flavors of pecan, peanut butter, cherry, chocolate and mint chocolate chip, at the holidays they add in egg nog and peppermint stick. Once they're dipped in chocolate, they are decorated to look like a Christmas tree.

406 S. Union St.; 929-4418; www.undergroundcheesecake.com

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