

It's Truffle Time

BY JESSIE AMMONS

Have you ever really tasted a truffle? Not the chocolate kind — which share only a moniker and exquisite, indulgent quality — but the underground mushroom variety. Jane Morgan Smith thinks maybe not.

In seeking a way to stay in touch with her customers year-round (since the mushroom's December through February season is so fleeting), the truffle farmer began developing products like truffle butter and dehydrated truffles to combat a market full of flavored goods that use perfumes and oils rather than genuine truffles. Her newest additions? Truffle honey and salt.

The self-proclaimed truffle "purist" fell into truffle farming after she and her husband began growing shiitake mushrooms on their Stokes County farm. Now boasting some 500 trees, the two manage Truffles NC with only a bit of part-time help in the summer. It is challenging but rewarding work (truffles grow on tree roots, invisible underground!), and we get to taste the



fruits of their labor year-round.

Smith makes all of the products herself, using local ingredients. Sea salt from Arden and North Carolina honey from Winston-Salem's Reynolda Farm Market provide a canvas for black winter truffles to work their magic.

For a winter pick-me-up, try Smith's personal favorite truffle treat: "Take a

spoonful of honey and put it in a cup of hot tea, and by the time you get to the bottom of the cup, the truffle is rehydrated and tremendously flavorful."

Truffles NC products are available at a variety of North Carolina retailers. Call 336-631-8080 or visit www.trufflesnc.blogspot.com for locations, as well as more information about Smith's Keep Your Fork Farm.

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