

# Producer OF THE *Month*

MAY 2021



White River Jct, VT



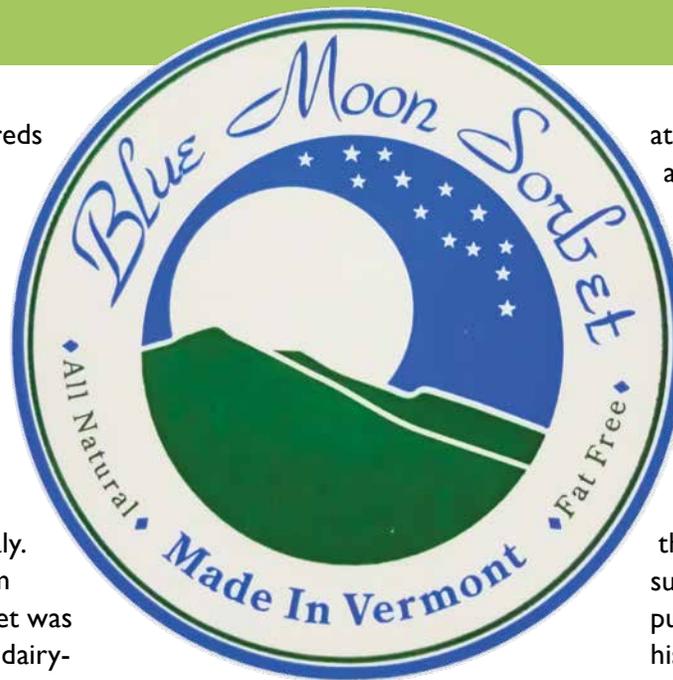
BRATTLEBORO FOOD CO-OP

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by Jon Megas-Russell



Sorbet dates back hundreds of years and is one of the earliest frozen treats. The original sorbet was created with either ice or snow and flavored with honey, fruit, or wine. The ancient Greeks and Romans and folks in the Middle East were big fans. The earliest written recipe for sorbet traces back to the 1600s in Italy. One thing we can discern from the history books is that sorbet was created many years before its dairy-filled friend, ice cream. Nowadays sorbet continues its long tradition as a fruit- and ice-based treat that, for many, is appealing because it is free of fat and cholesterol. Sorbet typically consists of water, juice, fruit puree, sugar, and some producers include additives and thickeners. When it comes to Blue Moon Sorbet, owner John Donaldson chooses simple and clean ingredients with his offerings, omitting the additives and thickeners opting for only the finest fruit purees, water, and sugar.



John moved from Illinois to Vermont in the 1970s and he and his wife settled in around the Putney / Bellows Falls region. They raised two daughters and have loved every minute of their time here in Vermont. After moving around to different restaurant jobs in southern Vermont, he decided to attend the Culinary Institute of America in the early 1980s. It was this training that allowed him to learn how to perfect the fine dining experience with a deep passion for pastries and desserts. Upon completing his time

at CIA, he learned that the Prince and the Pauper in Woodstock, VT, was looking for a pastry chef and, to his delight, upon applying he was hired. Blue Moon Sorbet originates from John Donaldson's time working at The Prince and Pauper where, during the '80s and '90s, John created all sorts of rich and decadent desserts from scratch. He loved the detail that went into making such delightful items as cakes, tortes, puff pastries, and sorbet. He enjoyed his work and took a deep interest in exciting taste buds at the end of a delicious meal. During his time there, he experimented with sorbet and creating delicious flavors such as Grapefruit Campari and Blackberry Lime. One night after work he was shopping for dessert at a grocery store. At that time in his life he generally sought out lighter desserts than what he served and tasted at work. He was underwhelmed by the options in the sorbet section that evening—raspberry and strawberry were the only flavors available. Sorbet did not end up in his basket



The vision and mission of Blue Moon Sorbet has always been to make the best tasting and cleanest sorbet. Their sorbets are made from all natural ingredients; fruit is the first and foremost ingredient. They use a mix of both conventional and organic ingredients, depending on what is available. They use less sugar because only the freshest, highest-quality fruits, purees, and juices go into the sorbet. There is no added flavoring or coloring — the intense flavor and vivid color comes from the fruit itself. They source only French fruit purees as John believes they are the finest in the world. In particular he has experimented with many different purees and always felt the taste of those originating in France was just far superior. Diving a bit deeper into their technique leads to properly defining what a “clean” ingredient means to John. Some companies utilize corn syrup, xanthan gum, and guar gum for sweetness and thickening. Blue Moon Sorbet has simply formulated a sorbet that does not require such ingredients and allows one to enjoy the simplicity

and on his drive home he wished that the grocery store had a wider variety. It struck him that at the time he was creating a much more exciting array of flavors and that, potentially, he had a solid business idea on his hands. Upon arriving home he pitched the prospect of a sorbet business to his wife Pamela, who reflected on the ten years of John’s recipe testing and the overwhelmingly positive response from

the patrons at Prince and Pauper before agreeing to his idea. Thus in 1995, Blue Moon Sorbet was created. As John stated, “We came up with the name Blue Moon Sorbet because a blue moon (being the second full moon in a month) is such a rare and special thing, like our sorbet.” Many years ago, Paul Zinkivich, a graphic artist who lives in Massachusetts and friend of John and Pamela’s, designed the label and logo.



of their product. Water, sugar, fruit puree, and fruit juice are all that is required—with the exception of a few other ingredients such as pectin, Campari, and a tad bit of other liqueurs in a few flavors.

John always wanted to produce the best tasting product and he feels as though he has done so, creating a rich taste and a classic European texture. With every scoop he tastes, he is given a pleasant reminder. You can purchase Blue Moon Sorbet here at your Brattleboro Food Co-op or across all the New England states and some select retailers in New York City—and even one shop in Texas. You can also find their sorbet at the end of a fine dining experience at Simon Pierce in Quechee, VT. Flavors include Wild Blueberry, Grapefruit Campari, Pear Ginger, Raspberry Cassis, Lemon Zest, Mango Passion, Red Raspberry, Peach Melba, and Strawberry Daiquiri.

Even in the face of a pandemic, the past year has been very fruitful for Blue Moon Sorbet. Many of their retailers placed larger than normal orders, keeping John and his one staff member busier than



normal. Now that business has regulated in its sales growth, John finds himself looking ahead. He has enjoyed owning and operating his own company, especially the interactions with the store owners, freezer buyers, receivers, and customers. And while Blue Moon Sorbet never grew into a large company, he and his wife are planning on passing it on to a new owner sometime in the

near future. He wants this wonderful product to continue to delight people and potentially grow with new flavors and more distribution. Once things are a bit safer, John would like to once again spend time with his daughters and grandson as well as travel.

Stop by the Co-op and pick up some of the delicious flavors of **Blue Moon Sorbet!**

