

Wicked Kickin' Savory Cheesecakes



by Matt
Ferreira

Cheesecake for dinner—A dream that Sean and Katie McKenna not only make a reality, they've made it a business. And like their products, this entrepreneurial husband and wife team started Wicked Kickin' Savory Cheesecakes from scratch.

The concept is easily explained. Imagine elements from some of your favorite dishes put together in an array of delicious combinations and arranged within a cheesecake. Though Sean and Katie are not the first to make cheesecake-ified entrees, they have certainly made the idea their own. "We loved the concept and did some research, finding out that most are herb and cheese recipes. We then started to experiment and play with different ingredient combinations," Sean says of his and his wife's entrepreneurial beginnings. "It was fun, often saying, 'You know what would be great in a cheesecake...'. Most of our cheesecakes are based on dishes we like to eat."

Another way Sean and Katie have made Wicked Kickin' Savory Cheesecakes an original is by injecting some local character into their product line. "All of our cheesecakes are named after either someone or something in MA or RI. We really love living in this area and wanted it to show in our recipes and names. Most of the names are also tied directly in some way to their ingredients. The Whitey Bulger is based on a white pizza, The Lansdowne is based on the sausage sandwiches sold

outside Fenway Park, The North End is based on a local favorite antipasto.”

On that note, a quick rundown of the Wicked Kickin’ menu:



- “The Neu Biege” – Linguica, crushed red pepper, onions, peppers, and a touch of cheddar.
- “The Cape Codder”- Chicken, craisins, spinach, red onions, walnuts, and goat cheese.
- “The Wicked Kickin’ Chicken”- Spicy chicken, red onion, blue cheese, and buffalo sauce.
- “The Whitey Bulger”- Tomato, fresh basil, garlic, mozzarella, and parmesan.
- “The Hub”- Pepperoni, mozzarella, ricotta cheese, marinara, fresh basil, and parmesan.
- “The Lansdowne”- Sausage, peppers, onions, and provolone cheese.
- “The Green Monstah”- Broccoli, spinach, garlic, red and green pepper, green onions, mozzarella, feta, mushrooms, and parmesan.
- “The Chatham”- Lobster, shallots, cayenne pepper, parsley, muenster and parmesan cheese.

Though Sean and Katie have had their fun creating personalities for their cheesecakes, they’ve also had their

share of hard work making their venture a success. “The most difficult part is that Katie and I are responsible for every aspect of running the business... marketing, purchasing, baking, cleaning, delivery, packaging, shipping, and on and on. But my wife and I work very well together. We each have our own strengths and weaknesses and each of our own set of skills compliments the other’s well.”

And it shows–In less than three years Wicked Kickin’s popularity has spread from the local Dartmouth community throughout the Southcoast and beyond to the brink of national success. “The business has given us some amazing opportunities. We have been on The Phantom Gourmet and served our cheesecakes to 10,000 people on Lansdowne St. behind the Green Monster. We have participated in fundraisers run by both Matt Light and Vince Wilfork of the New England Patriots. We’ve been called by someone from The Rachael Ray Show, Food Network Magazine and the television show SharkTank, all because of our savory cheesecakes! We recently participated in a couple of great events like the Taste of Southcoast in New Bedford and The Lloyd Center Clambake at Demarest Lloyd State Beach.”



Sean and Katie at the 2012 Child and Family Fashion Show.

In the beginning of December 2011, they opened the doors to the first Wicked Kickin' storefront on 319 Dartmouth Street, a location that had been previously used by Homelyke Bakery. The calculated leap into retail, part of a well-thought out business plan, has proven to be a highly beneficial move for the growing business. "We've been doing a lot of walk in business at the location" says Sean. "We're not limited to just filling orders anymore". Here, customers can find a ready-to-buy selection of Wicked Kickin's best-sellers such as the "Wicked Kickin' Buffalo" cheesecake and "The Nue Biege" as well as the themed "cheesecake of the month" such as March's St. Patrick's Day "Corned beef Cheesecake".

As for the near future, this increasingly business savvy couple has no plans of halting the momentum they have built thus far. Wicked Kickin' is due to make its appearance at the upcoming Phantom Gourmet's Wine & Food Phest in Boston, which has become an annual event for the couple. They have also been invited to provide their savory cheesecakes for Matt Light's Celebrity Shootout charity event for the second year in a row, which is a first time a company has been asked to do food for the event twice.

With an impressive list of achievements under their belt and the drive to keep taking things to the next level, the future of Sean and Katie's Wicked Kickin' Savory Cheesecakes is considerably optimistic in the face of today's small business-swallowing economy. "We are always trying to grow and improve. As a small business it is important to have a vision of what you want to become and try to operate every day in a manner which will close the gap between where you are and where you want to be."

The Phantom Gourmet Wine and Food Phest is going to be held at the Boston Center for the Arts (Cyclorama) on Tremont Street in the South End on Saturday, March 31st from 1-4 pm and again from 5-8 pm. Tickets cost \$40 in advance, \$50 at the door.

The next Celebrity Shootout will be held in October.

You can check out Wicked Kickin' Savory Cheesecakes for yourself at www.wickedkickin.com.