

## It's Good for All of Us

By Rex Halfpenny

We all like to enjoy what we eat. To some this simply means that the flavor is as expected and is non-objectionable. This would include fans of fast food and chain restaurants and are brand loyal to one light beer. Others pursue a higher standard and want the flavor to be more along the lines of "delicious." Such people often like to cook and enjoy fine dining, and experience a variety of different beverages. But as I tell my students of beer, we are all instruments capable of perceiving nuances of flavor as small as parts per million and even parts per billion, but each of us is calibrated differently. One person's ideal may not be the same as the next.

I have no doubt that there is overlap between these two groups, for I am certain there are many who enjoy fine dining yet only drink one kind of light beer, ice cold, and say they do so because of flavor. But to this I would like to add another feel good variable. The feel good about where the product came from, its ingredients, and whom you are supporting with the dollars spent to enjoy that product.

Enter the ideals of organic, sustainability, earth friendly, locally produced and local economy support. If these ideals can be reached, why not? The Halfpenny household has been doing this since Mary's involvement with Kokua Country Foods Co-op near the University of Hawaii in the Mid 70s. We do not talk about it much and have never used these pages to tout it, until now. Recent events and conversations have motivated us to begin to include this philosophy as part of *Michigan Beer Guide's* mission.

We were delighted to learn that **Rochester Mills Beer Co.** has been introducing more and more organic and locally produced products into their menu. They are now introducing an all-organic beer that will be a full time product, a portion of the ingredients are locally grown. The Wit beer will be called Organic Pleszure, in honor of Mike Plesz who inspired the idea. Taking the whole concept a step further, as equipment requires updating or repair, it is being replaced with more efficient alternatives.

Another company we are excited about is **The Sleeping Bear Trading Company**. The Sleeping Bear Trading Company (SBTC) was born from a dream in 1996 by Charles Psenka, the founder of **The Leelanau Brewing Company** and serves as Chief Liaison for Jolly



**Pumpkin Artisan Ales**, where Leelanau ales are produced. Charles donates much of his time to various Michigan conservation efforts and is founder of [SavetheCougar.Org](http://SavetheCougar.Org) and a board member of the Manitou Island Memorial Society.

SBTC is a Michigan based food and alcohol wholesaler with an emphasis on world-class beer, wine and gourmet organic delectables.

The Sleeping Bear Trading Company strongly believes in the principals of organic farming and sustainability. They strive to seek out independent Michigan farmers who are not currently organic and provide them with the business consulting necessary to take their farms organic and add on value added products as an incentive for the farmers to do so. From Organic Hard Cider to Fair Trade Certified Preserves The SBTC is working to have access to all the quality organic ingredients we will need, all from right here in Michigan. Promoting Michigan organic farming and delighting organic gourmet connoisseurs.

Simply put, organic food tastes great. We discovered long ago that there are a lot of products in stores today that looks picture perfect but are tasteless. There is nothing like a plant ripened and sun warmed tomato fresh from the back yard. The next best thing is organic local produce.

So when we learned of SBTC's line of organic products made with Michigan ingredients we eagerly looked forward to trying them.

The first one was Sleeping Bear Trading Company Cherry-Raspberry Preserves. I tell my students that 80% of flavor is aroma, and this preserve smells like sour cherries. Deep garnet color, full of whole tart cherries, balanced per-

fectly with Fair Trade sugar.

The SBTC Medium Cherry Salsa was amazing as a dip for the organic jalapeno tortilla corn chips that I enjoy as my snack food.

SBTC's Organic Gourmet Michigan Mustard is a wonderful brown mustard for use on sausages, burgers, or as a snack on raw organic broccoli. This is a sweeter mustard balanced by an unmistakable tang of apple cider vinegar.

The mustard can be spiced up with SBTC El Gringo Hot Sauce. Made with organic red ripened habanero peppers and organic red smoked jalapenos, this stuff is just the ticket to spice up everything short of your love life.

Saving the best for the last, SBTC organic Maple Syrup. No other ingredients and not so viscous as to cause long delays at the breakfast table. Try this with my favorite King's Hawaiian Sweet Bread French toast. Yeah, I know, the bread now comes from California and is made by Kraft, but I grew up eating this stuff in Hawaii when it was a local secret.

So all I am trying to suggest is that we all try making smarter purchase decisions by making local made in Michigan and organic products a larger percentage of our routine expenditures. From doing so we can enjoy top quality flavor and help the local economy while we're at it. As we have been saying for years, support your local brewery, we add, support your local farmer.

For more information on Sleeping Bear trading company visit these websites:

<http://www.sleepingbeartradingcompany.com>

Consumer online store:

<http://www.SleepingBear.Biz>

Wholesale website: <http://www.sbtc.us>

**MBG**