

# Food



AT THE CHEF'S TABLE | PAGE 3

## Pork chops

The humble country-style rib gets some deserved attention from Sepia chef Andrew Zimmerman, whose slow-cooked meat sauce begs for second, and third, helpings.

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## Dynamic duo

Chocolate and wine don't easily complement each other, but when you find the right combination, it's bliss.

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## FOOD DETECTIVE



Black garlic looks funkier than it tastes. | COURTESY BRADFORD SMITH

# Garlic fades to black

BY LISA DONOVAN

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Trend-watchers say 2010 will be the year of black garlic.

Fermented, chewy and delicious by itself, this Korean creation is the very definition of the fifth taste, umami.

While marketing types say the aged garlic doesn't leave diners with stinky breath, it doesn't exactly leave you with a minty fresh feeling, either; think mushrooms simmered in beef broth.

Though aged garlic has been around for centuries in Asia, it has only been catching on with American chefs since 2004, when food scientist Scott Kim began marketing his brand of black garlic.

The buzz hit a fever pitch after popping up on "Iron Chef America" last year. Fans say antioxidant-rich black garlic is the next superfood behind blueberries and wild salmon.

The fermentation process changes the properties of the sugar and amino acids in a hard, white head of garlic, producing the melanoidin that turns the cloves black, while the peel remains a dirty white.

Jerome Bacle, chef at Courtright's restaurant in Willow Springs, says black garlic's complex flavors come from the month-long heat-curing process.

He's been cooking with it for a while now. He uses it in a snail and oyster champagne stew with almond tarragon butter, as well as in a fricassee paired with pan-seared venison.

"I use it most . . . as a garnish but the mild taste of it is excellent in stuffing, in a sauce or even in a salad," Bacle said in an e-mail.

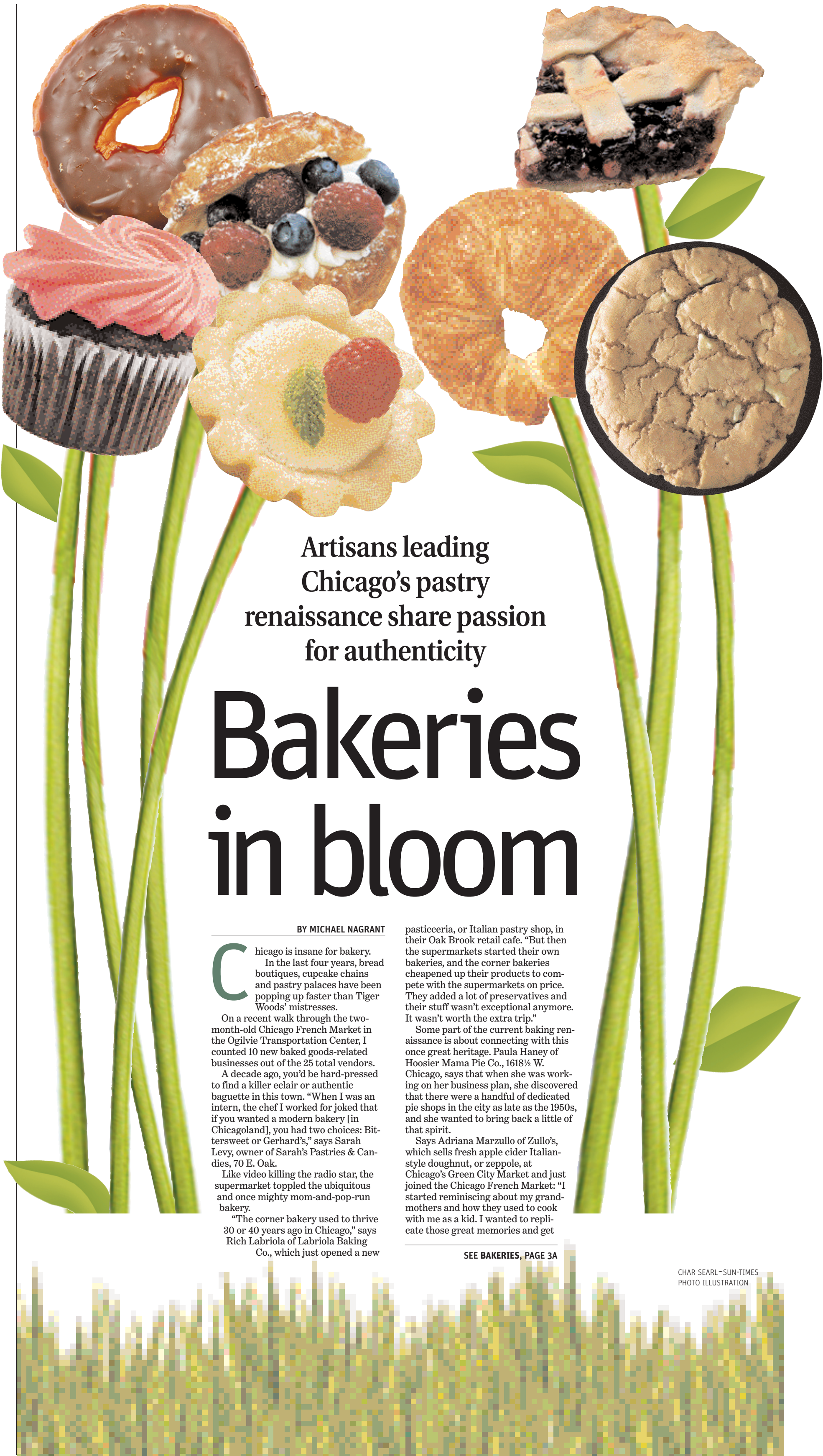
Bacle, like other chefs, says black garlic has sweet notes. He describes its flavor as mild with hints of garlic, dried black Mission figs and caramel.

Whole Foods and Sunset Foods stores carry the specialty garlic. At Sunset Foods, a package of two heads is \$13.99.

I sliced mine up and added it to a salad, and tried it mixed with hoisin, soy sauce and sesame oil as a marinade for pork tenderloin.

Wilbert Jones, a Chicago-based cookbook author and food product developer who worked for Kraft Foods for a decade, is writing a Southern breakfast and brunch cookbook that will include black garlic in some of the recipes.

"One of the recipes I was working on a couple years ago was a risotto, because that's when truffles were so hot. But, they're expensive," Jones says. "For people who can't afford the truffles, [black garlic] gives it the appearance of truffles with a nice taste."



Artisans leading  
Chicago's pastry  
renaissance share passion  
for authenticity

# Bakeries in bloom

BY MICHAEL NAGRANT

Chicago is insane for bakery. In the last four years, bread boutiques, cupcake chains and pastry palaces have been popping up faster than Tiger Woods' mistresses.

On a recent walk through the two-month-old Chicago French Market in the Ogilvie Transportation Center, I counted 10 new baked goods-related businesses out of the 25 total vendors.

A decade ago, you'd be hard-pressed to find a killer éclair or authentic baguette in this town. "When I was an intern, the chef I worked for joked that if you wanted a modern bakery [in Chicagoland], you had two choices: Bittersweet or Gerhard's," says Sarah Levy, owner of Sarah's Pastries & Candies, 70 E. Oak.

Like video killing the radio star, the supermarket toppled the ubiquitous and once mighty mom-and-pop-run bakery.

"The corner bakery used to thrive 30 or 40 years ago in Chicago," says Rich Labriola of Labriola Baking Co., which just opened a new

pasticceria, or Italian pastry shop, in their Oak Brook retail cafe. "But then the supermarkets started their own bakeries, and the corner bakeries cheapened up their products to compete with the supermarkets on price. They added a lot of preservatives and their stuff wasn't exceptional anymore. It wasn't worth the extra trip."

Some part of the current baking renaissance is about connecting with this once great heritage. Paula Haney of Hoosier Mama Pie Co., 1618½ W. Chicago, says that when she was working on her business plan, she discovered that there were a handful of dedicated pie shops in the city as late as the 1950s, and she wanted to bring back a little of that spirit.

Says Adriana Marzullo of Zullo's, which sells fresh apple cider Italian-style doughnut, or zeppole, at Chicago's Green City Market and just joined the Chicago French Market: "I started reminiscing about my grandmothers and how they used to cook with me as a kid. I wanted to replicate those great memories and get

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