

## Local Color

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Veg restaurant Cafe Flora in Seattle prints its commitment to local, mostly organic farmers right on the menu—and cooks up some amazing dishes with their produce



BY Mary Margaret Chappell

PHOTOGRAPHY Andrea Gómez

At Seattle's Cafe Flora, you don't just share a meal with fellow restaurant guests, you dine with Merv Dykstra, a Yakima Valley farmer; the Estrella family, who run a nearby creamery; and the growers at Rockridge Orchards and Full Circle Farm—to name just a few.

For over 17 years Cafe Flora's dedication to local growers has been so strong that the farms are an integral part of the menu. "We put all the farms on the menu with their locations," explains general manager Nat Stratton-Clarke, who goes to farmers' markets three times a week to buy provisions for the restaurant. "We take field trips to farms so the staff can see where the food is grown. They gain a connection to what they're cooking and serving, and so do our guests."

Stratton-Clarke and executive chef Janine Doran keep most of the provisions organic, or “as good as organic,” as Stratton-Clarke likes to refer to “old-time farmers who think policies that tell them what is and isn’t organic are ridiculous.”

Depending on local purveyors keeps things interesting. “There’s a huge element of surprise because you never know what you’re going to get, but I think that inspires the staff,” says Stratton-Clarke. Doran agrees: “It’s always creative. I find out what’s available, then develop dishes from there.”

To get a taste of what Cafe Flora is all about, give the following recipes a try using organic ingredients from your own area. Merv, the Estrellas, and the other Seattle-area farmers may not be able to join you-but they’ll be there in spirit.

Heirloom Tomato & Sweet Corn Pizzas

Lentil-Pecan Pâté

Yellow Beet and Asian Pear Salad (pictured)

Yakima Valley Polenta

Candy-Apple Coupes

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