

Southern Living®

MAY 2010

Inside:
SOUTH
CAROLINA
Living

Magical Hydrangeas

**GET THE MOST
GLORIOUS COLOR EVER**

Page 83

**PICNIC
SEASON!
POTATO
SALADS
WE LOVE**

**GLITZ & GRITS
AUSTIN & NASHVILLE
BEST INSIDERS' GUIDE**

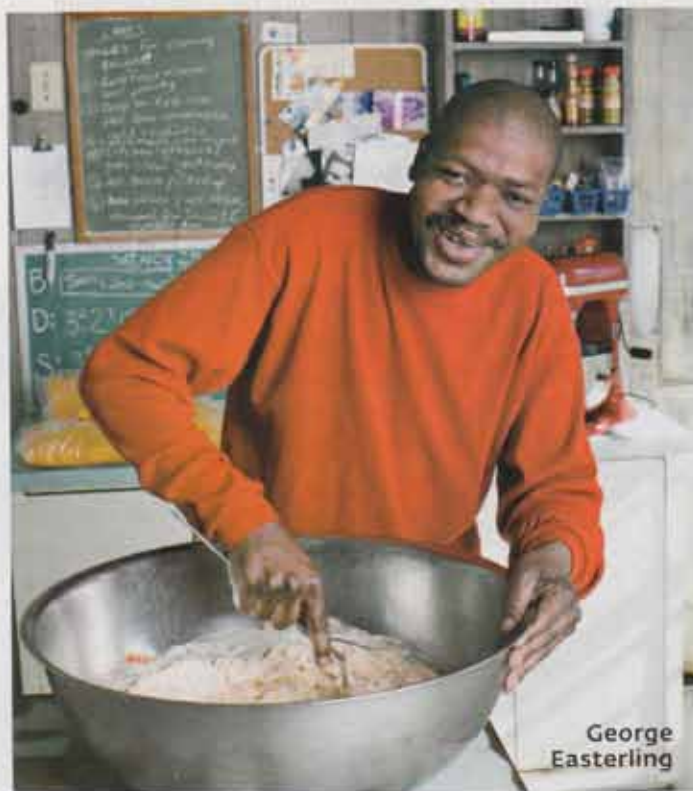
Plus: Quick & Easy
Favorites for the Grill

\$4.99US \$6.50CAN

05>



0 92567 10400 0



George
Easterling

Behind the Scenes With... Palmetto Cheese's George Easterling

A former boxer uses his strong arm and a guarded recipe to produce sought-after pimiento products.

BY BRYAN HUNTER

Fans of Palmetto Cheese, a secret-recipe pimiento cheese, say there's none other like it in the state—it's chunky, sharp-tasting, and definitely not pushed through an extruder in a factory. At least 600 units of the cheese are hand-blended each month by George Easterling, a former boxer and friend of company owners Sassy and Brian

FAMILY FUN in Charleston



PIRATES!

Swashbuckling fun aboard the CML Pirate Ship and seven other hands-on, interactive exhibits just for kids - only at the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry!

Jaw Dropping! Now Open!



Start planning your trip today!

For special discounts, family fun packages, daily programs and more:



www.exploreCML.org
(843) 853-8962



www.scaquarium.org
(843) 720-1990



Henry of Pawleys Island. His equipment includes a knife, a bowl, a spoon, and his strong arm for mixing in the kitchen of the Henrys' Sea View Inn. Over the past four years, Palmetto Cheese's popularity has skyrocketed—there's a Facebook fan page, and 550,000 containers were sold last year in eight Southeastern states. The Henrys have turned to Duke Sandwich Productions in Simpsonville to produce mass-market quantities of the cheese. George's batches are sold exclusively at Independent Seafood Company in Georgetown and donated to charity fund-raisers along the coast in original and jalapeño flavors. Here's a behind-the-scenes glimpse of George's process.

How do you whip up a batch of Palmetto Cheese?

"I start out by chopping everything by hand—the onions, the jalapeños, everything but the pimientos, which come already diced. I keep them all in the refrigerator until it's time to mix it up, so they stay cool and moist. I use a big metal spoon and a big stainless steel bowl, the biggest one in the kitchen. First, I put in the pimientos, the onions, the seasonings, and then the cream cheese; I add the Hellmann's Mayonnaise and whip it all up. The last thing I do is mix in the Cheddar cheese. And I package it all by hand the same day, so it's good and fresh."

How much cheese do you go through in a week?

"It comes in 5-pound bags, and I go through about 12 bags a week. So I use about 60 pounds of sharp Cheddar cheese a week." (TURN THE PAGE)



Adding the heat

BRING YOUR APPETITE
FOR A TASTE OF THE VISTA.



SAVE THE DATE:
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Join us in Columbia, South Carolina for Viva la Vista, a street fair and food festival all rolled into one delicious Saturday afternoon in Columbia's Arts and Entertainment district. Details and accommodations information available at: VivalavistaSC.com (after July 1).

COLUMBIA SC
FARMERS' MARKET





Measuring
the pimientos

What's the most critical step in the process?

"I can almost make it in the dark, but the key is the mixing. You don't want to hurry any part of it. You want to take your time and do it right. Then, when you're mixing each batch, you sight it out to make sure the consistency is just right. I can tell by looking at it when it's right. You don't want to over-mix it or it gets too mushy."

How do you put it in each of the plastic containers?

"I get my big spoon to scoop up the Palmetto Cheese and add it in there. I put it on the scale to make sure the weight is just right—I do that for each one. I've been doing it so long, though, that usually I can get it right on the money with one scoop. The

store wants it right then, just homemade and fresh."

What happened when Palmetto Cheese stepped up production?

"It got to be too much for me to mix it all by hand, so the Henrys decided to have it made by the sandwich company. The company got the recipe and tried making some, but they said mine still tasted better. Then they started doing it just like I do, except they have this special machine that mixes it up."

You're a former boxer—do people try to nudge you for the secret?

"No, not yet. They know better than to mess with me about it. And I sure hope they don't." ❦

To find George's batches of Palmetto Cheese: Independent Seafood Company, 1 Cannon Street, Georgetown, SC 29440; 843/546-6642. For a list of other stores that sell Palmetto Cheese, visit palmettocheese.com.

ANTIQUES ~ ART ~ HISTORY

one hour from Charleston, Hilton Head, and Savannah



Walterboro

The Front Porch of the Lowcountry

Welcome Center 843.538.4353

www.Walterboro.org



Buy the
cheese in
Georgetown.