

midwestliving.com

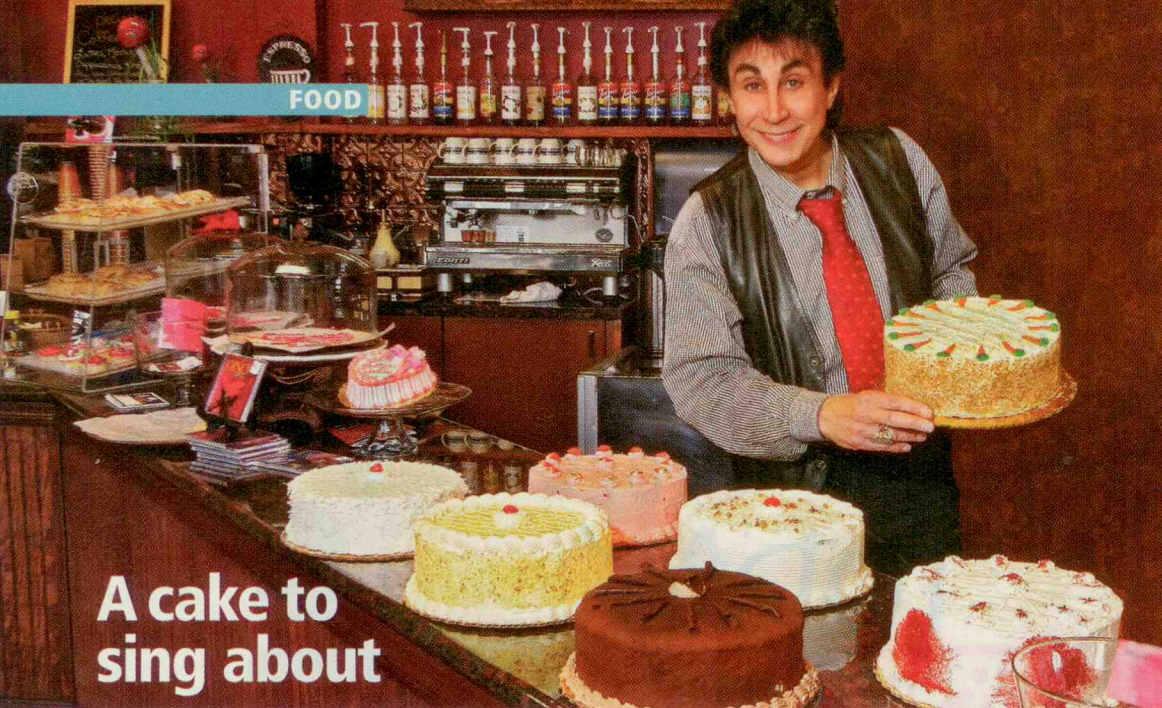
Midwest Living®

May/June 2010

STATE-
BY-
STATE
PARKS
GUIDE

WOW Weekends
Relaxing patios & porches
Great grilled sandwiches
Laid-back family lake resorts





A cake to sing about

There are no differences between making music and baking. They both bring love and warmth to the heart.

Dino Kartsonakis' flair at the piano packs Branson, Missouri, performance halls. But the lines at his 24 Karrot Cake Cafe in Branson and his bakery in Hollister prove he's no one-note performer.

The showman discovered his inner chef after a grueling rehearsal

drove him to the kitchen to bake and destress. Twelve cakes later, the 24 Karrot Cake was born.

Dino's wife (soprano co-star Cheryl) and friends (including Tony Orlando) tried his creation and agreed. "The consensus was I should sell the cake," Dino says.

He opened the bakery, then cafe—complete with a pair of chandeliers—and had an instant hit. His star cake features three layers of moist, carrot-loaded spiciness, filled and frosted with cream-cheese fluff, pecans on the sides and a crown of frosting carrots.

To mail-order any of his six cakes, other baked goods or music: 417/239-2822; 24karrot.com.

At every performance, I encourage people to discover their gift as I did with baking. Being creative and artistic is the key to reinventing yourself.

—Dino Kartsonakis

Olive oil 411
With bottles of amber olive oil jamming store shelves, how do you choose? Does "extra light" mean low-cal? U.S. olive oils fall into three categories. Nutritionally, they're identical: Extra light has the same calories and fat as regular olive oil and extra virgin. The difference is in the flavor and color. For more info, go to aboutliveoil.org.



Extra light

A whisper of olive-oil flavor makes this a good everyday alternative to cooking with vegetable oil.

Regular

With mild flavor and a hint of fruitiness, regular oil is ideal for use on roasted meats and in sauces.

Extra virgin

Save this robust, fruity oil for dipping bread and making salad dressings.

DON'T MISS: THREE TASTES WE LOVE

A little heat, a sweet and a fruit treat—three new Midwest flavors we had to share with you.



VULCAN'S FIRE SALT

The Spice House in Milwaukee and Chicago mixed this spicy-hot salt (\$3.28 for 1/2-cup jar) to add punch to popcorn, burgers and more (847/328-3711; thespicehouse.com).



KITCHEN SINK COOKIE

Jennifer Wisniewski of Milwaukee won Carol's Cookies' search for a new taste. Oatmeal, coconut, nuts and chocolate fill the cookie-of-the-month pick, \$205 per half year (847/831-4500; carolscookies.com).



JAMMYS CANDY

Cooks at American Spoon Foods in Michigan cook down plums, cherries and more to big fruitiness at \$21.95 for a 15-jammy box (888/735-6700; spoon.com).

PHOTOGRAPHS: (DINO) MARSHALL MEADOWS; (OLIVE OIL, FOODS) JAY WILDE