

# West Point Market, Springside join forces to recreate cheese spreads



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Folks longing for the taste of the former West Point Market's original cheese spreads can get their fill now, with the venerable market's original recipes for two of its spreads now being sold at the cafe at Springside Athletic Club in Bath Township.

Eight-ounce, resealable containers of Our Bar, made with cheddar and horse radish and The Other Spread, a garlic herb concoction, can be purchased there for \$8.99. They were two of West Point Market's most popular flavors that the upscale market used to sell in West Akron, said Rick Vernon, who was the market's third-generation owner.

The South of the Border spread is expected to be offered starting next week.

"We're talking old-school," said Vernon. "Those recipes were my dad's [Russ Vernon's] recipes."

In all, Russ Vernon had 35 cheese spread recipes. They were from among 350 recipes he developed for the former store, including baked goods, salads, entrees and sides.



Diana Bole, former cheese shop manager who worked at West Point Market for 30 years, has collaborated with Springside cafe operator Demi Boyazis to re-create the handmade cheese spreads, using the exacting standards of West Point's original recipes and sourcing the same ingredients. The development process for the spreads took about a month, with Springside first offering them for sale in December.

There are some trade secrets to making the spreads, Vernon said. "It's not just the recipe but how you make it with the preparation of it."

Selling homemade spreads in small batches is special, he said.

"The cheese spreads are a a lot of work. Not many people offer a good cheese spread — not homemade," Vernon said.

## **Fond memories of West Point Market**

The venerable family-owned grocery store closed in the Wallhaven area of Akron in 2015. A smaller location that followed was open in Fairlawn from 2016 to 2018.

"We've had requests all along to offer some of our West Point Market favorites," said Vernon, 60.

A new billboard in Montrose promoting Springside also has the West Point Market logo on it. Vernon is collaborating on the spreads with Springside owner Brian Steere, who has fond memories of West Point Market from growing up in West Akron.

"I grew up a big fan of West Point and particularly the spreads. The bar cheese was my favorite so that was the first one we tried to make," Steere said.

"With such an indelible impact West Point Market made on the Akron community, I was inspired and determined to revive the Akron icon's beloved classic recipes."

Steere is co-president and CFO at the family-owned Steere Enterprises in Tallmadge. His co-worker, COO Mark Stahl, is the son-in-law of Bole, who began working at West Point in the '80s.

It was Stahl and Boles who put Steere and Vernon in touch with each other.

"I would say that she [Boles] helped us perfect the cheese spreads," Steere said.

Vernon said Springside is selling all the spreads the cafe can make now and he and Steere will be ramping up production to meet demand.

## **Spreads also to be sold at Beau's Market & Deli**

Vernon, who helps to merchandise and market the spreads, also will sell them at Beau's Market & Deli in Copley, with production and packaging continuing to happen with Boyazis at Springside.

"I think it's great. It's the perfect spot," Vernon said of Beau's Market.

Next, Steere said, he and Vernon plan to offer some favorite West Point cookies, including thumb prints, chocolate chip and peanut butter; and prepared salads, including tuna, egg and chicken.

"We're hoping to get traffic from the outside" to the Springside cafe, he said. "There's sort of a plan to slowly release more recipes."

The spreads are sold during Springside Athletic Club hours, 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays and 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. weekends.

Steere and Vernon have also been talking about finding a bigger space to sell the West Point Market items in a prime retail location.

## **West Point Market brownies at Pandora Cupcakes**



In a separate business collaboration, Vernon has been offering the legendary West Point Market triple-layer brownies over the past three years, both retail and wholesale. The exclusive retailer for the brownies by the piece is Pandora Cupcakes in Montrose and Tallmadge.

They include the Original, Original No Nut, Birthday Cake Blondie, Bourbon Pecan, Butterscotch Blondie, Red Velvet Cream Cheese, Ruby Red Raspberry, Peanut Butter, Kona Kahlua, Fluffernutter and Pumpkin Pecan Blondie.

Vernon, who lives in Cleveland, bakes 300 to 400 brownies each week at the Montrose Pandora and also delivers them to the Tallmadge location.

"I sell as much as I can make," he said. "I come down here just about every day."

He also sells West Point Market brownie gift packs with eight varieties online at [wpmbrownies.com](http://wpmbrownies.com). Shipping is free and gift wrap and card are included. The former store's most popular brownie is not called a "Killer" brownie anymore, since another company trademarked the name.

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