

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is liberty" II COR. 3:17

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Tap into something sweet

CHEFS COLLABORATE WITH MAPLEWOOD FARM TO CREATE SIGNATURE SYRUPS

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For most folks, maple syrup is simply a tasty topping on their breakfast pancakes.

But for one Indiana producer — and some Chicago chefs — the simple, sweet syrup is getting a lot more complex.



Stephanie Izard of *Girl and the Goat* restaurant in Chicago.

Tim Burton of Burton's Maplewood Farm in Medora has been producing syrup on his Jackson County farm for four years. He began selling it at farmers markets, including Chicago's Green City Market, where chefs quickly discovered the artisan product. His syrup, also available in Indianapolis, is used in roughly two dozen Chicago-area restaurants.

Burton has also created aged, infused syrups. He's been making rum-, bourbon- and brandy-infused syrups for about a year, aging the syrup in barrels or casks formerly used for distilled spirits.

Now he's working with a handful of Chicago chefs who will create their own signature syrups.

For chef Stephanie Izard, of *Girl and the Goat* in Chicago's West Loop, it's a chance to create a distinctive product not available anywhere else.

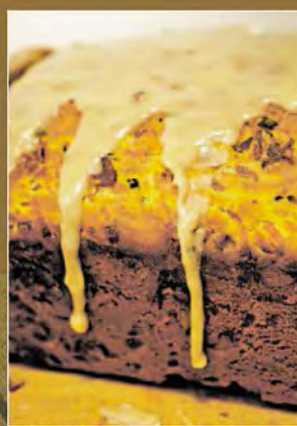
"We're always trying to learn about the product we're using and make it special in some way," said Izard, who won Season 4 of Bravo's "Top Chef" program. "The opportunity for each chef to put our flavor profile into the syrup is what's really got me excited about it."

Izard's syrup will be aged in barrels formerly used for her restaurant's red house wine. First, though, the syrup will be heated and spices added.

The chef wasn't sure last week which spices she would use, although favorite flavor combinations include pink peppercorns and red wine, bourbon and rosemary and such spices as cinnamon, nutmeg, fennel seed and star anise.

"It really sounds kind of awesome," said Izard, who also has used Burton's maple syrup for a special beer brewed for

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+ MAKE IT: See Page 4 for the recipe for **Maple Glazed Breakfast Bread.**

Sweet

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her at Haymarket Pub and Brewery in Chicago.

For Burton, offering chefs the chance to create a signature syrup has "opened up another world for us."

Chefs, he said, were quick to see the potential of creating their own distinctive syrups, and the concept has been well received. He hopes to reach out to chefs in Indianapolis and Louisville as well.

"It's a really cool collaboration," said Burton. "The excitement for me comes from seeing the excitement from the chefs. You can see the wheels turning in their heads."

Greg Biggers, executive chef at Cafe des Architectes in Hotel Sofitel Chicago Water Tower, has asked for smoked bourbon barrels in which to age his syrup, said Burton.

Other chefs collaborating with Burton on a signature syrup include Kevin Hickey, executive chef at Four Seasons Hotel Chicago; Mark Payne, executive chef of deca restaurant + bar at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago; and Paul Kahan, executive chef/partner at Avec, Big Star, Blackbird and The Publican, all in Chicago.

Burton doesn't really know what kinds of syrups the chefs will create.

"I just want to sit back and let the chef do his or her thing," he said. "I see my job as being kind of a referee, keeping them away from using similar flavors."

For Izard, having a signa-



2011 PHOTO PROVIDED BY NATIONAL MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Tim Burton, owner of *Burton's Maplewood Farm* in Medora, has been making artisan maple syrup for four years.

ture syrup will allow her to develop even more distinctive dishes.

"We use maple syrup in a lot of different sauces and dressings. It's all over the menu," she said. "I'd much rather use syrup to sweeten something than put in sugar."

Izard's custom syrup also will prove handy this sum-

mer when she opens *The Little Goat*, a diner-style restaurant, she said.

"We need syrup for a third of the menu," she said, "the whole breakfast side."

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