

Richmond Times-Dispatch

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Tuesday, October 20, 2009 |

Midlothian, VA 70° Feels Like: 70° Partly Cloudy

Say cheese! Sculpture wows Ukrop's patrons



MARK GORMUS/TIMES-DISPATCH

Shoppers were treated to unexpected artistry yesterday as Sarah Kaufmann, “the Cheese Lady,” carved a 325-pound round of Wisconsin cheddar at the Ukrop’s Chesterfield Towne Center store.

Text size: [small](#) | [medium](#) | [large](#)

By [PETER BACQUE](#)

Published: September 26, 2009

Recipe for marketing fun:

- Take one mammoth Cheddar cheese, 325 pounds.
- Add one Wisconsin-born artist.
- Garnish with white-and-black Holstein cow-patterned overalls (tail attached) and Cheese Head top hat (with sparkling highlights).
- Carve a bas-relief sculpture lightly in the cheese.

- Serve cool to an audience of warmly admiring customers.

Sarah Kaufmann, "the Cheese Lady," was creating her art at the Ukrop's Chesterfield Towne Center store yesterday, sculpting the big chunk of Cheddar into a light-hearted tribute to the harvest season.

Under her gloved hands, a cornucopia of apples, pumpkins, scarecrow and cheese emerged on the big orange-yellow cylinder.

"Fantastic, is it not?" said customer Walt Knight, a retired industrial consultant from Chesterfield County. "I think she's a very talented lady."

In the middle of the work, Kaufmann added the animating feature any sculpture worth its weight in curds needs to bring it to life: a portrait of the store's manager, Carmella Cramer.

"Have a taste, everybody," Kaufmann urged the customers surrounding her as she gently scraped away bits and curls and hunks of cheese.

A commercial artist by training, Kaufman, 57, worked for the Wisconsin dairy industry for 16 years.

"Cheese found me," the nationally recognized cheese sculptor said. "It's not that I said, 'I'll carve cheese.'"

As creative director for the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board -- her Richmond appearance's sponsor -- Kaufmann contributed her sculptures to national advertising and public-relations promotions for the state's dairy industry.

After moving to Ohio, Kaufmann became a freelance cheese carver in 1996. She has done a 120-pound Mickey Mouse, a 1,940-pound astronaut and a 6-foot-long University of Florida gator.

And the art of the cheese turned out to be just the thing to sell the Dairy State's renowned products.

"We believe fun and unique events like the mammoth Cheddar carving enhance the shopping experience for our customers," said Scott Aronson, Ukrop's vice president for marketing and analysis.

"It really is art," marveled Gregg Kalata yesterday as he watched Kaufmann work.

"I came up and sampled it," the Midlothian resident said, "and I definitely am going to buy some."

Contact Peter Bacqué at (804) 649-6813 or pbacque@timesdispatch.com.

Reader Reactions

Posted by (JayRob) on September 26, 2009 at 12:22 pm

what a cheesy promotion

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Posted by (beachwine) on September 26, 2009 at 9:17 am

Got to agree with hahaha. Why would you not show a picture of the sculpture???

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Posted by (wcast) on September 26, 2009 at 4:22 am

“G20 brought economy back from brink” Wrong (noticed I said wrong and not call it a lie!) They allowed it to happen. The everyday working person who continued with their daily lives keep it from a brink.

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Posted by (hahaha) on September 26, 2009 at 3:28 am

That cheese sculpture looks exactly like an old lady pushing a grocery cart!

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