



**Hrant Cetinyan
in the middle of
his work, selling
Armenian Velvet
paintings at the
New Castle
Farmers Market.**

Treasures at Farmers Market

by Nancy Turner

Winter may have painted the outdoors barren shades of white and gray but inside the New Castle Farmers Market, a spectrum of color awaits.

Whether it's J&B Pet Shop's teal green parakeets or the produce stand's baseball-sized lemons that catch your eye, or just the hundreds of weekend browsers, equally as colorful, anyone can have fun at the Farmers Market.

The New Castle Farmers Market traces its humble beginnings to little more than a parking lot where farmers in pick-up trucks brimming with home-grown produce congregated on weekends in the early 1950s to sell their wares.

Shortly, following the erection of a crude enclosure, the Farmers Market celebrated its grand opening on October 29, 1954, offering chicken for 25 cents a pound, roses at 49 cents a dozen and veal cutlet at 29 cents a pound.

Over the years, the Hares Corner landmark saw good times of prosperity and bad times of fire and decay; however, under the management of Steven Stein and ownership of 326 Incorporated, which began in 1983, the seven-acre property has gradually put on a more cheerful face.

"I'm very proud of the market," said Stein, "especially considering what it was when we got here. It would take us two hours to lock the place up at night with trying to find all the light switches and putting chains on the doors. Now it's bright, clean and cheerful, a family place. You can bring a date here for a lobster dinner or your in-laws from out of town."

He estimated that on a clear day, as many as 30,000 people have passed through the market during its 32-

hour weekend.

And yes, they are eating lobsters at Alex's Original Seafood and Barbeque, along with Alaskan King crab claws, spicy steamed shrimp and secret recipe clam chowder. Alex's has been a welcomed market attraction since 1956.

For one of the most refreshing treats in town, there's Chun Joo, a Korean juice bar, where healthful carrot and orange juice is fresh squeezed daily and the best non-alcoholic peach, strawberry, pineapple daiquiris are served with exotic fresh fruit salads.

The reliably good meats from Stoltzfus Foods are always a top take-home choice, but hungry landlubbers who can't wait that long will invariably sniff their way to Carusso's Restaurant, where billowing steam rises from a hot grill, piled high with onions, peppers and sausages.

Choosing dessert is a tough choice, with the Pennsylvania Dutch Shop, Donut Haven and Continental Pastries offering everything from frosted chocolate eclairs to homemade apple dumplings.

For those "born to shop," the 67 vendors of the Farmers Market sell everything from auto parts, furniture, knives, electronics and work clothes to brass, ceramics, wicker and human hair wigs to Rockports and Nike Airs (at J&L Shoes for \$15-\$20 below list price).

Afraid you'll miss a bargain? Better stop in to see Dr. P. Robin, a licensed optometrist, who will fit you with some brand new specs on the spot.

Some of the most unique vendors have been regular fixtures of the Farmers Market for many years.

Carl Rogers was cutting flat tops, ivy leaguers, and teddy bears when he opened his barber shop at the Market in 1957. Nowadays, some folks say that his shop is one of the few places in town where barbers

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really know how to cut the "latest styles," the styles sure to bring forth yuppie parenting pleas like, "Son, won't you consider leaving a little more on the back?"

Since 1957, while the price of a haircut was inching its way to \$4.50, Rogers' business grew to include four sons and enough barbers to pump a dozen hydraulic chairs but as tradition dictates, he and "the boys" never charge extra for "head tilts," Jeris tonic, or fishing stories.

At Discount Jewelry & Gifts, in business for over 15 years, owner Irv Perlman stocks 1000 watches from Timexs to Rolexes; gold chains, charms and earrings; antique and estate jewelry. He has about any kind of jewelry or watch that a per-may want . . . or guarantees he can find it. Think pure karat ice is nice? For a cool \$30 grand, Perlman can fix you up with a whopper of a diamond that would make Liz Taylor blush.

The Big H Health Food Store, owned by Larry and Bessie Kemp is a browser's heaven and one of among the most interesting shops in the market. In between aisles of vitamins, African folklore remedies, spell breakers and love potions, the most discriminating cooks can find whole fresh nutmeg, vanilla beans, colorful peppercorns, an extensive selection of Middle Eastern and Asian spices, sassafras and oolong teas.

The subtle aroma of 3 Sons

Smokeshope smells as good to a tobacco lover as Carusso's Italian sausage does to a dieter. The smokeshope carries over 200 custom blended pipe tobaccos and a variety of cigars with names like Partagas, Macanudo and Upmann.

For those who would rather stuff than puff, 3 Sons Smokeshope has Elephant Butts, Cumberland and Mammoth Cave Sweetened Twists like the ones that were enjoyed by Kentucky traders 200 years ago, and an array of snuffs.

In the spring, the parking lot of the New Castle Farmers Market is the weekend home for hundreds of bargaineers, barterers, backyard traders, craftspeople and attic cleaners, who rent spaces for \$12 per day.

As was true in the earliest years of the Market, farmers in pick-up trucks still faithfully return to sell their wares. They particularly shuck ears of tender sweet corn and neatly display heaping baskets of summer's red tomatoes and green beans, hoping to capture a glimpse and a few dollars from passers-by.

Angelo J. Defeo, from Penns Grove, N.J., has been selling parking lot produce for 30 years at the market. His silver queen corn is "so sweet, you don't have to cook it."

Not too long ago, he invented "Dreamer's Dressing," a \$3.50 tangy sweet blend of garlic and spices in 22-ounce bottles.

"I fell asleep and dreamed about it. That's how I made it," he proclaimed for the world to hear.

And after a glance from side to side, checking for takers, he continued, "You can marinade with it, put it on salads, it'll do just about anything!"

"It may get cloudy or it may get dark, but it will never spoil," he promised.

That's good. Like the Market itself, farmers and browsers will always come back.