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SOUTHERN MADE

Serving up Southern

By Linda Jerkins For the AJC

The proper accoutrement makes all the difference in the kitchen and at the table. Here are some options.

Carve appeal



CONTRIBUTED BY LINWOODCO.COM / KAELA RODEHORST PHOTOGRAPHY

Lin Babb doesn't use a pattern to create his curvy cutting boards. The self-taught wood carver lets the wood and its grain determine the shape of his stand-apart work.

The craftsman: Babb started wood carving about the same time he graduated from high school. After earning bachelor's and master's degrees, he taught high school physical education for 36 years. Babb retired in 2001 from teaching. But not from carving.

The company: Linwood Handcrafted is based in Central City, La., near Baton Rouge. Babb's daughter Mattie suggested they go into business together. He would craft the cutting boards. She would

develop the business and website. The family-owned company started in November.

The name: The artist/carpenter's middle name is Linwood. But he is called Lin.

The goods: One-of-a-kind, handcrafted cutting boards, cracker trays and serving trays (\$75 to \$300), depending on the size and shape. Also small spreading knives (\$25). The boards take about eight hours to make.

Materials: Walnut, cherry and cypress. Walnut is a customer favorite.

Where to buy: www.linwoodco.com. For a look at Babb's process, watch his video on the site. Also find out how to care for your board.

BEST OF THE SOUTH

Do you have favorite finds from around the South that you give as gifts, buy for your home or rave about to friends? If so, please send your suggestions to: ljerkins@gmail.com. Also find more Southern-made products, featured in the AJC, at Southernfinds.com on Facebook or [twitter@southernfinds1](https://twitter.com/southernfinds1).

Art on a platter



CONTRIBUTED BY WWW.GITTERGALLERY.COM

New Orleans native Doug Gitter is a passionate collector of contemporary American folk art, especially the colorful memory paintings of the late Clementine Hunter, a descendent of slaves. Gitter so admired Hunter's work that he was inspired to design and create a collection of hand-painted serving platters and bowls.

The founder: Gitter, president of Gitter Gallery in New Orleans, attended the University of Texas at Austin and Loyola School of Law.

Inspiration: The artwork of Clementine Hunter, the beloved Louisiana artist whose paintings captured everyday life, such as cotton and pecan picking, on Melrose Plantation, where she lived and worked until her death in 1988 at age 101. Gitter wanted to take Hunter's artwork and make it affordable so that others could enjoy a piece of American history.

The goods: The Clementine Hunter ceramic collection (\$120 to \$180) features 15 pieces, each depicting one of her paintings. Platters and bowls have distinct shapes and a textured surface. They are also food, microwave and dishwasher safe. Also available: Clementine Hunter giclee canvas art (\$250 to \$300). A portion of each purchase goes to the Hunter estate.

Best-sellers: The Cotton Mural platter (\$158), Cotton Picking bowl (\$158) and A Day at Melrose Plantation platter (\$148).

Other favorites: Pecan Picking plate (\$148), Baptism on Cane River platter (\$168) and the Cotton Vase (\$148). Since each piece is hand-painted, no two are alike.

Big break: Baptism on Cane River platter was chosen as one of Oprah's Favorite Things in 2013.

Where to buy: www.gittergallery.com

Heavy metal

Popular with Southern chefs, campers and home cooks, the cast iron skillet can be used for everything from fried chicken and catfish to cornbread and cobbler. Many of us have the humble, hand-me-down black skillets (I have two that belonged to my mother). But if you don't, order some new cast-iron cookware from Tennessee-based Lodge Manufacturing Co.

The company: Founded in 1896 by Joseph Lodge as the Blacklock Foundry in South Pittsburg, Tenn. After the foundry burned in 1906, the company was relocated about a mile and renamed Lodge Manufacturing Co. The family-owned-and-operated company is the only manufacturer of foundry-seasoned cast iron cookware in the United States.

The goods: More than 120 pieces of cast iron cookware, including skillets, griddles and Dutch ovens in various sizes, is made of equal parts pig iron and steel.

What's hot: The 12-inch cast iron skillet (\$37).

Other favorites: The 10 1/4-inch skillet (\$25), the 5-quart



CONTRIBUTED BY WWW.LODGEMFG.COM

Dutch oven (\$60) and Pro Grid Iron Reversible Griddle (\$75), a favorite with campers and tailgaters.

Where to buy: www.lodgemfg.com

GEAR

Stay dry in hoodie, keep dog in sight on hikes

Safety light gives you peace of mind without bothering your pet.

If you're a dog owner, you've probably experienced that horrible feeling when your furry friend disappears from sight. Ruffwear's The Beacon safety light can help put your mind at ease, as its super-bright LED light keeps Fido visible even in low-light conditions.

It clips right onto his collar (or any other Ruffwear-brand gear he's sporting) with two attachment options, and is lightweight and compact enough not to bother him. It's also watertight, so you don't have to worry about impromptu puddle splashing.

There are three light mode options to best suit your needs: slow flash, fast flash and constant light. (Some pups may be sensitive to the blinking op-



Ruffwear's The Beacon safety light helps you see your pet in low-light situations. SIMONE PADDOCK / EMERALD BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

tions, making the constant a popular choice.) The LED light is housed in a specially designed lens that helps distribute the light for better visibility.

Price is \$16.95. To purchase, visit Ruffwear.com.

Comfortable cold-weather protection

When you think of cold-weather protection, bulky parkas often come to mind. For adventurers who don't want to wear a sleeping bag with arms on their hikes, Sierra Designs' Men's Stretch DriDown Hoody offers the warmth of a down jacket with the light weight and mobility of a hoodie.

Made from 800 fill-power duck down insulation with a nylon blend spandex-woven shell that has a water-repellent coating, the DriDown Hoody is durable and ready for action.

This hoodie really masters the hood style. It actually sits flat against your back when not in use to accommodate packs, so there's no annoying bunching on the neck during hikes. The hood is toggle-free and fits just like it should on your head, too, with no pointy area at the top for wind to get in.



The DriDown Hoody offers the warmth of a down jacket with the light weight of a hoodie. MCT

To purchase or find a list of retailers, visit sierradesigns.com. Price is \$229.

Shelby Sheehan-Bernard, McClatchy-Tribune

Where can I find it?

By Sabine Morrow
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Q: Little European Bakery used to make the most delicious Russian black bread, a very dense bread with molasses. Do you know where I might purchase something close to this? — *W. Stephens, Brookhaven*

A: Check out aisle 20, in front of the Russian deli counter at Buford Highway Farmer's Market, 5600 Buford Highway, Doraville, 770-455-0770. You'll find two brands of Russian black bread made with molasses. Stolichniy and Karelskiy are both \$4.49, and each loaf weighs in at 28 ounces.

Q: I use corn puffs in a dessert item I sell at a local farmers market. For several weeks, I was able to find Harvest Road corn puffs, butter flavor, in a 10-ounce package for less than \$2 at Big Lots. Then they were no longer available. I can get Chester's butter flavor corn puffs, however, the bag is only 3 1/2 ounces and costs \$2. I would really like to use the Harvest Road brand but am unable to locate them anywhere. I have written to the company but they will not respond. I would be glad to purchase them by the case if you can find a place where I can order them. — *Kathy Perry, email*

A: I spoke to someone at Pretzels Inc., which produces Harvest Road puffs. Clearly, the company doesn't make it easy for fans to get their hands on the crunchy snacks. There is no way to order any items through the company website — or any other site, it seems. However, you should be able to stock up on Harvest Road puffs with a little bit of planning. Pretzel's Inc. ships an order to the Big Lots southern distribution center every other month. Big Lots are the only stores in the Atlanta area that sell your puffs. There's a shipment due before the end of the month, so you might want to buy all you can handle when they land at Big Lots.

Q: During a recent trip to Connecticut, my wife and I were introduced to cheddar cheese curds. I have not identified a local producer of these treats. Can you find them in metro Atlanta? — *Ed Ingram, email*

A: During the cheese-making process, the milk solids separate from the liquid whey, creating squeaky curds that have legions of fans, especially from the cheese capital of Wisconsin. Ideally, you would find the best curds near a cheese-making facility, since they're at their most flavorful eaten fresh. The freshest curds emit a squeak when you bite down on them. A stale curd remains silent. You can find cheese curds at DeKalb Farmers Market, 3000 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., Decatur, 404-377-6400. They're located near the prepared foods and pre-packaged dairy section, not with the artisan and imported cheeses adjoining the meat department.

Q: I have been trying to find Sahlen's Hot Dogs. Could you help me find them? — *Gary Teribury, Canton*

A: Sahlen's, a meat packing company based in Buffalo, N.Y., has been turning out a variety of meat products since 1869. While the company offers deli meats and sausages, the hot dogs seem to have die-hard fans that are willing to do almost anything to find their favorite franks. Locally, you can get your Sahlen's fresh off of a charcoal grill or pick up packages from the deli at Barkers Red Hots, 3000 Windy Hill Road, Marietta, 770-272-0407. A 1-pound package of seven Sahlen's original hot dogs costs \$7.49, and 5 pounds run \$26.99. The deli also offers Sahlen's jumbo all-beef red hots; 1 pound sells for \$8.59 and 5 pounds sets you back \$42.99 for the German-style frankfurters.

Having trouble finding a particular item? We'll try to help you locate it. Because of the volume of mail, we cannot track down every request. Write to us at Buyer's Edge Find It, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 223 Perimeter Center Parkway N.E., Atlanta, GA 30346; email sabinem.morrow@gmail.com (include your name, the city you live in and a daytime phone number).