

# Taste Cornucopia Organic Café

By Anissa Ljanta

Early this year local grapevines in Hawke's Bay were running hot with the news that iconic organic eatery, Taste Cornucopia, had changed hands. Local organic vegetable grower Terry Kelly heard that chef and owner James Beck wanted to sell and jumped at the chance.

"I believe in the need to offer customers food made from organic, fresh and locally sourced ingredients, so when I heard that James wanted to sell it, I jumped at the chance to negotiate with him, and here we are today!"

Taste Cornucopia is located on one of the main shopping streets in Hastings, right next door to the Cornucopia Organics store. There is no connection between the two other than the name and goodwill but the combination is a winning one, with many customers coming to pick up supplies then popping next door for a meal.

Regulars can rest easy. Passionate about organics and a member of the Soil & Health Association since the '90s, Terry is continuing the legacy of excellent food at Taste Cornucopia. There are a few changes in opening hours; most notably the café is now open on Saturdays during the day.

"We are a breakfast and lunch café, with lunches being our particularly busy time, given we are located in an area of professional offices and retailers. We offer a wide range of cabinet food, with a number of vegetarian dishes, and some vegan and gluten-free offerings. Our all-day menu consists of breakfast/brunch items, and



Above: Some of the luscious lunch offerings: salads, pizzas, fish pies and sausage rolls

we have special after-eleven dishes that change on a regular basis, depending on what produce is available. Most of our menu offerings can be prepared gluten free, and we include a number of vegetarian options."



Above: Some of the staff at Taste Cornucopia (left to right): chef Daniel, Terry, and the two friendly and talented baristas, Briar and Bronny.

## Brown rice and quinoa salad

Gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan

This salad is popular all year round at Taste Cornucopia. Some customers like it heated. It also works well as a base stuffing for stuffed veges. Experiment with different roasted veges to suit the season and your tastes. Taste Cornucopia sometimes includes potato, cauliflower, carrots and parsnips.

This makes about 8 cups of salad, enough to fill a 2-litre ice cream container (perfect for your contribution to a BBQ party!). It stores well in the fridge for 2-3 days.

- 4 cups cooked brown rice
- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup tamari
- 330 g pumpkin
- 1 medium kumara
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 10 g cumin seeds



1. Roast the kumara and pumpkin separately, with half the garlic and cumin seeds in each. Roast until just tender – some firmness is desirable.
2. Mix rice and quinoa together in large bowl.
3. Heat oil in a frypan and gently fry the pumpkin seeds (cover to prevent them popping all over the place!).
4. Add the tamari and remove from the heat, then add to the rice/quinoa mixture.
5. Add roasted veges to the bowl and mix all together.

Staff at Taste Cornucopia take pride in the quality of their coffees and teas – both Taste’s regular and decaf coffees are organic and supplied by Atomic; their teas are organic too. Taste also offers fresh juice and smoothies made in-house with organic vegetables and fruit. In the colder months Taste offers winter warmers such as lemon honey and ginger, and spiced apple.

Customers benefit hugely from Terry being an organic vegetable grower, as he is now able to supply much of the produce they use in the café. It doesn’t get much fresher or more local than that!

“We use organic ingredients whenever we can, unless they are prohibitively expensive, and we are trying to move to even greater use of organic ingredients. All of our fresh produce used at Taste is organic, our flours are organic, and most of our nuts and seeds are organic, but these do vary depending on availability,” says Terry. “Unfortunately, sometimes certain items are not available. I do have to make choices, and sometimes I choose not to offer something if we can’t source it organically. If we want to continue to offer a dish and we can’t get all organic ingredients for it, then we choose free range and local as our guide.”

It’s not just the food that is free of harmful chemicals at Taste. They only use environmentally friendly cleaners, recycled paper products and compostable takeaway containers. In Terry’s words: “We do our very best to avoid any nasties in our business.”

The chefs at Taste Cornucopia make everything from scratch in the kitchen, including all of their breads (except the gluten-free bread which they pop next door to the Cornucopia organics store to buy), desserts, condiments and sauces.

Terry has a long history with organics and healthy living, beginning in his university days in the US. While a lecturer at Massey University, he developed a paper on sustainable agriculture, which included a module on organic farming systems.

Passionate about organics, Terry loves to cook (he has cooked professionally in a past life), and had a thorough handover from outgoing owner and chef James Beck. Terry’s fresh perspective on the business is proving to be a healthy approach to continuing the success

of a much-loved local institution. One of Taste Cornucopia’s regular customers is Soil & Health Association co-chair, Marion Thomson, so it must be good! ☺

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### Taste Cornucopia

Open 7.30 am – 4 pm Mon-Fri and

8 am – 2 pm on Saturdays.

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