



## totally local food: Panzanella shortens the path from farm to table

you what you need when you need it," he adds. "It's something you don't get in other areas, which is why I think so many of our local restaurants use local produce."

McCloskey will often put in a couple of 18-hour days right before a Totally Local Dinner in order to "just switch gears and create an entirely different menu."

In addition to delivering great taste, food produced within a five-hour drive from the table also retains more nutrition, as nothing needs to be done to preserve it for travel. According to the Weaver Street Market Web site, buying from local, organic and sustainable farms "preserves the rural character of the land, inspires better farming, strengthens the local economy, reduces resource consumption, protects water resources and encourages a self-sufficient community."

In addition to treating the community to a great dinner series and supporting local farmers and producers, 10 percent of the restaurant sales from Totally Local Dinners benefit the Sustainable Agriculture Program offered by Central Carolina Community College in Pittsboro. The program focuses on better growing methods that renew resources. It also focuses on supporting the farming community by help-

ing owners develop the small business skills needed to manage a profitable, environmentally sound and community-based farm or agricultural business.

Panzanella and WSM are located in Carr Mill Mall in Carrboro. The grocery features healthy foods, organic produce and earth-friendly products and has a second location in Southern Village.

When the business started eight years ago, it was partially funded by a loan from the Self-Help Ventures Fund, a grant from the Town of Carrboro. The cooperative is owned and operated by its members, however, the public at large is welcome to shop and eat there. *Panzanella.com* 

### menu

Corn Crespella with Duck Salad, Red Cabbage Confit & Butternut Squash

Pork Loin Scaloppine with Blackberry-Merlot Sauce, Baked Corn Pudding & Roasted Patty Pan Squash

Panna Cotta with Peach Compote & Balsamic Syrup

**W**hat's special about the above dinner menu celebrating the late summer harvest? Everything in it was produced within a 250-mile radius of Carrboro. These dishes and 22 others were on the menu of a Totally Local Dinner at Panzanella, a restaurant that is part of the Weaver Street Market (WSM) cooperative. Even the beverage possibilities were local - the Carolina Brewery's Sky Blue Golden Ale, a Mt. Airy chardonnay, and Cup A Joe espresso were among the selections.

Panzanella Chef Peter McCloskey says that during the summer the menu is already about 80 percent local. The challenge is filling in the gaps to develop a menu that doesn't repeat itself. Totally Local

Dinners started about four years ago as an experiment. In 2005, the restaurant put three of these dinners and then alternated with special menus that feature a specific farm. All of Panzenella's specialty dinners are exceptionally popular with the community.

McCloskey says that each year Sandi Kronick at the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association produces an aggregate list of what local farmers will be growing and approximately how much. This helps him begin to plan the menus, but he also relies heavily on his relationships with local farmers. "The farmers, especially the ones at the Carrboro Farmers Market, are incredible," says McCloskey. "They really go out of their way to help restaurants - bringing



### Here's a sample of our local products:

Eastern Carolina Organics:  
Patty Pan Squash, Red Cabbage  
Romaine Lettuce

Peregrine Farm, Alamance  
County:  
Fresh flowers, Heirloom Tomatoes

Maple View Farm, Hillsborough:  
Milk, Butter, Ice Cream

Cane Creek Farm, Saxapahaw:  
Pork  
Sugar Baby Watermelon

Perrywinkle Farm, Chapel Hill:  
Leeks, Rose Potatoes, Banana  
Peppers

Celebrity Dairy, Siler City:  
Goat Cheese