

[As published in EDIBLE TWIN CITIES: March/April 2014]

Dry Aging Helps Re-invent Distinctive 'Old World' Flavors

Dry aged meat has to be the ultimate slow food.

That's how Thea Lopatka describes what home dry aging and dry curing products make possible. And, she's probably right. Branded under the name UMAi Dry® (pronounced "oo-my"), these kits enable meat aficionados to craft charcuterie or the perfect dry-aged steak in their own kitchen.

Lopatka, founder of Minneapolis-based DrybagSteak, LLC, and her business partner Igor Pilko, CEO, have developed products for home dry aging of meats that folks will find manageable, safe, and affordable. And the results are genuinely delicious.

Lopatka initially launched UMAi DrybagSteak to allow steak connoisseurs to create custom dry-aged steak at home. UMAi Dry is a special, moisture-permeable material that allows meat to release moisture in any household refrigerator or restaurant cooler without the worry and mess of odors or off flavors. The company's website made the product available to anyone and she soon found herself sending these kits internationally. These days, UMAi Dry has customers in over 70 countries.

You've never tasted a steak so tender and intensely flavored, with the characteristic nuttiness and umami that only dry aging makes possible. As Lopatka says, this process "re-captures or retrieves how steaks used to taste back before everything got shipped and wet-aged in plastic bags."

Within the last few years, the company added UMAi Charcuterie, which allows anyone to craft traditional dry-cured artisan meats in their own refrigerator, including cured meats such as capicola, pancetta, prosciuttini, prosciutto, and others. "This is a great way for you to create the artisan flavors you thought only came from Italy," Lopatka says.

The company's newest product, UMAi Salumi is designed for creating fermented dry sausage in your own refrigerator. This kit lets you make salami, Spanish chorizo, pepperoni, soppressata, soudjouk, and other dry sausages all in the comfort of your refrigerator.

DrybagSteak, LLC has also always found an enthusiastic following for its products from commercial food sources such as restaurant chefs and meat processors. Recently, UMAi Dry received a Product Innovation of the Year Award from the National Restaurant Association.

You will find UMAi Dry online: www.umaidry.com.



Creating Tradition at Home SM

Dry Aging and Dry Curing made easy, in the comfort of your home refrigerator. www.umaidry.com