

Ohio Icon

By DAMAINE VONADA

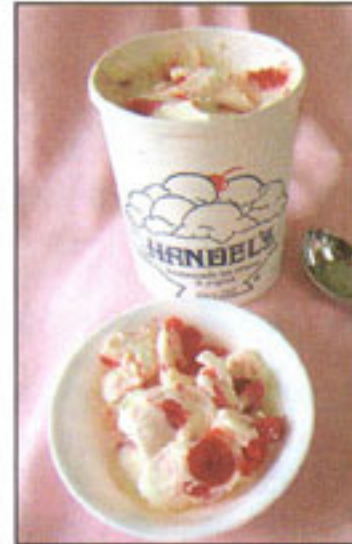
Handel's Homemade Ice Cream & Yogurt

Youngstown and beyond

Just by looking at it, you can tell that Handel's ice cream is something special. Handel's cherry vanilla is riddled with succulent maraschinos the size of a quarter. Every bite of chocolate pecan yields a bonanza of big, beautiful, butter-roasted pecans, and Handel's Buckeye ice cream practically bursts with chocolate and peanut butter candies.

Never skimping is a 60-year-old tradition at Youngstown-based Handel's that began with the company's founder. In 1945, Alice Handel started making ice cream from her own recipes and selling it at a gasoline station her husband owned in Youngstown. Initially lacing the ice cream with strawberries that she grew in her backyard, Mrs. Handel made ice cream only one batch at a time, and because it always was so fresh, her product had a remarkably soft and smooth texture that the locals absolutely loved. By the 1980s, in fact, Mrs. Handel's little ice cream stand had become such a Youngstown institution that the mayor gave her the keys to the city and rechristened the alley where it's located "Handel Court."

Before she passed away, Mrs. Handel sold her business to Leonard Fisher, who not only has been a caretaker of her high standards but also expanded the number of Handel's ice cream stores. In addition to Mrs. Handel's original stand in Youngstown, the company now has



about 30 franchises in Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania, and this year, it expects to add two new locations in Virginia Beach and Upland, CA.

The window-service-only stores are open year round, and true to

Mrs. Handel's methods, each makes its own ice cream in small batches every day. The ice cream's silken consistency and oodles of fine ingredients continues to be an irresistible combination, attracting devotees ranging from the newest generation of Youngstowners to entertainers such as Bill Cosby, who routinely has quarts of Handel's shipped directly to his door. □

Handel's Homemade Ice Cream & Yogurt, corporate office at 3830 Starr Centre Dr., Canfield, OH 44406; 330-702-8270. Original ice cream stand located at 3931 Handel's Court (near the corner of Market and Midlothian), Youngstown, OH 44511; 330-788-0356. For additional information about Handel's flavors, locations, and how to order ice cream online, visit website www.handelsicecream.com.