

scene

## Here's the Scoop!

A PEOPLE panel gives America's hometown ice creams the sweet test and names the very best

### THE JUDGES

#### Daryl Sabara & Alexa Vega

Now starring as the intrepid Cortez sibs in the summer hit *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over*, Miami-born Vega, 15, and Californian Sabara, 11, were a study in ice cream tasting contrasts: She took dainty bites and deliberated for minutes before rendering a judgment; he devoured each and every helping. "To me, all the ice creams we sampled were like, yeah!" says Daryl. To which his big-screen sis replied, "If it's edible, he likes it."



#### Rocco DiSpirito

For Manhattan chef DiSpirito, 36, star of the NBC reality show *The Restaurant*, no taste sensation beats ice cream done right. "When you're licking the cone and closing your eyes, it can take you back to your childhood," he says.



#### Jane and Michael Stern

The Sterns—authors of more than a dozen books on all-American cuisine and the Roadfood column in *Gourmet* magazine—know their scoops. Michael's frozen favorite is ginger-flavored. "I'd have it at my last supper," he says.



#### Tom Palchak

Palchak, 45, who oversees the production of 225,000 gallons of ice cream a year at Penn State University Creamery in State College, Pa., has learned to indulge in moderation. "Ice cream is a treat, not a meal replacement," he says.

#### Homer Simpson

Son Bart advised close supervision when we tapped Homer, 39, for our panel. "Dad thought the holiday gingerbread-house competition was a gingerbread *eating* competition," says Bart. "It took six cops to bring him in."



scene



### THE COMPETITION

After PEOPLE correspondents across the country nominated their favorite local ice creams, we picked 16 finalists and sent them to our panelists for judging. Then a select group of hungry staffers at our New York City offices conducted identical tests, and their votes were averaged to count as a single vote on the panel. The hotly contested results at right are out of a possible top score of five scoops.

#### HANDEL'S HOMEMADE ICE CREAM

Youngstown, Ohio  
330-788-0356

#### CHOCOLATE PECAN

"The crunch makes it stand out," says Alexa. Palchak lauds the "smooth, creamy" texture and the "nice pecan inclusion."

**SPRINKLES OF PALM BEACH**  
Palm Beach, Fla.  
561-659-1140

#### TRIPLE CHOCOLATE SUPREME

Our top-scoring treat. "When you need to mainline ice cream or break your diet," says Jane Stern, "this would be the call."



**BONNIE BRAE ICE CREAM**  
Denver  
303-777-0808

#### VANILLA

Jane Stern found it to be "like white satin, lovely and rich." Palchak, on the other hand, marked it down for "weak body."



**AMY'S ICE CREAMS**  
Austin, Texas  
512-458-6895

#### KALEIDESCAPE

"Mmmm," says Daryl of this cherry-cocoa combo from a store he loved visiting while filming *Spy Kids* in Texas.



**ORIGINAL PAINTER'S HOMEMADE ICE CREAM**  
North Myrtle Beach, S.C.  
843-272-6934

#### BLACK CHERRY

"Not bad," says Penn State's Palchak, but one finicky PEOPLE editor deemed it "straight from the supermarket."



**BASSETTS ICE CREAM COMPANY**  
Philadelphia  
215-864-2771

#### VANILLA

"I'm a real sucker for the flecks of vanilla. You can taste the nuggets," says Jane Stern. But Palchak called the texture "gummy."



**FOUR SEAS ICE CREAM**  
Centerville, Mass.  
508-775-1394

#### CHIP CHOCOLATE

Palchak praised the ice cream's "nice all-around flavor" but subtracted points for this Cape Cod favorite's "slightly coarse" consistency.



**DAVE AND ANDY'S HOMEMADE ICE CREAM**  
Pittsburgh  
412-681-9906

#### GOLDEN ALE ESPRESSO CHIP

An acquired taste, apparently. One PEOPLE writer called it "criminal"; Alexa was diplomatic: "It's different."



**TILLAMOOK COUNTY CREAMERY ASSOCIATION**  
Tillamook, Ore.  
503-815-1300

#### CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER

Simpson loved the flavor combo: "What's the catch? Do I have to sell my soul to PEOPLE magazine? Deal."



**MITCHELL'S ICE CREAM**  
San Francisco  
415-648-2300

#### CANTALOUPE

This exotic flavor struck some judges as, well, weird. *Spy Kid* Daryl couldn't ID the flavor—"Is it orange?"—but Alexa decreed it one of her favorites.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: CRAIG DEGENSTO; THE SIMPSONS TM AND © 1997 CENTURY FOX FILM PRODUCTION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. SCOTT JAMES JR.

PHOTO: JAMES