



*Midwesterner*

# SALUMI WITH A MIDWESTERN PEDIGREE

**Chris and Mollie Eley draw on the flavors of Indiana and the greater Midwest at Indianapolis's Smoking Goose Meatery.**

You'll see spruce tips in the bresaola, local mead in the stagberry salame, and local maple sugar in the bacon rub. We caught up with Chris to talk about what he's done at the Meatery, a small-batch butcher shop with a growing national audience, since he opened it as a sequel to his popular Goose the Market in 2011.

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## **Do you consider your charcuterie *Midwestern*?**

From the beginning, we've taken the playbook of the Italians, and even the French, of using what is specific to the area. Take soppressata. It can have so many different styles and flavor profiles in Italy, depending on where you are. It's like a dialect of a language that changes throughout the country. That's always been our philosophy, too. We go to the market or forage and see great things. Why not use those things before we source something from elsewhere?

## **What are some of the local ingredients you like to use?**

I like using honey, maple syrup, and hickory syrup. I love all the mushrooms we can get. We dry them and use them in sausages and salami. We forage for spruce tips and juniper berries, which have an immensely different flavor than what you get in a spice container. They're more floral and not as dry or spicy. Indiana is known for persimmons, and we make our South Cider Salame with persimmons and [Indianapolis-made] New Day cider. I look for artisan producers that have similar values and make high quality products, so we also use beers from Sun King Brewing and 3 Floyds Brewing and spirits from 8th Day Distillery, which is around the corner from us. It's not that we have to use things from the Midwest, but we have things that are really good here. If our juniper berries weren't the best, we wouldn't use them.

## **Are your meats local, too?**

80% of our meat comes from Indiana. Our two main producers are Gunthorp Farms in LaGrange and Fischer Farms in Jasper. We get Wagyu beef from Ohio, and also occasionally get meat from smaller producers in Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri. Indiana is the largest duck-producing state in the country, but it's one of the lowest consumed proteins here, so most of it gets exported. I've always been a big fan of duck. We get some from Gunthorp, though they are no longer going to raise them, and others from New York, since they are large and the right size for our prosciutto—so it dries nice and even and slow. We are working on a duck and paw paw snack stick that I think is really cool. Paw paw, which grow in Indiana, adds a texture and sweetness that's very similar to mango.

## **Beyond local and regional ingredients, how does the Midwest express itself in your charcuterie?**

It starts with the animals—how they're raised on pasture, what they're fed. Hogs go through seasonal changes on pasture. Their fat content and marbling change. The environment has a huge effect on how the charcuterie turns out, too. We go through very dry periods and very humid periods, which produces a different style of flora in our salami. If you took our recipes and made them in an arid climate, they would not taste the same. There's even that variability in our products throughout the year. Sometimes it works in our favor, and sometimes we have to work with it. The influences of terroir change the product. I like that hand-produced items are inconsistent and not as uniform. Just like wine, our charcuterie can taste different at different times, even if the recipe and everything else is the same.