

Treasured Artist Doris Clearwater

Fresh Fudge...The Art and Science in Grandma's Kitchen

by Mary Ann Ebner

Doris Clearwater keeps the old-fashioned in Grandma and the art and science of perfection in her kitchen. Born and raised on Jones Farm in Cornwall, NY., Grandma Doris still puts in an honest day's work on the farm – in its country store kitchen.

The store is called *Grandma Phoebe's Kitchen*, named after Doris' grandmother, Phoebe Tuthill Jones, but it's Grandma Doris everyone can thank for the farm's fudge and baked goods. In 1994, the family renovated the store and kitchen. And added the fudge. Soon after, they expanded their array of temptations with fresh doughnuts, cookies, and home-baked pies.

"We bake the old fashioned way," Grandma Doris said, "as you would do it in your own kitchen 50 years ago. I'll be 80 in August, and proud of it."

Grandma's age isn't slowing her down. One of her main priorities is ensuring that the fudge counter is fully stocked. From seven to seven, she works, creating fresh fudge and baked goods, taste testing in the kitchen and assisting customers. She loves her customers to help sample new flavors, and there's always Grandpa, Belding "Pete" Clearwater, to help taste the assortment.

"I'm the quality control person," Grandpa said as he tried to reach around Grandma to sample the store's bestseller – chocolate. Nothing tops the chocolate fudge, but on any given day, Grandma's Kitchen offers at least two dozen flavors, from maple to chewy praline. And seasonal favorites like



raspberry and orange cream make the list in spring and summer. Grandma also molds the fudge for special occasions. Chocolate, maple, and vanilla bunnies jump off the shelves every spring.

"I was a cookie person when my kids were growing up," Grandma Doris said. "I would bake one day a week. We raised three boys and when they came home from school, they ate homemade cookies. Never store-bought."

And Grandma insists that there's no better way to keep a community happy than to offer something freshly prepared. The Jones Farm tradition blends beauty with exactness. Their creations must taste as good as they look.

"There's no such thing as a bad batch because we measure everything," Grandma said. With her helpers in the kitchen, Grandma perfectly primes each pan of fudge. Side by side with her son, David Clearwater, they take pride in making the fudge and perpetuating the family farm business.

"It takes 24 hours from the mixing to being able to cut the fudge for customers," David said. "It has to be exact."

With her family living all around Jones Farm, Grandma nurtures them through the pleasure of country sweets. But she sees a lot of children who have no grandparents or who live miles away from any relatives.

"I'm the adopted grandmother to all the kids," Grandma said.

"Even the young people who work here call me Grandma."

If there's an art to earning praise from the masses, this Grandma excels at it, admittedly with the added allure of a little butter, sugar, and chocolate!

A little visitor walked by the fudge counter with his father and admired the double chocolate fudge, just ready for sampling. But not so fast, with Grandma in charge. She asked for the magic word and smiled when she heard "Please!"

"Grandma asks all the kids what the magic word is, before they get to taste the fudge," David said. They soon add their "pleases" and "thank yous" and dust off their manners. "She can get away with that because she's Grandma."

Grandma Phoebe's Kitchen is located at Jones Farm, 190 Angola Road, Cornwall, NY. 845-534-4445. The store is open from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Fresh Fudge Favorites:

AMARETTO CHOCOLATE SWIRL, CHEWY PRALINE, CHOCOLATE, DOUBLE CHOCOLATE, ORANGE CREAM, MAPLE, MAPLE NUT, MILK CHOCOLATE MINT, CHOCOLATE SWIRL, PEANUT BUTTER, CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY, RUM RAISIN, CHOCOLATE TIGER, BUTTER VANILLA, VANILLA WALNUT