

SWEET!

Sugary Treats, the South American Way

A Uruguayan native is bringing artisan dulce de leche and other indulgences to the county. **By Brian Kluepfel**

Although it's said that dulce de leche is an historical accident — the cook of an Argentine nobleman left the *lechada* (dessert milk) to boil too long, resulting in a creamy paste — when Cristina Lopez Goldstein prepares hers, nothing's left to chance. The Uruguayan-born chef, who launched Christine Organic Confections in a Buchanan factory in February 2016, watches over the evaporating dairy-sugar mixture like a cat on a bird, spoon in hand,

Christine Organic Confections
www.christtine.com

and when the moment's right, out it comes, sticky and golden brown. "Patience and perseverance!" she preaches.

Often compared to caramel, dulce de leche is both creamier and less sweet than its confectionary cousin. To South Americans, it's a jar of Heaven, to be treasured any time of day, and Lopez Goldstein revels in the memory of merry *meriendas* — afternoon teas featuring dollops of dulce de leche between thin crêpes, bananas, or oranges to be dipped and dunked, or spoonful secretly sequestered directly into the mouth.

Lopez Goldstein is a culinary double threat, also producing fluffy *alfajores*, a delicate, crumble-in-your-finger "alpha-cookie" filled with fruit jams or — you guessed it — dulce de leche and dusted with powdered sugar and coconut,



sometimes decadently dipped in dark or milk chocolate.

"I like mine with coffee, for the contrast," she says. "But some prefer them with wine. Who am I to argue?"

Lopez Goldstein carries on a paternal pastry process from her

Spanish grandfather, whose breads won over an international crowd at the famed Uruguayan beach resort of Punta del Este. "My grandfather was the master baker, and my mom and dad met working for him!" says Lopez. "I learned from them how to tell if the dough was good with just

An avalanche of *alfajores*, in dark chocolate, *maizena* (rolled in coconut), and white chocolate; pastry chef Cristina Lopez Goldstein