



# CAPE ANN

North of Boston Living



One of the secrets Sea Street Soup owners reveal about their recipes is that each vegetable is cooked in its own pot, so as not to mix the flavors.



Catherine Steinhoff, left, and Kathy Hines make homemade soups with fresh ingredients from their gardens and bring them home to customers.

# STOCK OPTIONS

Manchester duo  
delivers savory  
soups from their  
kitchen to yours

*Story and Photos By* JULIA BISHOP



Cream of watercress and leek soup.

**F**For two years, Catherine Steinhoff worked alone, making homemade quarts of delicious soup in her kitchen on Sea Street in Manchester-by-the-Sea, for delivery to friends and family just in time for dinner.

These people so loved her recipes featuring ingredients like butternut squash, heirloom tomatoes and fresh herbs from her garden that she soon became overwhelmed by the influx of orders for more.

Help was nearby, however, in the form of next-door-neighbor Kathy Hines. And since this past Labor Day, the two have teamed up in a new professional kitchen in Danvers, where they are busy at work filling orders for their business, Sea Street Soups.

The business operates through the website [seastreetsoups.com](http://seastreetsoups.com), where Steinhoff and Hines offer a menu from which customers place orders for delivery.

Each week, the two decide upon two soups to offer: The first week in October, for instance, the choices were Black Bean and Roasted Butternut Squash. Then they provide specifics. For example, Steinhoff notes on the site that their bacon contains no hormones or antibiotics, along with the fact that beans are high in valuable proteins. The list of ingredients is posted, too, as is nutritional information.

Along with the soup, they deliver bread and chocolate chip cookies, purchased from Alexandra's Bakery on Main Street in Gloucester.

The deadline for ordering is Monday morning, but by Sunday they have their grocery list in hand and are ready to head out of the kitchen to start traveling. From Gloucester to Newbury to Marblehead, and back to Essex, >



Catherine Steinhoff, front, and Kathy Hines make chicken stock at Sea Street Soups.

Rowley and Ipswich, the GPS systems in both cars are put to good use locating farm stands and other venues for acquiring ingredients.

Their main source of produce is Tendercrop Farm in Newbury, where everything from homemade sausages to French lentils, and sweet onions to flavorful basil can be found.

Since September, their orders have increased by 20 percent each week.

For Steinhoff, the business is a natural. From as far back as she can remember, she found great comfort in preparing food for large crowds.

“Making a special meal was always a way my family showed they loved you,” she said. “I guess it is no surprise I continue with this theme in my home and now in the soup business.”

As a 10-year-old, Steinhoff remembers calling in the hay balers on her grandparents’ farm in Ohio for a warm meal. After her grandmother and mother ladled the beef barley soup into their bowls, Steinhoff watched the men gulp it down along with biscuits.

Years later in 2000, while living in Toronto with her family, Steinhoff’s memories of her favorite childhood soups came

flashing back to her during a visit to the specialty grocers in her new hometown.

Red, green and orange soups were stacked in neat rows calling out to customers, promising both taste and nutrition. She found it heartwarming to see the glass jars so carefully displayed in the market’s coolers. And she quickly made them part of her family’s regular menu.

“Buying these soups started as an impulse item and quickly became a healthy staple in our house,” said Steinhoff, who along with her husband, Wayne, has raised three children.

Her dream of making soups to ➤

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CATHERINE STEINHOFF

## SEA STREET SOUPS

► **Owners:** Kathy Hines and Catherine Steinhoff, both of Manchester-by-the-Sea.

► **Services:** Delivers freshly made soup to your home. Must order online by Monday at 10 a.m. for Wednesday and Thursday delivery anywhere on Cape Ann, and beyond for new customers. Soup also can be picked up at Harrigan’s Liquor Store in Beverly Farms, Hamilton and Manchester. Harrigan’s will pair a bottle of wine to the soup.

► **Prices:** \$10/quart; \$6/pint.

► **Bread and cookies:** Alexandra’s Bread in Gloucester bakes for Sea Street Soups.

► **On the Web:** [seastreetsoups.com](http://seastreetsoups.com); e-mail [soups@seastreetsoups.com](mailto:soups@seastreetsoups.com).

► **Telephone:** 978-500-4991.

“MY GRANDMOTHER  
ROSE CANNED ALL  
HER OWN VEGETABLES  
AND BAKED HER  
OWN BREAD IN  
PREPARATION FOR  
OUR FAMILY GET  
TOGETHER. I HOPE  
I AM BRINGING THIS  
TRADITION FULL  
CIRCLE FOR MY  
CUSTOMERS.”

KATHY HINES

share with friends and neighbors quietly simmered, until she moved to the North Shore in 2006. Desperate for the quarts of soup she so enjoyed in Toronto, she took out her own stock pots and started dicing vegetables, browning meat and searing shrimp.

With her grandmother's favorite chicken noodle recipe, she created her signature soup, adding her own herbs and vegetables in line with her mission to extend the farm to the table into December.

“We make what is fresh for as long as the local farmer's markets can supply ingredients,” she said. “Then we make winter hearty soups. We still use organic vegetables when they are available.”

Hines, who with husband, Brian, has three boys, is not so much different than her business partner.

By the time she was a teenager, Hines' father had given up his job in corporate America, moved his family to Vermont and bought a restaurant, Penelope's.

Hines said she uses her mother's soup recipes and credits her mom for infusing her with the entrepreneurial spirit. Yet she insists that it was her grandmother's pre-holiday gathering that drew her into the soup world.

Each Wednesday before Thanksgiving, while her grandmother stood over the stove making a pot of chili for 50 people, Hines remained as close by as possible, the pot simmering. Her job was to bring the canned tomatoes to her grandmother's kitchen counter.

“My grandmother Rose canned all ➤

her own vegetables and baked her own bread in preparation for our family get together,” she said. “I hope I am bringing this tradition full circle for my customers and their families.”

Coming up with new soups that their grandmothers never dreamed of adds to the creativity at Sea Street Soups, they both say. Customer favorites include Thai Chicken with Lemongrass and Watermelon Gazpacho.

They are proud of their homemade stock – “liquid gold,” Steinhoff calls it.

Hines recommends adding half a cup of vinegar to each pot to leach out minerals and give the soup flavor.

And another secret? Each vegetable is cooked in its own pot, so as not to mix flavors. Sugar pumpkins are baked in their own oven, too. And Steinhoff says that her favorite part of the day is when she slices the freshly baked sweet potatoes with her paring knife and the flavorful aroma escapes into the kitchen.

They repeatedly hear from customers that Wednesday night has become soup night in their house, and that makes Hines and Steinhoff feel that their mission is being accomplished.

They know what it's like to want to get out for a run while needing to juggle work, picking up the kids and worrying about dinner. And they feel that they are providing a service that actually allows people to accomplish all of their responsibilities with time left over for fulfilling desires, as well as encouraging modern families to sit down and connect at dinner.

“A hearty soup makes a kid real happy on a blustery fall day,” said Hines, whose sons are ages 17, 19 and 21.

But it's not just the children who love the soup, not by any stretch. Each week, in fact, at the top of Steinhoff's to-do list is delivery to her 103-year-old friend in Newbury.

“I love when Catherine shares her soup,” said Ray Poor, who holds the title of oldest resident of his community. “I spend the week eating Meals-on-Wheels and it is a fun and tasty surprise to see what is coming from the kitchen each week.”

Their vision for the future is to stock the coolers of specialty grocers with colorful concoctions from Sea Street Soups.

“We love the entire process,” Steinhoff said. “Buying healthy ingredients, blending the flavors into a special recipe and delivering a savory meal to your home.” 