

Upscale popcorn a worthy splurge

THEATER POPCORN is good, but send that popcorn through a caramel bath and dust it with a little Fleur de Sel — or replace the butter and salt with truffle oil and truffle salt — and you have a popcorn that's not just good. It's hoardable.

Who does that to popcorn? Glad you asked. It's a small San Francisco-based company called **479 Popcorn** that just introduced its small-batch artisan popcorn flavors this fall. The company, named "479" because that's the exact temperature required for popcorn perfection, makes all of its popcorn to order, which may be the reason why every flavor I tried was stellar, not to mention incredibly interesting.

I admit that the one I snarfed first was the Fleur de Sel Caramel, but I loved the Chipotle Caramel and Almonds, the Ginger Sesame Caramel and the Vietnamese Cinnamon Sugar. Besides being ultra-fresh, the popcorn is made with hand-ground organic spices that pack tons of flavor. Even though the popcorn will set you back about \$7 for a single 1.6-ounce box, it's a worthy splurge. 479 Popcorn can be found at Draeger's stores and at the Pasta Shop in Berkeley and Oakland, via the Web at www.479popcorn.com or by phone, 888-479-9866.

JOLENE THYM Picky Eater

by Amy Sedaris is hilarious. It does offer a lot of good tips for stylish entertaining, but in brutally honest, slapstick fashion.

Sedaris suggests never apologizing for not having food or drink for drop-in visitors, since the visitors are, quite frankly, uninvited. The apology should come from their side, she says. She offers advice for putting on a funeral potluck, for entertaining lumberjacks, and for delicious dishes to serve alcoholics. If you need a good laugh — and these days, who doesn't? — check it out. And BTW, Amy says when you invite someone over, you're saying to them "I like you."



COCONUT

BLISS: Even if you are dairy-intolerant and don't care how many calories are in your dessert, I dare you to hate the new So Delicious Coconut Milk Mints. OK, you can hate them if you hate coconut, but seriously, these mini-treats from the freezer — including ice cream sandwiches and

sustainable, and for those who are lactose-intolerant or have milk allergies, and for those who are calorie-conscious. That's what I call a treat that delivers. My favorite is the 100-calorie banana split sandwich. The bars are \$4.99 for a box of four and can be found at Whole Foods and Safeway stores.

CHAMPAGNE TASTE: If you happen to have champagne taste when it comes to vinegar, I have two words for you: Global Gardens.

The Los Olives-based company taps into nature's bounty of fresh fruit to make some of the most juicy, fresh fruit vinegars anywhere. The company sent over three of its 11 flavored vinegars — pomegranate, apricot and raspberry. Raspberry is their top seller and it's easy to see why. The vinegar has all the personality of a fresh raspberry — with that vinegar kick you need to brighten a plate of vegetables or a piece of meat. The apricot and the pomegranate are just as fresh and vibrant. Global Gardens vinegars are all made from Domaine Chandon champagne, which may explain why they are so light on the palate. The raspberry is \$14 for a 200 ml bottle, the passion fruit is \$20. The vinegars can be found online at www.olives.com.

TIP OF THE WINE: Instead of spending big cash on fancy label wines for your hol-