

# The DIY Ice Cream Man

*Nicholas Morgenstern, co-owner and chef of the General Greene, builds a street cart using materials sourced from Brooklyn Shops.*

By Jeanne Hodesh

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## STAGE 1: WHEELS

It all begins with a wheel. The first stop on our tour is Motor Grrl, a motorcycle garage in Williamsburg, for a set of stylish spokes. The prize: a pair of wheels off a '78 Yamaha 650 Special that graced the shop owner's first bike. "They're thin, but really cool looking," gushes Morgenstern, who used to ride a chopper between kitchen gigs. The shop then puts in an overnight order for Delmont tires to fit the retro rounds.

## STAGE 2: AXLE

Morgenstern asks where he can get an axle and a Grrl staffer walks us to nearby Nexton Designs, a 24-year-old hardware shop. Morgenstern sketches out a rough design of the cart he has in mind—a simple metal box to house a freezer, which would rest on an axle that runs between the two wheels. Within hours, owner Leo Krivulin has fashioned an axle out of a brass rod. Balancing it across a stool, Morgenstern attaches the wheels: The parts fit perfectly.

## STAGE 3: BODY

Morgenstern called Dexter Welding in Ocean Hill, Brooklyn, to fashion the cart's body. He'd provided the measurements a few days earlier; today Dexter (who declined to give his last name) leads us behind his shed, where the box awaits us. "I had faith in Dex," says Morgenstern, standing back to admire the piece. Dexter solders down the ends of the bolts, and the two men lower the freezer into the cart.

## STAGE 4: MAKING THE ICE CREAM

In a subterranean lair beneath the General Greene's dining room, Morgenstern makes his Philadelphia-style ice cream—it requires no eggs, letting the flavor and texture of the dairy speak for itself. He scalds a milk-and-sugar base and combines it with flavor—maybe Greek yogurt, or a concentration of green tea—one ladleful at a time. It's then strained, chilled and poured into the grill of his Coldelite ice cream machine to get spun around and aerated. "We

keep the flavor of the base simple and then add extra stuff to it,” he says. “I think ice cream served on a cone should have more texture, more things happening in it.” The mango frozen yogurt offers sweet, chewy fruit against a smooth, tangy base. Other creations are still being perfected. The Elvis—peanut butter ice cream with salty bacon from Char No. 4 and banana—was created for Irving Mill chef Ryan Skeen, who “wants pork in everything.” “That one’s not quite ready yet,” says Morgenstern. “It’s a lot of work to make.”

## **STAGE 5: OPENING DAY**

On a warm mid-May afternoon, the metal sides of the ice cream cart glint in the sunlight, and a yellow and white umbrella invites passersby. A couple of General Greene regulars wander up to the cart, admiring the scoops of burnt honey vanilla, mango frozen yogurt and salted caramel pretzel. While they nurse their cones and chat with Morgenstern, their pipsqueak dog dashes around, hoping to catch a stray drip. “It’s awesome,” they concur, trading flavors. Morgenstern fusses around with a framed menu, attaching it to the cart’s umbrella. “Ice cream’s probably my favorite dessert because it’s simple and satisfying,” he says. “It’s just one straightforward component.” If only the same could be said of the cart.