

Bloodroot Vegetarian Restaurant to Celebrate 50 Years in Bridgeport

— [Mark M. Braunstein](#), 10.11.2025



BRIDGEPORT – Founded in 1977, [Bloodroot](#) Vegetarian Restaurant is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary. It also will be commemorating its legacy. Reaching a golden anniversary is noteworthy for any business; for a restaurant, that is an enviable achievement. For this historic restaurant that has created its own recipes not just for its menu planning but for its business plan, 50 years will mark a milestone.

Bloodroot began stirring feminism into food during an era when feminist cafés, coffeehouses, and bookstores sprang up all across the US and Canada. Bloodroot has outlasted them all. It is also the second-oldest vegetarian restaurant in Connecticut, its longevity surpassed only by Claire's

Corner Copia in New Haven (see our January 8, 2025, [review](#)).

Like Claire's, Bloodroot has contributed to the vegetarian movement beyond Connecticut's borders through its several vegetarian cookbooks. For Bloodroot, food is political. Bloodroot's first three cookbooks published in the 1980s and 1990s brandished the phrase "Political Palate" in their titles. Its fourth, "The Bloodroot Calendar Cookbook," was published in hardcover in 2018. In tune with the times, its most recent cookbook has gone vegan.

The restaurant has defied convention, even in its location on a dead-end street of a peaceful residential neighborhood. Before the advent of GPS for car navigation, Bloodroot was so difficult to find that its printed menus by necessity listed travel directions. Once you do discover it, its secluded site provides the benefits of a spacious yard, an ample parking lot, and a waterfront view of Brewster Cove's marinas. Picnic tables in the yard and on the front entrance patio foretell of informal and leisurely dining.

Indoors, this historic landmark carries a museum-like ambience. Tapestries hang from the rafters. Chandeliers simulate candlelight. One entire wall is decorated with dozens of framed black-and-white vintage photos, all of them portraits of women. The tables and chairs, perhaps sourced from antique shops, match the antiquity of the portraits and might have been handed down from the grandmothers depicted in the photos. Bloodroot is all about Mom.

The food, "like mother used to make," is akin to grandma's and mom's home cooking. Everything served here is made in-house, including the breads, the nut cheeses, and the nondairy ice cream. Not haute cuisine, but not crunchy-granola health foods either. White flour, white sugar, and white rice rule the day. The mostly traditional fare with an ethnic flair simply omits the meat. Think steak and potatoes minus the steak. For the past ten years, it

has also excluded cow's milk and other dairy products. Think potatoes sans butter. Vegan feminists have long reminded us that the dairy industry specifically exploits the females of the species, so Bloodroot's transition into veganism was overdue.

I have dined at Bloodroot over thirty times since 1985. During that 40-year span, I may have changed, while the restaurant's building and interior décor have hardly changed at all. Historic indeed.

Its menu, however, changes both seasonally and daily depending upon what local produce is available, upon the skills of the rotating cooks, and upon their whims. On some occasions, I have been treated to memorable meals that rival even the most expensive vegan restaurants of Manhattan, just without the NYC high price tags. Yet there's no point in my citing any of my favorite dishes because when you visit you won't likely be able to order them. Like Heraclitus into his same river, you can never set foot into Bloodroot's same menu twice.

One visible change in décor has occurred in its adjoining bookstore. In the age of Amazon, it has morphed into more of a reading library with comfy couches that encourage you to browse through the books. On one table and one shelf, some used books, mostly pertaining to the subjects of feminism or vegetarianism, can indeed be purchased, but that selection is small compared to the other shelves crowded with books intended only for perusal. While the three earlier Bloodroot cookbooks are out of print, its current volume is in print and so offered for sale.

Another visible change happened in the past year. For 48 years, when you stepped inside you were usually greeted by Selma Miriam, who cofounded Bloodroot with her business and life partner, Noel Furie. Selma's public role seated at her desk at "the front of the house" was complemented by Noel's

role mostly behind the scenes in the kitchen at “the back of the house.”

But Selma won’t be greeting us anymore. She died last February, three weeks short of her 90th birthday. Eulogies and obituaries filled Connecticut news media, and she was accorded a lengthy obit even in [The New York Times](#).

Presently filling roles both at the front and the back of the house, Noel must be one busy woman. And Bloodroot may be beginning a new chapter in its CookBook of Life. In case you’re wondering about the meaning of its sanguinary name that may seem contradictory for a vegetarian restaurant, the bloodroot is a wildflower native to New England whose roots sprout up all around it with flowering shoots. But this iconic Bloodroot in Bridgeport stands alone.

[Mark Mathew Braunstein](#), a vegan since 1970 and the author of three books about the vegan diet, has contributed to *CT Examiner* six recent reviews of Connecticut’s other vegetarian and vegan eateries.