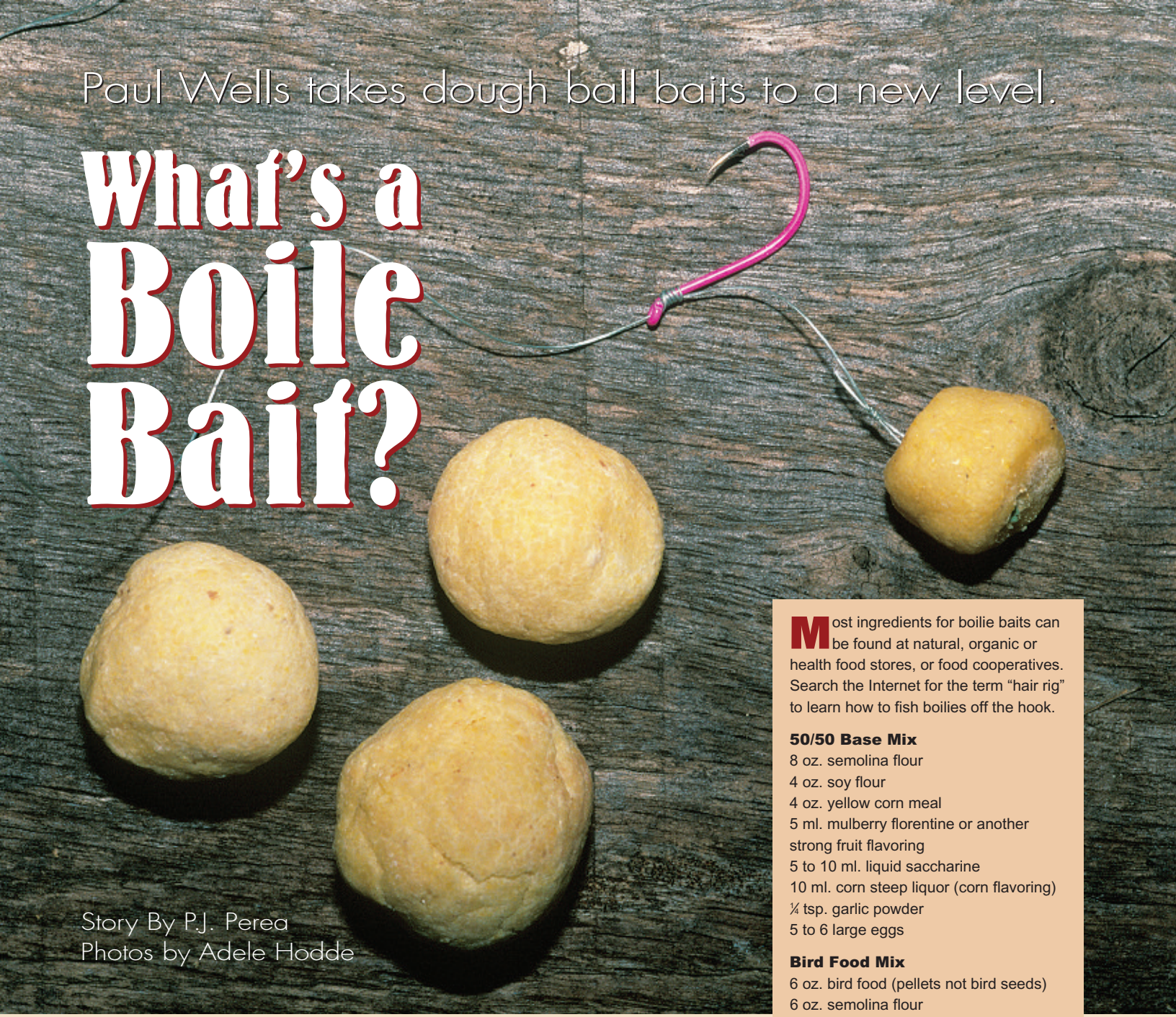
Paul Wells takes dough ball baits to a new level.

What's a Boile Bait?



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The delectable aromas wafting from Chicagoan Paul Wells' kitchen spell trouble, not for his waistline but for the target of an upcoming fishing expedition—the common carp, a plentiful, transplanted species that has taken over many river and lake systems.

Wells' kitchen concoctions are boilie baits, a European creation designed to take advantage of the discriminating tastes of the larger, smarter carp. Boilie baits differ vastly from the doughballs and worms that commonly dangle from many hooks by allowing the angler to tailor an infinite variety of custom flavors—keeping fish guessing at what is OK to eat and what will one day have a hidden hook.

For a different twist on carp fishing, and to keep the fish guessing, experiment with crafting homemade boilie baits.

"I recommend carp anglers fish slow- to medium-flowing waters at first and bring only boilies until they are confident in using them," Wells said. "Two of my favorite recipes, the 50/50 and bird-food mixes, have accounted for several 30-pound fish, a number of 20 and 10 pounders, and dozens of smaller fish."

Most ingredients for boilie baits can be found at natural, organic or health food stores, or food cooperatives. Search the Internet for the term "hair rig" to learn how to fish boilies off the hook.

50/50 Base Mix
8 oz. semolina flour
4 oz. soy flour
4 oz. yellow corn meal
5 ml. mulberry florentine or another strong fruit flavoring
5 to 10 ml. liquid saccharine
10 ml. corn steep liquor (corn flavoring)
¼ tsp. garlic powder
5 to 6 large eggs

Bird Food Mix
6 oz. bird food (pellets not bird seeds)
6 oz. semolina flour
4 oz. soy flour
2 oz. whey
5 ml. butterscotch, vanilla or other creamy flavor
5 ml. liquid saccharine
¼ tsp. garlic powder
5 to 6 large eggs

For either recipe:

Mix the ingredients in a bowl until a stiff and slightly sticky dough has formed. Roll into long strips, cut and roll into bait-sized balls.

Cook the balls in a pot of boiling water until they float, hence the name "boilies."

Variations: Puff the dough in the microwave for about a minute to create a pop-up bait that will float. Add food color and fruit extracts to either recipe to create a custom flavor/color combination.