

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

We have some sad news to share regarding one of our long time vendors.

Marlene Mckay, matriarch of Willowtree Farm, lost her battle with cancer a week ago. Marlene's gregarious personality and joie de vivre was such a vital part of our market that it will seem eerily quiet without her.

She leaves behind her husband, Rod, and sons Alex and Jordan and their wives. All of us at the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair send our condolences to her family and will always remember and miss Marlene.

On a happier note, you probably have noticed that we now have a new vendor who makes Neapolitan pizza in a wood burning oven. Here is their story.

It all began in the fall of 2013 when the family was watching Italian food shows (Two Greedy Italians) and fell in love with the wood fired oven approach to cooking. They could imagine the smell of the wood burning and the taste of the smoke wafting in the air.

They decided that they had to have one. They wanted one in their backyard, on wheels, that they could move if necessary. They turned to the Internet to do some research. They had thought they could build one with some instruction, however, they ended up on a site called ?The Fire Within? where they found a three-day course on how to use a mobile wood burning oven.

So, off to Colorado they went to learn the art of making authentic Neapolitan Style Pizza.

That experience made them realize they had to share this with their friends and family at home. Sitting in the seminar smelling the intoxicating aromas emanating from the oven made them think of ?primal?-basic instinct, wood fired oven- and Primal Pizza was born. The dream had taken flight. Could they translate this into a small family business? They believed that they could teach the children how to work hard and learn some life skills along the way.

Their two sons, Colin and Christopher, are now part of the business and have been learning how to start a business while having fun and being responsible.

The moment that the Johnstons returned from Colorado, they placed an order for their oven. It wasn't the backyard model, but a mobile, 4 foot radius, 3 ton oven on a customized trailer. No turning back now. The oven was completed in July and they prepared for another road trip to Colorado to collect their new addition. They towed that oven 2,393 km home in 38 hours at 100 km/hr.

Once the oven was home, they practiced on anyone who would eat their pizza. Their neighbours and friends were willing victims and the kids were the taste-testers. The adventure with the wood burning oven really brought the neighbourhood together. Over the winter, they developed the logistics of the business and applied to come to the Aurora Farmers' Market. They love meeting new people every Saturday and they are drawing crowds. They have enjoyed the experiences they have had as a result of having their new oven but, the funny thing is that they can't fit the oven into their back yard!

They make several different pizzas and you'll be sure to find a favourite.

See you at the Market!