

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

The early morning trilling of a host of birds in my backyard is a sure sign that spring is just around the corner, and what a relief that will be. Although this winter was milder than usual, it seemed to drag on forever. Now we can look forward to the trees beginning to bud and the early spring bulbs popping up in the garden.

For me, it's a beautiful and positive time, with everything coming back to life.

The arrival of spring also means that the Farmers' Market will begin its outdoor season in about a month and a half, and people can once again plan their Saturday mornings around a trip to the Market to meet friends for coffee, breakfast and shopping at their favourite vendors.

In the meantime, there are still two Indoor Markets at the Armouries for you to attend. The next one is on Saturday, March 12 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. and we hope to see you there.

These are the vendors who are expected to be there:

The farmers will include 19th Avenue Farm, the Abbott Family Farm, Oakridges Finest, Pioneer Brand Honey and Kind Organics. The food vendors will include Cosmo's Smoked Meats Ltd., Catharina's Kitchen, Green River Coffee, Nicolle's Cakes, Nutmeg Bake Shop, John Abraham's Projet Christina Marie and Sasha's Sweets.

Among the artisans you will find the Bear's Den, Nancy Wood, Eva Nagy, Green Leaf Designs, Kibo Natural Body Care products, Limitless Jewels and Beading Mama.

Although Attilio of Attilios Olive Oil won't be at this Indoor Market, we sincerely hope that he will be well enough to join us again for the outdoor season. Here is some interesting background information about this delightful gentleman.

Attilio was born in Santa Francesca, Veroli, Italy in June of 1935, at home. His birth wasn't registered until a week later because there were no cars to take them to the town hall. He was unable to stay in school beyond Grade Three because the family needed him to work on the land.

He was the youngest of seven children but the older boys had gone to fight in the war. The family lived off the land and had chickens, pigs and sheep. They needed Attilio to become a shepherd boy. They also grew wheat, vegetables, potatoes, grapes and olives. They made their own olive oil and canned their food.

At the age of 25, Attilio went to work in Germany so he could send money home to his family. Unfortunately, his father became ill and he returned to Italy to care for him. After his father died in 1965, Attilio immigrated to Canada with his wife and 2 children as he wanted a better life for his family. At that time, he had 5 siblings living in Canada. He immediately went to work in construction, sold windows, vacuum cleaners and shoes to feed his family, now consisting of six children. According to his children, Attilio worked tirelessly to provide only the very best for them. For example, he never bought juices from the store but would buy boxes of fresh oranges to squeeze. The family ate vegetables from their garden and only the best meat.

Attilio's olive orchards are in Veroli which is south east of Rome. Some of the trees in his orchard are up to 700 years old. Every year, Attilio returns to Italy to care for his land and harvest his olives. The trees are lovingly cared for as they were passed down from his beloved father. For Attilio, the life of each tree represents the life of his father and forefathers before him. He harvests only in the traditional way, picking only by hand. When the trees are pruned, the sheep graze on the clippings and grass, creating the best natural fertilizers. The family says that love begins from the soil to the trees to the olives to your table. To view his most recent harvest, go to www.attiliosfinefoods.com

See you at the Indoor Market!