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POP-POP'S BEST

For years my family and friends have enjoyed my homemade salad dressings, dips, and marinades. They urged me to market my creations for everyone's enjoyment. I've created POP-POP'S BEST for exactly this purpose

Now you can enjoy POP-POP'S BEST in your own home!

My NEW Balsamic Gourmet Vinaigrette will dazzle your tast buds with a unique combination of flavors, sweetness, and a little zing. The amazing Balsamic dressing easily doubles as a fine marinade for meats and vegetables.

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Lee "Pop-Pop" Licht

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NewCityPatch

Business

April 25, 2013

Retired Clarkstown Resident Starts Salad Dressing Company

Pop Pop's Best is available so far in Congers, Nyack, Pearl River and New City stores

By: Adam Littman

When he retired a bit less than two years ago, Lee Licht wasn't sure if he wanted to kick back and relax.

Instead, he started a business.

"I was urged by my family to come out and market a salad dressing that I had been making for them and for my friends for years," he said. "So, basically, that's what I did."

For the last few years, whenever there was a family gathering or Licht, of New City, was meeting with friends for a meal, he'd be in charge of bringing the salad and, perhaps more importantly, the dressing.

"It's basically a product that I started with on a very simple basis, just a simple balsamic-type salad dressing," he said. "Through the years I played with it, made it more complex and more complex and more complex, but I finally arrived at a taste that I liked and that everybody else seems to like."

Licht continued to tinker and play around with his recipe for years until he settled on a recipe, one that's still a balsamic dressing, but one with a slight kick or zing.

"It started because I wanted to concoct a simple salad dressing," he said. "From there every batch was just a little different. I kept adding and subtracting ingredients to get it right. I love to cook. I'm a kitchen guy."

Licht's prowess in the kitchen doesn't end with salad dressing, though. He said some of his other famous recipes within his family include Chicken Kiev and spaghetti sauce.

"My wife's Italian and she likes the spaghetti sauce, or gravy as some call it, so that's good," he said.

But it was his salad dressing that his family urged him to look into marketing. Licht found a company upstate, Nelson Farms, to help produce the dressing. Nelson Farms is also connected to Cornell University, which prepared the nutritional facts for Licht's dressing.

Licht got his first batch in February and is in four stores in Rockland currently: Steve's Prime Meats and Catering in Congers, Luigi O'Grady's Deli & Catering in Pearl River, DeCicco Marketplace in New City and Old World Food Market in Nyack.

He's hoping to get into more stores, but Licht said he also thinks he'll take his dressing to at least one or two local street fairs in the coming months, and possibly more.

Through the years I played with it, made it more complex and more complex and more complex, but I finally arrived at a taste that I liked and that everybody else seems to like.

~ Lee "Pop-Pop" Licht ~

People can also be on the lookout for Licht at grocery stores doing tastings of his dressing, which is how he got into the other stores.

Licht, who is 77-years-old, said that the more he's done for his salad dressing company, the more he's enjoyed it and wants to keep going. He has ideas for two more dressings he'd like to produce in the future as well.

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do in retirement and this is something my family really pushed me towards because they thought I'd like it," he said. "Since starting the business, I really love it. If anyone else is thinking about going into business after retiring, I'd tell them to just make sure it's something they love doing. At our ages, we deserve to have fun."

For Licht, it's not just the salad dressing part of his business that's been fun. After spending 40-plus years in the packaging industry, he designed the bottle, cap and label for his dressing. He has four children, two sons and two daughters, and one son help him set up a website for the company and one daughter took the picture that appeals on the bottle. One of his grandchildren, who is in school for design, helped design the label.

Even the name of the company, Pop Pop's Best, is named for a nickname his grandchildren have for him.

"It's definitely been a family project," Licht said. "It's great to have the love and support of family."

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