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## Q&A: 3 Sisters Garlic & Oils is newest addition to local culinary center



BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

3 Sisters Garlic & Oils has joined Lewiston's unique culinary center, at 442-444 Center St., joining Battle Flag Tavern, Brewed & Bottled Craft Beer Shop, and Sgt. Peppers Hot Sauces, Etc.

The DiPasquales grow garlic on their Cambria farm. They use the bulb for myriad products sold at two farmers markets and in three Niagara County storefronts – each spot named for daughters Melissa, 16; and twins Emma and Lilly, 14. Recent addition and lone “dude,” Louie, 5, has his name attached to the family bakery.

Jennifer DiPasquale shared more in this edited Q&A.

*Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the company and how it all got started?*

**DiPasquale:** The business name is Three Sisters Garlic. It goes after our three daughters. We're a small, family farm; we grow about two acres of garlic. The girls help with picking the garlic, planting the garlic.

*Q: What got you into garlic?*

**DiPasquale:** We grew a little bit of garlic but, about seven years ago, we went to Cuba, New York, to the Garlic Festival; and that's what started it all. There was all sorts of different varieties of garlic. We mainly grew just one kind, so it opened our eyes to all the different selections of garlic.

There was one lady, and she was doing the black garlic that we produce. And she was like, “This is something that's going to be up and coming; jump on the bandwagon.” And so, we bought one processor for the black garlic – and now we're up to 10.

*Q: What is exciting, unique or special about garlic?*

**DiPasquale:** I think what's more happiness for us is watching everybody enjoy what we create with garlic. Garlic people use it for sauces, and they like cooking with garlic; but I think we like making inspired products like our pesto and our hummus, fresh tapenade – and it uses all the garlic.

The garlic that we don't replant, we dehydrate, and we make our spices with our fresh garlic, and then our garlic-inspired dips.

*Q: Like you said, a lot of people use garlic for sauces and cooking, particularly in Italian; but isn't garlic also one of the superfoods?*

**DiPasquale:** It's one of the super foods, and even the black garlic that we produce is an extra superfood, where, with the fermentation process, it helps with A1C, cholesterol, good gut health.

*Q: I'm not super-familiar with black garlic. Can you tell me more about that?*

**DiPasquale:** Black garlic is regular garlic, but we ferment it, slowly cook it for 14 days, and it's going to take on a sweet, balsamic flavor.

The garlic that we produce, we make a black garlic butter, a black garlic hummus. I just made, in the fridge, I have black garlic cream of mushroom soup. There's a lot that you can have fun and create with, with the garlic.

*Q: When you first started out, you were selling out of your family farm?*

**DiPasquale:** It was just out of our family farm. We've been in the North Tonawanda Farmers Market six years now, and then the Lewiston Farmers Market for about five years. It was our garlic, our garlic powder, and our bruschetta, and those were the first three items that we made – produced – and now we're over 150 items. About 50% we make, 50% we purchase, like the olive oils and the specialty balsamic vinegars, we get that distributed. But it's all pretty much garlic-inspired.

That's our main items. *Q: What appealed to you about coming to the Village of Lewiston?*

**DiPasquale:** I've always loved Lewiston. The girls, we went to St. Peter's in Lewiston, my daughters, we attend church there. It seems homey. It's always open arms; very friendly people out here. We've been trying to come here for a couple of years now.

*Q: You've got this very unique culinary center. What do you like about this particular unit?*

**DiPasquale:** I love it. We all get along great. I'm so happy with who I'm next to, and we all play off one another, and support each other, and I love it. It's nice out here.

*Q: Tell me about the various products you have in the Lewiston location.*

**DiPasquale:** In the very beginning, the front, we have our specialty pastas, garlic-inspired, or we have different flavored garlics. Even basic down to like a butter-nut squash.

And then we carry dipping oils for bread. We carry dipping oils and dipping bowls.

We also carry the spices that we make from our garlic. Every spice that we carry has our fresh garlic that we grow, except for our truffled salt. We do get our truffles from Italy, so they are nice and fresh.

We also bake specialty breads. We carry a little bit on the weekends here. And then we carry all the specialty balsamic vinegars. The olive oils that are flavored. The balsamics are dark balsamics, so they're nice and rich and thick. Great to use for salads, glazes.

*Q: This is a lot of products; it's a lot of things that have to be made. You're making all these as a family?*

**DiPasquale:** Yeah; that's the way it is. The girls help out whenever they can. Lately now, it's school and sports coming back. It's nice that it's in the slower season, so we can get back into producing. But pretty soon we'll be planting our garlic.

We're actually going to extend the crop, so we're going to extend from two to three acres. It's mainly German purple stripe, is the garlic that we grow. It's just a strong, hearty garlic. And then we're going to start another crop, it's called Georgian fire, and it's a spicy garlic. We're going to extend a little bit, and then we're going to do a German white, also, this year.

*Q: Lewiston likes to pride itself on being culinary destination. Its people are very savvy when it comes to culinary arts. So, I would think this would be something right up their alley. What kind of response have you had so far from the community?*

**DiPasquale:** I think, with being in the Lewiston Farmers Market and being around for so long, that a lot of people already know who we are. But I think, like I said before, I think it's more exciting is how people react to the products that we create with the garlic, and how fresh it is.

We don't use any preservatives. It's as fresh as it is. All of our spices and dips we make weekly, so they are nice and fresh.

We tell a lot of people about our spices: You don't need a lot, because it's so fresh.

*3 Sisters Garlic & Oils is open in Lewiston from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday through Sunday.*