

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

When Life Gives You Cucumbers, Make Pickles

*Rumson entrepreneur brings hot and spicy pickles
to local markets*

BY COLIN FOLEY



John O'Malley aka Señor Juan is bringing a little spice to area markets.

FRESH. SMASH-MOUTH. PUNCHY-CRUNCHY. These are just some of the phrases used to describe a new snack phenomenon that has captivated Monmouth County. Grown and packaged locally, Señor Juan's Hot and Spicy pickles are a deliciously unique alternative to those you are used to. Local entrepreneur John O'Malley developed his "Famous Rumson Recipe" after harvesting a particularly bountiful cucumber crop in the mid-1990s. The recipe, a result of simple experimentation in

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"You know, this is how it works: you come up with something that you like, your wife tries it, you hand them out to your neighbors and they like 'em and when your 80 year-old aunts polish off a jar in 1 sitting you pay attention," said O'Malley. "I happened to notice a little hole in the market to plug this in to." And thus having developed and sold several businesses in the past, John decided to start selling

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his pickles to the public.

O'Malley, a Long Island Native, has made a career of marketing and design. Putting this experience to good use, he has made Señor Juan's a fast success. "It's huge advantage, once I decided to launch the fresh-packed pickles I had an e-commerce website up, jars, labels and packaging plus all the collateral materials designed, product photos shot and vendors lined up in six days. I had orders in 14 days." No small feat when one considers the impact of the current economic climate. The pickles have been selling well, and continue to grow in popularity thanks to the utilization of several sales outlets and free tastings. Be it local food

spots like Sickle's Market in Little Silver and Brennan's Delicatessen in Rumson, chains like Whole Foods, through Amazon or at www.Srjuan.com, O'Malley is no slouch when it comes to diversification.

"The new business paradigm is to be nimble and reactive and fast and use all the media that you have available," he said. "One of the best things I did was let folks know where to buy through email and Facebook."

"It's a good pickle," said Bob Sickle, owner of Sickle's Market, adding that Señor Juan's pickles fit well into the market's emphasis on local foods.

"People are very interested in local products," Sickle said. "It's a rising trend."

The market recently launched a summer-long "Jersey Makes" campaign to

highlight products made and grown in the Garden State. Señor Juan's Hot and Spicy Pickles joins other Jersey-made products like Boylan Sodas, Nylabone dog bones, Jersey Girl t-shirts and Blackwell's Organic Gelato, as well as fresh, seasonal locally grown produce, in the season-long spotlight on Jersey's best.

With a few new flavors in development, and several new food products in the works, it seems John, and Señor Juan are here to stay. A delightful prospect considering his contributions to the community and involvement in local environmental foundations. So, as the weather heats up and you're searching for that perfect addition to your picnic or just a snack to have around the house, pick up a jar of Señor Juan's Hot and Spicy Pickles.