

The Language Of Olive Spoken Here

Did you cherish that pepper in the back of your throat? Experience the lush of grassiness rushing from your taste buds? Realize the splash of herbal bouquets surprising your pallet like a newly married bride tossing beautiful happiness off to her friends? Eating better and living longer is *all* about the taste, the spiciness, the alluring excitement of...well...yes, I'll admit my weakness...extra virgin olive oil!

Words like bitter, fruity and pungent aptly describe some of the best tasting olive oils on the market. A true extra virgin olive oil is less than 1% acidic and has passed taste, smell and color evaluations by certified tasters of the California Olive Oil Council (cooc.com)—and internationally by the IOOC (International Olive Oil Council). Truth be told, our own country's FDA does not currently require truth in labeling on extra virgin olive oil; many oils labeled as such on popular grocery shelves have been cut with seed and other flavorless oils to reduce costs and--unbeknownst to the customer—healthful qualities, not to mention astounding flavor attributes found in freshly produced olive oils. Consequently there is a great confusion about what actually constitutes an authentic extra virgin olive oil.

Consumers need to be savvy and let their pallets speak the truth much as we do with our passion for wines. Olive oil is indeed like wine—tasteful nuances can surprise even a bland tilapia into wakeful dance from our dinner

plates to joyful tummies. Greek and Spanish varietal oils (harvested when the olives are black) tend to be a more fruity compliment to buttery salad greens, pastas, oven roasting and even baking. Greener Tuscan style oils are more conducive to fuller flavored foods but I encourage experimentation--to the grill, the dipping dish and the skin. There has never been a happier bunch of broccoli than one freshly steamed and adorned with XVOO, nor a more delicious French toast, grilled sandwich or softer elbow!

I heat my skillets to the proper temperature before adding the olive oil and immediately enjoy the resounding succulent sizzle of food added within seconds—the aromas permeating the kitchen with the promise of savory goodness soon to come. Caphalon or similar pans are great for olive oil because they regulate heat so quickly. Never put extra virgin olive oil in the fridge and know that a great oil should last at least two years if stored away from direct light and heat; but at my house it's lucky if it lasts two weeks! My own love affair with olive oil began as a first generation baby born to European parents of Slavic and Greek descent. It occurred to me in 1996 on a sunny winter day while directing the production of a commercial photo shoot in lovely Santa Barbara wine country that this prolific region was prime for olive stewardship. Global Gardens® was the first in our county to plant a commercial grove of trees (2017 to be exact), Certified Organic, specifically for the production of high quality extra virgin olive oil (1997).

Our tasting boutique in downtown Los Olivos offers no fewer than five extra virgin olive oils for tasting and comparison. Currently our medal-winning Certified Organic Farga Estate is our most vibrant conversationalist at the tasting bar with the 100% Kalamata from a private family estate in Greece a close second place. Santa Ynez proprietary blends along with some new appearing on our shelves make interesting tasting companions. My mission is to enhance the awareness of the fine characteristics of olives and olive oil while educating customers on the many global flavors waiting to be invited into their homes to discover the true language of olive!

Theo Stephan founded Global Gardens in 1998. The Global Gardens destination store and tasting room opened in 2006. Hours are 10-5 daily, 2477 Alamo Pintado Ave., 2 blocks west of HWY 154, 2 blocks east of the Los Olivos flag pole.

Contact Theo for more information, 1.800.307.0447,
theo@oliverevolution.com