

Meet the Farmers: Elaine Haumann

Elaine's Homemade Jams

Marietta, N.Y.

Elaine Haumann, owner of Elaine's Homemade Jams, makes 19 different flavors of jam each season, and fills 1,000 jars each year.

She keeps her Downtown Farmers Market booth stocked with the fan favorite flavors that jam lovers expect to find: Strawberry, Blueberry and Raspberry.

"I know the common flavors that everyone likes," says Elaine. "But then, I like to have different flavors, too."

She also likes to incorporate the unexpected into her selection, but she promises not to serve anything she doesn't like herself (Her own palette tends to prefer the sour over the sweet!). New this season, she is featuring Orange Marmalade, Blueberry Lime, Cinnamon Pear and Raspberry Jalapeño.

The Raspberry Jalapeño, a blend of the spicy and the sweet, is one of her new favorites.

"When you taste it, you immediately taste the raspberry. Then all of a sudden, you get hit with the kick," she says. "That's the best part about it."

Elaine has been making jam her whole life; her aunt taught her when she was a young girl. As an adult, Elaine thought the skill would help keep her busy. She started selling her stock at craft fairs, then added the Downtown Farmers Market into the mix.

Elaine has gotten the process down to a science. "It usually takes about a half hour to make a batch," she explains. "Initially it takes a little bit longer, because you're sterilizing and sanitizing the jars and setting everything up. That first batch always takes a little over an hour or so. But then, as I go along, I get moving in a groove. I get the water bath cooking hot, measure out the berries and fruit, and get that all stirred up."



Sometimes, her customers surprise her with their own discoveries. "I've heard the Hot Pepper Jam with peanut butter is really good on a sandwich... but I haven't tried it yet," Elaine admits.

If she's analyzing the numbers from an inventory standpoint, Strawberry Jam is her best seller. But Elaine listens for what her customers are curious about as well. As she gets to know their palettes, she offers flavors she thinks they will like. The Orange Marmalade is an example; the selection was added after several customers inquired about that particular flavor.

This season, Elaine debuted a new promotion for customers, stamping a card for each jam purchase. When they buy five jams, they get one for free. "It's been a good thing! People are really receptive to buying them to get one free!"

Market visitors will also find chocolate chip cookies at Elaine's Homemade Jam stand. Those are made by her daughter. "She is the most awesome cookie maker," Elaine gushes.

Jam enthusiasts can buy Elaine's jams year-round. They can track her progress and flavor selection on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Elaines-Homemade-Jam-170732213113697/timeline/>



Elaine and her husband at their booth at the Downtown Farmers Market

Then, it comes down to timing - waiting for the perfect rolling boil it takes for the jam to set. "I don't even have to think about it," she says.

She says her jam-making season usually starts in March, and lasts through the Holiday Season - kicking into high gear as people search for the perfect gift(s).

She enjoys her time at the Downtown Farmers Market. She says she looks forward to talking with her encouraging customers each week, swapping jam stories. "That's my favorite part," she says. "They're fun to talk to! They'll tell me stories about how their grandmother used to make jam, and we get talking about that."

Often, Elaine's customers will ask her for new ideas about how to eat the jam. They're curious about how else they can eat it, besides putting it on a sandwich. Elaine suggests pairing different jam selections with different kinds of meats, to complement and bring out new flavors.

"Sweet Cherry Jam is good with beef or steak. Marmalade or raspberry is good with chicken. I try to help them in that way," she says.



Make sure to say hello to Elaine every Tuesday at the Downtown Farmers Market!