**Locally produced Monteleone Peppers in Oil expands**

From the Sylvania Advantage, November 6, 2013

Sylvania Township residents Susanne and Dino Martin have expanded their capacity to package their unique product, Monteleone Peppers in Oil. “We were not able to keep up with the demand of our distributors,” Mrs. Martin noted, “We also had to develop a formula to make the peppers shelf stable, as we use the very old world technique of packing the peppers in oil using no vinegar or citric acid. Now, our peppers have a two-year shelf life.”

“We were fortunate to find a packager to follow our formula and will produce 2,600 cases or 31,000 jars of peppers this fall. We just could not do that many on our own,” she said. Now, Monteleone Peppers can be found in northwest and eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Michigan. “We also have developed a good online business and ship our peppers across the country,” Mrs. Martin stated.  
According to Mrs. Martin, these old world peppers are very common in the Youngstown area where her husband grew up. “My mother-in-law, Connie Bruno Martin, put up cases of these peppers every fall. These peppers were on their table during every meal. Her peppers were also given to family members and friends as well,” she said.

Mrs. Martin credits Kyle Baker of Gordie’s Barbeque with encouraging her and her husband to begin packaging the peppers after sampling them at a neighborhood event. “He said we needed to make these peppers and introduced us to the Center of Innovative Food Technology (CIFT), the commercial kitchen near Bowling Green, suggesting we enter the annual food contest. Walt Churchill happened to be one of the judges and loved our peppers. He invited us to bring them to his store,” she recalled. “And, that is how we began.”  
The Monteleone Peppers can also be found locally at Sautter’s Markets, The Andersons, Sofo’s, Kazmaier’s and both Churchill locations. In addition, the Martins can be found at the downtown Toledo’s Farmer’s Market offering their peppers along with Stromboli and several varieties of breads baked fresh by the  Martins. “We started offering Stromboli to demonstrate one of the uses for the peppers and found this to be such a success, we continue to have this available,” she said.

“As a hobby, we built a brick oven in our backyard so we could bake old style Italian bread and make pizza, which we also offer for sale at the Farmer’s Market,” Mrs. Martin added.

As the company continues to expand, the Martins have not forgotten their roots. “Monteleone Foods’ products are the inspiration of Dino’s mother and the name, Monteleone pays homage to his father, Joe, whose original name was Joseph Monteleone,” she said. “I also credit my son, Will, for all of his encouragement and support.”

Monteleone Peppers are sold in jars and in one- and five-gallon containers to the food service industry. There are three varieties: hot, medium and mild, all with a strong note of garlic and other spices. “These peppers have the perfect blend of heat and sweet peppers and are sure to add zing to any dish,”Mrs. Martin promised. “And, the leftover oil can be used as a marinade, salad dressing or for sautéing or frying vegetables, eggs and meats.”