



Small Business **BUZZ**

A free newsletter for Des Moines Patrons who value small business.

“Think Globally, Buy Locally” becomes a real possibility with about 20 local ethnic grocery stores to choose from in greater Des Moines. Each store relies heavily on the loyalty of the customers within the nearby community.

Why do people shop at these specialty grocery markets? The reasons can range from keeping close to the foods from their land of origin, to having cultivated worldly tastes for foods that aren’t found at the local retail grocery chains.



Whatever the individual motivation, we can celebrate the diversity of our city and

the opportunity to realize we are all part of a world that grows smaller every day.

Food plays a significant role in unifying us all across the globe. It not only nourishes our body but also reveals our cultural similarities and differences.

The most distinct impression that we found at local ethnic markets is that the activity of eating is best when shared with family and friends and doesn’t need to be limited by geographic or political borders.

On the Road with Buzz and Chef Josh.



Award winning Chef Josh Beck of ARAMARK Corporation studied under Chef Dominic Rivera, regional executive chef of ARAMARK Business Dining for 7 years. Chef Josh specializes in Asian foods with a breadth of culinary expertise for all ethnic areas due to his focus on fusion foods prepared utilizing the French technique.


It’s the first ever **BUZZ Tour!** Come join us as we caravan with Chef Josh and explore some of the specialty grocery stores located in Des Moines. You’ll get:

- Fun information on some of the more unusual items available at these shops.
- Samples to get your taste buds thinking
- Recipes to try at home.
- Expert tips on how to use culturally diverse foods at home.

Come join this unique Saturday morning excursion visiting markets that are so close but will take you so far!

Saturday from 9:30 to Noon
September 23, 2006

For details and reservations call:
Sherry and David @ **274-6703**



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- *Storied Gifts - Biography Guide*
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What’s Inside?

Italian to Remember • Asian Avalanche • Bosnian Beacon • Immigrants Remember • Latin Zest • Middle Eastern Abundance



It's the "little Italy on University. A Taste of Italy is located on the curved section of University between 73rd St. and 22nd at 8421. Shop for Italian groceries and enjoy lunch.

Italian Getaway

A Taste of Italy

Nothing transports us faster than a familiar scent. Walk into A Taste of Italy and it's like you're at your local neighborhood market on the town's Italian piazza. It's the fresh smell of bread, herbs, and *the* essential balm olive oil that tell your nose the food has got to be Italian. If you could eat the air you'd probably give it a try. A Taste of Italy beckons you to have a seat and visit over a fantastic lunch.

Todd Ferin, owner of A Taste of Italy, has cultivated the grocery and eatery on University for the past decade. The shop started its first year strictly as an Italian grocery, but then expanded to offering fresh Italian-style sandwiches. Todd acknowledges that it was a great move for the store because now his business is a 50/50 split between customers who come to find either imported specialty items or a fresh and enticing mid-day meal.

So what draws in the customers? Todd explains that they don't have daily specials but there are a few days where particular favorites are prepared. Everything is made fresh each day and the assortment of meats, cheese and toppings means you can always find a match for your tastes. Try to come in on Wednesday for example and

Todd will dazzle you with his Italian beef. Todd explains, "On Wednesday, I consider that a special day—we do a Chicago-style Italian roast beef. It's basically like a French dip except I use Italian roast beef, cheese, peppers, and onions if you want. It's really, really good and we only do that on Wednesdays."

While waiting for your lunch you can browse the shelves for your night's dinner plans. There are numerous imported sauces, olives, various peppers, and a selection of pasta and meats. The atmosphere of the small neighborhood market is special too. While you wait for lunch you may hear the music of Italian opera singer Adrea Bocelli playing in the background. The music swells as you gaze at the mural of Italian icons such as the Coliseum on the full-wall mural. There are fun photos of the "Rat Pack" posed in front of The Sands Casino, next to a photo of etchings featuring Frank Sinatra nestled next to a selection of Italian candies.

The setting is so friendly and relaxed that it is easy to forget that Todd and his staff are a small business dealing with the usual stresses and challenges. Todd explains, "I'm only 29 (he points to his thinning

graying hair). There is a lot of stress. I tell that to a lot of people. Everyone is always talking about 'oh you run your own business.' Well, you know what? There are a few days where I swear I would love to be playing with someone else's money. It's give and take just like everything. But I love what I do and I love interacting with the customers. I think it is the best thing in the world."

Each day the market opens, Todd, along with his three employees, works to make a pleasant experience for their customers. In a west side that is constantly under expansion with new chains of all kinds springing up, just where does Todd see his shop headed in the future? "I can only hope to go up. Right now I love what I'm doing and I don't see myself doing anything else. I love the location. It's definitely about location. If you are to move you definitely need to go out west. That's where everything is right now. If things weren't so expensive maybe a small business could make it out there."

In the meantime this space on University is the spot to take your midday respite and enjoy a little Taste of Italy. Have a seat inside where you can enjoy the market's ambiance or relax outside on a specially prepared table under the bello skies of Iowa. A Taste of Italy is the authentic neighborhood market, a place to remember the importance to stop and savor our day. **sb**



Todd's a cut up personality but very serious about providing quality in everything he sells from behind the counter.



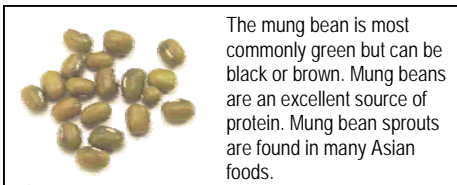
Asian beers, meats, seafood, and vegetables are some of the items available at Wang's Asian Market at 3005 100th St. Urbandale, IA.

Across Asian Lands

Wang's Grocery

Going to Wang's Asian market is a lesson in geography. You walk in and are immediately impressed with the variety and similarity of peoples and foods across continents. Paula and James Wang provide an assortment of foods coming from China as well as other Southeastern Asian countries in addition to Korea, Japan, and all the way down to the Philippines. It's a distance that spans roughly 4000 miles.

Today Paula jumps up from her late afternoon lunch break to help a customer. She transfers easily from English to Chinese with enviable linguistic finesse. Switching tasks quickly is just one aspect of running a specialty market each day.



The mung bean is most commonly green but can be black or brown. Mung beans are an excellent source of protein. Mung bean sprouts are found in many Asian foods.

The Wang's have mastered the skill in their years as small business owners. Wang's Asian Market has been open 4 years, but prior to that they became seasoned entrepreneurs who owned and operated the Imperial Gardens restaurant on 22nd. Street for fifteen years. Paula concedes that having a number of employees and running the restaurant was a challenge she no longer has to

manage. However, the tradeoff now with a smaller operation is that she and James are in their store 100% of the time.

How much of a demand is there for Asian food in Des Moines? Tastes have evolved and Paula has seen a great increase in interest over the years. "People are more familiar with Japanese food now than in the past." she explains. Patrons have come to expect more diverse options here as Paula recognizes that most of her customers are born and bread Iowans. Paula has also seen an increase in Asian customers since they have opened the market. They have regular customers who are immigrants or visitors from China, the Philippines, and Korea for example.

Wang's  is filled with shelves of

Point of interest:
The total Asian population in Iowa in 2000 was recorded as 36,635. In the Des Moines area, the census counted more than 13,500 Asians, or 3.5 percent of the population.

canned, frozen and dry goods that are brightly labeled in the characters of various Asian languages. There is also a selection of foreign films and some gift items. Paula explains that

keeping the products rotated and having the selection of goods that people want at all times is the big challenge. "If it does not sell, we won't carry it again." contends Paula. Most of the products are ordered from the countries of origin and then purchased through wholesalers as close as Chicago or farther away in California.

Paula has lived in the United States for 40 years and 19 of those have been here in Iowa. "I like Iowa" she explains. I prefer living here to bigger cities like Chicago. "This is the right size and a quality place to live." **PoH**

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Imported meats, coffee, spices can be found here at 8036 Douglas Ave. in Urbandale. Call 251-6393 for hours and information.

“Bosnian” Moon Over Iowa

It’s 9 a.m. and Asima is busy making sausages for the restaurant’s lunch and dinner menu. There are several trays of prepared sausages ready for grilling, as proof that she starts her work early. In addition to Luna Imported Foods, Asima and Said Deumic own a restaurant called Oaza Bar and Grill, located next door.

Luna Foods requires at least 12-hours of work each day so adding a second business just means that they seem to work 24/7. The Deumic’s started their first grocery store in the Waveland neighborhood. They learned some tough lessons about traffic, small business, and landlords in those early days before moving to this location on Douglas.

Asima and Said are the first generation of their family to make the trek to the U.S. Like other Bosnian families who now reside in Iowa, they moved here to escape the ethnic cleansing occurring in their homeland. Their experience mirrors the universal immigrant story; work hard in labor-intensive jobs, put in many hours of work each day, and build for the future. The Deumics started right away working for other employers but then Said injured his back on the job.

The Deumic’s experiences have taught them that it is important to adapt. Survival depends on being ready to come up with a new plan when the old one doesn’t work anymore. Asima is matter-of-fact about the reasons they opened for business, she

explains, “We had no choice but to find a way to support ourselves.” She acknowledges it has been tough to do but they have also been fortunate to receive help from local Iowans to assimilate into the community. This assistance made it a bit easier to start a business.

Asima says that most of her customers are Bosnian immigrants who have settled here. They come to the store and restaurant as a way of connecting with their own community. So is there enough business to keep local Bosnian markets open? The last Iowa census data reports a

population of 15,000 Bosnians in and around Des Moines.

Asima explains that her customers find comfort in

finding the same products they would have purchased in Bosnia. Even though many of her customers work several jobs they still like to prepare traditional meals of favorite recipes for family and friends. Asima describes what she believes to be the collective philosophy of the Bosnian people: work very hard in all aspects of life but make time for tradition and family.

It is Asima’s goal that her children will be able to benefit and enjoy a better quality of life. Her goal is that her children will not have to work quite so hard. She sees her generation paving the way and suffering the health consequences of so many hours spent working to build something. In the meantime, she brushes aside the idea of speaking any more about her opinions or plans. It’s 9:20 and there’s still 12 or so hours of work to be done. **PoH**

Point of interest:

- The Bosnian culture and recipes are influenced by Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Turkey.



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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: THE CHANGING FACE OF DES MOINES



Seeking opportunity, in 1961 Ed Vander Hijde came from Holland to rebuild cars and build a life for himself and his future.

Change For Opportunity Vander Hijde

Ask Ed why he chose to come to America in 1961 and the reason he gives is simple. Ed Vander Hijde came to the U.S. because he knew there were more opportunities here to earn a living and create a future. Like many people of his generation, Ed kept his eye on the future because the past reminded him of the pain of WW II.

In 1944, Ed at the age of 7, along with his siblings and mother were forced into an concentration camp in the East Dutch Indies. This was one of several camps created by the Japanese to restrict the presence of Indonesians who were of lighter skin color or mixed ancestry.

At the end of the war, Ed's family was sent to New Guinea where they worked to rebuild their life. The weather was hot and they had to start out with nothing. The first step was to build a home.

After 7 years in New Guinea, Ed moved to Amsterdam, Holland as a young man to pursue work and opportunity. After 3 years however he realized that the possibilities were limited for him due to the high cost of land and the shortage of jobs. Ed decided to join his brother who already lived in the United States.

As a young bachelor Ed won a sponsor from the Quaker Community so that he

could make the move to live and work here. In February of 1961, Ed landed in New York and from there made a 2-day train trip to Des Moines.

The first several weeks while Ed looked for work he slept on a roll-away bed that went into the closet each morning. Soon he was employed helping to repair Volkswagen cars.

In those early days Ed explained that his food preference was really Chinese food which is most similar to Indonesian. In

1961, Des Moines just did not have a lot of choices for Chinese food. Today Ed sees more selection of Asian foods available.

Ed met and married his wife, raised a family, and worked over the years here as a mechanic earning the livelihood he desired as a young man. Change for Ed meant opportunity, and as he describes his family it looks like life has been a dream come true. **SB**

Hard Work and Dreams Rudy Thill

He had no idea where he was headed, and that was normal. As a POW in a U.S. camp during WW II, prisoners were moved often from one camp to another. But on this day in 1944, Rudy realized the train was probably crossing the Mississippi. With a superstitious spit into the muddy water Rudy told himself he would return to America after the war and build a life here.

It would be a decade later before Rudy realized his dream and returned to America. There were many jobs and experiences along the way. Sometimes he lost hope he would ever make his way

back here to America but finally in 1954 at the age of 31 he was able to return.

Special point of interest:

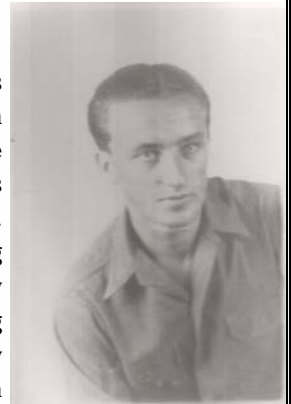
To read the complete story of Rudy's experiences you can order his book called "Adrift in Stormy Times. To order contact Rudy Thill at 285-7820.

With only 5 dollars in his pocket that assured him two nights at the YMCA and food for two days, he set about gaining employment.

Rudy's first job was as a night porter at the Savory Hotel. Even though he was

educated and had held higher positions before the war, he was grateful to have work and took pride in his labor. Soon he was promoted to assistant catering manager and remained at the Savory for many years. Rudy explains that the night hours were perfect for him and he was happy to be working and earning 0.53 an hour.

Soon he was encouraged by a friend to pursue his bachelors degree at Drake. While working at the Savory and attending classes, Rudy lived on 38th Street. Each day he walked the 5 miles to and from his job and classes. In those days he was able to earn the money needed not only to pay for his lodgings but also his tuition at Drake.



As a POW at Camp Fabens in Texas in 1943, Rudy knew that he wanted to come back to the U.S. again, but the next time as a free citizen.

In Rudy's opinion one of the most significant changes today is that a person could not work a basic job and be able to survive let alone pay college tuition. **SB**



Open the door to the spice of the Latin foods ready for you to savor. This market is located right in the neighborhood at 433 5th St. in Valley Junction.

A State of Being— La Michoacana

Lush is the first word in nearly every description. Michoacan is recognized as Mexico's most fertile state for agriculture and history. La Michoacana is a local market in Des Moines' Valley Junction that works to embrace that sense of abundance for the food and community that is traditional to the people of Michoacan.

You immediately feel the sense that there is more here than food when you enter the store. This is a place of family and community where the work of running a local market is honored as a chance to serve and share the flavors of Latin cuisine.

Today Jesus Castro, owner of La Michoacana, is busy working with a customer while his teenage daughter stays busy behind the register. Outside there are children on the lawn playing on scooters. Moments later they run in to purchase a cold soda. Mrs. Castro surveys the shelves while comforting the youngest member of the family on her arm. In the kitchen Jesus' brother-in-law manages the production of today's batch of tamales.

If it were not here in Des Moines, one could easily imagine that this is how a market in a neighborhood somewhere in Mexico might feel. Shopping is an opportunity to visit with your neighbors and celebrate every aspect of meal preparation.

What have the Castros learned about running a small specialty grocery store? For one thing, they keep learning about new foods. Jesus acknowledges that many of their customers are Latinos from not only Mexico but Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. These more recent Iowans come to La Michoacana seeking some of the familiar foods that they use for their traditional family recipes.

Weekends are a busy time for the market. That's when customers have most of their time for shopping and family. In addition to the grocery, La Michoacana offers specially prepared items like Carnitas which is specially seasoned and cooked shredded pork and is often served in burritos and tacos.

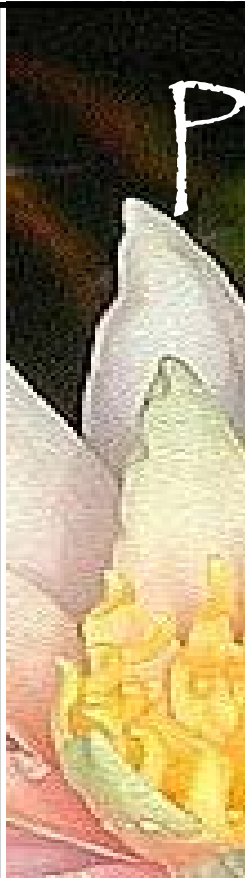
Another favorite is La Michoacana's Chorizo which is a pork sausage seasoned with chili and paprika.

Anytime a customer asks for something that La Michoacana does not have the Castros make a note of that item and then work to have it available for the next time. Like many of the local markets with specialty foods La Michoacana relies on wholesale distribution out of Chicago.

Jesus and his family have celebrated their first year in business. It is no small accomplishment for any store to still be viable after one year but most impressive for a specialty market. Jesus' pride in his store and his family is evident. Someday he has ambitions of growing but for right now things look pretty good in the Valley Junction neighborhood. And really, it appears that what matters most is the care and service that extends beyond his immediate family to the friends and customers. **POH**



From top to Bottom:
 1. Garlic and a root found in Guatemala
 2. Spices of Mexican cuisine
 3. A bounty of peppers
 4. Tender and spicy meats prepared especially at La Michoacana



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Marsha Hines

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More than a little diversity of culture, Hilal is a market where you'll find Indo-Pakistani, Middle-Eastern, and African groceries. Located at 1163 25th St.

From Beginnings to Growth Hilal Groceries

The crescent moon is an important symbol for the Muslim people. Hilal is a term for that first sliver of moon that appears after each new moon and signals a month beginning. Hilal Groceries began 5 years ago with a goal to bring specialty foods to the community. Much like the symbolic significance of the crescent moon, the market itself has become a potent symbol for the city as well.

Hilal Groceries specializes by providing foods for Indo-Pakistani, Middle-Eastern, and African origin.

Betty and Mohammad Khan are co-owners in a partnership with others. Mohammad explains that at first they were simply trying to make it easier to purchase the foods they wanted. Mohammad explains, "We had to go to places like Chicago just to get items." Hilal was to be a project for the retired couple that has turned into a demanding business.

This was especially true for the Hilal meats. The Kahn's have built relationships with many sources to make the Hilal meat available. Chickens, for example, are raised by the Amish organically and then specially slaughtered in observance of Muslim tradition. All Hilal meats are free-range.

Of all the ethnic markets in Des Moines, Hilal Groceries seems to serve the most

diverse group of people. The Drake University area seemed the right place to open the market because of the diversity of the student mix but since then the neighborhood has grown to become one of the most diverse in the city. Betty explains that in addition to Americans, Hilal also serves immigrants from Sudan, Afghan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia and Iran.

Mohammad acknowledges they are always learning something new, "It is very demanding and you have to be looking for things all the time. People are always asking for things you've never heard of. It is quite an education."

In addition to the meats, Hilal provides spices, grains, beans, cheese and fruit drinks. There are items that specifically appeal to vegetarians who are interested in having foods that are free of chemicals. Betty points to an entire line of products that are "ready-to-eat" vegetarian meals.

Hilal has enjoyed growth and the Khan's now are working to expand the market and include a restaurant. They have been amazed but pleased at the interest for Hilal. It was the market that helped them realize the need to support a Mosque for the neighborhood as the Muslim community has continued to grow.

Mohammad admits that it is a hectic business, "We tried to close one day a week just to rest, but we couldn't figure out which day. Even the hours we are opened now from 10 in the morning until 7 in the evening...sometimes we come in early because a truck is making a delivery and even then people are waiting here."

Mostly the Kahn's enjoy the inclusiveness of the community and all they have learned about peoples and cultures. Mohammad explains, "It is an amazing place to meet different people. The amazing thing is we have so much in common with people all around the world. Betty adds, "People come in here seeking help and we become their friends." **SB**

As always thanks to our loyal readers... you keep us keeping on. May you grow and prosper in numbers!

Why In Mind Matters.



In Mind Matters is a range of writing and art services that focus on relating information in a meaningful way so that it matters to other people.

Small Business Buzz

Our effort to do the giving first. SBB is a free newsletter that highlights small businesses and provides access to free advertising.

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In Mind "the Staff"

Sherry



A burgeoning writer and creative thinker. A graduate of Drake University she continues to create imaginative and engaging pieces on local business personalities, as

well as outlining their life in the local community. Sherry is crafting her skills in layout and newsletter format while providing excellent coverage of small business in central Iowa. Epiphanies of collaboration and thinking outside of the box are her guiding force.

David



Masters the pen and paper with illustration work, crafting quality portraits, logos, personalized images and site-specific cartoons. With numerous awards in drawing

and photography, David's work has been printed in publications such as Modern Railroads Magazine, LIFE Magazine, The Des Moines Register, and numerous newsletters and trade journals. **DB**

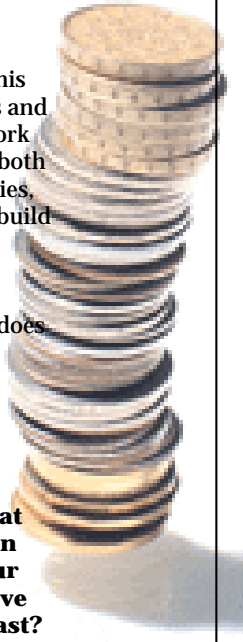
What's your buzz?

Send your comments to inmindmatters@mchsi.com

Rudy and Ed came to this country back in the 50s and 60s (page 5) seeking work and opportunity. They both were able to raise families, pursue education, and build a future working basic minimum wage jobs.

Today minimum wage does not seem to meet the minimums of living expenses.

In your opinion, what are the differences in our economy and our values today that have changed from the past?



Word Of Mouth



A world of food options in the Des Moines area.