

Olive Grove offers a delicious new concept in Mendota Heights

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Contributor

With her new store, The Olive Grove, Natalie Jaeger is convinced she can make your life more delicious. The store, located at 720 Main St., in the Village of Mendota Heights, is a European concept, of-

fering dozens of varieties of olive oil, balsamic vinegar and specialty oils such as truffle oil to be sampled and bottled to order.

The warm, welcoming space is filled with "fustis," stainless steel casks that preserve the oil's freshness. Freshness, says Jaeger, is the most important element in oil quality.

"Fresh oil means you have a ton of flavor and a lot of antioxidants," she said. "As olive oil ages, not only does it gradually lose its flavor, but it also gradually loses all the antioxidants. If you're not using fresh oil, you're really not getting what you could get out of it."

According to Jaeger, many people don't realize the variety of olive oils and vinegars available.

"It's very similar to wine," she said. "There

are many types of olives, so you can have oil that tastes fruity, it can taste woody, it can have a pepper kick on the end of it. Our balsamic vinegars are at least 12 years aged in oak barrels. Our most popular item, hands-down, is an 18-year-aged balsamic vinegar. It sounds weird, but it is really good on fruit or on ice cream."

Jaeger said her products can make meal choices easier. For example, chipotle-fused olive oil over rice with cilantro, or basil-fused olive oil with pasta make quick dinners full of flavor.

Jaeger, a Chicago transplant with a background in real estate, is pleased with her Mendota Heights location.

"I looked in a lot of areas, but I knew this kind of concept would have a regional draw, and



Natalie Jaeger owns The Olive Grove at The Village of Mendota Heights.

this space is right off of (interstates) 35, 494, and (highway) 110," she said. "We have customers coming into the store from hundreds of miles

away, every day. The reception from the community has been really positive. There are many complementary businesses here."

The store also has gourmet mustards, olives and locally-baked breads. For more information, call 651-686-4710, or visit www.theolivegroveoliveoil.com.

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