

# **RBGA Helps Mark 10-Year Anniversaries For Olive Oil Marketplace And Green Tree Inn**

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**GODFREY** – The RiverBend Growth Association recently helped two of its member businesses mark their 10-year anniversaries with celebrations that included special ribbon-cutting ceremonies coordinated by RBGA staff and members.

Marking these milestones were Green Tree Inn of Elsah and Olive Oil Marketplace.

Olive Oil Marketplace hosted its 10th-anniversary celebration with the RBGA on June 3, 2022. Sharing in the day's celebration were approximately 35 RBGA and community members, along with Alton Mayor David Goins. A live broadcast with radio personality Asher Benrubi, better known as "Smash," on Big Z Media's WBGZ/MyMix Radio featured several on-site interviews as well.

Attendees enjoyed cake and ice cream, and a chance to savor their Get-R-Smoked Pulled Pork along with other signature recipe dishes. Also on hand were local vendors sharing products carried in Olive Oil Marketplace's store. There were drawings for a variety of local restaurant gift certificates as well as for an Olive Oil Marketplace Basket filled with goodies.

Olive Oil Marketplace had also partnered with nine local restaurants in the two weeks preceding their June 3rd and 4th anniversary weekend, creating the inaugural "Olive Oil Marketplace Restaurant Week" as a part of their 10th-anniversary celebration. During those two weeks, partnering restaurants featured special dishes using OOM products.

Partnering restaurants included Bossanova Lounge & Restaurant, Bluff City Grill, Mac's Downtown Alton, State Street Market of Alton, Morrison's Irish Pub, The Brown Bag Bistro, Lucianna's Pastries, Old Bakery Beer Company, and My Just Desserts.

Owners Tim and Julie Meeks first launched Olive Oil Marketplace in 2011 from the road. "We sold at fairs, festivals, and craft shows our first year before we went to brick and mortar," noted Tim Meeks. He further said that they chose Alton as their first permanent location because of its "small-town feel and because it was a vibrant community that was still growing and thriving."

Being in the historic downtown river tourist traffic area was another draw for OOM's Alton location. They have since established a second location in Belleville inside the Old Town Mall at 310 E. Main St. OOM currently has two full-time and two-part time employees.

"If you're a foodie, then you need to check out Olive Oil Marketplace," Tim said. "We offer the finest quality 100 percent Extra Virgin Olive Oils from top olive farms in Italy, Spain, Tunisia, California, and Greece. You can choose from traditional olive oil to those infused with natural flavors. There are more than 35 flavored olive oils. To complement the oils, OOM also carries over 35 flavored balsamic vinegars imported from Modena, Italy."

In addition to the oils and balsamics, OOM also offers a variety of handmade pastas, seasoning blends and rubs, dips and sauces, pepper jellies, jams, mustards, soup mixes, kitchen and grilling gadgets, loose teas, fresh-roasted coffee beans, and more. They host a tasting room and retail store at their Alton location.

When asked what had helped them over the past 10 years to get to where they are now, Julie Meeks said, “Faith, family, friends, and a lot of hard work. And the loyal support from our customers.”

“We hope when you come into our store, you feel welcomed and comfortable,” she added. “Our oils and balsamics speak for themselves. We welcome customer requests and look forward to the opportunity to earn their trust as we deliver some of the finest products Italy has to offer. Our customers’ experiences are of the utmost importance. We are totally committed to exceeding expectations, one customer at a time. We invite you to come to experience the quality and taste the difference.”

To learn more about Olive Oil Marketplace, visit online at [oliveoilmarketplace.com](http://oliveoilmarketplace.com) or call (618) 304-3769. Email inquiries should be sent to [sales@oliveoilmarketplace.com](mailto:sales@oliveoilmarketplace.com).



Green Tree Inn of Elsah hosted its 10th-anniversary celebration on June 21, 2022. Attendees included several RBGA and community members along with Elsah Mayor Mike Pitchford, the builder and original owner of the Green Tree Inn.

Attendees enjoyed a diverse menu of refreshments, including homemade sweet treats such as triple chocolate brownies, chocolate chip bars, and gooey butter cake. Fresh fruit and veggie pizza were also served.

Owners Gary and Connie Davis were actively looking for a bed and breakfast business investment when they came across the Village of Elsie 10 years ago. “We had looked at several other locations before we came to look at Green Tree,” said Connie Davis. “The first time we came into the village, there was just a little bit of snow and it looked like a winter wonderland. We were hooked. We immediately fell in love with the Village of Elsie.”

Constructed by Pitchford and initially opened in 1986, the Davises are the third owners of the establishment. They also serve as its two full-time employees, with added support provided by the Inn’s two part-time housekeepers.

The Davises reside on the premises, giving them a greater chance to get to know visitors to the inn. It also makes it easier for them to meet the needs of their guests, share the area’s history, offer recommendations for dining and local attractions, and ensure a relaxing stay.

“We are a true bed and breakfast,” Davis said. “We provide homemade sweet treats every afternoon and a full home-cooked breakfast each morning. We will also provide dinner for our guests if they book the entire inn for their stay. This is a great place for family reunions or retreats. And we can also host small weddings at our gazebo.”

With the Village of Elsie’s designation on the National Historic Register, the Green Tree Inn offers guests a unique place to get away, with shopping places, restaurants, wineries, and other attractions nearby.

“We just received the TripAdvisor’s Travelers Choice Award for the third year in a row,” Davis noted. “This award is given to the top 10 percent of all lodging properties worldwide. We would not have received this award if it had not been for our wonderful guests taking the time to submit their reviews.”

“Gary and I love getting to know our guests over breakfast,” she added. “We also love sharing the history of Elsie. We are happy to do private tours of Elsie’s village museum for our guests too. If you haven’t stayed with us, we would love to have you as our guest.”

For more information about the Green Tree Inn of Elsie, visit online at [greentreeinnelsie.com](http://greentreeinnelsie.com) or call (618) 374-2821. Email inquiries should be sent to owner. [greentreeinn@gmail.com](mailto:greentreeinn@gmail.com).

The RiverBend Growth Association is the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization for the 11 communities known as the Riverbend. For more information about the Growth Association, please visit [www.growthassociation.com](http://www.growthassociation.com) or call (618) 467-2280.