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FRESH HARVEST

NEW TASTING ROOM IN ROGERS FEATURES HEALTHY, AUTHENTIC OLIVE OILS AND BALSAMIC VINEGARS

“Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food.” – Hippocrates

Those words are a simple philosophy that Troy Johnson now lives by.

The stage IV cancer survivor has defied the odds against the life-threatening disease with the help of standard medical treatments, as well as large doses of hope, prayers and a high-oxidant diet that is laden heavily with all-natural olive oils and balsamic vinegars.

Johnson and his longtime best friend and partner Steve Ketchersid moved from California to Northwest Arkansas in 2012, opening Fresh Harvest Tasting Room in Eureka Springs. Tucked away in The Village shopping center, the cozy establishment offers patrons an opportunity to sample a large variety of premium olive oils and barrel-aged balsamic vinegars. TripAdvisor.com lists Fresh Harvest as the city's top-rated shopping destination for locals and visitors.



Owners Steve Ketchersid and Troy Johnson in the recently opened Fresh Harvest Tasting Room in downtown Rogers.

With that great retail success over the past six years, Johnson and Ketchersid decided to expand, recently opening a second tasting room in historic downtown Rogers. “Not only do we sell these ultra-premium products, but we also like to educate consumers on the health benefits they can provide,” Johnson said. “We are able to reach a lot of people in Eureka, but we are now going to be able to reach and educate many more in a much larger area like Rogers and Bentonville.”

Each shop offers 80 or 90 different items to taste at any given time. The complimentary tasting tours are on a first come, first served basis, and take from five to 15 minutes. “We like to show our clients around for the first time and let them sample our products before they purchase,” Johnson added. “We specialize in high-antioxidant olive oils, which include biophenols, and have been

proven to fight cancer. Being a cancer survivor myself, I do attribute nutrition and my diet greatly to my recovery.”

With many “fake” olive oils on the market — generally a product adulterated with canola oil and tinted with green food coloring — Johnson warns consumers to be cautious, particularly when shopping at common grocery stores. The best detection is simply the oily film the canola oil can leave in your mouth, as opposed to the light juice-like quality produced by authentic olive oil.

“Olives are a fruit, so a real extra virgin olive oil is not oily or greasy,” he said. “We are very particular with the suppliers we deal with, and we chemically test all of our olive oils.”

Fresh Harvest accepts only ultra-premium olive oils, which are those crushed (or processed) within six hours





of harvest. Also, with the northern and southern hemispheres alternating summer seasons, the oil is imported from north of the equator half of the year, and from the south for the remaining half. "There is nothing added to these products. No added chemicals, colorings, sugars or flavorings. All authentic," Johnson said.

The olive oils are kept in vacuum-sealed pots, called fustis, to prevent light and air from damaging the oils. "We fill all of our bottles here at the store, but we try to maintain the integrity of the product," he said.

The balsamic vinegars are made with grapes and aged in wooden barrels from 12 to 18 years, in Modena, Italy. Again, with all of the "fake" products on the market, Johnson and Ketchersid take pride in the fact that their products are completely authentic, with no additives.

The Rogers tasting room is now open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Patrons are encouraged to just drop by, or view the website at FreshHarvest.co, which lists the current varieties of oils and vinegars, as well as provides 200 recipes for healthier eating. "We are seeing some definite health advantages to using olive oil," Johnson said. "I love the fact that we are able to help people find healthier ways to eat." ■





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Polo in the Ozarks is a family-friendly event featuring a live polo match, children's activities, tailgating, silent and live auctions, and a gala dinner with live music and dancing. All proceeds support the mission of Life Styles, Inc., a non-profit organization that has been providing quality services to individuals with disabilities since 1976.

Match Tickets: \$25 Adult, \$10 Children. Gala tickets, tables, and VIP packages for adults start at \$100 and include admission to the match. Visit polointheozarks.com to learn more and purchase tickets.

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