

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

84 YEARS IN BUSINESS **LOCALLY MADE** **GREEN BUSINESS**

LEWIS JOHNSON
OWNER

Butte View Olive Co. and Stella Cadente, two wildly popular olive oil labels that serve cooks across the nation, are produced right here in Oroville by Lewis Johnson and his family.

It all began in 1935, when Johnson's grandfather first began farming the 150 acres of olive trees that they still have today. In 1999 Johnson produced the first bottle of Butte View olive oil after three years of fine-tuning his process.

Today, Butte View produces a wide variety of extra virgin olive oils infused with flavors including: jalapeño, garlic, basil, lemon, lime, blood orange and rosemary. These pure, light and delicate hand crafted oils provide wonderful aromas and distinctive accents to any dish making them truly unique and excellent – just one more reason why these olive oils are “Gold” and “Best of Class” medal winners.

Mr. Johnson welcomes you to come experience California sunshine in a bottle! Available in Chico at Maisie Jane's, Made in Chico, and S&S Produce, in Oroville at Collins & Denny Market, and Wagon Wheel Market, in 250ml and 500ml bottles.

BUTTE VIEW
olive company

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SECOND & FLUME

by **Melissa Daugherty**
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Cheers to Dave

I last saw Dave Mettler a few weeks before Thanksgiving. I was at Safeway to buy sourdough bread, but I popped over to the next aisle to say hello to the store's venerable “wine guy.”

I needed to get home and get cooking, but I loved chitchatting with Dave.

During a previous shopping trip, he'd helped me select the bottles to fill out a six-pack of wine for the upcoming holidays. It was a treat for him as much as it was for me, as I'm a bit of a hard sell. That is, I'm an occasional wine drinker, mainly because I get migraines. Dave knew this, and he'd often ask whether I was keeping hydrated.

He'd also always ask about my husband and my son, Henry, the latter of whom he'd seen only once since early in the pandemic, when we crossed paths with him and his granddaughter—they enjoying a walk, us on bikes—in our neighborhood.

Dave was a doting grandfather. On several occasions over the years, I ran into him at the elementary school that Henry and his granddaughter attended. He often talked about her when we chatted in the store, his gravely voice softening as he listed her accomplishments.

I first met Dave shortly after he began working at the Mangrove Avenue store in 2013, but it was decades into his career with Safeway. He won me over by offering a bakery cookie to Henry, who was then a little guy still sitting in the top basket of the grocery cart.

At first, I was a bit taken aback by Dave's presence. If you know, you know. But for those who don't, he could be described as being, well, passionate about wine and spirits. The store's beverage steward, he was responsible for stocking the shelves and helping customers, giving them suggestions tailored to their tastes or the occasion.

Dave had a knack for steering customers to the best bottles for the price point. When Safeway was having a big sale, he'd suggest a six-pack, which knocks the cost per bottle down further. I caved on several occasions, because, let's be honest, Dave was a hell of a salesman. He also knew his stuff—from Bordeaux to zinfandel—and gave great advice, both about wine and life.

In fact, as I reported back in 2019, Dave became a certified sommelier, making him one of the most knowledgeable wine people in town. During the interview, when I asked him how the new bona fides had changed his job, Dave mentioned his confidence. But he quickly noted that he was still learning. “Your mind is like a parachute—it doesn't work unless it's open,” he said.

That was the second time Dave had appeared in the paper. Years earlier, I made him one of the Best of Chico Editors' Picks. He never stopped mentioning how grateful he was for that surprise write-up, noting the wave of congratulations and customers he gained from it.

During our last conversation, as always, Dave asked about my family. I, too, asked about his. We talked for only five or ten minutes, but within that time, Dave showed me pictures of his granddaughter, beaming about how she was becoming quite the equestrian. He sorely missed her, as her family had moved to Oregon. He also showed off pics of him in his high school band.

We laughed and then I said I needed to get home, never thinking that would be the last time I'd see him. Dave died after a sudden illness shortly before Thanksgiving. He was 65.

It took me a few weeks to return to Safeway after I heard that he had passed away. And honestly, once I did, the store felt alien without his presence. Because it was a rarity not to find Dave helping a customer or stocking bottles in aisle 17, I simply expected he'd always be there.

But, as we all know—more so these days than ever—life comes with no guarantees. Perhaps Dave's last lessons for us would be to remember just that—and to befriend those around us and love our people unabashedly, as he did.

To that I say, *Cheers!*

Melissa Daugherty is editor-at-large for the Chico News & Review