

MARKET BASKET

A Tradition of Quality

By Victoria Keenan

For the last 56 years, Market Basket has been a staple in the North Jersey catering world. With everything from the highest quality butchered meats to the freshest breads, pastries and more, Market Basket is far from just another gourmet market. Third generation family member Zach Chernalis explained how his family and Market Basket do things differently, not only in their sprawling Franklin Lakes location, but through their catering services and healthy eating options.

Anthony Chernalis started the family business at just 20 years old, creating Market Basket as a butcher shop/deli, before eventually catering out of the small storefront. Realizing he needed to expand, he designed a much larger store in Franklin Lakes, the space where Market Basket is today. Since then, the family has expanded the store twice, ensuring everything at Market Basket is made from scratch by culinary trained chefs. From smoking their own meats to creating their homemade delicacies, the family focuses on utilizing the highest quality and freshest ingredients. “We send our 18-wheelers into Hunts Point Market four to five times a week to make sure we’re getting the freshest produce and seafood. For us, we go the extra step by skipping over distributors so that our buyers can hand select the best products available. We drive our trucks to local farms all the time and get what’s in season. We’re not a huge chain, so we can always make sure we are buying the top of the line meats, even when there is not a large quantity in the market. We contract with small farms in Pennsylvania to make sure we get the best grass-fed turkeys that are never frozen,” Chernalis explained.



From the deli to their high-end items, like fresh black and white truffle and caviar, the storefront is always packed with everything one can possibly want. With a heavy focus on catering, Market Basket is one of the top catering companies in the state; doing everything from corporate lunches to weddings. “We can really do anything and that’s the great thing about us. Someone could come to us today and say ‘I need food for a last minute 300 person event tomorrow’ and we could do it no problem. We can be really flexible and cater to everyone’s needs,” Chernalis said. “We have 40 vans in the fleet to ensure we can always get to you on time. We’re always coming up with new designs for display pieces and props, we’re always innovating. We even have a full-time carpenter to create unique display pieces for your event.”

Much more than just a caterer, Market Basket is always looking for new ways to provide its clientele with healthy options. Heather Campanile, Market Basket’s Registered Dietitian, explained how the company is expanding their healthy options with a clean eating presence in the store and taking different dietary needs into account. “We want to have the quality food while also focusing on creating healthy food that can be gourmet and can taste good too. People believe that healthy has to be [bland] and that’s the tradeoff, but we really are able to create these high-end meals that don’t make you feel like you’re sacrificing taste.”

Some examples of these meals are the cold pressed juices, made with certified organic produce like kale and carrots, which are packed with vitamins. There is also Gourmet to Go, where two chefs work to make hot foods, like salmon, chicken and pastas, and also have cold display cases, with quinoa salad, and other healthy options. There is everything from marinated flank steaks to pan seared scallops, all prepared ready. The case also has dinners like salmon, wild rice and asparagus, as well as other clean foods such as an array of roasted and steamed vegetables, and dishes like octopus salad and turkey meatballs.

For 2017, Market Basket will continue to introduce healthy options into their already stellar repertoire, and will bring in a registered dietitian to the store for customers seeking guidance for their special dietary needs; this will include gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan, vegetarian and Paleo options. Store tours will also be available with the dietitian in order to help customers find clean eating labeled items in Gourmet to Go and prepared foods.

