

# 165 Final

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olive oil quality, small producers, health benefits, extra virgin, antioxidants, polyphenols, mislabeling, adulteration, harvest date, storage tips, cooking methods, monounsaturated fats, regenerative farming, olive oil tasting, Mediterranean diet

## SPEAKERS

David Sandstrom, Marianna Devetzoglou

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**M** Marianna Devetzoglou 00:00

I think the most important thing is that you can't really trust lots of labels and food, especially in grocery shops. And it's very important to look beyond that, learn about your food, where it comes from, who makes it. It's what you put in your body, and it's your fuel. Some people say, Oh, my car, they said in my car that they would never put a low quality fuel into their car, right? Why would you put a low quality fuel into your body, and you only have one body for this lifetime, at least

**D** David Sandstrom 00:31

Amen, sister,

**M** Marianna Devetzoglou 00:33

exactly. So try to look beyond that. Learn who makes your food and supporting small producers, not just all involved producers, small producers of food is really critical for the well being and our health. And after all, our health is our wealth at the end of the day,

**D** David Sandstrom 00:56

Welcome to the Christian Healthy Lifestyle podcast. If you're new to the show, this is where I help Christians over 40 maximize their health potential so they can age gracefully and live abundantly. I'm your host. David Sandstrom, naturopathic doctor and biblical health coach, and this is episode number 165 today we have in the show Mariana Devetzoglou with a physics background. Mariana created Oleosophia, a company that produces award winning extra virgin

olive oil, a certified olive oil taster. She hosts tastings, experiences and seminars. Her journey was powered by a personal love story, and through Oleosophia, she guides us into the amazing world of olive oil. Marianna, welcome to Christian healthy lifestyle.

**M** Marianna Devetzoglou 01:39

Hello, David. Thank you very much for inviting me, and it's so nice to be here with you to discuss all things olive oil.

**D** David Sandstrom 01:46

Absolutely it's a pleasure having you on. You know, my wife and I were there a couple of months ago, and we did a tour of your your olive olive oil farm. And it was just fantastic. And I learned so much. And I said, Man, I've would really love to have you on the on the show, make an episode out of it, because I learned so much, and I'm sure the listeners are going to learn a lot too from this conversation.

**M** Marianna Devetzoglou 02:08

Thank you. I hope so too. So

**D** David Sandstrom 02:11

tell us a little bit about your background. You have a degree in physics, right? Yes,

**M** Marianna Devetzoglou 02:17

I have an urban background, meaning I was born and raised in Athens, so nothing to do with agriculture, and I studied physics in Athens and London. I got involved into the olive oil industry when I met George. George, now he's my husband, so I was a horrible olive oil consumer, and I learned a lot of things when meeting George and his family. Through meeting the family, I learned about the problems in the olive oil industry, and that intrigued me to learn more and improve my lifestyle and my quality of food. So I decided to pursue an olive oil education. So apart from being a physicist, I'm also a certified olive oil sommeriaAnd taster, and last year, I finished my master's degree with the Spanish School of olive oil as well. So we founded Oli Sophia. I'm the founder, and it's a woman led business. And we take the family's olive oil and we communicated directly to fine food stores and deli shops, and, of course, directly to our community of oleosophers. We do this because the previous business model for the family, George's family, Abby was to sell bulk and traders, so all the beautiful quality characteristics were lost in the vast sea of olive oils. Yeah. We started our journey in 2018 the year that we got married, and we continue with our journey.

**D** David Sandstrom 03:44

Excellent. Well, you know, a few episodes ago, in episodes 141 and 142 I talked about saturated fat and vegetable oils, or seed oils, and I was discouraging people from consuming excessive amounts of polyunsaturated fatty acids. But olive oil is different. It is. It's not an animal based product. It still is a plant based product, but it's very low in polyunsaturated fatty acids and high in monounsaturated fatty acids, which really transforms the properties of that oil and it becomes a health food.

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David Sandstrom 04:17

So can you talk to us a little bit about the health benefits of consuming quality extra virgin olive oil?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 04:24

Yes, of course. First of all, I know that there are lots of international trains for fat free diets and things like that, but we do need fat in our life, just in moderation and the right type of fat. So extra virgin olive oil, which basically is the natural fruit juice that comes from the fruit of the olive tree. That is the olive Okay, contains more healthy fat, unsaturated than unhealthy fat. It is reaching high. It is rich in antioxidants, as vitamin E, vitamin A, polyphenols. That are very good against inflammations, so that helps protect our heart reduce inflammation within our body. If Polyphenols are a type of antioxidants, and also they seem because there are ongoing research to help shield ourselves and slow down the development of new neurodegenerative diseases. That's Alzhiemers, Parkinson's dementia, multiple sclerosis, things that we get because, you know, we get older, and as we get older, of course, more things are starting to work, not as good as they did before, and that is inevitable. Yeah. So it also protects us against high blood pressure. It helps us have it more reduced, but pressure and all that is that's something that I emphasize always. It's if we consume it on a daily basis, it's proactive. I'm building up my shield. Rather than I got sick, I'm gonna get some extra virgin olive oil to get better. It's part of a holistically good and well rounded and balanced diet, a little bit of everything, basically,

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David Sandstrom 06:21

yeah, yeah. I really like that approach. Now this is Christian healthy lifestyle, because our lifestyle choices have a lot to do with how we how well we age, and how resilient our bodies are to preventing things like cognitive decline and wrinkled skin and you know, all of those things, any chronic degenerative disease can be addressed much more effectively with lifestyle choices than they can with drugs. So you know, I totally agree with what you just said, that olive oil is a part of a healthy lifestyle, but we got to make sure we're getting quality olive oil and we're consuming it in the right way.

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David Sandstrom 06:59

So talk to us a little bit about, if you would the difference in, you know, everyday grocery store variety olive oil and your extra virgin olive oil. I mean, there's a lot to talk about there, but go ahead, you got the floor.

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**Marianna Devetzoglou 07:13**

Well, thank you. Well, the olive oil industry is a huge industry and has no borders, which means that on a global level, there's lots of money involved. Unfortunately, olive oil is one of the most popular products for mislabeling and adulteration and fraud. That being said, our chances of finding authentic extra virgin olive oil at a supermarket are quite slim, okay, everywhere, including Greece, actually another producing country.

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**David Sandstrom 07:47**

I thought that was just United States. Go over there as well, huh?

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**Marianna Devetzoglou 07:51**

No, you're not alone in that. We'll keep you company. Olive oil. Countries are not an exception to that, unfortunately. So here as well the olive oil education needs to grow more and more customers have to get to know more about what we actually consume. Overall, olive oils that end up in large grocery shops tend to be mislabeled or old and adulterated mixed with other oils. This means that sometimes we buy what is labeled as extra virgin olive oil, thinking it is extra virgin olive oil, and it ends up being something completely different. Yeah. I do respect people that want to purchase something else, but as long as you know it that it is something else, yeah, so the extra virgin olive oil that we make as artists and productions, because we work with a small production that we only sell to our philosophers and do some select fine food stores around the world, is produced from healthy fruits that are harvested in the best way and are pressed within 12 to maximum 24 hours from collection. This is so crucial, because the olive fruit, unfortunately, once picked from the tree, it's dead, so it starts decomposing, and unlike Oranges and Lemons, and decomposes very quickly. So you cannot make a fresh fruit juice with all the nutritional value from a fruit that is decomposed. And this is a main reason why Extra Virgin Olive Oil of high quality is not an abundant product and not a very cheap product, because harvesting in the morning and going to the press at nights. Okay? Every day means more labor, more itineraries. I'm losing more olive oil every time I go through the pressing facility versus, let's say, a more mass oriented production, I will collect for several days, and at the end of those days, I'm gonna. Patch everything up in my truck and go once to the mill. So think of your olive oil like your orange juice. You want fresh oranges to make an amazing orange juice. You want fresh healthy olives to make an amazing extra virgin olive oil. Extra Virgin Olive Oil has a beautiful chemical composition, amazing aromas that connect to the variety of the olives that are harvested and no defects. So it's born in perfection.

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**David Sandstrom 10:33**

Yeah, that's great. That's a great summary, you know. And I've known about the the problem with olive oil, ordinary, grocery store variety olive oil being adulterated for quite some time. Why do you think that? Is that it's such a common practice, it would seem that there would be some type of legislation that would prevent that. But if there is, they're not effective. What are your thoughts on that?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 10:54

Well, money is big, so big corporations, they need to feed the masses and have a lot of food available. So you cannot go with an artisan small production. You have to cultivate more super intensively. You have to mix, maybe olive oils from different years and different places in order to increase your quantities and have them readily available for the supermarket. So this is a food crisis starting from the grove and the soil all the way to consumer education and consumer behavior. There are legislations in the States and also in the in the European Union. But that doesn't mean that all companies abide to these legislation. Controls are random, so if and when I get caught, there might be a penalty to pay, which is not so big compared to the revenues. Therefore it's worth the risk. That's the cost of doing business sometimes, whereas a smaller producer, not only is finding it difficult to pay that penalty, but also it's our name out in the market. And sadly, sometimes consumers might be traped or misguided, and you walk into a shop and then there is buy two, get free, and everyone forgets everything,

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David Sandstrom 12:23

right? Yeah, well, you know, I like to think of it this way, and that is, these people are trying to make a living, right? They want to have a company that's profitable. Issue, because you're not profitable, you're not going to be around, right? And because they don't know an awful lot about nutrition, they don't see a problem with adulterating the oil would, you know, it's something like, I don't know what they would put in there, but it's, I know it's a seed oil. Canola oil is very popular here in the States and Canada. Soybean oil is another very, very popular large crop, much less expensive here in the States, because those crops and corn oil as well, are heavily subsidized by the federal government, so they can get that product really inexpensively. And it's, as we talked about on your tour, a highly processed really, you could call it a toxic product, and they adulterate their extra virgin olive oil with it because it dramatically reduces the cost, and because they don't know enough about nutrition and anatomy and physiology, how that those oils will react in our bodies. They don't see any ethical problem with it. So therefore, it is rampant in the industry. And I really thought that if I went to some of the big health food store chains here in the US, I was going to be safe. I thought that for a while, but after doing your tour, and when you taught my wife and I How to taste real olive oil, I tasted your product. And by the way, I have your product right here. This, this is, this is Oleophia. Olive oil came from Greece. We ordered by the case with some friends that are like minded and understand the value in paying a little bit more for quality. This is quality, folks. And I'm telling you, if you taste this oil, this olive oil alongside your your high, you ah, quote, extra virgin olive oil from all right, I'm just going to use the name Whole Foods or Trader Joe's that are promoting themselves as, you know, a health food store, there's a big difference. You know, right away, all you got to do is get that olive oil near your nose and you can tell that there's a difference, let alone tasting it. I mean, so anyway, I want a little bit of a rant or rant there.

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David Sandstrom 14:29

But can you talk to us a little bit about how you can distinguish between low quality and high quality? Extra virgin olive oil.

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**Marianna Devetzoglou 14:42**

Of course, it takes some practice and some education, but overall, consumers are used to low quality olive oils, and they think that this is what extra virgin olive oil feels, tastes and smells like when we taste an extra virgin olive oil, ah. We should keep in mind that it's a fruit juice, therefore it has to smell fruity. So fruitiness is the first characteristic that we're looking for in an extra virgin olive oil. This fruitiness can refer to all the aromas that we can smell. And the aroma range is a huge has a huge spectrum we're talking about fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, almonds, nuts. We have green aromas, meaning aromas that reminds us of fruits and vegetables when they are unripe and therefore usually green. We have sweet aromas, aromas that remind us of fruits and vegetables when they're more mature. Think of the tomato basically, when it's green and ripe. That's a green aroma. When it turns more mature, becomes redder and softer. That's sweet aroma. Okay, so I need to smell fresh and nature. Then when I taste it, I need to find some level of bitterness and some level of pungency. Bitterness and pungency. Pungency is this peppery sensation that we feel here in the upper far links, and quite often, most people call it peppery or spicy. Okay, so bitterness and pungency are there? Why? Because the fruit itself, if you bite it from the tree, it's super bitter, therefore the fruit juice will have some bitterness. Also. Antioxidants and Polyphenols are responsible for the bitterness and the pungency in our extra virgin olive oil. So when you taste an olive oil that is more bland and there is no flavor, there is no aroma to it, you should be suspicious, whereas when you smell an olive oil that has a personality, has no vibrance into it, oh, we have something here. Yeah, at this point I'd like to add an answer. Is that just like in wines, we have different grapes that give us different wine personalities. Same here we have different olive varieties that give us different olive oils. So you can come across a delicate olive oil, extra virgin olive oil, a medium extra virgin olive oil, or a robust extra virgin olive oil, just because the variety is such that it gives you the respective expression at that so at that point, you need to consider, is it quality? One, yes, no, and then do I like it? So finding your olive oil means that you need to experiment. You need to taste and you need to also practice at home by smelling your fresh fruits and vegetables, scratch them in bed and smell them before cooking them.

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**David Sandstrom 17:51**

Yeah, yeah. What a great analogy there, for sure. I mean, you can take an old vegetable and freeze it, and when you unfreeze it, it's still an old vegetable, right? It doesn't get any better after it starts to rot, right? So same is true with olive oil. And I know that that maybe we could talk about this in a minute, that you put you go to great lengths at your, at your, your, your grove. We call it an olive oil an olive tree grove. Is that what we call it? Yes, you go to great lengths to protect the soil and do things the way nature intended to grow your trees in a natural fashion, and I know that you don't use chemical fertilizers and those kinds of things, but let me put that on back burner for just a minute. I want to stay here on the tasting.

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**David Sandstrom 18:38**

And I know that you send your products at random to a tasting agency over in Spain. So can you, can you talk to us a little bit about that?

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**Marianna Devetzoglou 18:48**

Yes, it's not a tasting agency in Spain. In Spain is where the headquarters of the International olive Council are. The headquarters the international olive Council is the grand regulator of all things olive oil, and they have established certified tasting panels in many countries. Of course, olive oil producing countries and some What are more in the consuming side. And legally, I'm obligated to send samples of my production for a chemical analysis, because food and life are also chemistry and for a tasting evaluation, the terminology is sensory or organoleptic evaluation. So although, as a taster myself, when I work in production, I taste for my quality assurance, I need to go through this certified panel, because one person cannot issue such a certification and unbiased. These panels consist of tasters that receive samples and blindly evaluate them and write back to you extra. Virgin, virgin or plain olive oil, depending on the quality category that the samples fall into, only when I have a positive sensory evaluation and a positive chemical evaluation. These two together complement each other. Allow me to claim my title as extra virgin olive oil. So tasting is a crucial part, not just for a fun experience, but also to help guide the consumers. It is an actual job done in tasting panels according to very specific standards.

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David Sandstrom 20:38

Yeah, yeah. That's That's great. That is so such a great quality control standard that you volunteer to hold yourself to, I think that really separates you from many of the olive oil producers around the world. Really, go ahead

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Marianna Devetzoglou 20:54

It's not exactly volunteering. It's actually demanded by law. Oh, really, if I don't, if I don't do it and I get caught, I could be penalized because I'm missing my legal documentation. A small artisan producer will do that, not just to be safe on the legal side, but also when we get the results back. Okay, and the tasters have described to us the personality of the olive oil. This is something that we communicate to our partners, because it helps them explain and describe our olive oil to their customer that has just walked into the daily shop and is looking for an extra virgin olive oil,

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David Sandstrom 21:41

Yeah. Okay. All right. Very good. So, so other lesser quality companies will go through this same standard. But it would it be, would it be correct? Just to make sure I'm understanding, you would be correct to say that? Well, if I, if I cut my extra virgin certified extra virgin olive oil by 50% it's still okay for me to put extra virgin olive oil on the label, but that's not necessarily all that's in the bottle. Is that correct kind of yes, okay, fill in the gaps.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 22:14

You can, you can send a very good batch, okay, for a tasting analysis, and then bottle all your tanks are all your tank certified, not necessarily. So basically, that's why there are a lot numbers for traceability and things like that. Okay, if you get caught, you might be penalized,

so you risk that it doesn't happen very often, or as often as we would like, and consumers usually don't know that side they walk into the supermarket, olive oils are mostly for calorific value rather than for nutritional value.

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David Sandstrom 22:52

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, one of the points I wanted to make along those lines is that if you look at the published medical literature, there's conflicting information regarding the health benefits to olive oil. There are some studies that say, Wow, this is like a miracle food. And then others say, Well, no, hang on. Maybe not. Some not so much so. And I, my theory, is that it's because people are using different grades of olive oil in their studies. You know you can have an ethical producer, such as yourself, doing things right, and we're going to see some good results in the study, or we can have some low quality stuff that's called extra virgin and not produce the same results. So would you agree with that?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 23:37

Indeed, all the research has to be done with extra virgin olive oils, not just any type of olive oil. People, we all tend to call it just olive oil, but legally, okay. And technically, when we refer to plain olive oil, it is actually a refined oil, meaning it has been treated to become edible. And the first material for that is a non edible oil that comes out from pressing materials and pressing facilities. Yes, okay, allow me to explain a bit the levels the pyramid. Okay, sure. Everything starts from the growth, from a healthy growth, a healthy grow with a healthy cultivation where you collect, using best practices, and you go on daily basis to a clean, quality, oriented meal the pressing facility, okay? The equivalent to your juicer to juice your juice. Okay, we lead me to an extra virgin olive oil. The same process, but without so many good practices. I harvest for five, six days, and then I take everything together at the meal. I always have more decomposing. Maybe the meal is not so clean, so well maintained, I will have a virgin olive oil. Virgin olive oil starts having some minor defects. Defects in olive oil are shortcomings in the nose and in the mouth that we find there as a result of bad practices. So that means that quality is starting to go down in some cases where everything goes wrong. Sick fruits, horrible milk conditions, piling olives for days and days on end, can lead to the production of lampante oil, lumpy oil. Basically, this is not edible. It's not fit for human consumption, but it is refined using hexane, which is a petroleum based agent in very high temperatures, four to 600 Celsius. That is approximately 800 Fahrenheit plus, to deodorize, decolorize, make a uniform blend, to make it edible. So a bottle that writes olive oil is refined. I know that the word refined in your vocabulary usually is connected to purification. You refine your diesel and all that. Though, I'm not comfortable comparing diesel with extra virgin olive oil for obvious reasons. Okay, but refine also means that it wasn't fine and someone made it fine again. So it's not just olive oil, it's food that was for throwing away, but we used it.

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David Sandstrom 26:36

Yeah, I want to point something out here. I was an airline pilot 35 years so I think jet airliners and those kinds of things. A jet engine burns kerosene. And kerosene is a very unrefined fuel, and it doesn't burn very easily. If you had some sitting in a bowl, for instance, and threw a match on it, it would not catch on fire. That doesn't catch on fire very easily. So in



order to get it to ignite inside of a jet engine, it has to go to extremely high temperatures. And you know what that temperature is? It's about 600 degrees Celsius, and so, so that's how you that's a temperature you need to burn this low quality fuel. You've got a heat. It extreme. So extreme temperatures, eight, 900 degrees Fahrenheit. That's a really hot batch, and to think that that oil is not going to be damaged in that process is crazy. I mean, it's just that's, that's not like, as you said, not an edible fuel, is it not an edible food? Yes, yeah, crazy.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 27:36

So plain olive oil has this problem. Regular olive oil, that's why extra virgin olive oil is healthier than regular olive oil, yes, okay, because of the antioxidants, because of the vitamins in it, because of the flavor that it brings to the food, okay? And this is why we encourage people to read your labels. Don't just see an olive tree photo or an olive on a bottle, and just grab it. Yes, read the label,

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David Sandstrom 28:03

right? So let me clarify. If you're at the grocery store and you see a bottle of olive oil, and next to it there's an extra virgin olive oil, there is a big, big difference.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 28:16

There is a big difference. However, in the grocery shop, the labeled extra virgin olive oil could be virgin olive oil, usually or olive oil are mixed. Okay. You can find mislabeling in grocery shops, right? But for sure, you can zoom in by rejecting plastic bottles or sign of low quality, okay, rejecting bottles that right, bottled in versus product of that's a small difference that many consumers don't pay attention to product of means produced cultivated in that country, bottled in. It's not illegal, but maybe it was bottled in, I don't know, Greece, but the oils could be from anywhere else you don't know that. Go for dark glass, because olive oil is photosensitive, like beer or metal tin. Go for smaller packaging, close to your monthly bi monthly needs, rather than a huge jug that you open up and it takes you a year to finish, and as the level goes down, oxygen is oxidizing and aging. Basically your olive oil, because olive oil ages, yeah, and of course, the best way is to look and find and support smaller producers. Buy directly from them, if you can, and look for a harvest date. Harvest date is the birthday of the product. So that means that you know when it was made, and you know where in its life cycle you are if you don't find a harvest date, is it a fresh olive oil? Was it made from three years ago? How old? Old, is it? There's a big cloud?

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David Sandstrom 30:03

Yeah, yeah. Those are all some really good points go ahead.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 30:07

And also a very low prices are suspicious also. And you don't have to pay \$100 per per bottle. But the truth is, always somewhere in the middle, very low prices are suspicious

but the truth is, always somewhere in the middle, very low prices are suspicious.

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David Sandstrom 30:18

Yeah, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna say this. You know, our grocery store variety olive oil goes for 12 to \$15 a bottle. Your olive oil sells for 40 Euro? Is that right? something like that?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 30:32

this year and in the states, yes. Are we talking about the same size, 500 ml, which is, ,

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David Sandstrom 30:37

yeah I couldn't, I couldn't tell you for sure, probably similar. I don't, I don't know, similar, yes, yeah. So there's, there's a difference.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 30:47

There is a difference. And usually with your cooking and eating habits, you would need approximately, let's assume that you need a bottle per month, correct? Yeah, your question when you're switching to a quality product, be that olive oil or honey or something else, is is 30, 40x amount of dollars to per month too much on my family budget to have access to a high quality, extra virgin olive oil, and ideally that I know who makes it, and anytime I can call and say, Hey, do you have more? No amount of stock. The easiest thing for a producer is to buy somebody else's olive oil, put it in their bottles and sell it. But is that the transparency and the ethos and the vision we want for our artisan production? Yes, no, and they select accordingly,

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David Sandstrom 31:43

Right, yeah. Let's go back a little bit to the to the quality control that you put into things. We start with the trees and the farm, right? So can you, can, can you talk to us about, you know, what goes into the growing process? I know you're in Greece, and Greece is probably the ideal location to grow olives, right? And so talk to us a little bit about that end of

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Marianna Devetzoglou 32:04

it. It's one of the best places to grow olives, along with other neighboring Mediterranean countries, the olive trees, relatively resilient tree so has managed to grow over centuries and centuries in our areas, and every variety has its own personality, strength and characteristics and has adjusted to the microclimates that it has. I emphasize a growth, because a healthy growth with a healthy soil, profit soil will give you a healthy cultivation in our business model and in our company, and I say, mine our family, we try to apply regenerative farming practices so we don't want to spray with heavy chemicals. We want to use minerals that are much more natural. We want to use a local ecosystem to enrich that soil, or even use

manure from other animals around us. Let's take I'll take you to a journey throughout the year. Okay? Because olive oil is seasonal. It's made every harvest season, which for the northern hemisphere is autumn. Okay, the cultivation goes on year round. Let's start January, February, March. The trees lay dormant, okay? They never shed their leaves, but they don't have any fruit on them. They rest down on the ground, okay? It's like a soccer field with beautiful grass, okay. Around late March, early April, spring is coming in, everything is starting to wake up. So this means that on the ground, the grass is giving its place to flowers in our area, in our growth, what we have are chamomile daisies, wild yellow flowers and some poppies, they grow on their own. So that's a natural ecosystem. We love it, we enjoy it, but it has to go at some point, late April to early May. I'm preparing for my blooming face every May, the olive trees give birth so they need food. I can either give them chemical food, or what I can do is come in with a small tractor, chop the flowers off and leave them on the soil to decompose as they decompose. Obviously, the scenery is not as romantic anymore, but they return the natural nutrients into the soil in time for my olive trees to absorb them and be able to give birth to more flowers. Why do I want to see a lot of flowers? Because it's like a funnel. I want to see lots of them, because not all of them will manage to survive and stay on the tree and. From the ones that stay on the tree, not olives will make it through the harsh, dry, hot summer to make it to September, October and be harvested in June, July, August. I think you visited in June. Yes, late June, if I remember correctly, the crown is more dry, more miserable, compared to spring and winter. Okay? So this adds stress on the trees. Lack of water is a stress for the tree, and our area is suffering from water we don't irrigate, okay? So it's what they give us by themselves. We want to have some stress because look what happens in nature. How, how, majestically, things work. Stress in olive trees means that they will create antioxidants as a self defense mechanism to shield themselves against the hot, dry conditions that they're suffering. Yeah, and we will just enjoy these antioxidants when we get the olive and the olive oil. Okay, so some stress is much appreciated. Obviously, we don't want the trees to die within reason. And in September, October, we're preparing for the harvest. The harvest season now itself is quite big. Late September, October, November, December, every producer will start harvesting when the time is right for them, depending on the type of olive oil they want to make and the resources that they have. That's why you see so many different olive oils, so many different price tags and so many different options out there. It's like with the wines. There are wines and wines, there are olive oils and olive oils,

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David Sandstrom 36:56

yeah. So there's a lot of similarities between growing grapes and growing olives, right?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 37:02

They're pretty much, yeah, some Yeah, okay. Grapes are more water intensive and sensitive, okay, whereas the olive tree will shed as many fruits as it deems necessary, but it's not going to die as easily as a grape,

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David Sandstrom 37:17

okay? And you know, I love the concept, I love the concept that you just touched on, on the beneficial stress. You know, our bodies benefit from stress. We call that a hermetic stress. Exercise is a beneficial stress. You know, doing a cold plunge or a sauna is a hermetic beneficial

stress, if done properly, and the stress on the tree can actually produce a higher quality fruit, which is amazing. I remember, I grew up in South Florida. In Central Florida, they grow a lot of oranges, primarily for juice, and they get about one or two freezes per year, and they'll lose part of their crop as a result. And I remember one time this newscaster was interviewing an orange farmer on an orange grove, said, you know, what are you know, what are you going to do about this freeze? Well, you know, we take precautions. We have some fans and heaters, and we will lose part of the crop here. And the newscaster wanted to make a big story about how the devastating loss this was, it was all bad. And the guy said, you know, this is not all bad, because that freeze actually makes the fruit that survives better and it's sweeter and it tastes better. So we actually welcome this as part of the process and, and that's exactly what you just said about about the olive trees, you know, it makes the final product even better, which I think is so cool.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 38:35

True Nature has, I don't know, has planned everything you have to tune into her rhythms, respect that and try to work with that professional makes diamonds, after all,

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David Sandstrom 38:48

without getting too, too into the into the weeds, here, can you talk to us a little bit about the different ways that the olives can be processed at the mill, at the mill, and you know what can go wrong there, and what you do to make sure that that is done properly.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 39:06

Okay, I'll try not to get too technical on that. Okay, because when pressing olives to make extra virgin olive oil, there are so many parameters. And Millers that make exquisite olive oil are often called Master millers, like a maestro. So the baseline for everything is to have a healthy fruit. A healthy fruit under great conditions will give you an amazing juice. And unhealthy, bad fruit cannot be revived to give you an amazing juice. Okay, so the Miller cannot do anything, yeah, when we get to the pressing facility, I want you to think of the pressing facility as a line of steps with only methodological equipment, okay, no thermal or no chemical processes, like in the refinement process. Yes, okay. We take the olives, we wash them for two reasons. One is to cool them down. Because they're out. It's hot in October, maybe November, they were in the sun. Okay, we want to bring temperatures down. That is what you often read in labels, cold pressed or cold extracted. That is the better terminology, okay? And we also wash them so any dust or soil, you know, is cleaned off. Then the olives are put into the crusher. The crusher is a rotating machine with a hammer blade, usually, okay, that crushes the olives and releases the droplets of olive oil. Okay. Now my olives have become like a smoothie. That smoothie behaves like a dough. Sometimes we might have to add water into it, and here is where the tricky stuff starts. If you add too much water, you are at risk of passing humidity, you know, into your olive oil, which will lead to defects, you need to add just the right amount to make it workable without risking it. So that's a mirrored experience also, okay, okay. This is why sometimes we wait for one two rains before harvesting, because nature knows how much water she wants into the fruits the mirror goes by experience, trial and error, and quite often it's error, because that's the way you learn. Unfortunately, yeah, so that paste now I I transfer it with tube to a

horizontal, usually blade that does the following job, helps aggregate the small droplets of oil that I released in the crusher into bigger and bigger, bigger drops, making the olive oil. So the principle, in a very, very simplistic way, is release the droplets of oil and unite them again. Now, all I need is to use a centrifuge with which is a natural process, okay, to separate that olive oil from water and from the solids, the pieces of the fruit that were crushed in the centrifuge. You know, materials of different density upon rotation, they separate, and this is how we get the olive oil out, so the water can go wrong. The temperature we want, low temperature, so that we can keep as many aromas as I can and as many antioxidants and polyphenols as I can. Okay? Otherwise, I'm going to lose them out and about in the making process. Okay, the machinery has to be clean so that they don't contaminate the olive oil passing through. It's also important to know, is this a mill where like minded producers go because we go one producer after the other, so usually like minded producers tend to flock towards the same olive mills, okay? And that also plays a role, and it's up to the artistry of the miller, okay, to navigate the settings that we use when making olive oil. That's why most preferable it is to use small Mills rather than huge ones, because a small mill can change the parameters depending on the variety that you're working a huge mill, like a big machinery has one setting for everybody so you cannot adjust. Does this cover the question?

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David Sandstrom 43:52

No, I think you answered it quite well. You know, I just wanted to break it down, yeah, no, I wanted to ask you that question, just to illustrate how many things go wrong with a low quality production, and how many things go into a high quality production. And you are so knowledgeable when it comes to this process. I mean, you're rare find. Most people can't talk about this process the way you do. And I really love the way you explain you do things so so clearly and so well, it's just, it's a pleasure speaking with you.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 44:24

Thank you. It's a process that not many people have seen or will ever see in their life, so it's important to try and paralyze it somehow to another process that we go through on a daily basis. Think of making your orange juice if your juicer is in bad shape. If you're in a hurry, if you never clean it, things like that, your juice will be contaminated. Same here, the milk is very important. If I get too hot, lots of water, bad machinery, low maintenance, my juice will come out wrongly, right? So to do all these things, it means labor, workers, hands, okay, it in areas, back and forth every day with half empty truck, because how many olives can you take within a day? Education, going to workshops, maintenance, every year. These things cost, and this is why it adds to the price of the product at the end of the day.

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David Sandstrom 45:27

Yeah, for sure. I just want to circle back on a couple more questions or wrap things up here. But you talked about having a harvest date on the bottle, which your bottles do, right? Help me out, Where's, where's the harvest state here? Oh, there it is, right on the back. I'm gonna put that up to the camera. So, so there it is, right there. There's a harvest date. So full disclosure with your products. I love it. So how, how old can an olive oil be and still maintain its quality?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 45:55

Well, that's a tricky, tricky question. Olive Oil in general, unlike wine, it doesn't get better time? Okay, it doesn't expire. And this is why it has a best by date rather than an expiry date. Are we familiar with the difference between these two?

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David Sandstrom 46:12

Yes, I think so. I mean, expire is throw it out. best by is you may lose some quality, but it's not going to be toxic,

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Marianna Devetzoglou 46:21

Exactly so with olive oil, because it is also a natural preservative, okay? The legislation foresees that you can give a best by shelf dates of 18 to 24 months here where things are starting to be a bit some people translate it Okay, from bottling or from opening the bottle, there is a cloud here. Yes, the truth is, and not many people realize this, that extra virgin olive oil is born every year, every year we sell, we give you are years olive oil. So time is ticking from the moment of birth, and that's the harvest date. So you know the birthday, because I can produce it in October, November, keep it in my tongue for a year. Bottle it's and give you another two years. So you get a three year old olive oil. Again, it doesn't expire, but it's starting to lose its quality. Yes, the higher the quality it is born, the slower and more graceful the aging, whereas the lower the quantity its life is going to be short and miserable. I dare say yes. And why does it happen? Because antioxidants stabilize extra virgin olive oil. We want antioxidants because we were we're going to live longer and better. Same for the olive oil, it has antioxidants and it lives longer and better. Okay, you can consume it after the two years pass, but you should keep in mind that maybe the intensity of aromas of bitterness or pungency has gone down because it's aging. That's inevitable. So this is another reason why you shouldn't save it for a special occasion. Otherwise waste of money and olive oil. Have to use it on a daily basis. Yeah, very good. Quantity is up to you.

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David Sandstrom 48:24

Yeah, okay. Now, as far as consuming it goes, I know you talked about how the the food on your plate is the protagonist, and the olive oil should be adding to the flavor of the food, right? So would you recommend using olive oil on top of food on your plate. Do you cook with it? Or how do you recommend consuming it?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 48:47

Well, in Greece and in most Mediterranean countries, we use extra virgin olive oil for everything, for baking, for marinating, for cooking, for pan frying. I don't even go into deep frying. That's a bad habit, regardless of the oil that you use, okay for sauteing as well. So my recommendation is that you can use it everywhere. The antioxidants would stabilize it and will help it be a stronger oil, even against heat, you will lose some antioxidants in the process, because when temperatures rise, all oils become sensitive to that, okay, but I would rather lose

some antioxidants and not gain as many harmful compounds myself, rather than protect my extra virgin olive oil forever and I'm unshielded against the compounds formed when frying. Okay, so the the job of the of the product is to protect me, not the other way around. So you can use it in your salads and vinegarettes. You can cook with it if you don't want to cook, then you can do your cooking in your casserole, turn the heat off. Off and then pour extra virgin olive oil mix and let it sit for 10 to 15, minutes. This is something that we do sometimes when we cook for babies, okay, so that they have olive oil for the antioxidants and the flavor, but as close to his raw form, which is always the best as possible.

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David Sandstrom 50:19

I love it. That's that's really good.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 50:21

Yeah, on on top of pet of pasta. Okay, you can use it in your what is it called for the oven, the pan for the oven. Okay, I do something to caramelize my onions, my peppers, mushrooms, things like that. I do make my scrambled eggs, my omelet now that in a pan frying and, of course, not really Atlantic Ocean inside your frying pan, just a little bit is enough. You're gonna have to already do it.

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David Sandstrom 50:51

I like it. So personally, I like to saute and cook in saturated fat. So I will use butter or tallow, beef tallow or coconut oil, because the saturated fat is more stable, less subject to oxidation during the heating process, and less subject to damage. So I don't cook with olive oil. Personally, I love to use the saturated fats for that, but I love putting it on food, and it's really great for that. So that's personally, what I do. Let's see. One other thing I wanted to ask you about was

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Marianna Devetzoglou 51:22

one thing I would like to note for the frying. I know a lot of people say, Do not fry with extra virgin olive oil. You're killing it antioxidants, or it's not good for you. If it's a quality extra virgin olive oil, it's one of the best oils for frying. The reason for that is that the antioxidants provide that stability and balance that we want. So it's a healthy fat, okay, especially for pan frying, deep frying, I would avoid it, yeah? Frying, you go to McDonald's and you get and you get it. Okay, so if well produced and quality oriented. It's one of the best oils that you can use and buy, even to high temperatures, thanks to your antioxidants. And I'm going to get into lots of the chemistry that happens inside of it, because we're going to get very technical, okay, but the key is the antioxidants. Yeah, olive oil, which is refined, has no antioxidants, therefore, yes, it's not a good option to use in high temperatures.

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David Sandstrom 52:28

Very good. Thank you for saying that and correct me if I'm wrong. Marianna, but it's the high

very good. Thank you for saying that, and correct me if I'm wrong. Marianna, but it's the high monounsaturated fat content. The oleic acid in olive oil is what protects the the oxidation is what shields the the oil from damage. Is that correct?

M Marianna Devetzoglou 52:47

Well, it's a stable fat chain, but also it's the antioxidants that shield it, and they're working as a sacrifice, sacrificing soldiers against any compounds that threaten the balance and the stability of that. That's why they say that you're going to kill some of your antioxidants.

D David Sandstrom 53:04

Yeah. So all the more reason for pursuing quality right from the right from the farm or from the grove into the bottle. So the way you where you grow the product, the way you mill the product, where you produce it, where you the bottle you put it in, how you store it, and how you use it, it all plays into maintaining the delicate balance of those antioxidants and the oils that produce preserve those health benefits.

M Marianna Devetzoglou 53:30

Exactly. And when we get at the level of the consumer, you also have to take care of your olive oil, meaning that you can pay as much money as you want to buy an amazing extra virgin olive oil. Okay? If you keep it uncovered, then you're exposed to oxygen. If you keep it next to your stove all the time, where it gets hot continuously, you accelerate its aging. If you put it on your windows and every day the sun says, Hello, there. It's nice, romantic, very good. But accelerates. That's why storage is important. To avoid rancidity, meaning aging. Keep it in a dark, cool place, like your pantry, or if you have a wine cellar at home, you can keep it in your wine cellar. Take it out, use it, put it back. Very good. Keep it closed.

D David Sandstrom 54:19

Very good. That's such good advice. Marianna, you are such a boatload of wisdom. I just, I just really, just really enjoy this, and

M Marianna Devetzoglou 54:28

I'm trying to study myself even, even more okay, because knowledge is, you know, never ending,

D David Sandstrom 54:33

yeah, yeah, lifelong learner, right? There's always new things to learn. So just to wrap things up, what would you consider to be the most important thing we talked about? Or what would you like to leave the listeners with?



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Marianna Devetzoglou 54:46

Well, I think the most important thing is that you can't really trust lots of labels and food, especially in grocery shops, and it's very important to look beyond that, learn about your food where it comes. Is from who makes it? It's what you're putting your body, and it's your fuel. Some people say, Oh, my car this and my car that they would never put a low quality fuel into their car, right? Why would you put a low quality fuel into your body? And you only have one body for this lifetime, at least

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David Sandstrom 55:18

Amen sister,.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 55:20

Exactly. So try to look beyond that. Learn who makes your food and supporting small producers, not just thought of all producers, small producers of food is really critical for the well being and our health. And after all, our health is our wealth at the end of the day. So it would be an honor for our listeners to to hold on to that, look for small productions and learn about your food.

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David Sandstrom 55:50

Excellent. That's great advice. So if someone is resonating with this message and they're like, I want to get a hold of some of this olive oil, how do they do that? How do they get in touch with you? How do they order your products?

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Marianna Devetzoglou 56:00

Well, we're in the phase of building our key shop, and they can find us on Oleosophia.com and in the contact form, there's also my telephone number. So people can reach out on WhatsApp with me to speak directly. They can ask me any question. And I have to admit that despite having the time difference or having many messages from different people, I love the connection, because that way it shows that they are interested and I understand what they are looking to understand as well. So you can find us on Oleosophia.com, on social media, Facebook and Instagram @Oleosophia, even if you text it's me behind the brand for a small family, so it's either me or George, basically. So you know the who is who, and gradually, are people that want to stay connected and stay informed. I have a contact form in the website where they can subscribe, and we always communicate to our community when the fresh olive oil is out, any updates, any news, any new products or things that we do, I don't spam because I'm for one or two people, so we don't email very frequently. Don't be scared. But this is our way of communicating with our Oleosophers, excellent.



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David Sandstrom 57:22

I encourage everybody to go to the website. And I don't want to say this, most of my listeners are in the United States. And what, what we did was, when we came home after we tasted your products, I was like this, this is what I'm going to be eating, sort of be providing for my family and but it is kind of difficult to order a whole case, because you only going to use, as you said, Maybe a bottle a month. So I got a couple of friends that understood a little bit about nutrition, because I've known them for a while, and they they listen to me talk, and they understand the value of getting a quality olive oil. So we went in two other families and us, we bought a case, and you ship it to us. Came. It came really fast,too. I was surprised. Among few days it arrived. So it's pretty easy to do, folks, this is not hard to get. And I, you know, I'm not kidding. I was looking for for many months, if not years, for a quality source of olive oil. Couldn't find it until we met Marianna. And this, this is, this is, you know, a gold mine here. So I highly encourage anybody listening to pick up some products. Make it happen. You won't be sorry.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 58:21

Thank you very much for that recommendation. Indeed, the shipping is very quick. If I get on the plane to bring it to you myself, I don't think I can arrive any quicker than that. And yes, I do encourage people as well to merge orders if they feel that. You know, a whole case is too much I do sometimes combos or fours or sixes or twelves, depending on production. And one thing is that if people reach out and something is out of stock because it finished, I'm going to tell them that it's out of stock. Can you please wait until I have the fresh one? This is transparency and this is real life, because nature doesn't produce everything in abundance. Okay? So when we're close to the end of season, right now, I'm almost out of stock, actually, but in two months, we're going to have the fresh olive oil that's people register their pre ordering or what they would like to have once it's out. So I know it might sound a bit sad at the moment. Oh, she doesn't have olive oil right now, but it's better for me to tell you that the fresh one is coming up, rather than find somewhere olive oil for you,

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David Sandstrom 59:31

exactly you could. You could find some low quality olive oil, put it in a ball and sell it. You know, when you're out of stock, but you're not going to compromise your quality that way.

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Marianna Devetzoglou 59:39

No, that's not the vision that I have for I left a very good job that I previously had to do this. So I want to stay true to to that vision and step by step, for getting this

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David Sandstrom 59:52


excellent I appreciate that. Marianna, thank you so much for being on the show today. Really, really enjoyed this conversation,

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Marianna Devetzoglou 59:59

 Marianna Devetzoglou 09:59

for hosting. Me. And for the lovely questions, if anyone has any any questions and they send them over to you, you can pass them to me, or now they know where to find me. It will be an honor. Okay.

 David Sandstrom 1:00:12

Well, thanks again. God bless

 Marianna Devetzoglou 1:00:14

Thank you very much, David. Thank you

 David Sandstrom 1:00:17

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