

Winnemucca eatery's Basque dressing hits shelves

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

A bit of Winnemucca Basque cuisine has made it to the aisles of Northern Nevada's biggest supermarkets.

The Martin Hotel dressing, the house salad topping on the historic site's dining room tables, now can be found in Raley's and Scolari's supermarkets from Reno to Elko.

It's been a remarkable ride for Martin owner John Arant since the idea crossed his mind in 2010 to bottle the oil, vinegar and garlic concoction and sell it beyond the restaurant's doors.

"It's been interesting to watch the way the big companies reach out to help the little guy," he said. "We've really gone to school in so many different ways."

The dressing was first made by the Martin's former owners, the Uriguen family, in the 1950s. Arant's product bears a narrative of the dressing's history on the back and acknowledges cook Rosie Uriguen. Each bottle has a 1-ounce container of "prairie dust" – salt, pepper and garlic salt – attached by shrink wrap.

Arant said the dressing has been such a staple of the restaurant's Basque fare over the years that he began chatting up a possible mass production option with one of his food suppliers who, in turn, connected him with a Salt Lake City packaging firm.

With the requisite permitting and labeling analysis from University of Utah laboratories, Arant's staff made the first batch of 50 cases, six bottles to a case, and persuaded the

Uptown Market in Winnemucca to sell it.

“I thought that (50 cases) would last six months. It lasted three weeks,” he said.

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