



Tony Athanasiou of Continental Stores. Photo: Rob Doe

# Green gold in found in East Finchley

The health marvels of Olive Oil by Robert Doe

For thousand of years olive oil has been used for nourishment, body care, embellishment and medicine. Physicians as early as the 7th Century BC valued it for its curative properties and healing powers. However recent research has established these ancient beliefs as closer to fact than fiction. Olive oil has been linked to relieving gallstones, combating liver problems, reducing ulcers and may even reduce the risk of breast cancer. These claims are backed by global studies into the hidden benefits of this mystical oil. People living along the Mediterranean, who's diet includes olive oil, have lower cholesterol levels, and therefore lower incidence of heart disease, than Americans who use other fat products.

Continental Stores, High Road, has the largest selection of both fresh olives and olive oil in East Finchley. With over ten varieties of oil in bottles and litre tins ranging from £2.48 - £18.50, Tony Athanasiou, the shop proprietor sells over twenty types of fresh olives between £79p ¼ for pitted olives - £1.98 lb for Cyprus olives.

"The price of the oil has been dropping significantly over the past few months, I feel this is because exporters have finally realised they had overpriced the oil in past years. We have noticed more people are buying it today compared to fifteen years ago when we first started."

It is the fruits of the olive tree which are thought to delay ageing. It prevents the excessive production of oxidising cells and many regard it to prevent the wear and tear of age on the function of the brain. However the most important discovery has to be the risk reduction in breast cancer. Experimental animal studies carried out in Greece found that olive oil consumption, in contrast to consumption of other fat types, did not enhance the occurrence of chemically induced mammary tumours. A study of 820 women with breast cancer and 1548 control women discovered. "Vegetable and fruit consumption, along with increased olive oil consumption were independently associated with a reduced breast cancer risk. Increased margarine intake, however was associated with a higher risk." (Journal of the National Cancer Institute. 18/1/95)

But it doesn't stop there. The marvels of olive oil are thought to improve and aid a vast number of other medical conditions. Rich in vitamins A and E it is good for both the skin and healing wounds.

"I have heard it is especially effective in soothing blisters after sun burn and slightly

warmed oil on cotton wool is good for earaches" claims Tony.

Additionally, applied to recent scar tissue it is thought to not only to aid healing but reduce scarring. Olive oil also helps absorb calcium, iron, phosphorous, magnesium and zinc. It is therefore good for children and the growing process.

But what makes a fat product so healthy? Fats are an important nutrients in every day diets. Not all fats are good, monounsaturated ones reduce dangerous levels of cholesterol whereas saturated fats like those from animals increase the level of cholesterol.

Olive oil is an excellent source of oleic acid which raise high density lipoproteins known as 'good cholesterol'. A visit to Continental Stores will reveal numerous varieties and brands of olive oil and even some claiming they are 'cholesterol free'. There are two types of oil, olive oil and virgin olive oil. To confuse matters more there is an additional three different types of virgin oil as follows;

1. Extra Virgin Oil - this is the most expensive and highly flavoured type produced from the first pressings of harvested olives. The key to its classification is that it must have perfect flavour, aroma and colour (light yellow to green) along with a maximum acidity of 1%

2. Virgin Oil - This has a maximum acidity of 3%. Milder in flavour than Extra Virgin as it is not produced from the first pressings and can

be from second or third pressings of pulp.

3. Mild/Pure Olive Oil - this is a blend of refined oil extracted from pulp and pits left after the second pressing of lower quality olives. Sometimes a small amount of better quality oil is blended in to give it a richer flavour. It is much lighter in colour and flavour than the above

A general rule when buying good olive oil is the deeper the colour the more intense the flavour. The flavour and colour also varies depending on where it is produced. Italian oil tends to be peppery green while Spanish oil is yellowish and nutty and Italian oil is known for its peppery green texture.

How can something that's pure fat really be this healthy? Firstly it is important to remember 'a little and often does you good.' This doesn't mean you should pour olive oil over everything you eat. Instead incorporating it into a healthy balanced diet replacing other fats like butter and vegetable oils is a good start. At the end of the day it's still fat. If used sparingly the flavour will enhance salads, pasta, potatoes, beans and even bread. Research is still continuing as to the full extent of its benefits but even if it just helps prevent certain illness, prevention is better than cure. It seems strange though that since a dove returned with an olive twig to Noah's Ark it has symbolised hope. Hope which may turn out to be more valuable than gold itself.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

# Open all hours

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility.

**There's something unique about drifting into an empty pub just as it opens.**

At opening time you get more than just service. The barman still has the inclination to do more than slop some beer into a glass. He is a friendly face, a person you can tell your troubles to without fearing that half the neighbourhood will know by sundown and the other half by dawn.

Besides, that first drink always tastes better than any later drink. It hits the back of the throat like cool rain on a blazing hot summer's day. It puts you back on your feet, connects you to reality without reminding you that you could be starting to leave reality behind.

### Public spirit

It's not just that: the sense of being in a pub is part of the thrill. No other country has pubs in the way that England has pubs. They are something unique, somewhere you can have a peaceful drink undistracted by the passing whims of the world.

As time moves on from opening time to lunchtime the mood changes as loud young men drift in for their lunchtime swill and older, more seasoned drinkers take that necessary break in the middle of the day. After that you're settled in for the afternoon as the pub quiets down while the world rushes aimlessly by in its pursuit of the fastest buck.

### Working party

Come 5.30pm and the peace

is disturbed by the after-work, out-of-the-office crowd of boys and girls celebrating the end of an imperfect day.

Before long it is evening and the place is bustling and all the barman has time to do is slop some beer in your glass and hold out his hand for the money. Still, by then it doesn't matter, you're pissed and all doubts have been washed away by the beer. What the heck, it's better than working and anyway, I like pubs.

*PS. Am I the only person to notice the difference between the way that the murders of Stephen Lawrence and Philip Lawrence have been treated? Philip Lawrence's killer has been caught, Mrs Lawrence has been hijacked to set the agenda for the moral elephants and something is being done about knives. Stephen Lawrence? Well the killers are still out there, there was no crusade to ban knives and there seems to be precious little justice going round. The difference? Philip Lawrence was white, middle class and middle aged. Stephen Lawrence was young, working class and black. Anyone still think they live in a non-racist society?*

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