

STROLL

Alpine

Meet Your Neighbor
**SAVORY WELLINGTON
PIES: HANDMADE
GOODNESS BAKED BY
MARK WELLINGTON**

COVER PHOTO BY
MELISSA GRIEGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY

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Savory Wellington Pies:

Handmade Goodness Baked by Mark Wellington

BY MELISSA GRIEGEL PHOTOS BY MELISSA GRIEGEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Longtime Alpine resident Mark Wellington has had many careers over his lifetime. He been a contractor, a home restorer, a Realtor®, a bus driver, a car service owner, an environmentalist, a chef, a caterer, and an organizer of reptile parties and school events knows as Mr. Lizzard. He still runs his Wellington Transportation car service, specializing in helping the elderly and doing airport runs. However, his main focus now is his new venture baking and delivering handmade savory pot pies. His company is called Wellington Pot Pies and offers a large variety of pies, including some interesting flavor profiles. Current offerings include beef, white meat or dark meat chicken, franks and beans, lamb shepherds pie, New England clam chowder, pork, Italian sausage and pepper, shrimp and scallop, white meat or dark meat turkey, vegetarian Shepherds pie, vegetarian pot pie, mushroom, and his one sweeter offering: sweet potato with pecans. He occasionally will have special pies such as duck and turkey with stuffing, and steak and ale. You can also call Mark with custom requests to suit your tastes or dietary needs.

Mark told me how the pie-making began: I became interested in making savory pies through a good family friend. Knowing about my background in the restaurant industry, he asked me to contribute to a family cookbook that he was putting together. When you are a chef, you don't let anything go to waste. So if you are roasting a turkey, you use the bones for soup and you turn the leftovers into a new dish. I made a turkey pot pie with extra turkey and it was pretty simple to do and tasted great. I submitted that for the cookbook, and then started experimenting with other combinations of flavors for a wide variety of pies.

The pies are all 6 pies that Mark says, are a healthy portion for one person or a light meal for two, perhaps with a side dish of salad or a lovely glass of wine. Wellington Pies is a family affair as his wife, daughter, and brother all chip in to help with his marketing, accounting, and inventory needs. They officially launched their business this past September at the Harrington Park Farmers Market. From there, they brought their flash-frozen pies

to other farmers markets. All of the pies are baked in a professional kitchen that Mark rents space in. I spent several hours with Mark at this kitchen to watch him and photograph him throughout the whole process. I was impressed with the organization and cleanliness of the kitchen, as well as their state-of-the-art equipment such as the flash freezer. Mark spent several years as an Executive Chef in a restaurant in Manhattan, and that professionalism shows in his chef's whites, his organization in the kitchen, and his use of the chef's time-honored CAGO system (Clean as You Go).

Using high quality ingredients is a key element for Mark. We all deserve wholesome food, Mark says. Mark uses vegetables that are grown and harvested in the United States, and selects meat that is American-raised and processed, free from antibiotics, growth hormones, or preservatives. He hand trims and grinds his own meat. In addition to striving to provide nutritious meals, Mark is also environmentally-conscious. Their packaging is made of recyclable materials and Mark composts in his yard. He will also sometimes use fresh ingredients from his garden, such as his home-grown garlic. Immediately after baking his pies, Mark freezes them to lock in the freshly-baked goodness. I brought some pies home with me, and can attest to the fact that they are not only easy to heat up at home, but that they taste great. I love the fact that you can get dark meat chicken or turkey. Traditionally, pot pies just have white meat, but as someone who strongly prefers dark meat, the dark meat turkey pot pie I had was such a delight. We had a family pot pie night, so I got to try several of his flavors. We all loved the little animal cut-outs baked onto the pie topping, so you can tell what pie you are eating by seeing a pig, chicken, lamb, etcetera, on the top of your pie.

If you order four or more pies, and live in Alpine or nearby in Bergen County, Mark will deliver the pies to your home for free. He will also deliver outside of this area for a nominal fee. Wellington Pies is a labor of love for Mark. What can I say? I love to cook! I always have. I remember watching my mother make her famous stuffed cabbage when I was a kid. Watching her cook taught me the old school way to make *real* homemade food. I am

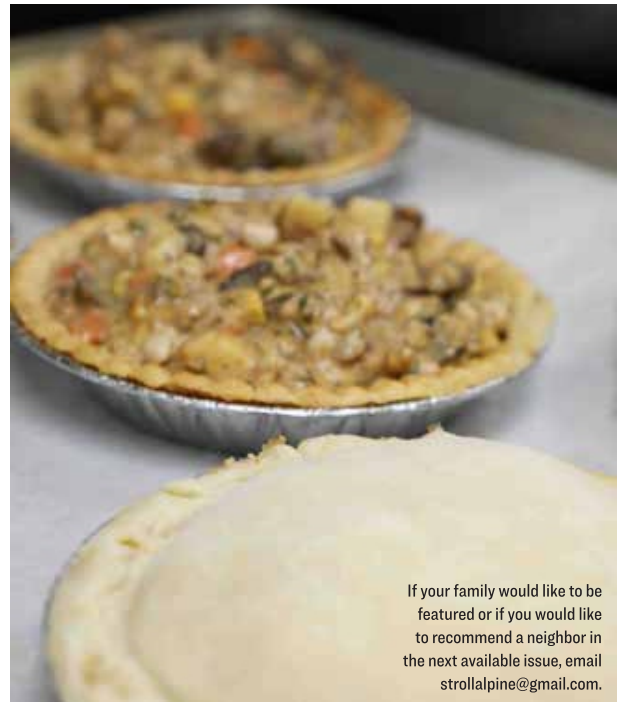


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If your family would like to be featured or if you would like to recommend a neighbor in the next available issue, email strollalpine@gmail.com.



always surprised by what they call homemade nowadays. A lot of it doesn't resemble what I learned from carefully watching over the shoulder of my super-chef mother. After years of observation, I learned how food was made with heart and soul, traditions carried down by a long line of Jewish women. Years ago while raising my two daughters in Alpine, I was always cooking and I made sure I had enough to share with others in the community. That is part of my philosophy of cooking. We have always been lucky enough to share. I hope that by sharing what I have learned from my mother, my family, and a long, abundant life, I can give back to others with authentic homemade food that transcends time and culture.

If you would like to order pies, you can call Mark at 201-446-2973 or by email info@wellingtonpotpies.com. His website is www.wellingtonpotpies.com.



Who Doesn't Like a Pot Pie?

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By Kathleen Sykes

I discovered Wellington Pot Pies at the Palisades Community Center Farmers Market last December. I love good pot pies so I decided to give one a try. It was delicious.

I loved its flaky crust, its seasoning and its packed filling. Wellington Pot Pies has been up and running for six months. “I spent over a year setting it up,” says owner Mark Wellington, “testing recipes, leasing a commercial kitchen, obtaining the necessary permits and arranging vendors. I was determined to make pot pies of the highest quality. There are no preservatives, I use organic vegetables, bake the pies fresh then flash freeze them.” The six-inch pies are fully cooked and can be frozen for up to three months; they just need to be heated in the oven for 30 minutes at a low 300 degrees. Mark offers a wide variety of pies, twelve and counting. “I have another twenty I want to try,” he says. There are meat ones – turkey, chicken, ground pork and ground beef, franks and beans, sausage and pepper, two seafood – clam chowder and shrimp and scallops as well as vegetarian pies including sweet potatoes with a toasted pecan crust. Mark roasts and grinds everything in house. “I use top round and pork loin, Kosher uncured beef franks, hand-shucked clams. My pork stock is made with smoked ham hocks.”

The new business is a family affair. Mark’s wife, a retired Air Force colonel, handles billing, orders, customer service and inventory. “She keeps us up and running,” he comments. Mark’s two daughters cover social media.

I asked Mark what led him to sell pot pies. “I love to cook. I found a pot pie recipe in a friend’s family cookbook I had contributed to, tried it and was hooked. I immediately started experimenting with ingredients.” Mark had worked as executive chef at a New York nightclub and in 2005 he started a limousine business specializing in servicing the elderly and those with dementia but Covid put an end to that.

Mark has been selling his pies at area farmers markets. “We sold over 100 pies at the Nyack Farmers Market last week,” he says. He is still trying to determine how often to take a booth at various locations. To find out where he will be, sign up for his monthly newsletter through his website, **Wellingtonpotpies.com** and through social media like Instagram, Nextdoor and Facebook. “I will also deliver to Palisades with a four-pie minimum,” he says (call 201-446-2973). Why does he feel he has been so successful? “I’m offering homemade food in the marketplace.”

About 10964

The 10964 community newsletter has published news and information of interest to the people of Palisades, NY since March 1977.

<http://palisadesny.com/about/>