

Canton olive oil company to connect Greece and the U.S.

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CANTON —

A Canton resident is trying to bring what she sees as “true” extra-virgin olive oil from Greece to the United States — primarily through online sales.

The Pure Greek Olive Co. was founded in January by Stella J. Karavas, a first-generation Greek immigrant who was born and raised in Canton.

Karavas is the company’s American-based president and CEO, while the company’s operations in the European Union are headed by Stratos Ketsetzis of Greece.

Although Pure Greek olive oil is available in select locations — including the Shaw’s in Canton — Karavas says their goal is to keep their sales as online-based as possible.

“We want to take the money we would’ve used to pay stocking fees at supermarkets to offer free packaging and shipping, to bring it right to people’s door,” Karavas said.

The company received a shipment of 2,000 bottles earlier in the year and is due to receive its second shipment soon.

According to Karavas, all of the olives used by the company are grown in Lakonia, Greece. What will make the oil stand out in a crowded market, she says, is that it’s truly “extra virgin.”

“Our oil is at 3 percent acidity,” Karavas said. “The FDA requires ‘extra virgin’ to be anything with acidity under 8 percent, but you can add things to it and no one will know unless they do their research.”

Karavas pointed to recent studies from the University of California-Davis which showed that nearly 70 percent of imported olive oils labeled “extra virgin” did not meet U.S. or international standards.

The company has no other employees besides Karavas and Ketsetzis. It contracts public relations and other work out to five Canton-based consultants.

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