

**Business Beat**

# Markham Caesar to go



Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Unionville resident Doug Woolsey holds one of his Et Tu Caesar products currently in supermarkets throughout Ontario. It's all the makings for a Caesar salad including croutons and salad dressing. All that's needed is to add the romaine lettuce.

**By DEB BODINE CHAMPION**  
When customers at Hank's Diner bombarded Unionville's Doug Woolsey with requests for his Caesar salad dressing recipe, he knew was on to a good thing.

Not wanting to add yet another bottled salad dressing to the market, the restaurateur created Et Tu Caesar—a unique concept in convenience foods.

Et Tu Caesar is Caesar salad for two in a box. Included is everything necessary (except the romaine lettuce) to make the salad served at Hank's Diner: baked croutons made with three different types of bread, grated parmesan cheese, real crumbled bacon and, of course, the highly sought-after home-made style caesar dressing. It's designed to serve four to six people as an accompaniment.

Woolsey is no stranger to the food business. In 1980 he started Calathumpians on Main St. Unionville, after selling his shares in the downtown eatery The Hard Rock Cafe.

Five years later, he left Calathumpians to build Hank's, a 50s style diner located Esna Park Drive and Alden Road.

Walking into Hank's is like travelling back in time, or walking onto the movie set of American Graffiti.

Says Woolsey: "I shopped for artifacts in Toronto, New York City and Buffalo. Almost every piece is authentic, not pre-fab—the lighting, chairs, jukebox, bar, everything is from is from the 1940s and 1950s."

A large, old Coca-Cola cooler assumes a prominent position at the entrance. Food is prepared out in the open by cooks with white caps and aprons.

Customers can choose to sit on a swivel stool at the counter, at a table, or a booth with table juke box. A touch of flashing neon sets the mood.

Also nestled in the casual surroundings is a thriving catering business. In fact, Hank's Diner is only open weekends for private parties and catering. And Monday through Friday, Hank's serves up 50 Caesar salads per day.

Woolsey divides his time between the diner and the Hollywood Grill at Victoria Park and Ellesmere Ave. — a 1940s New York-style bar and grill which opened in 1986.

With two restaurants on the go, how did the 35-year-old entrepreneur find time to go into the food manufacturing business as well?

Woolsey gives a great deal of credit to his girlfriend Linda Brewster, who not only manages Hank's Diner, but also is

the creator of the celebrated Caesar salad dressing.

"After you've had restaurants for two or three years, they become established and if you've got good people managing them, you find yourself with extra time."

Hence, Linsey Foods Ltd. came to be.

Doug Woolsey's drive and initiative is apparent by the speed in which Et Tu Caesar progressed from the concept stage to the grocery store shelves.

Just an idea last January, he had a lot of questions that needed answers before the idea could become a reality. Government officials, suppliers, designers, printers, marketing personnel all played a role in getting the product off the ground.

"We had a lot of doors closed on us, but you just have to keep

going on until they open again," he said.

And now, just 12 months later, the characteristic green and purple box showing a Caesar salad surrounded by a sunburst can be found at most Loblaws stores, with the other supermarket chains to follow within the next few weeks.

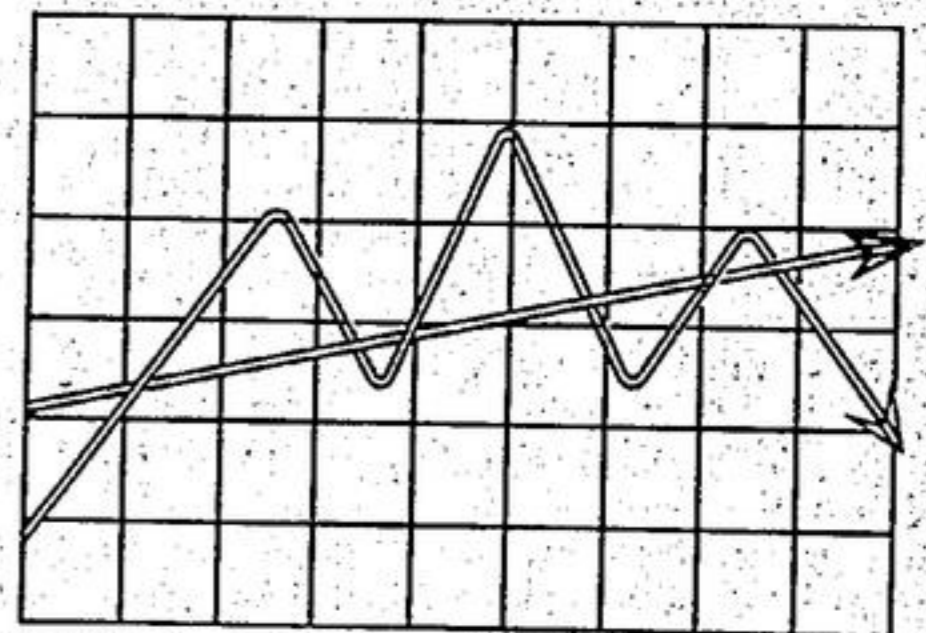
In the Markham area, Et Tu Caesar can be found at selected fruit markets and convenience stores. But that's only the beginning.

"I've set up a distribution network that should be coming through in the next couple of months," says Woolsey.

"We'll be moving into Quebec, and to Eastern and Western Canada. Also, we hope to be exporting to the States, with the help of the Canadian government, within 90 days."

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Robert W. Davidson, president of this new company, also practices as a public Chartered Accountant in Markham

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