

# Mascoutah couple puts Salsa Rose on the local grocer's shelf

By Vicky Albers

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It goes with everything!

That's just one of the positive comments customers are saying about a new salsa being produced and distributed by Mascoutah couple James and Hope Reinneck.

Salsa Rose, which is available in mild and hot varieties in pint size and quart size jars, is the result of years of trial and error, fine tuning and taste testing.

"I've been making salsa for years," James said. "Every summer faithfully since the 1980s."

Ingredients for James' homemade salsa have traditionally come from the family's garden. While they still have a large garden, James said he now buys all of his fresh ingredients for production of Salsa Rose on Produce Row in the St. Louis neighborhood of Soulard.

Over the years, James said he has given out hundreds of samples of his homemade product, and that, in part, is how the couple's new venture was started.

In 2008, the Reinnecks were blessed with a baby girl, Jada Rose, who was born premature and spent a great deal of time after her birth in a St. Louis hospital.

"I needed to de-stress for a bit," James explained, "so I went home and made a batch of salsa. When I returned to the hospital I gave sample jars to the nurses and they said, 'You should sell this.'"

James eventually took the advice to heart and started efforts to fully develop the product, fine tune the recipe and trademark the name.

"It took about a year to get all of the details of the business sorted out," he said.

With the idea of finally marketing their salsa product initiated during their daughter's stay in the hospital, the Reinnecks felt it was only fitting to name it after her. Using her middle name, Salsa Rose was created.

The salsa is marketed under the company name of Reinneck Ranch, Inc., which is also the name of their Mascoutah home, located along Highbanks Road.

"It's been a work in progress for the past 15 to 20 years," Hope said of the



**Hope and James Reinneck of Mascoutah have recently introduced a new line of salsa, Salsa Rose, which is produced and distributed under their own label, Reinneck Ranch, Inc. The salsa is available at more than 30 locations in southern Illinois.**

family ranch.

Hope worked on the label design which intertwines barbed wire, a beveled five-point star and a rose. A message from James is printed in the corner of every jar: "Fulfilling a lifelong dream dedicated to my family and friends. We hope you enjoy our products."

It was late September when the first batch of Salsa Rose was ready for distribution.

"We did a test pilot run of 30 cases and it just grew from there," James said. "The next run was 200 cases."

As of mid-December, Salsa Rose is available in more than 30 locations: Super Valu stores in Breese, Carlyle, Highland and Troy; Market Center in New Baden; Trenton IGA, Trenton Processing and Windcrest Farms in Trenton; Jo Al Winery and Handimart in Mascoutah; six locations of Norrenberns food stores along with a variety of grocery stores and specialty shops throughout southern Illinois.

James said he has always had a passion for cooking and, at one point, he had considered opening a restaurant. Some of his other specialties are his chili, named Levi Rugged after the couple's 1-year-old son Levi, and his pickles, for

which he has won top honors at the Illinois State Fair.

If everything goes as planned for the Reinnecks, consumers may one day be able to find both of these products — and more made under the Reinneck Ranch label — on their local grocers' shelves.

For now, James and Hope are promoting their Salsa Rose with demonstrations and taste tests in the various markets.

"We've just had incredible feedback," James said. "Most importantly, it seems that people like to support products that are made locally."

Hope added, "It's a sweet salsa and it's spicy, and I don't think there's anything like it on the market."

With its smooth texture, James said many customers have raved that the salsa tastes good with everything.

"It's endless what people are telling us that they use our salsa for — spaghetti and tacos, quiche and meatloaf," Hope said. "It's being used for more than just chips and dip."

To learn more about Salsa Rose, contact the Reinnecks at reinneckranch@yahoo.com. Also, watch for the company's new Web site, which is currently under construction.