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## **Farmers Market brings exclusive Mediterranean flavours to Canberra**

Using their Mediterranean culinary expertise and impressive experience, owners of multi-award winner Pilpel Fine Foods have developed an exclusive range of exotic flavours for the Capital Region Farmers Market visitors.

Pilpel Fine Foods produces dips and soups which are gluten-free, dairy-free, egg-free and contain no animal fat, preservatives, artificial colours or flavours, representing an ideal option for vegan and vegetarian people.

Pilpel Fine Foods, the Hebrew word representing the whole capsicum family, was founded in December 2004 by Israeli couple Dari and Yehiel Kaplan who came to Australia in 1989 in search of some international experience.

“My husband was a chef in a five-star hotel in Israel and wanted to become executive chef, but to do so he had to get international experience. We were both a bit young and crazy and just decided to pack our bags and come to Australia. We’ve never looked back on that decision,” Dari said.

The Kaplans had been owners of a restaurant and catering service for 15 years when they decided to start Pilpel Fine Foods in Bondi, NSW.

“The catering and restaurant market is very demanding and we needed a new adventure. Yehiel loves creating new products and so we saw a perfect niche market with dips and soups. With my graphic design background, I could create beautiful labels for our products too,” Dari said.

“We started with six dips sold in deli stores and independent supermarkets. Within nine months we had entered David Jones. We now have 13 dips in the range and we introduced soups and pesto last year,” she added.

With four kids, four employees and on average 13-hour daily shifts, the Kaplans have found time to travel to Canberra every Saturday for the past two years to sell their products at the Capital Region Farmers Market at the Exhibition Park.

“When we first started our business, some of our friends moved to Canberra and started talking so highly of Canberra people that we thought we had to try the Farmers Market,” Dari said.

“It was the best decision we made. The Farmers Market has put us on the map, so to speak. Customers saw the consistency in the quality of our products and started visiting us every weekend. We now have strong contacts and good support in Canberra,” she said.

Dari said Capital Region Farmers Market is the only market she visits with her husband who has developed a range of products exclusively for Canberra residents.

“We like having direct contact with Market customers and getting their feedback. We can understand what they want and have a much more hands-on approach on our business,” Dari said.

“Throughout the years, some of our customers have started asking for specific products and so we have developed a whole range of products strictly for the Farmers Market, which includes marinated olives, antipasto, curries, marinades and cheese spreads.

“We bring a lot of our Mediterranean background from Israel to our products whilst always keeping an Australian twist to our recipes. We use Australian produce as much as possible. This way, we’re giving back to Australian farmers and residents.

“We have formed close relationships with a lot of the customers and some of them now buy our new products without even tasting them first simply because they trust us,” she added.

The Sydney Royal Fine Food Show awarded Pilpel Fine Foods 10 medals for its dips in 2006 and medals for all its soups in 2007.

“Food experts predict that in the next few years, Australia will have the best food in the world which will be made of a combination of Mediterranean, Australian and Asian flavours. This obviously works for us,” she added.

Pilpel Fine Foods has also introduced non-vegan pesto under the brand name Darikay.

The Capital Region Farmers Market has over 100 stalls and is open every Saturday morning at the Exhibition Park (EPIC) from 8 am to 11 am.

The Farmers Market is a genuine farmers market, offering a diverse range of fresh food and agricultural produce straight from the producer to the customer. There are over 100 market stallholders each Saturday morning selling everything from fruits and vegetables to specialist organic products, meats, breads, chocolate, wine and olives.

All funds generated from the Market are fed back into regional communities and other projects chosen by the Rotary Club of Hall which founded the Market in 2004.

For more information on Capital Region Farmers Market, visit [www.capitalregionfarmersmarket.com.au](http://www.capitalregionfarmersmarket.com.au).

*Released for Capital Region Farmers Market by Dennis Rutzou Public Relations (www.drpr.com.au)*

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