



The Wild Asparagus team is (from left, in front) Sheila Byrne and Mary Salvo. In back, from left: Julia Noack, Dylan Trafton, Kari Iatarola, Andrew Brennan, Dianne Ricker, and Kelly Eisele.



Barrington's favorite hors d'oeuvre

Growing Wild Asparagus

THE MAKER OF BARRINGTON'S FAVORITE HORS D'OEUVRE
TALKS ABOUT HER CATERING SUCCESS

WILD ASPARAGUS CATERING came to Barrington in 2008. We began our little business in an old Victorian house in the Village. We had a few employees, one of whom lived above the kitchen and who would help answer the door, when the rare person would brave our steps. Our kitchen was small with one six-burner stove, one shelf in the oven, a tiny fryer, and a tiny electric flat top, for searing.

It is exciting to have grown from being an employee to now owner of Wild Asparagus and to be part of this team that is known for making Barrington's favorite hors d'oeuvre—the Wild Asparagus Cheese Puff. I had recently graduated from Kendall College in Chicago and knocked on their door one day about a job. I was hired part-time and was so happy to be a part of this adventure. We learned early on that if we were going to succeed, our catering products had to be better than good. Through this dedication to our customers,

we outgrew that little kitchen and moved to Pepper Road three years ago.

The cheese puffs that are standard fare at Barrington area events and parties were handmade in this small kitchen, then transported down two flights of stairs to the convection oven, where they would be rotated every three minutes until done to perfection. This was primarily my job, in the beginning.

FROM TINY TO SPACIOUS

Today, our brand-new kitchen is a dream come true. A real dish room (that is no longer wedged next to a tiny stove). A 12-burner stove. Two convection ovens that are on the same floor—yeah! Our cheese puffs are still handmade, and Julia makes most of them now and she has it down to an art. We have an office for our talented and dedicated staff, a tasting room, and a little space for a small “take along” freezer that offers homemade soups and the cheese puffs. In the meantime, all

our dishes continue to be handmade with the freshest, highest quality ingredients that we can find. Being on Pepper Road has brought us foot traffic that we never had before. Our challenge is to keep this little freezer stocked with Barrington's favorite hors d'oeuvre, which proves to be tricky sometimes, as those little cheese puffs fly out the door. We tempt our customers with 11 other appetizers, pulled pork, and soups by the quart, so naturally, our take-out business is off to a great start. It is truly unbelievable that we have begun to outgrow our beautiful kitchen, but we have, and we are expanding. Lucky for us, the space next door became available. If you stop by to see us, you will need to pardon our dust, while we knock down walls. As we take on larger full-service events, we try to never lose sight of the smaller events or pick-up orders, as they are all important to us.

SIGNATURE CATERING OPTIONS

One of our signature offerings is our salmon platter. We house-smoke a full plank salmon with a custom blend of hard woods to the perfect tenderness. Andrew and Dylan have this down to both art and science. The smoked plank is then presented on a platter with sour cream, diced red onion, capers, black and green olives, and lemon.



House-smoked salmon

The team of people here is dedicated. Most of us had started with Wild Asparagus in its beginning and have been the cornerstone of this growing catering company. The drive to provide a quality product with outstanding customer relations is our top goal. We have clients that drop in to see us each week. They always go home with soup, or pulled pork, or cheese puffs, of course. There are so many requests for us to provide more. People are looking for hot soup now, or maybe a sandwich. We get many requests for dinner-to-go, or a salad. Expanding into the additional space adjacent to our location will allow us to grow in the take-out area, as well.

You can keep in touch with us as we fine-tune the direction of our take-out menu and meals-to-go. Follow on Facebook or Yelp. Check our website, wildasparaguscatering.com, or sign-up for our email mailings by reaching us at Kelly@wildasparaguscatering.com, or visit us when in the area. We are located at 22000 N. Pepper Road, Unit D, in Lake Barrington. If you are interested in having us cater an event, call 847-382-3400. Our hours for take-out are Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. As summertime approaches, we will be in the kitchen longer hours, so give us a call, we might still be here. 

Dianne Ricker is the new owner of Wild Asparagus Catering. She is a longtime Barrington resident. Her love of food has always been her number one passion, outside of raising her three children. This passion was further fueled by her love of long-distance running and an ongoing goal of eating healthy. She is a 2008 graduate of Kendall College, one of the top culinary schools in the country.