

Family Values Keep Bay View Packing Company Thriving

The WisconsinMade Blog

Kathryn Howard, content marketing specialist

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In 1923, the thing that brought Bay View Packing Company into existence was family when three brothers — Bruno, Walter and William Liebner — started the company. Almost 100 years later, family is what keeps the business running, especially with the substantial growth in sales and production.

That growth started in the 1990s when two things happened, according to current president Reiny Liebner. One, Bay View Packing (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) took on production for a nationally-distributed private label. Two, they got involved with ecommerce and selling on the World Wide Web (as it was called back then), which they've done since they partnered with WisconsinMade in 2000.



Drew (left) with father Reiny Liebner of Bay View Packing Company

Linda and Rick Remeschatis, the founders of WisconsinMade, found Bay View Packing after seeing them on *Food Finds*, a travel show that highlighted specialty and gourmet foods across the United States.

Their meeting Reiny was beneficial for both parties. Linda and Rick were working on getting WisconsinMade off the ground, and Reiny was so overwhelmed with orders that his answering machine was constantly full. (This was before the age of digital voicemail). With their partnership, WisconsinMade could handle incoming orders and customer service while Bay View Packing focused on what they did best: pickling meats.

“The thing about our product is, there used to be a lot more companies like ours that made these types of product,” Reiny says. “But they haven’t survived. A lot of these people who had grown up with these products were searching for them when they saw us [on *Food Finds*].”

While nostalgic customers have kept sales on an upward trend, it’s the younger generation that Reiny’s sons have their eyes on. Bay View Packing’s own products align with the values of the current younger generation, who prefer to buy locally-made, novelty foods in specialty or niche markets.

“They don’t want to always go with the mainstream thing,” says Drew Liebner. “They want to be the one to find something unique. I think that would be a way that we’re going to grow in the future.”

Over the past several years, Drew and his brother Eric have slowly taken on leadership roles in Bay View Packing. As brothers who grew up within the business, their dynamic with each other helps to keep the business afloat under their father’s tutelage. It helps that they both prefer to take on separate responsibilities: Eric enjoys working on the production side of things while Drew handles everything in the office.

“I’m the right hand, he’s the left hand,” Drew says. “We work together in different ways.”

Of course, they’re only part of what makes Bay View Packing successful. The growth of the past few decades allowed the company to hire more employees, and treating them right is a core value to preserving the company’s integrity. This is a family company after all, and that means the people the Leibners work with are members of their family.

“The reason the business has been successful is because of all the people involved,” Reiny says. “Relationships are the key to business. It’s got to be more than just business in order for you to be successful.”



Bay View Packing's best-selling item is Pickled Pork Hocks! Yum. Get yours by clicking this image.