



FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD  
BY DICK BROWN

PURE DELIGHT

NO PECTIN, NO COLR, NO FILLER  
NO PRESERVATIVES, JUST  
100-PER CENT GREAVES JAMS AND JELLIES

A great many so-called family food businesses turn out to be disappointments because they aren't really family anymore. There's still a son involved, maybe, but he's not running things and some sharp accountant has got his mitts into the operation and he's cut back on the more expensive ingredients. He's discovered a dandy little additive that will give the product six month's extra shelf life; the food doesn't taste quite as good but most people don't seem to notice and, what the hell, the idea is bigger volume and more profit. In the end, you learn that the family sold out six months ago and the business is now owned by some giant that makes soap and builds hotels.

Greaves Jams and Jellies is not a disappointment. Greaves is a joy. "Last year alone we turned down three offers to buy the business," say Fred Greaves, as he stirs a big kettle of grape jelly.

You won't find jars of Greaves in your supermarket, for a couple reasons. For one thing, Greaves isn't set up for that kind of volume. For another, the family isn't particularly interested; it says there were talks, in the past, with supermarket people, but they always wanted too large a piece of the action. Eaton's and Simpsons both carry Greaves and so does Laura Secord, under its own label, but for the most part you will find Greaves in Toronto's smaller food stores, about 125 of them, perhaps the little butcher shop that handles those farmer's sausages that you like so much, or the fruit and vegetable store that always has such perfect lettuce and green peppers.

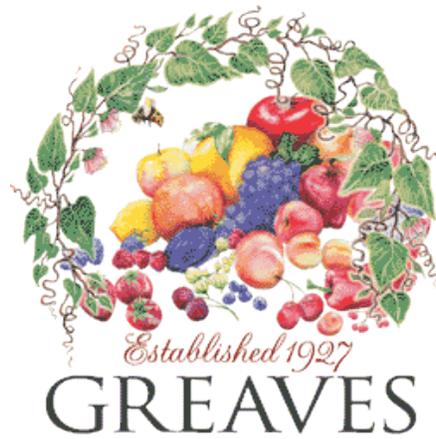
And Greaves does a roaring business in the store attached to its tiny factory (if that's the word for it) in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In the front window, a sign says: "New-100per cent Raspberry Jam. No Pectin. No Color. No Filler. No Preservative." There's a little counter and a few shelves, everything simple, and they're piled not only with raspberry jam but with strawberry jam and black currant jam, apricot jam, apricot-almond jam, gooseberry and plum jams, quince jelly, crabapple jelly, apple jelly, black currant jelly, orange marmalade, grapefruit-orange-lemon marmalade, chili sauce, relish, pickled beets. From the rear comes the clacking of Greaves' little conveyor belt – it puts you in mind of a toy-and the sweet, strong smell of Fred Greaves' latest batch of grape jelly.

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“We don’t pretend to have any secrets,” say William Greaves Sr. “It’s just good fruit and sugar, and everything is pure.”

William Sr. is president of the firm. He’s 92 years old but he still keeps an eye on things. His eldest son, William Jr. is the manager and there’s an assortment of Greaves, performing all sorts of other jobs. Across the street and the down the block is William Jr.’s daughter, Mary Ann, working in the Greaves warehouse. She’s putting labels on jars of raspberry jam, holding the jars, one by one, so that a machine can stick on the labels. A portable radio sits on top of the machine (everything at Greaves is easy going.). Besides a labeler, Mary Ann is Greaves’ treasurer. “Freddie s” father used to be the treasurer and the cook.” She explains, shutting off the machine, “but he died and now Freddie’s the cook and I’m the treasurer. “ Almost the entire Greaves family is in the business and trying to identify the various relationships becomes an incredible tangle. David, who is a don of William the manager, is both a deliveryman and salesman-though there really isn’t too much selling to be done. “We don’t advertise,” says David, “we never did. It’s all word of mouth.” Word of mouth also brings in people who are interested in selling Greaves’ stuff. “We had a fellow walk in yesterday who wants to handle our products,” says David. “He has a store in Kleinburg, a gift shop I think.” The Greaves business began in the kitchen of the family’s farm home, 5 kilometers from Niagara-on-the-Lake, when Mrs. Greaves got hold of a bargain in oranges and made a particularly large batch of marmalade, so much that she decided she ought to sell some of it. It was so tasty that it was an instant hit, and it touched off such an encouraging round of lip smacking and lavish word of mouth promotion that Mrs. Greaves decided to make more – and, before long, to look for more outlets, including stores in Toronto. The business grew steadily and, in the Sixties, the Greaves mechanized it, on a small scale, with the purchase of a conveyor and a machine to put lids on the jars and another, bought from the now-defunct Betty’s Marmalades in Weston, to pour in the goodies. Mrs. Greaves died 16 years ago and today her grandchildren, including Mary Ann, all have shares in the business. They just slid into it naturally. “I sort of went into it because I didn’t know what I wanted to do.” Mary Ann explains. “All I knew was that I didn’t want to live in the city.”

Why do they *not* sell out? There are seven Greaves in the business and they all make a decent living from it; if they sold, they wouldn’t make enough to retire so they’d wind up having to work for somebody else.

*President William Greaves Sr. 92, is still keeping an eye on things.*

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