



FINE FOODS & CELEBRATIONS  
ESTABLISHED 1985



## On a Personal Note

June 15, 2021

Hello! It's been a few months since my last letter. I've written and rejected a number of them. My intent is simply to share my perspective as a business owner trying to navigate through the many twists and turns during this new year of Corona. I'm happy to say we are settling in nicely with a re-imagined Julienne Fine Foods and Celebrations, and it feels *good!*

However, just as things are winding down, opening up, looking forward, many of us in the food and service industries are still in this relentless grip of Covid which impacts our day-to-day operations and customer expectations. I talk to business owners who have expressed the same disbelief, frustration, grief, and fatigue. Never in 35 years of business have I experienced such a tumultuous labor market. Quite honestly, these last few months have been hell. "Re-entry" is proving to be just as arduous as the onset.

I am really trying to understand the nuanced dynamic behind the shrinking labor market nationwide, not just here in LA County. Certainly, the perspective of this past year is unique to each individual and family. Many have been impacted with only mild discomfort or disruptions and it scales up from there. Countless news articles cite the same obstacles as it relates to hiring employees today: fear of getting covid, lack of child care and schools not fully open, enhanced unemployment benefits set to expire in September, moving to other cities, finding new careers, and attending school.

As employees choose to work fewer hours for the reasons above, and not limited to, we have had to really double down on our hiring process. Yet, many applicants don't show up for interviews and those hired promptly quit. It's so baffling. Our staffing needs are quite extensive; we are now open 7 days a week. While our sales hours are 9 am-5 pm, the team arrives much earlier and leaves much later. We take care of an average of 325 customers in person every day. Our team of over 50 makes and packages everything here on the premises. We launched our new website, new menus, and rolled out new training protocols. We redesign the Marketplace every few weeks and even hosted a twilight Trunk Show of our new summer finds.

Amidst this all, we are re-shuffling the management team. After 13 years, the part-time counter girl turned General Manager Kate who is a most dedicated, trustworthy, and competent woman, and wearer of many hats is leaving to take care of her toddlers and family life. We will sorely miss her and her countless contributions to Julienne! All this to say, there are many moving parts to keep Julienne going and a stable workforce is a critical component.





*But...upheaval makes for opportunity.* These last 18 months exposed stress points in our operations so we took a few deep breaths and tried then tried again. It takes faith and grit to re-invent, especially when so many circumstances are out of your control; the key is to control what you *can*. Ingenuity fosters *opportunity*. We have always promoted from within and the time has come to bring in outside expertise. Over the last couple of weeks, we've hired a number of managers for newly created positions. This new pool of talent, energy, and professional experience will reinforce what we do best and modernize our online operations to help us grow for your pleasure and enjoyment.

The Julienne Marketplace will always be a vibrant social hub with a nod to graceful living. Our vast selection of signature house-made foods, displayed in a beautiful and cheerful space, with polite and knowledgeable staff which also offers a curated look and feel for specialty gourmet provisions, boutique wines, and festive seasonal decor. Many of you know I love to shop! The garden patio offers a most pleasant spot to enjoy a glass of wine with food purchased from the Espresso Bar or the Marketplace. I hope you, too, will feel the good energy as the Julienne lifestyle continues to embrace all aspects of fine foods and celebrations. On June 15, I'll happily be pouring my traditional "dixie cup of holiday cheer", i.e, champagne, all day to celebrate seeing your face and smile once again. Come visit us and let's hug!

For better or for worse, Covid has presented *opportunities* for real change, work/ life options, and the freedom to re-invent. I just try to stay ahead of the curve and anticipate what is best for Julienne. I am equally exhausted and energized with what the future holds, and it feels *good*!

Wishing you all the best with the *opportunities* presented your way.  
Sincere thanks for your continued patronage. It has kept us going!

Julie

