



## 2016 Old Town Farmers' Market Blogs

by Jane Hess Collins

---



**April 2016**

### **Kiwi Kuisine, Alexandria, Virginia**

“Food and rugby are my passion,” said Bertie Todd, owner and founder of Kiwi Kuisine. Actually Todd prefers to go by the name “Ram” although he admits that these days, “I’m more of a lamb than I am a ram.”

A New Zealander Maori, Ram started playing rugby when he was six years old and eventually landed with the Washington Irish RFC. The United States was great, he said, but he was sick of eating hot dogs and desperately missed his native meat pies.

Ram decided to move back to New Zealand to learn the meat pie business. He knew the basics of cooking from his mother, a chef, and he asked a friend who owned a bakery to teach him the pastry business. Ram returned to the United States and started creating his meat and vegetable-filled pies, keeping them in the Maryland Exiles RFC fraternity house freezer to eat after practice. When the other players kept eating them, Ram knew he had a business.

Kiwi Kuisine debuted in 2003, featuring meat pies filled with chicken, steak or lamb with vegetables, as well as sausage rolls, spinach rolls and other hearty meals. Four years later he began selling at Old Town Farmers' Market and other area markets. Today he sells at ten markets, Whole Foods, Balducci's and nearly 50 other grocery stores. He guarantees everything he sells, including the cold vegetable/fruit juices he makes using produce from other farmers' market vendors.



Ram's talents don't end with pie. Somewhat of a Maori Renaissance man, he is a Frank Sinatra impersonator and is the founder/president of Alexandria Rugby, a sports program for kids and adults that he started in 2006.

Ram's pies are better than the New Zealand original, he told me. The meat he uses is free of trans fat, steroids and antibiotics, and the pies are bursting with meat, unlike gravy-filled commercial pot pies. I tried the Curry Chicken pie and my husband had the Steak Guinness and they were amazing. No wonder Kiwi Kuisine sells out of its pies every Saturday.