

Thus began four years of grueling harvest times as, for three months each year, the Barianis worked 24 hours a day, picking, washing, crushing, pressing, and bottling their precious fluid.

As the market for their oil expanded, the family graduated to bigger, more automated equipment. Their guiding principle remains the same, however: The simpler the process by which you extract the olive oil, the better and more healthful it is.

The Barianis' oil has become so popular that they have planted an additional 15 acres in olive trees, ensuring expanded production in years to come. But just to a point. "We would not compromise quality," Emanuele says. "There is a point where you have to say 'no more.' If I make more and then every time I go

to cook I say, 'This is not as good as it used to be,' it's going to upset me. I use the olive oil every day, so I want it to be good."

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Their hydraulic press replaces the screw press of the Romans, but the principle is the same. A piston rises and exerts pressure against the mats, causing the crushed olives to release their oil. The liquid, a mixture of oil and vegetable water, runs into a separator. There the water sinks to the bottom and the oil, which is lighter, rises to the top. The water is drawn off, leaving pure, unfiltered olive oil.

GOOD FATS / BAD FATS

Most Americans eat too much fat. Worse, we eat the wrong kind of fat. That is why the rates of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other related health prob-



lems have soared in the last few decades. Our bodies are good at making fat. We've been engineered to survive periods of famine by manufacturing and storing fat during times of plenty. However, there are some essential fats that our bodies can't make.

The building blocks of fats and oils are fatty acids. They are classified as saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated,

depending on the number of hydrogen atoms in the molecule.

Saturated fatty acids are the ones we don't need. Their main source is animal products:

meat, eggs, and dairy products. Worse than saturated fats are the trans-fatty acids produced when hydrogen is added to polyunsaturated fats. These molecules act like saturated fats in our bodies but have even worse consequences. When you see "partially hydro-

genated oil" on a food label, run the other way.

Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids are the good ones, the ones our bodies can't make. Polyunsaturated fats are abundant in cold-water fish and in oils made from plant seeds such as safflower, sunflower, soy, and corn. Monounsaturated fatty acids are found mostly in vegetables

such as olives and avocados and in nuts and their oils. Canola oil is another rich source of monounsaturates.

Our bodies need *some* fat, but only about a tablespoon a day. And that should be unsaturated fat.



J.M.