

Taste drives De Pere's big fat Greek cookout

BY THOMAS ROZWADOWSKI

trozwado@greenbay-pressgazette.com

DE PERE — It's all Greek to Mary Pappas.

For the record, that's a good thing.

As owner of Alpha Delights European Bakery & Cafe in De Pere, Pappas has made her mark in the area with authentic Greek entrees and desserts. But for an annual Greek cookout Pappas started eight years ago, she put her improvisational skills to the test while recalling a citrus-flavored sausage from childhood known as Loukanika.

"It was a very special thing in large Greek communities, and I thought it would be unique to make," Pappas said. "So it was, 'Cool, let's try it' ... Except I had no idea how to make it."

Anyone who watches Food Network already knows that culinary in-



Mary Pappas, owner, works on cutting homemade greek sausage Loukanika on Friday at Alpha Delights European Bakery & Cafe in De Pere. **Evan Siegle/Press-Gazette**

spiration strikes in odd and interesting ways. However; it's the carry-over to the kitchen where real magic happens — experience and experimentation creating wonderful flavors that cause a sensory overload before the knees buckle upon first bite.

With a friend conducting sausage research, Pappas was given enough of a road map. A recipe developed, but it was the kitchen experience with

her mom that made the difference.

"It was a neat experience because my mother and I were drawing on memories of taste that were 30 years old, if not more," Pappas said. "As we were making it, we'd say, 'No, we need more of this. The citrus flavor isn't strong enough. Do this. Do that.'"

A food tour of Greece a few years ago confirmed that Pappas nailed it. And with that, Loukani-

It's all Greek

The Alpha Delights' Greek Cookout runs from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday at 143 N. Wisconsin St., De Pere.

ka has become a mouth-watering draw at the cookout — a sidewalk sale project turned summer barbecue that is Alpha's signature event.

"I think what people cherish as much as the wonderful flavors is the sense of history that's conveyed through the whole thing," Pappas said of the cookout, which also features a custard called Galaktoboureko, among other made-from-scratch offerings with a Greek twist.

"And there's an element of hospitality that is characteristic of Greek culture and food. That comes through what we do, and I think why we're very successful in making people feel comfortable and welcome."