

# The Little Man Who Could - Jon Peters

## The source for our scrumptious food items.

Over the years, many people have asked “Where do you get all of your food items from?”. Well, it’s not an easy answer because we use many different providers. However, one does stick out from the others. About half of our gourmet food products come from a company located in Grandville Michigan. Here’s an inspiring synopsis about “the little man that could.” Not unlike many of today’s entrepreneurs, Jon Peters began his career in the early 1930’s on the canals of Schipol near Amsterdam. He bought his first small shop from a failing tobacco merchant. He and his children carefully packaged bulk dry goods and soaps for the growing community of Schipol. They endured the war years and grew in product selection and service. Neal Peters, Jon’s eldest son, was an enterprising young man. His job was to ride his bicycle around the countryside taking orders and delivering groceries. When a new resident moved in or if a house was built, Neal was knocking at their door to introduce himself and encourage purchasing from the family store.

Taking his enterprising spirit to America, Neal immigrated to Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1954. While learning the English language and raising his family, Neal worked various jobs in the food industry. In 1976 he purchased his own shop and called the 800 square-foot store Van’s Dutch Store. Importing foods from The Netherlands gave him a niche of providing for the needs of his loyal Dutch customers. Soon he included mail order shipping and selling wholesale to other Dutch shops throughout the United States.

By 1988, Van’s Dutch Store outgrew the space and a move was necessary. Neal’s sons, Ed and Ernie, joined him in the business and the name was changed to Peters Imports. Their product selection expanded with more imported and domestic gourmet delicacies including some of the world’s finest chocolates. In 1989 they moved to Grandville and they’ve since opened a Florida distribution division which keeps The Basket Case stocked weekly. Throughout each growing phase, the Peters’ family continued to put their customers first.

Pallets of food no longer arrive in the basket of a bicycle. Product selections are easily viewed on the wholesaler’s website and taste tested at major market shows. Samples are easily available when a new item or manufacturer joins the Peters Imports Division. Made in the USA is a key consideration in Ed’s line offering in honor of the generational beginnings who immigrated to this great country, survived the struggles of expansion while maintaining “The customer is king” motto.

Peters Imports, whose humble start and perseverance lives on after four generations, is a wholesale food business that continues to provide a large portion of the foods that we hand pick for our customers. Selections vary from gourmet foods such as infused oils and pastas, meats, cheeses and fine biscuits to the array of candies including fine chocolates to fun and retro treats. Peters Imports continues to hand deliver to our door weekly, ensuring freshness and quality for its loyal merchants whose motto lives on as, “The customer is king.” With pride B&B continues a ten-plus year relationship with “the little man that could.”

-- Bruce H. Kubec