

Karlovo – Since 2001

Heather Nahatchewitz, Marketing and Communications Director

Founded and managed by Krassimir and Krassimira Tabakovi in January 2001, Karlovo (named for a town in central Bulgaria) manufactures and offers traditional Bulgarian, Polish, Ukrainian, Serbian, Macedonian and Spanish salami and dry meats.

“When I came here I didn’t see any Bulgarian products on the market and our community was looking for it. I took over a small butcher shop and started from there. Built it from scratch,” says Krassimir.

With only six employees (counting the owners) Karlovo operates two retail locations, one in Etobicoke, the other in East York. The plant is part of the Etobicoke location and

produces all of the meat products sold at both locations. Karlovo also distributes its products to other stores in Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, and Ottawa.

When I arrived at the Etobicoke location, the lovely Krassimira was busy preparing for the lunch crowd and we had a few

“When I have a question I can just call OIMP for the answer. They always help me.”

~ Krassimir



moments to chat. I just had to ask her about the odds of two people with the same name meeting and falling in love in their home country of Bulgaria. Was the name so common there? Krassimira told me the 'a' at the end made it feminine and it was really just a coincidence. After 25 years of marriage they've been asked the same question numerous times and don't even think about it anymore.

(Except of course when the phone rings and they patiently try to decipher whether the call is for Krassimir or Krassimira.)

Krassimir's day starts at 8am with production at the plant. He then makes deliveries to other stores including Starsky's and the second Karlovo location. The day wraps up by 9pm when the stores close, paperwork is completed, and everything has been cleaned and put away for the next day.

Karlovo produces about 50 meat products, the most popular being the beef pastarma and sudjuk.

Krassimir's personal favourite?

"My products are like my children," smiles Krassimir. "I don't have a favourite."

They used to have more variety but with certain regulations being introduced they had to stop producing some products.

Krassimir provided an example of how people

would line-up to get fresh kobassa, still warm from the smokehouse. "Now that it can't be served warm and must be vacuum-packed, people stopped coming for it."

That hasn't stopped the couple from doing what they love. "Consistency and quality. That's our philosophy," says Krassimir. "You have to love your work. When you see your customers happy – that's everything."

Karlovo Inc. has been an OIMP member since 2003. They've recently entered three products in the Ontario Finest Meat Competition™ for the first time. Join us to see if they've won at the OIMP Red Carpet Awards Gala on Saturday October 21, 2017. ■

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