

# Cleveland's iconic Bertman mustard still a fan favorite after 91 years

By BARRY GOODRICH

Like so many other Clevelanders, Randy Mintz's first taste of Bertman Original Ball Park Mustard came during an Indians' game at Municipal Stadium.

"I remember the vendor putting the hot dog on the bun and then taking out the mustard and waving it around like an orchestra conductor," laughs Mintz. "I passed the dollar down the aisle and had my change passed back to me. Finally, my hot dog showed up ... and somebody had taken a bite out of it."

Today, Mintz is president of Bertman Original Ball Park Mustard, still headquartered in downtown Cleveland after 91 years.

**The Mintz family purchased Bertman Foods last August and continues to produce the brand's signature mustard. "We're a vinegar-based, not water, sauce," says Mintz. "It's all natural, gluten-free and kosher."**

The company got its start in 1925 when Joseph Bertman's spicy brown mustard was sold at League Park, where Babe Ruth hit his 500th career home run.

"We don't know for sure if he ate our mustard but we know Babe Ruth loved hot dogs," said Mintz.

When the Indians moved to Municipal Stadium and then Jacobs/Progressive Field, Bertman mustard went with them. The distinctive mustard also found a home at Euclid

Beach Park. Today it can be found on the shelves of most major supermarkets in Northeast Ohio as well as the tables at Corky and Lenny's, the Happy Dog and more than 20 public and private golf courses in the area.

Native Clevelanders who now live throughout the country are regular customers, not to mention Bertman fans from across the world. "We ship out five to 10 cases per day all over the country and Canada. We've shipped to Germany, El Salvador and Mexico," says Mintz, a Beachwood High School graduate who lives in Twinsburg.

At the Hudson News gift shops located at Hopkins Airport, travelers purchase 15 cases of the mustard every seven to 10 days. Bertman mustard, hats and shirts are all top selling items in the Indians' gift shops at Pro-



gressive Field. And the mustard is the primary ingredient in Michael Symon's Cleveland Barbecue Sauce, served at Mabel's downtown.

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While Bertman mustard has been a fixture at Indians' games for decades, another local product, Stadium Mustard, is served at Browns' games. "There's plenty of exposure for both," says Mintz. "And the competition is

great for both of us."

While tradition plays an important part at the company, Bertman's recently teamed up with another iconic Cleveland business, Great Lakes Brewery. The new product, Dortmund Beer Mustard, is already a hit.

The mecca of mustard is situated in Middleton, Wisconsin at the Mustard Museum. "There are 3,000 mustards there," says Mintz, "and we are number one in Internet sales."

It's safe to say that Joseph Bertman's original product is still cutting the mustard.



Kathy and Pat Sweeney with a 1917 American LaFrance fire truck.

## Shaker Historical Society "Twilight in the Garden Party"

The 12th annual benefit for the Shaker Historical Society was hosted by Jude and Dick Parke at their historic home believed to be the oldest house on Fairmount Blvd. in Shaker Heights.



Jude and Dick Parke

Built in 1842 by Jacob Strong, the Greek Revival farmhouse has been meticulously restored and maintained by the Parkes who graciously invited the 100 or so guests to tour it in its entirety. Party chairmen Stacy Hunter and Jennifer Sullivan greeted people as they strolled through the perennial gardens, its borders defined by foundation stones rescued by Mr. Parke from a neighbor's barn. Honorary chairmen were Shaker Heights Fire Department Chief Pat Sweeney and his wife Kathy, appropriately, as later pledges were made toward the restoration of the city's first fire truck, the 1917 American LaFrance Pumper Type 75, owned by the historical society.

The Sheela Das Trio provided musical entertainment during cocktails and the buffet dinner catered by J. Pistone.

It was a charming party, the traditional kick-off to the eagerly anticipated Father's Day Gracious Gardens of Shaker Heights Tour, organized by chairmen Catherine Feldman and Margaret Ransohoff. STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHRYN RIDDLE

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