

VENDOR PROFILES

By David Crowder

Eva Culak



If you want any of Eva Culak's pastries at Ardovino's Farmers

Markets, it's good to get there early on a Saturday morning because they go fast.

Soon to turn 87, Eva has been coming to the weekend market to sell her pastries for 18 years.

That makes her the elder vendor at the weekend market started 23 years ago just across the New Mexico state line at Ardovino's Desert Crossing.

Started chiefly for local farmers wanting to sell their produce directly to the public, the market is now home on weekends to serious artisans and products of all sorts.

"I've only sold here at Ardovino's," Eva said. "Business has been good to me because people know me, and they love my jelly and my apple strudel."

She made 20 strudels and other sweets for a recent market and sold out well before noon. And she does it all by herself.

"It keeps me busy, and it keeps me young," Eva said, as the Bee Gees' song "Stayin' Alive" played on the PA system. "I'm going to keep on going."

She started baking for Ardovino's weekend markets after the death of her husband.

Before that, Eva ran a very different kind of business.

"My husband and I did yard work," she said. "It was Eva's Lawn Service."

And before that?

Eva is from Heidelberg, in what used to be East Germany, behind the Berlin Wall and miles of barbed wire.

"I sneaked out overnight," she said with a mischievous smile.

You can purchase Eva's divine pastries and delectable jams every Saturday at the Farmers' Market. Discover for yourself how delicious they are.

David Crowder is a semi-retired journalist with itchy fingers who spent more than 40 years with the El Paso Times, Newspaper Tree and El Paso Inc. as a reporter, editor, columnist and photographer.