

Local spotlight

# Joe's Produce plans an upscale expansion

■ Third generation store will add deli, hot and cold foods, pastries, baked items and cheeses.

BY NEAL HALDANE  
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**LIVONIA** — With road construction on Seven Mile Road wrapping up, Joe Maiorana plans to unwrap a fresh, upscale Joe's Produce that will give shoppers more than just fruits and vegetables.

When the addition opens in January, Joe's will grow from 20,000 to 30,000 square feet and will include a deli, larger kitchen and additional space for flowers, fruits and vegetables.

"We are going to put in hot and cold prepared foods, from everyday to gourmet," said Maiorana, the third-generation owner of the store, which opened in 1967.

The market will feature a European look with stainless steel counters and granite tops and an outdoor display area for seasonal products.

The enlarged store also will add another 30-35 employees to the 75 workers already on staff, he said.

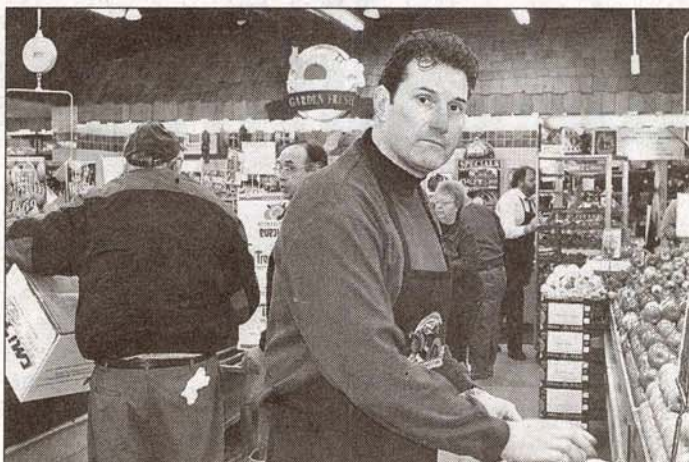
Andrea Krolicki of Livonia has shopped at Joe's for nearly 20 years.

"Joe's consistently carries quality produce and a good selection of market items," she said.

Krolicki expects the changes will be positive but said she was concerned about losing the intimate feeling of the current configuration.

The revamped Joe's will sell rotisserie chicken, deli sandwiches, hot and cold side items, pastries and baked goods, cheeses and salads.

The remodeling also adds more refrigerated areas for conventional and organic produce and an expanded wine section.



Wayne E. Smith / The Detroit News

Joe's Produce in Livonia is adding 10,000 square feet to its store. The addition, which opens in January, will include a deli, larger kitchen and additional space for flowers, fruits and vegetables.

## Joe's Produce

- **Where:** 33152 W. Seven Mile, Livonia
- **Opened:** 1967
- **Employees:** 75
- **Current size:** 20,000 square feet
- **Post-expansion size:** 30,000 square feet
- **Information:** [www.joesproduce.com](http://www.joesproduce.com)

"Our floor space has always been tight and without expanding, we were very limited in how we could grow," said Maiorana, who started looking at an expansion about three years ago.

"Any company that can't grow goes backwards. This seems to be where the industry is going."

Joe's looks to join other successful grocers offering a greater selection of convenience foods, remodeling stores to make the shopping experience more appealing, and providing more choices of fresh foods, natural and organic fruits and vegetables, ethnic products and specialty items, according to a Retail Forward report on food retailers.

Consumers notice these changes and admit they spend more money because of the improvements, the report stated.

The remodeling also comes at a time when Americans are eating more produce, according to the Produce Marketing Association.

The association reported fresh produce consumption increased to 346 pounds a year per person in 2004, up 2 percent from the previous year.

Vegetable consumption increased 4 percent to 219 pounds per person, while fruit intake remained relatively flat at 127 pounds.

Joe's also will face competition from a variety of other retailers. Upscale grocers are becoming more prevalent in the Detroit area.

A Fresh Market recently opened its first Metro Detroit location in Rochester Hills and Plum Market will enter this market with stores in Bloomfield Township, Ann Arbor and Royal Oak.

*Neal Haldane is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.*