

## Old-World Tradition With A Country Attitude.



Photo by David Gibb | dgibbphoto.com

CAVE JUNCTION, OR — Against the odds, Taylor's Sausage has staked out a reputation for fine meat products in an improbably remote corner of Southern Oregon that stands as a testimony to the hard work of this fifth-generation family business. On a holiday weekend, about 1,000 visitors stop for hot dogs, hamburgers and assorted meat and other products at its Country Outlet Store and Restaurant at 202 S. Redwood Highway.

The almost 100-year-old company that started in Calgary, Canada, has become Cave Junction's largest employer. The deli is a popular oasis that's about half way between Medford and the coast. It all started when "Grandpa Taylor," began making summer sausage in 1918. The family moved to Los Angeles in 1934, and grandpa's old-world recipe continued. Taylor's Sausage was popular at the famous Farmer's Market, and movie stars lined up to sample the savory sausages. Eventually, the family moved to the Bay Area, but the lure of a simpler, more rural life, grew stronger.

On a trip to Northern California, Charles Taylor decided to take a side trip to Southern Oregon to check out a piece of property, finally finding something to his liking in the Illinois Valley. In 1970, he purchased a small meat shop in Cave Junction and moved his family up there.

The Taylors have continued grandpa's tradition and avoided the lure of making mass-market sausage. As its reputation has grown, the Taylor name became synonymous with a growing movement toward locally produced foods.

Charles Taylor, Co-Owner  
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*"Dad comes in, stomps through here and says hi to everyone. He and Mom do all the ordering and filing together. We still keep everything in the family."*

- Scott Taylor  
Co-Owner  
Taylor's Sausage

## Old-World Tradition With A Country Attitude.

CAVE JUNCTION, OR — Far from any city, Taylor's Sausage founded a family business on a solid country attitude that has earned it a big star on the region's food and wine map.

The fifth-generation company began in 1918 in Calgary, Canada, migrated to Los Angeles and then to the Bay Area. Finally, on a whim, Charles Taylor checked out Southern Oregon on a vacation and moved the business to Cave Junction, where after many years of struggle, it became that town's largest employer.

Throughout this circuitous journey, Taylor's Sausage steadfastly maintained its high standards. On a holiday weekend, its popular Country Outlet Store and Restaurant can attract up to 1,000 visitors, and that's a major feat considering it is 40 minutes from Interstate 5. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The family has basically worked long and hard to turn a relatively remote enterprise into a destination that offers the best of Southern Oregon. "Having grown up here, I like the rural lifestyle," says Scott Taylor, who is one of the owners and runs the store and deli. "I like to fish, I like to hike, I like to raft." His brother, Terry, runs the production plant and is the imaginative force behind many of the newer products offered. "He's a little better in the creativity part," Scott says. "I'm a little more of the nuts and bolts kind of guy. We make a good team." In something of an about-face, Scott used to run the production side, and Terry handled the deli. "We just traded," Scott says. "Now, he's production." In the future, they may trade hats once again, he noted.

Other family members, including mom and dad, who are in their 80s, have a hand in the business. "Dad, comes in, stomps through here and says hi to everyone," Scott says. "He does all the ordering for the business well most of it. Mom files with him. We still do everything family wise."

In 1918, "Grandpa Taylor," began making summer sausage based on a recipe that he brought over from Europe for a store in Calgary, Canada, that was one of the first in the area to have refrigeration.

The family moved to Los Angeles in 1918, and the old-world recipe continued to make mouths water. Taylor's Sausage was popular at the famous Farmer's Market for 19 years, and movie stars quickly became a fan of the company's meat products. After World War II interrupted the business briefly, the family moved to the Bay Area to start anew, but big city life eventually lost its appeal as it grew more crowded.

On a vacation to Northern California, Charles Taylor decided to take a side trip to Southern Oregon to check out a piece of property, finally finding something to his liking in the Illinois Valley. In 1970, he purchased a small meat shop in Cave Junction and moved his family up there. "It was a bit tough at first," remembers Scott. "My mom had to go back into teaching to keep things going. There was long, slow growth and plenty of work."

Growth is constant as they keep up with demand for 5,000 pounds of ham, linguica, beef strips, salami and other delectable meats produced each day. And the Taylors keep adding to their lineup. Once, a customer brought in some bear meat and asked if Taylor could make salami out of it. That started the wild game product line the company now features.

Taylor's Sausage, which opened its new retail store in 2001, just a few blocks away from the factory, insists on a production area that is so clean and spotless, they're proud to show it off to visitors. Depending on the time of year, you might see travelers who are mostly from the coast heading to Medford for holiday shopping. In the summer, Medford residents stop for a burger or hot dog as they head to the ocean to cool off from soaring inland heat.

As its popularity grows, Taylor continues to add to its facilities, anticipating expanding the kitchen space while constantly enlarging the production facilities. Some 30 to 40 people work in the deli, while the production area has about 100 employees. Products are sold throughout the U.S. and in Canada. Finding workers can be a struggle, but the Taylors are happy to offer people their first jobs, and they try to accommodate flexible schedules as workers go to school or raise a family.

Scott said he appreciates other complementary businesses such as wineries and restaurants but generally prefers to maintain the rural character of the area. Giving back to the community is important to the Taylors, who sponsor local events for the Illinois Valley Little League, the Boys and Girls Club of the Rogue Valley and other organizations. "We try to keep the restaurant kind of like a meeting place," Scott says. "Realtors come here and spread out maps on the tables."

With deep roots, Scott said Cave Junction is home for his family. "We try to be a positive part of this community," he says.



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Cases at the Country Outlet Store contain a lineup of fine meats.



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