

How'd you meet Glynn?

Deborah Parisa Making Great Things Happen

by Meredith Millen Deal

photography by Alicia Crews, AOC Photography

Bubbling over with enthusiasm, Deborah Parisa has a can-do attitude that makes you want to join in! She exudes positive energy, and says she is “everywhere”. Deborah’s driving entrepreneurial spirit makes her a true networker who thinks way outside the box, or should I say “jar”? She is living her dream.

So how did Deborah and Michael Parisa, a family of five humans, three dogs, a turtle and a horse named Shyanne get here? Why of course, like many of us, they used to visit St. Simons Island and Glynn County with friends. They even stayed at The King & Prince Resort a few times while relaxing away from their hometown of Malverne, NY, on Long Island. Then the Parisas began to look at St. Simons as a place for a second home. They bought a house in Shaw’s Bounty and then it hit Deborah and Michael, St. Simons Island would be a great place to raise their kids! So, in 2007 they permanently moved here and now we are happy to call the Parisa family “locals.” Deborah says “It is so much fun here, we love all our new friends and people love my marinara sauce! My fra diablo marinara sauce will be my next product; it has the heat from three peppers and more.”

The marinara sauce. Yes, Parisa’s Marinara Sauce is super delicious and most versatile; I even eat it with tortilla chips and bought my jar at Island Natural Food Store. And, all the fresh ingredients are locally grown right here in Georgia. Deborah borrowed an FDA approved kitchen from her friends, the Crum family and then got her marinara sauce approved by the University of Georgia’s Agriculture Department. Now manufactured at Manning Farms in Vidalia, GA, (yes, she uses Vidalia onions) it is so delicious, and gluten free with no preservatives. Perusing the label, Deborah tells me it is a local picture of all ingredients featured in the sauce. Also sentimentally, there is a bottle of wine tied up with a purple scarf, a gift from her girlfriend who did not survive 9/11.

Driven to be productive from an early age, Deborah credits her parents Seamus and Rose McGonagle as her mentors. “Dad has never paid a bill late, he is beyond generous; they proudly raised us five girls. I miss my parents and my Long Island years of being home, but absolutely love our family life on St. Simons Island.” She adds: “My husband Michael inspires me with his never ending confidence and has helped me realize I’m no different than anybody else. I can confidently place my marinara sauce on store shelves next to any other sauce. I always look forward, I never look back. And if my marinara sauce ever becomes not fun, I’ll move onto the next project!”

Delicious Fun Facts about Deborah:

Family: Husband Michael, children, Michael Anthony 7, Isabella Rose 6, and Ava Grace 3. **For relaxation:** “I ride my horse, Shyanne. We ride on the beach with Tommie Crum from Three Oaks Farm or at the riding arena at Sea Island Stables where Shyanne lives.” **Favorite fruit:** The strawberry, of course! **She once had a business, “back in the day”:** At age twelve, Deborah collected excess tomatoes from neighbors, selling them according to size in front of Cross Island Fruits Store, and says “Now my marinara sauce is on their shelves!”



Being artistic, she took \$40 one time and bought tempera paints to paint store front windows for the holidays, “I made some great money and had fun! I also had a doggie daycare in my NY home where I made my own dog biscuits and sent my clients’ home daily with doggie bag treats.” **Favorite place at home:** “The hammock. I get my comforter and pillow and go outside at night to see all the stars; they are so bright here.” **Message on Deborah’s business phone line:** Make great things happen. **What’s next:** Her dream of an award winning product continues, for Parisa’s Marinara Sauce is now one of three finalists in the 2009 Flavor of Georgia Contest.