

# Biography

JOSETTE LEBLOND, founder and President of Normandie Pate, Inc. has manufactured fine pates and sausages since her arrival in America in 1985. Today, Normandie, Inc has expanded into manufacturing bakery goods for airlines, grocery chains, and restaurants. Born in Normandie, France, Josette was raised with strong work ethics. After grade school, she would help her father in the charcuterie business (delicatessen). On the weekends her father would take her to their country farm where they raised and butchered their own livestock. It was here Josette butchered her first pig at age seven. This would set the stage for the “French-American” dream which would come later.

By the time Josette was fourteen she had decided to leave school. With her father’s approval she began working full time in the family business. For the next three years Josette applied herself to learning everything she could. Then at seventeen, Josette married. In a triumphant moment she made a deal with her father to buy his business. Even though she was dedicated to her business and providing the best service and products to her clientele it did not stop her from taking on a greater responsibility, namely, raising a family. At twenty-one Josette gave birth to a baby boy she named Anthony. Now she, her husband and new son lived above their shop. But the bliss was short lived.

By 1981 Josette had separated from her husband. She bought out his half of the business and learned to run it on her own. Soon she would buy all the properties from her father. Yet within a year she added another business: the serious business of making authentic breads - a boulangerie.

Josette was now a successful business woman. But her father pointed out running it took all of her time. He encouraged her to sell. He offered the fact that one could open a small business in the South of France, work three to four months during the summer, and live off the earnings the rest of the year.

Josette took part of her father’s advice and sold her business to one of her workers. It was a week-long vacation in America that changed her life. Visiting New York with her son in Los Angeles, Josette came to the stunning realization: *“This is where I must live.”*

During her visit in Los Angeles, Josette was invited to a party where she met the chef of the Queen Mary, the famed tourist attraction docked in Long Beach. He was also French and asked her to work for him for a month. She accepted his offer and was soon working in the kitchen preparing salads. It didn’t take long for the chef to ascertain her background in the charcuterie business. Now Josette was back making her fine pates and foie gras.

A distributor’s representative found out about her products and offered to be her broker. Thus began the first Normandie Pate, Inc. Along the way Josette learned English, and still delivers it today in a staccato but charming, thick-as-cream-cheese accent. Josette also began moonlighting pates in her own restaurant kitchen.

Experience paid off. Within a short time she had generated enough income to move into a 900 square-foot kitchen in Gardena, California. But then she encountered the bureaucratic rules and regulations of opening a manufacturing business. Within a year and still speaking very little English, Josette learned to deal with the demanding rules and

regulations of the Health and Safety Departments; the License Bureau and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

By 1988 Josette was able to purchase a 12,000 square-foot manufacturing plant located west of downtown Los Angeles. She oversaw its renovations making sure it met USDA requirements. She still had her other business in Gardena to run. But with her new plant she could bake authentic French breads and manufacture pates, even make sandwiches and pastries. She also opened a small retail for local consumers at the front of her plant. As owner, chef, plant manager, and salesperson, Josette managed to acquire many key accounts for her company including Disneyland Hotels, The Biltmore, Macy's, upscale restaurants throughout Los Angeles, chains like Bristol Farms, Whole Foods and Pavilions; airline caterers and many more. She also supplies hotels like the Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, and Hyatt. Normandie employs 35 people while producing 2,000 lbs. of pate and 3,000 baguettes each day. The bakery also produces 30,000 rolls each day for catering companies that make meals for British Airways and other airlines.

As one gets to know Josette they can't help but admire this woman for her tenacity. How she turned one idea into a multi-million dollar business in a very short time. What makes it even more amazing is that Josette rarely follows the typical American business principles. She does things her own way.

Josette has gone on to expand the Normandie parent company. She now owns Normandie Bakery and Coffee on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood, as well as one on Sunset Boulevard; a Normandie Bakery and Restaurant in Marina Del Rey, and a Normandie Country Bakery and Pate in Los Angeles.

Hoping to retire, Josette moved to Las Vegas in 2001. But as fate would have it, she continued running her bakeries in Los Angeles while opening new ones in Las Vegas. She has opened Normandie Country Bakery on Sirius, Normandie Deli on Valley View, and Josette's Bistro on Flamingo in Las Vegas.

Josette's Bistro is located at 4983 West Flamingo In Las Vegas. It is an authentic French bistro open for lunch and dinner. Here you will find Josette in her element. She greets each guest personally. Like her accent, she has her own unique way of making you feel special and comfortable. Locals and celebrities alike come to dine at Josette's on a regular basis and to enjoy the nightly live entertainment which is surprisingly varied, from lounge pianists to Cabaret shows. Josette's Bistro is capable of truly inspirational moments.

Proud to be a part of Las Vegas, Josette is very active in the community. She generously donates her time, baked goods and meals to charity organizations like Chef 4 Kids and Taste Of The Nation.

Josette's energy, perseverance, experience, and love for the business have always kept her going in the right direction. She likes to say she is living the "*French-American dream.*"