

SUNDAY INDEPENDENT
30 Septemeber 2012



NET WORTH: Aileen and Michael O'Neill with their Irish Atlantic Sea Salt in the Beara Peninsula, West Cork

Fisherman lands successful catch with gourmet sea salt from Atlantic ocean

LOUISE McBRIDE

WHEN most of us think of the Atlantic Ocean, cold and choppy waters are more likely to be the first thing to come to mind than gourmet sea salt.

Yet it is from the waters of the Irish Atlantic that West Cork man Michael O'Neill harvests the sea salt sold by his firm, Irish Atlantic Sea Salt.

O'Neill set up Irish Atlantic Sea Salt with his late father in 2009 — shortly after he did some shellfish consultancy work in Britain.

"I'm from the Beara Peninsula, so fishing is in my blood," says O'Neill. "I was a fisherman at the time — and doing a bit of consultancy work in Britain when I came across a sea salt harvesting plant in Cornwall. I saw how success-

ful it was and asked why we couldn't do the same here."

So why would someone buy sea salt over table salt?

"We don't apply high temperatures when the salt is being produced — which means we keep a high percentage of essential elements in our salt," says O'Neill. "You also don't have to use as much sea salt in your dinner as you would normal table salt."

Irish Atlantic Sea Salt, which is run by Michael's wife, Aileen, is currently being sold by 130 independent retailers and 60 supermarkets across the country. The company is also talking to some of the multiple supermarkets about having its salt sold there.

As well as producing sea salt, the company is considering producing a mineral water drink derived from sea water.