

FROZEN DESSERT  
INNOVATIONSCHECK  
THIS  
OUT!

Photo courtesy of Peter Knipp Holdings

■ Donna Berry *Product Development Editor*

**T**his summer confirmed what the dairy industry has long known — Americans love being entertained by ice cream. Across the country, frozen dessert manufacturers got creative for National Ice Cream Month (July). Let's check out these creative innovations and unique ways of marketing them.

Blue Bell Creameries, Brenham, Texas, debuted a number of new flavors. Caramel Kettle Crunch is a creamy vanilla ice cream with crunchy caramel-coated popcorn and a smooth caramel sauce swirl. Summer Berries is a refreshing, citrus ice cream mixed with strawberries, blueberries and swirls of raspberry and blackberry sauces.

"We've combined the best-tasting berries with our great-tasting ice cream for a very refreshing new flavor," says Ricky Dickson, vice president of sales and marketing. "There are chunks of strawberries and blueberries in every bite of Summer Berries Ice Cream. It's the kind of ice cream that you can enjoy while relaxing on your back porch at the end of a long, hot summer day."

Other fruit-filled flavors now available from Blue Bell include

Cherry Vanilla (creamy vanilla ice cream with maraschino cherry halves) and Southern Hospitality (vanilla ice cream with chunks of pineapples, roasted pecans and a strawberry sauce swirl).

Wilbraham, Mass.-based Friendly's introduced Ice Cream Cupcakes. Made with chocolate cake that is topped with vanilla ice cream, freshly whipped icing and decorations, this new dessert option is perfect for birthday parties or just any day, according to Tim Hopkins, vice president and general manager of retail business for Friendly's.

"We really wanted to start out the year, and enter the spring and summer season, with very innovative ice cream products, products that are unique to Friendly's," Hopkins says. "We listen to our customers and know what they want when it comes to ice cream."

To add to its innovation in the industry, the company expanded its current ice cream carton offerings with two new frozen yogurt varieties: Honey Granola (vanilla frozen yogurt with a honey-flavored swirl and granola oat clusters) and Forbidden Fudge Brownie (double chocolate frozen yogurt with fudge swirls and fudge brownie chunks). The company has also expanded its Sundae Xtreme flavors to include Mint Cookie Collision and Fudge Nut Brownie.

"Our ice cream products are loaded with stuff people love. And, with our frozen yogurts that provide healthier options with the same great taste, it's the best of both worlds," he says.

Speaking of health, Wells' Dairy Inc., Le Mars, Iowa, now offers through its foodservice program a line it describes as "supplemental ice cream." New Blue Bunny Nutriplus frozen dessert cups come in orange cream and vanilla varieties. They are designed for hospital patients and nursing home residents who need extra



■ New Friendly's Ice Cream Cupcakes are a first in retail freezers.

## Sundae Celebration

Breyers took the art of the sundae on the road this summer, partnering with popular local chefs around the country to create signature ice cream sundae recipes. Renowned pastry chef Gale Gand kicked off the Sundae Showcase with the development of recipes such as the snow ball sundae, the spaghetti and meatball sundae, ice cream lollipops and the mini coffee ice cream sundae.

The Sundae Showcase invited families to get creative with a free scoop of ice cream at the mobile build-your-own sundae bar. Families were encouraged to create a family-friendly ice cream sundae recipe at home that included 10 or fewer ingredients and enter the Breyers Sundae Scoop-Off Contest. Recipes could be submitted up until September 13 at [www.breyers.com](http://www.breyers.com) for a chance to win \$10,000, a trip to Chicago featuring a private cooking lesson with Gand and one year of free Breyers ice cream.

In addition to creating sundae recipes and serving as a judge for the contest, Gand provided tips for sundae making, including using two or more ice cream flavors in a sundae to add extra flavor and flair, or rolling scoops of ice cream in any kind of cookie crumbs, crunched cereal or chocolate milk powder to create an ice cream truffle. ■



nutrition. Each 4-ounce cup provides 240 calories, 13 grams of fat, 9 grams of protein and 2 grams of fiber. A serving is also either a good or excellent source of nearly 20 vitamins and minerals.

Also for foodservice, Wells' Dairy introduces Parlor Pies, pre-sliced ice cream pies that come in two varieties. Cookies & Cream is moist chocolate cake topped with vanilla ice cream filled with chocolate cream cookies. Chocolate Peanut Butter Swirl is a swirl of premium peanut butter ice cream with peanut butter cup pieces, caramel ice cream and dark chocolate ice cream atop a moist, thick layer of chocolate cake.

### Culinary inspirations

Breyers ice cream, a brand of Unilever, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., teamed up with renowned pastry chef Gale Gand to encourage Americans to think of retail packaged ice cream as the base ingredient for their sweet culinary creations. Gand created a variety of recipes that put a creative twist on the classic ice cream sundae — everything from the ultimate in family fun to the perfect solution for a dinner party dessert. (See "Sundae Celebration," above.)

Breyers recently refined many family-favorite varieties in the All Natural ice cream line to deliver an even richer and more indulgent dessert than before. For example, Breyers All Natural Rocky Road has 20% more marshmallow and chocolate flavor.

"My favorite flavor of Breyers All Natural Ice Cream is Butter Pecan," says Gand. "I don't always go with tradition, but this ice cream flavor is everything I want it to be. It's creamy and sweet.

And the toasty flavor of the nuts with an ever so slight saltiness, plus their subtle crunch, make them the perfect foil to the smooth, rich-tasting vanilla ice cream surrounding them."

Gand is the executive pastry chef and partner of a four-star restaurant in Chicago, a city that is now home to a major ice cream event: The Chicago Luxury Ice Cream Festival. In its second year, the event pays homage to the micro-creamery, pastry chefs, chocolatiers and artisan suppliers. No bowl is left unturned, as the festival offers something for every palate. Brands available for sampling at this year's event included Vosges, Black Dog Gelato, Nice Cream, Homer's, Oberweis, Trader's Point Creamery, Ciao Bella Gelato, Bob Tail Ice Cream and Sassy Cow Creamery. All but Ciao Bella, which has its roots in New York, are produced in the Midwest.

Each of these dairies has a story to tell, which is part of their attraction. For example, Sassy Cow Creamery, Columbus, Wis., which opened as a milk-bottling operation in 2008, produces ice cream behind big viewing windows. Family owned and operated, the company is known in the community for its innovative ice cream flavors. Recent flavors of the month included Orange Chocolate Bliss and Purple Cow (black raspberry ice cream with chocolate chips).

The West Coast has a new claim to frozen dessert fame. San Jose, Calif.-based Silver Moon Desserts melds premium liqueurs such as Irish cream, Cointreau and crème de mint with milk and other natural ingredients to make liqueur-infused frozen desserts.

## Watch What You Call Natural

At least 48 out of 53 flavors of Ben & Jerry's All Natural ice cream and frozen yogurt contain alkalized cocoa, corn syrup, partially hydrogenated soybean oil or other ingredients that either do not exist in nature or that have been chemically modified, according to Washington, D.C.-based Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Calling products with unnatural ingredients natural is a false and misleading use of the term, the nonprofit watchdog group said in an August 12 statement.

CSPI is urging the Unilever-owned brand to drop the claim or else the group will take its concerns to FDA and state attorneys general. In 2002, CSPI alerted FDA and the company to Ben & Jerry's deceptive use of the all-natural claim, but neither took action, and the problem seems to have only gotten worse, according to CSPI.

"These ingredients are safe – only a small amount of partially hydrogenated oil is used – but it's a stretch to call any of them natural," says CSPI executive director Michael

Jacobson. "Ben & Jerry's sylvan labels notwithstanding, these ingredients come from the factory, not the farm. And slapping an all-natural label on the products certainly implies that the products are top quality and deserve to fetch a higher price."

Although FDA does not have a formal definition for the word natural, the best rule of thumb to follow is if the ingredient has been significantly altered from its original form, it is artificial or synthetic. And if it is artificial, it cannot be natural. ■

This summer the company's culinary creations became available at northern California Whole Foods Market stores.

"The acceptance of Whole Foods Market is a critical milestone for our young company and a powerful signal of Silver Moon's appeal. Since last year's retail launch, we've exceeded our goals for getting onto the shelves of fine-foods markets," says Sheri Tate, founder and CEO of Silver Moon Desserts. "The artisan food arena is incredibly competitive, but we couldn't be happier with the Bay Area's phenomenal reception of Silver Moon."

After years of research and experimentation, former Silicon Valley technology marketing executive Tate founded Silver Moon Desserts in 2008 when she began sup-

■ Silver Moon blends premium liqueur with milk and other natural ingredients for an adults-only frozen dessert.

## New Kosher Gelato Debuts Overseas

Until this summer, there has never been an authentic gelato produced in Italy that is kosher. That changed when Israel's G. Willi-Food International Ltd., teamed up with an Italian gelato manufacturer to produce kosher frozen goodies such as Cioccolatissimo (chocolate gelato with chocolate syrup and triple chocolate curls), Panna Cotta (plain gelato with caramel syrup decorated with chocolate curls) and Tiramisu (plain gelato with fresh cream, coffee and sponge cake).

"This new launch demonstrates our commitment to developing new, innovative and high-margin food products with careful attention to meeting the special needs of our customers," says Zvi Williger, president and COO. "This is the first time that a kosher ice cream is manufactured in Italy." The company's products are distributed globally. Plans include exporting the kosher gelato to the States in the near future. ■



plying her premium, liqueur-infused ice cream and sorbets to the foodservice industry. Her two newest creations are Lavender Limoncello and Bourbon Vanilla Bean.

The company launched its first retail line this past year and was very soon selected as a "favorite" of Oprah (April 2010 *O, Oprah Magazine*). The company is planning to expand into southern California and the Pacific Northwest regions later this year. It currently is available for shipment anywhere in the United States through its online store, silvermoondesserts.com.

Consumers, such as Oprah and her fan club, will continue to find comfort in eating frozen desserts as much as entrepreneurs enjoy creating boutique frozen treats. As the economy improves, expect to see more culinary creations roll out in record number. ■

