

Palisadian-Post

16 PAGES

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2008 ♦ PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIFORNIA

75¢

PAGE 6

PALISADIAN-POST

JUNE 26, 2008

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Marquez Moms Launch Krazy Ketchup Business

By SUE PASCOE, Staff Writer



At a commercial kitchen on Robertson, Erin Rosen (left) and Laila Bowden create Krazy Ketchup, using only natural ingredients.

Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

Two Marquez moms, Erin Rosen and Laila Bowden, have started producing Krazy Ketchup, a healthy alternative to the standard bottled varieties.

The owners, who started as actresses in New York, met in Pacific Palisades and became involved together in car pools, volunteer activities and kiddie birthday parties. When their toddlers refused to eat vegetables, they came up with the idea for their company.

Trying to sneak vegetables into their children's diet, Rosen (who has two children, Aidan, 8, and Logan, 3) and Bowden (whose children are Jack, 8, Lane, 6, and Lucy, 3) began adding pureed vegetables to other foods like macaroni, pasta sauce and ketchup.

"What kid doesn't eat ketchup?" Bowden said. "They put it on everything."

However, when the two women studied their ketchup labels, they were alarmed by the ingredients, especially corn syrup and high-fructose corn syrup. "We tried organic brands, but they were too runny or had a different taste," Rosen said, so the two decided to make their own ketchup using only natural ingredients.

They experimented with different recipes, trying the result on friends and asking for feedback. When organic sugar in place of corn syrup proved to be too sweet, they replaced it with organic agave. Eventually, their ingredients included tomato paste, vinegar, organic agave, organic carrot puree, organic sweet potato puree, organic squash puree, sea salt, and organic spices. The result was a thick tomato ketchup with great flavor that people started requesting.

"We served it at barbecues," Bowden said, and their ketchup soon gained a following among neighbors, playgroups and school friends. Still not sure if it was a viable product, the pair attended a fancy food show to see what was available. "There

were 1,000 barbecue sauces and two ketchups, one of which was jalapeño, but there was nothing like ours on the market," Rosen said. "We thought it was something we could pursue."

They learned the rules and regulations for manufacturing a food product, including finding a commercial kitchen—Chef's Kitchen on Robertson Boulevard. And they gave careful thought to a logo for their label. "We wanted to appeal to kids and what would be fun for them," Rosen said. "We didn't want to give kids a clue that there was hidden vegetables."

The Krazy Ketchup business has now been launched and is increasing through word-of-mouth endorsements. "Adults love the taste," Bowden said, "but we're marketing it towards kids because of the hidden vegetable purees."

Every two weeks, Bowden and Rosen go to their commercial kitchen and spend an entire day making 260 bottles of their product. "We're at the starting stages, but we're evolving," Rosen said. "Our next step would be to find a company that can make it for us."

At Marquez Green Day, the owners were surprised that they sold more than 50 bottles at \$6 each, including four bottles to honorary mayor Gavin MacLeod.

A San Francisco mommy's blog gave the ketchup a favorable review and orders from the Bay area suddenly increased. A relative bought 24 bottles and sold them in Oregon, which opened up yet another market.

"We've gone slowly, we're taking our time," Rosen said. "Our heart is in it. We'll see where it goes."

"We just want to get on Oprah," Bowden said.

Rosen's husband, Steven, is a publisher and manager of the Rosen Music Corporation and Bowden's husband, Bobby, is a vice president with AIG.

Krazy Ketchup can be purchased at Chefmakers on Via de la Paz or online at www.krazyketchup.com.