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NEWS & NOTES
• UNFPA Foundation Funds Report on Safety and Health of Farmworkers
PAGE 8

RETAILER NEWS
• Major Trade Specialty Concept with New Store
PAGE 10

SUPPLIER NEWS
• Seasonal and Fall Items with a True Story Behind Them
PAGE 14

NATURALLY HEALTHY
• Salted Jelly from CraftVillage
PAGE 18

OLI E ACETI
• Included with This Issue

News 8
Ad Index 23
Calendar 25

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Wackym's Kitchen

Continued from **PAGE 1**

Garland, Texas, bakery feature flavors both outrageous – Salted Sour Lemon and Spicy Apple, a mean snicker doodle with cayenne as well as cinnamon and sugar both inside and out – and as traditional as Maple Pecan. Wackym's Halloween-seasonal Ginger Pumpkin sounds traditional, but it's a little twisted with aggressively spicy cayenne pepper bite to it – it's a cookie that begs to be served with a cocktail. “Even though they sound weird, we have a passionate following,” Wackym says. “That has been a huge point in our success – the word of mouth and the engagement of the customers and the store associates.”



The Man with the Hat Sells Cookies

BY LORRIE BAUMANN

Wackym's Kitchen is known for its all natural real butter-based crunchy cookies, with calories lower than many cookies out there – and for the hats that Owner and Baker Paul Wackym wears during his frequent sampling and demonstration visits to grocery stores and trade shows. A



clothing designer during his early career and a department store chain's creative director before he turned to baking cookies, Wackym has a collection of 70 different hats decorated with flowers, feathers, paper and butterflies and never makes a road trip without a few of them in his baggage or a cookie-sampling without one on his head. “When I started at the Dallas Farmers Market in De-

cember 2018, I put on a gray Tyrolean hat, stuck some red feathers in it and became the cookie man in a hat,” Wackym says. “I have them for every season, in every color.”

The flavors of his cookies are as bright as his hats. Made with real butter, cane sugar, unbleached and unbromated flour and aluminum-free baking powder, the cookies that are dropped onto the cookie sheets by Wackym's Kook-E-King Dough Depositor in his

Continued on **PAGE 16**

“I’ve demoed aggressively for years,” he adds. “When I demo, I don’t sell cookies. I give away lots of cookies, but the result of giving away cookies is that we sell lots and lots and lots of cookies.”

The cookies are made in a new 10,000-square-foot facility and are baked in two Hobart double-rack convection ovens with custom racks that can handle 6,400 cookies at a time. “The shocking thing about what we do is that as we’ve grown, we’ve done nothing but make our process smarter,” Wackym says. “We haven’t really changed anything.” The big difference between how Wackym's making cookies now from the way he made them when he was baking 11 pans of cookies at a time for sale to Central Market, his first big customer, and the way he makes them now is that his equipment is a little better and he

no longer has to hand-crank the dough depositor, which is the commercial-scale version of the cookie press found in a home kitchen. “It’s the same process – we’ve just figured out how to do it faster and smarter, but the process is the same,” he says. He no longer hand-scoops his drop cookies either. “But I still know how,” he says. “It’s not something you forget easily.”

Cookies from Wackym's Kitchen are currently sold all over the Southwestern United States in Whole Foods as well as in H-E-B and in specialty stores across the

country. A shortbread line introduced two years ago that features Butterscotch, Cornmeal Rosemary, Lemon Lavender and Triple Ginger Shortbreads has a following in California's Wine Country. “They’re proving to be very popular with wine drinkers,” Wackym says. “The Cornmeal Rosemary is the bomb with a soft blue cheese smeared on it – like a Stilton, or any cheese that you might serve a fruit with. I’ve had extra-aged Gouda with it, but it’s very messy.”

For more information, visit www.wackymskitchen.com. **GN**

