



OUTSIDE THE VINES: *INSPIRATION FROM BEYOND THE POTTING BENCH*

Here's the Scoop

By Lynn Tangorra

Ice cream shop owners, Anthony Sobotik and Chad Palmatier, promote working with and purchasing ingredients from local shops.

Anthony Sobotik, co-owner of Lick Honest Ice Creams, grew up in South Central Texas enjoying ice cream from local, small town shops and making his own with his parents. His career as a caterer and then a baker led him and Chad Palmatier to open their own local ice cream shop.

"We didn't really have many local ice cream shops [where I grew up]," Sobotik says. "We had Dairy Queen and a café on the square that had a dip cabinet in it."

Palmatier grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where there were a plethora of mom-and-pop ice cream shops that used local ingredients.

After visiting Palmatier's family, the seed of opening up a local shop was planted in Sobotik's mind. "I thought we could do this in Texas and make these Texas-centric flavors, the kind of flavors that I grew up with, but in this local mom-and-pop-type atmosphere," Sobotik says.

Shop Locally; It's a Growing Concept

The local part of the equation was crucial for both owners. "We like to see other businesses grow as well," Sobotik says. "I think that is part of

being a small business owner. You've gone through it and you've lived it, so we like to use shops that are local to obtain ingredients. Everything we purchase is grown by someone locally or harvested or crafted by someone locally."

Sobotik and Palmatier work a great deal with Johnson's Backyard Garden to purchase herbs and vegetables for their ice cream such as roasted beets and mint flavor beets. Honey is bought from Austin Honey Co., and all the milk and cream are from a single Texas dairy, something that is unique for an ice cream shop.

"It is rare that you find ice cream made with a single source of dairy," Sobotik explains. "Usually it's from a blend of several dairies and several thousand cows. Ours comes from one herd, so I think that sets us apart."

What's in a Name

Sobotik and Palmatier did not have a hard time choosing a name for their shop; it was the first one they thought of. "To me it is the first word I think of when I think of ice cream," Sobotik says, referring to the Lick portion of the shop's name.

"The Honest Ice Creams part was because we wanted to produce ice cream that was made honestly, that customers would know where the ingredients were coming from and know exactly what was in it."

Lick Honest Ice Creams has 20 flavors

total, three of which are vegan and dairy-free options made with coconut milk, 10 everyday flavors and seven seasonal flavors.

The most popular flavor year-round is Caramel Salt Lick. "We make the caramel in our kitchen using medium brown Texas sugar, and we lightly salt it with sea salt," Sobotik says.

Cilantro Lime, the first flavor Sobotik created, is also a popular choice. The inspiration for the unique flavors comes from a combination of what is in season in Texas and what is culturally popular.

"Certain produce can be grown year-round in Texas such as pecans and beets that we can purchase all year, and then I create flavors based on what I grew up eating, things that I associate with Texas," Sobotik says.

When the shop opened Sobotik made every component of the ice cream: every sauce, syrup, cake and cookie that went into a flavor.

Now they have a team that helps make all the ice cream. "I still do all of the flavor development and take flavor samples to the shop to get feedback," Sobotik says. "I love that part of it, being able to experiment with new flavors, try new ingredients and work with local farmers. That's very exciting to me."

Handmade to Perfection

Everything produced at Lick is handcrafted, right down to the handpacked pints of ice cream they sell. The ice cream is made at a maximum of five gallons at a time.

"[Everything] is artisan to the nth degree. We don't even buy chocolate. We have it ground from beans into blocks of chocolate for us the week we use it." The beans, of course, are grown in Texas.

"This for me is a dream job," Sobotik says. "What motivated Chad and I to do this is wanting to celebrate the farmers, the flavors, the ingredients and the culture of Texas through ice cream, and recreate the classic ice cream shop feel in a modern, locally sourced way." **LGR**

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