

Food Artisans: NY Natural Pudding Co.

Posted by Stephanie Klose, August 15, 2012



[Photograph: Dave Katz]

Wanting to tap into the nostalgia-driven snack craze and looking for a category that didn't yet have an artisan option, Lonnie Fortuna, Christopher DeMark, and David Smith decided to start a high-end pudding company, [NY Natural Pudding Co.](#) Fortuna adapted a generations-old rice pudding recipe for the business, DeMark brought his training as a pastry chef, and Smith, who grew up in the ice-cream business, has a background in marketing and branding.

As they came up with ideas for flavors, they started with the classics: two kinds of rice pudding (coconut and vanilla), vanilla, banana, and a rich chocolate pudding made with two different strengths of cocoa powder. Then, Smith says, "Lonnie had the idea for flavors that were popular as ice cream," like salty caramel and their mocha flavor, cocoa java. The maple-flavored French toast variety rounds out the line.

Though they've been developing their recipes for two years, they've only been officially available for about three weeks. They're thrilled by the response they've gotten from stores in such a short time, and already are available in close to 50 [grocery and specialty shops](#) in and around New York City. They attribute their success to the product itself.

"Once we get someone to taste it, they can't stop eating it," Smith explains. "We don't need to educate people about the product, just let them try it."

To that end, they put a lot of time and energy into arranging tastings and sampling opportunities for potential customers.

In September, they'll be handing out samples from a food truck in Manhattan (keep an eye on their [Twitter feed](#) for location information.)

About the author: [Stephanie Klose](#) has more mustard than you. You can follow her on twitter at @sklose.

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