

Ben and Jerry's mixes unique flavors with fresh ideas

By Shawn Froberg

Ben and Jerry's ice cream, known for its tastiness and eccentric flavors is more than two people's attempts at ruling the ice cream vendor business. Ben and Jerry's Homemade Holdings, Incorporated is the culmination of two men who wanted to make good ice cream and help shape the community to which they are selling their product.

Lifelong friends Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield with an investment of \$12,000 started the Vermont-based company in 1978. The first "scoop shop" was a reconstructed gas station in Burlington, Vermont. The two quickly became known for their creative flavors and more natural ingredients than most other ice creams.

Today, Ben and Jerry's ice cream is sold in grocery and convenience stores across the nation as well restaurants and franchised Ben and Jerry's scoop shops. The company not only makes ice cream but frozen yogurt and sorbet, which are also sold in selected foreign countries. Something else that separates the company from other businesses is its consistent support for local Vermont charities and donations to larger charities with a broader focus in creating a better world. Along with the bizarre flavors is the ice cream itself that is made up entirely of Vermont dairy products and other natural ingredients. On every pint sold in stores is the "All Natural" title above the flavor name and a message from Ben and Jerry, which outlines their goal for that flavor, or a new way they are utilizing their profits.

Of course supporting this ice cream empire is over 50 different flavors that are offered in stores and "scoop shops" (take that, Baskin-Robbins 31 flavors).

A special feature of Ben and Jerry's ice cream is its spotlight on jam band ice cream (Jerry Garcia, Phish, DMB) that raises funds for that band's charity organization.

Cherry Garcia is named after the late Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia. There is no specific organization that benefits from this flavor but the carton is made out of eco-print paper that does not effect the environment like other bleached paper and cardboard products (the cartons themselves). The Grateful Dead started in the early 1960's and didn't stop until 1995 when Garcia died in the middle of touring. The music that was created by the Dead has inspired generations of fans and in the peak of their career the Grateful Dead had a large legion of devoted fans, "Dead heads" that followed the band every where they went, forgoing their normal lives and camping out in cars and trailers to see the Grateful Dead year round. The band was known for its spacey jams and extended songs, which could end at around the one-hour mark on a long night and eight minutes on a short night. The Grateful Dead from years of touring and studio releases have a number of albums including Dick's Picks a collection of live shows that just released its twenty fourth album. The ice cream inspired by the late guitarist is a mix of whole cherries, cherry ice cream and fudge flakes.




One Sweet Whirled named after the song "One Sweet World" by the Dave Matthews Band helps support organizations against global warming and the bands own charity, The Bama Works Foundation. The Dave Matthews band was formally formed in 1991 and word of its creative new sound spread its fan base like wild fire. The first release by the band was Remember Two Things, and soon the bands touring got the attention of RCA who became the bands record label. In the following years touring combined with excellent albums launched the band into pop star status. Following the band were the illegal bootleggers who sell over priced and under funded live recordings of the bands performances and studio releases. To combat this the band has released several live recordings with more on the way. In 2000 the Dave Matthews Band was the top grossing touring band in the country and sold out stadium across the country in 2001. The ice cream is a mixture of Caramel, Coffee ice creams and marshmallows with fudge chips. "Cherry Garcia was kind of bland, but One Sweet Whirled, oh man," said Antioch Community High school math teacher Ryan Estabrook.

Phish food (not for fish) named after the band Phish is a combination of chocolate ice cream, caramel, marshmallows, and fudge fish. "I love it, it's an awesome combination of flavors," said senior Andy Lynn. Phish began in the early 80's with guitarist Trey Anastasio and drummer Jon Fishman. Later bassist Mike Gordon and keyboardist Page McConnell joined to complete the band. As with the Grateful Dead, Phish built a following around touring and making every show different. With a sound yet to be classified Phish broke the boundaries of music with deep jams and funky lyrics. With constant touring the band built a fan base that remains loyal to the band even though they are on hiatus right now. Phish being on hiatus has not slowed down the four members though, all four members of the band are doing their own projects and touring with separate bands. Trey Anastasio has been playing in two bands since the breakup, Oysterhead and his own touring band simply titled the Trey Anastasio band. Mike Gordon has made a few full-length movies and is currently not on tour. Page McConnell started Vida Blue with Allman Brothers Band bassist Oteil Burbridge and drummer Russell Batiste from Funky Meters, which is touring right now. Jon Fishman has been working with on and off with the Jazz Mandolin Project an improvisational mix of jazz and bluegrass instruments.



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