

April 3, 2014

DeJaFrut's All Natural Sorbet



Shanica Blair, Gleaner Writer

Food was left struggling to find words to describe DeJaFrut's all-natural sorbets. From the black cherry, coconut, hibiscus tea (sorrel), key lime, mango and our personal favorite, the pineapple, their sorbets are incredibly rich and deceptively creamy.

The frozen dessert made from sweetened water flavoured with fruit is dense and even in texture, and is made by slowly freezing down the ingredients while churning them constantly to create an even, consistent texture. DeJaFrut's all-natural sorbets puts a tropical spin on Italian ice with local fruits that are mostly sourced from the parishes of St Elizabeth, St Mary, and St Thomas.

The company which was the [winner](#) of **The Gleaner** and The Production Lab's SME Challenge last year is a small, family-owned [business](#) founded and run by the children of Jamaican parents. During one of their regular visits to Jamaica, sisters Marie and [Maria](#) Wilson noticed that there were no sorbet-like product available on [the island](#). The absence was striking to them,

since the warm Jamaican climate is perfect for the consumption of frozen desserts without the heaviness of cream or the cloying sugariness of artificial sweeteners.

Experimenting with flavours

After deciding to introduce a lighter and healthier alternative to ice cream, the sisters soon realised that the fruits traditionally grown in [Jamaica](#) provided the perfect base for their product. Mango, coconut, pineapple, and sorrel, which have long been familiar to the Jamaican palate, were the first flavours they experimented with. They then returned to the United States and started experimenting with different flavours, and with the help of their younger brother, Chris, they have expanded DeJaFrut's product profile to include the black cherry and key lime.

Chris Wilson, who is also the managing director of the company, told **Food** that their sorbets are all-natural and contain only fruit puree, a natural gum stabiliser and evaporated cane juice. "Our products do not contain any artificial dyes, colouring, additives or preservatives. In addition, all our flavours are dairy, gluten and fat-free (except for the naturally occurring fat present in the coconut flavour)," explains Wilson.

Local ingredients

With their mission to create high-quality desserts that use all-natural products, convenient and nutritious, Wilson stresses that they source most of their raw ingredients locally from Jamaican farmers and manufacture their sorbet in Coral Gardens, Montego Bay - a move he says will help spur economic development in Jamaica.

"We package our sorbet in heat-sealed, single-serving containers (recyclable paper tubes with aluminium foil lids) that are four fluid ounces (120ml) in size, and will soon be offering a three-tube single flavour retail box. We began sales to several hotels/resorts last January. However, at this time, we are still rolling out the product on the local market and expect it to be available islandwide by June 2014," notes Wilson.

So far, the products have been receiving very positive feedback, since they were test-marketed at Reggae Sumfest 2012. "Consumers are captivated by the unique packaging design, and pleasantly surprised by the creamy texture and intense fruit flavour."

shanica.blair@gleanerjm.com