

Posted on: Wednesday, January 14, 2004

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Maui's Roselani ice cream in stores statewide

By Wanda A. Adams
Advertiser Food Editor

When I ran into Cathy Nobriga Kim at Ka'ahumanu Mall during the holidays, she was all smiles at the latest development in her family's third-generation dairy business, Maui Soda & Ice Works Ltd.: Their Roselani Ice Cream is now available at Foodland and Sack N Save stores statewide (plus Times on O'ahu and Star markets statewide).

The stores stock four flavors of Roselani's Tropics line developed in 1989: Macadamia Nut, Kona Mud Pie, Mango 'n Cream, and best-selling Haupia.



Roselani is the only ice cream made from scratch on Maui and has a long history entwined with the lives of the Nobriga family. Founder Manuel Nobriga began making ice cream for the wholesale market in 1934, creating his own recipes. It was his practice, for example, to use milk and sweet butter, rather than plain cream, because he liked the texture.

His taste preferences have been passed down from generation to generation. "If the senior generation is still around, you can't fool around," says Kim, who began working at the family firm when she was 15, making ice cream novelties.

Kim's dad, Buddy created the retail ice cream line and gave it the name Roselani in 1970 (the rose is Maui's flower). He used to line up the family and employees for blind taste tests: "Whose ice cream is this? Whose is this?"

The defining characteristic of Roselani ice cream, Kim says, is the richness of premium ice cream with the smoothness of soft ice milk. It is also made by a rather old-fashioned method, batch pasteurization.

Their goal in creating ice cream base is a sweet, slightly caramelly flavor and a rather "fluffy" texture. "If the base is balanced properly, the added ingredients just enhance it," she said.

Surprisingly, Kim doesn't take ice cream home from the factory. She buys it at the grocery store like everyone else, in part as a means of quality control — she wants to see what the consumer is getting.

And she follows firm rules: "Ice cream is not an impulse purchase. If I'm buying ice cream, I'm going straight home." She keeps a cooler in the car and fills it with ice before buying ice cream.

"Ice cream," she says, "is a fluid in suspension ... whipped and expanded into a solid," she explains. Allowing ice cream to melt and re-freeze causes two unpleasant characteristics: crystals and a gummy surface texture.

As soon as you get home, place the ice cream in the freezer leaving a little space around it, so the cold air can circulate and bring the temperature down. Kim recommends spreading a large piece of waxed paper over the surface of the ice cream, sealing the surface, and crumpling the edges up on top to force any warm air out.