Pine Brook Business Grows With Every Extract
Local ingredients manufacturer Teawolf sees boom in demand for organic supplies

By Liz Wagner | Email the author | August 30, 2010

Major players in the food industry have hundreds of choices when it comes to purchasing their ingredients. Both nationally and out of country, producers search for flavors and scents to create the tastiest, most appealing food and drinks possible. But where can a company turn for some of the most natural, organically produced ingredients on the market?

Why, Teawolf at 25 Riverside Drive, of course.

Teawolf is a relatively new company, founded in 2008 by Greg Robertson and a handful of associates who worked in some capacity within the food and ingredient industry. The group wanted to create a company that focused on natural and organic products for consumers looking for a lifestyle change.

"Consumers, Baby Boomers specifically, are driving a movement calling for cleaner labels and more transparency from food and beverage manufacturers," Robertson said. "Teawolf is well positioned to satisfy the needs of food manufacturing companies to meet this consumer demand."

Teawolf, known most for its tea extracts and wolfberry products, also offers vanilla and chocolate products, botanicals and a slew of specialty products gained in the acquisition of Spagomed Laboratories in 2009. The company is organic-, fair trade- and kosher-certified.

"The founders of Teawolf have a combined 150 years of experience in the food and beverage industry, and believe that natural and organic wellness products will continue to be a key focal point for consumers well into the future," reads the company’s website. "Our focus on advanced technology, industry innovation, and exceptional customer service allow us to deliver the finest quality products in the industry."

Teawolf, as the name suggests, is known most for its tea and wolfberry products. Its tea is imported from dozens of countries including Argentina, Indonesia, South Africa and Kenya. The wolfberry, or goji berry, is grown in China and known for its taste in the culinary world and for its medicinal health benefits. Teawolf’s other products are imported after being studied by a company expert.

"Armin Prahst, technical director at Teawolf, has traveled throughout the world sourcing botanicals for Teawolf," Roberston said. "While in some cases we source direct (as with our tea farm in Kenya, or our Goji farmer partners in China), we also work through brokers."

Though all of the company’s products have become increasingly popular, its 10-Fold Vanilla Extract or Green Tea Distillate has been receiving a "tremendously positive response," said Robertson.
With a desire to manufacture with the United States, the group set up shop in Pine Brook in April 2009. Their want to produce domestically ultimately set them apart from many similar companies who find it more convenient and affordable to set up production sites abroad.

All of Teawolf’s operations now take place at the company’s headquarters in Pine Brook, with an additional Canadian office in British Columbia. Once the botanicals, extracts and flavors come into the country, they are processed and distributed on site.

At the start of July Teawolf announced the hiring of Eric Schnell, the recent president of Steaz: The Healthy Beverage Company, which was the first line of organic soft drinks in the country. In 2007 he received the Socially Responsible Business of the Year award by New Hope Media for his work. Schnell joined the organization in advisory role as director of strategic initiatives and will help the company hone in on its social responsibility goals.

"I’m excited to become an active contributor to the strategic and operational development of Teawolf," he said. "I look forward to sharing my industry knowledge, operational know-how, management experience and network of contacts with Greg as we hasten growth and improvements that will ultimately increase sales and profits for the company."

And the company continues to enhance its marketability. Just last month Teawolf announced a partnership with Premium Ingredients International, one of the largest ingredient distributors worldwide.

"They have thousands of customers that Teawolf is now provided access to as part of this strategic relationship," Robertson said. "This allows Teawolf to dramatically increase its presence in the marketplace as Premium customers reach across the entire food and beverage industry."

With an interest in organic and sustainable food rising in this country, Teawolf expects major growth in the next few years.