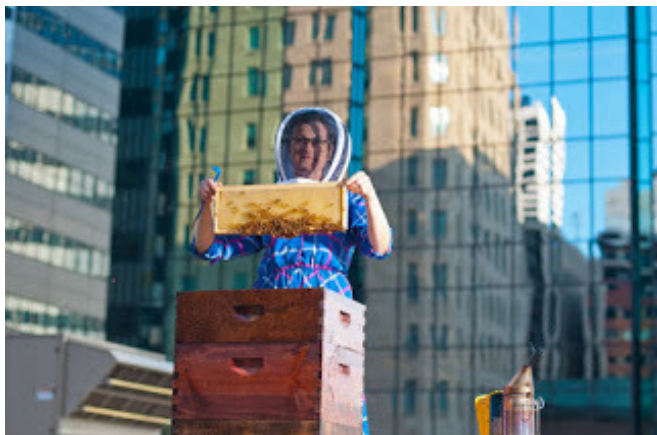


Success Story: Mademoiselle Miel, LLC



Susan Brown on top of the W Hotel Foshay (photo by Bill Kelley)

Problem: Many people have food allergies or intolerance to certain ingredients that prohibit them from enjoying various kinds of sweets, especially chocolates, and are not able to participate in the simple pleasures that most of us enjoy on special occasions.

Challenge: Formulate a product and develop a manufacturing process that allows people who suffer from allergies or intolerances to enjoy a high quality chocolate product that is made from all natural, locally sourced ingredients.

Solution: Realizing that bee honey is one of Nature's most perfect food products, Susan Brown developed a process that overcomes the difficulty of combining low fat, low sugar chocolate with all natural honey – an inherently difficult food combination. Susan's answer, Honey BonBons, which she makes and markets under her company name, Mademoiselle Miel, LLC, uses only the very best ingredients in the blending of her chocolate. To ensure that she obtains an all-natural product, she personally harvests honey from local hives found on top of buildings in the Twin Cities. Not only does this guarantee a unique and exclusive product but it provides a marketing opportunity.

Owner's Background: Susan discovered she had a personal intolerance for processed sweeteners during her college days and was determined to learn to make all the things she loved with honey. Her mother, a trained chef, was her inspiration. After 25 years of developing countless recipes, including classic French pastries, Susan decided to conquer chocolatiering. She worked with a chocolatier from Los Angeles to learn the craft. When she put the ingredients together - a

"Dan helped me with many of the steps in starting my business. His encouragement at the very beginning was especially important and valued." - Susan Brown, Owner

"Susan was eager to learn about each phase of starting a business. She has the talent and marketing skill to grow her sales." - Dan Levey, SCORE Mentor

pure chocolate shell with a creamy honey filling - she felt excited to share it. Her first taste test was her Mom who after a long pause described them as "magnificent." Soon after the 24k edible gold leaf gilded "honey bon-bons" were launched and they've been a hit ever since.

SCORE's Involvement: Susan learned about SCORE in 2012 and applied for free mentoring. Dan Levey, a SCORE mentor, met with Susan and discussed business financing, legal structure, marketing, and details of the production process. Dan provided input as Susan's plan developed and her business became a reality.

Business Description: Susan's Honey Kitchen & Showroom is located at 342 Kellogg Boulevard West in St. Paul. She also sells through about a dozen other retail stores including locations in New York and Washington.

The Future: Susan just received an award for Top 10 Chocolatier in North America. She plans to continue expanding sales at her store, through other upscale retail stores, and through her website.



Mademoiselle Miel Honey BonBon (photo by Jennifer Simonson)

More information:

- Mademoiselle Miel: www.mademoisellemiel.com
- St. Paul SCORE: www.stpaul.score.org

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