

JAMAICA PLAIN

Tabasco sauce ice cream wasn't such a hot idea

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He tried it, but the result wasn't exactly what he expected. After all, how many people know that one ingredient in Tabasco sauce is aged peppers?

Which is just what Vincent Petryk, owner and founder of the Jamaica Plain-based J.P. Licks, discovered when, out of boredom, he set out to create a Tabasco ice cream last summer as part of his series of hot ice cream flavors.

Petryk, a keen fan of the spicy condiment, came up with a recipe but wasn't getting any heat from his mix. After adding half a bottle of Tabasco, he realized why his concoction wasn't spicy at all. The butter fat in the concoction's sweetened cream base "encapsulates the chili pepper oil in the Tabasco," explained Petryk. "That's why when people eat spicy food, only milk will get rid of the heat. Basically, what was left was a vinegar and aged-pepper ice cream. It didn't sell very well," he added.

"We always try to have our stores reflect the neighborhood they're in," said Petryk, who recently had his eight Greater Boston stores certified as kosher. "Now, we'd like to come up with the 'Flavors of Boston,' to reflect the melting pot that the city has become."

Already people are responding. Maribel Herrera, a Harvard University worker from Roslindale with roots in Puerto Rico, was among the JP Licks customers sending Petryk some suggestions for new flavors.

In Puerto Rico, "parcha," or passion fruit, and mango ice cream is available everywhere, Herrera said. "My father used to eat harina de maíz ice cream all the time," recalled Herrera, 34, referring to cornmeal ice cream. "I miss all those flavors."

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