

# CRAFTING A NEW, IN-STORE ICE CREAM EXPERIENCE

Whole Foods  
Market Takes  
The High Road.







## REINVENT THE FROZEN TREAT EXPERIENCE

Handmade chocolate stracciatella

**W**ith sales declining at the in-store frozen treats counter, Amy Donati, Whole Foods Market Bakery Coordinator (Midwest) had two choices. **Pull the venues completely out of 36 stores to make room for something else, or reinvent the frozen treat experience.**

“I really didn’t want to remove our frozen treat counters because our guests speak so highly of their beauty as they were imported from Italy. I was thinking of taking our frozen treats down a more nostalgic route - I wanted to capture that feeling from childhood of running up to an ice cream truck with pure excitement. It was difficult, however to find the right products and partnership to develop that idea and meet Whole Foods Markets standards.”

“I was thinking of taking our frozen treats down a more nostalgic route...”

-AMY DONATI

Whole Foods Market Bakery Coordinator



Slow-cooked strawberry jam

**High Road Craft Brands in Marietta, GA is no stranger to delivering products that meet and exceed Whole Foods Market standards.** “Our partnership began in 2012 when we launched High Road in the South region of Whole Foods Market stores and went on to co-create a national private label project called Boulevard Tasty Ice Cream,” said Christian Rodriguez, Senior VP of Commercialization for High Road Craft Brands. “We’ve been working with Whole Foods Market South Region since then with our branded High Road and Ciao Bella products and in 2013 began supplying the gelato mix for their frozen treats counter.”



## FLAVOR EXPLORATION

In High Road Craft Brands, Donati found the ice cream partner she was looking for. “I first tasted High Road Ice Cream at a trade show and it was just over the top with flavor. **The story of High Road chefs just melds so well with Whole Foods Market** that I immediately became so excited for the potential to bring their products to our stores and couldn’t wait for our guests to have the same flavor exploration.”

High Road was founded by chefs and has built a reputation among fans, chefs and restaurants for delivering hand-crafted, vat pasteurized ice cream that creates a unique dessert experience.

“*I think what makes us special is what we do and how we do it. We make a very high quality French crème anglaise which is the base mix for most of our ice creams. Sixteen and a half percent butter fat which is very rich, luscious and it takes on flavor really well.*”

-RODRIGUEZ



Fresh dairy vat pasteurized  
for an unbeatable texture

...delivering  
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experience.

**Unlike most ice cream manufacturers, all ingredients for High Road ice cream are made in-house, in the on-site commissary kitchen.** “So if our ice cream has praline pecans, shortbread cookies, strawberry jam or chocolate ganache, all of those things are made in-house by our team of chefs. And I think that’s really a differentiator in the market, not to mention the pride we take in what we do, knowing that we’re making a higher quality product for the consumer,” said Rodriguez.

Handmade ice cream sandwiches:

Chocolate Chip Cookies with Malt Ice Cream  
Peanut Butter Cookies with Chocolate Ice cream





## PREMIUM INGREDIENTS

Madagascar Vanilla beans and  
sea salt used in Vanilla Fleur de Sel

The quality of the product and the story of the company is why Donati feels High Road will bring value to the Whole Foods Market shopper.

“I think Whole Foods Market shoppers appreciate flavor and I know they appreciate meaningful stories behind the products – High Road has both. The ice cream is so good that you can just taste the premium ingredients that have gone into making it. And then, to make it even better, when you learn the story behind the ice cream it really makes you want to eat it even more. I’m just so proud that Whole Foods Market is able to serve it to our guests.”



-DONATI

**Creating everything in-house allows High Road to not only monitor the quality of everything, but the chefs can tweak flavors on a continual basis.** Nicki Schroeder, Co-Founder and Chief Brand Officer explains, “Ice cream companies usually bring in their inclusions and variegates from outside vendors. So if your chocolate chunks are coming from a vendor and you’re not quite happy with them they’re going to say, ‘that’s our chocolate chunk.’



Founders Keith and Nicki Schroeder

If our chefs feel they can tweak the chocolate to create an even better experience for our customers, they’ll tweak it and it’ll be in the ice cream tomorrow. We can continually improve every single day everything that we do.”

“...you can just taste the premium ingredients that have gone into making it.”

-DONATI



## DEVELOPING A MENU

Toasting oats for  
oatmeal cookies  
with cinnamon ice  
cream sandwiches

The handcrafted nature of High Road's production facility allows consumers to receive a more personal and homemade touch that's near impossible to achieve in fully automated facilities. "Obviously it would be better for us if we were to automate everything but we wouldn't get that oddly shaped all butter cookie on your ice cream sandwich. So we want to make sure that we are able to provide our consumers with product as if they made it at home or made it with us at our factory," says Rodriguez.

Relaunching the frozen treat counter in 36 of the 64 stores across 8 states is a huge undertaking. With all manufacturing and the kitchen in-house, High Road Craft Brands is well known for its ability to turn around high quality products to meet most any deadline. Donati worked directly with Rodriguez to develop the menu and product lineup for the launch and manage the scope of this large project.

We are able to provide our consumers with product as if they made it at home.

*“Developing a menu and a partnership that works through technical details with Christian and Nicki has been nothing short of wonderful.”*

-DONATI



Super Chocolate, Caramel Pecan Ice Cream and Four Berry Sorbet

Rodriguez and Donati settled on 18 total products made up of **8 flavors of ice cream and sorbet in 5 liter pans, 6 flavors of ice cream sandwiches and all 4 flavors of the brand new Wallop!** The Wallop! is the brainchild of Nicki Schroeder.

## PROVIDING SOLUTIONS



Sweet cream ice cream with  
chocolate chip cookie dough

“A Wallop! is a handcrafted ball of ice cream, wrapped in cookie dough and enrobed in dark chocolate. We’re already making cookie dough here for inclusion to some of our ice creams, we craft our own chocolate chunks, and we make the ice cream. So I thought how cool would it be to have something that uses all of those items altogether. When you put it in your mouth you feel like you’re literally getting walloped by a snack!”

-NICKI SCHROEDER  
HIGH ROAD CRAFT ICE CREAM  
CO-FOUNDER / CHIEF BRAND OFFICER

For Donati, the Wallop! provided a solution she’s been trying to develop for some time. “The Wallop! is exactly what I’ve been searching for! I previously had difficulty finding a cookie dough that would stand up in the gelato cases. I was totally jazzed to find an amazing two- bite, individual item to put into this case and on top of that, I even got the cookie dough I’ve been dreaming of! It is **a marriage made in dessert heaven.**”



Wallops!  
freshly  
covered  
in a crisp  
chocolate  
shell.

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It has taken roughly one year from initial meeting to store roll-out. High Road initially shipped over 6,500 cases of ice cream, sorbet, ice cream sandwiches and Wallops into two different warehouses to be distributed to 36 stores covering 8 states. **High Road plans to add more products and innovation to the sets as they are developed by the R&D team in partnership with Amy and her team.**





## CULINARY ARTISTS AT HEART

Launching a program this big wasn't completely seamless, but having everything in-house, under one roof allowed High Road to meet Donati's goals of a reinvented frozen treats counter with all new products on time.

"We're not just an industrial ice cream manufacturer. We're culinary artists at heart."

"Working with High Road has been awesome. Christian has been a great partner, helping me with flavors and in getting operations to the right place. I'm so excited about the partnership and I cannot wait for our guests to taste this magic."

For Rodriguez and the High Road team, **this project was another opportunity to share the love of what they do.**

*"If we didn't like doing what we were doing, especially in these manual processes, we would not do them. I think that puts the craft in High Road Craft. We're not just an industrial ice cream manufacturer. We're culinary artists at heart and we want to bring that culinary prowess, that love of food and put that in every pint and every product that we make."*

-RODRIGUEZ

**High Road Craft Ice Cream, Sorbets, Ice Cream Sandwiches and Wallops! are now available at the Frozen Treats counter at select Whole Foods Market Midwest Region stores.** The Midwest Region includes stores in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and Wisconsin. ■

For more information on this topic, please contact Nicki Schroeder by calling 678-701-7623, or e-mail [nicki@highroadcraft.com](mailto:nicki@highroadcraft.com).



Above: Pistachio Gelato  
Right: In-store signage