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PALEO

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est 2011

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INSIDE**

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Sweet Potato, Kale
& Salmon Skillet

Chicken Chili Casserole

Winter Cobb Salad

Carrot Coconut Pancakes

Chocolate Raspberry
Smoothie

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(and how to
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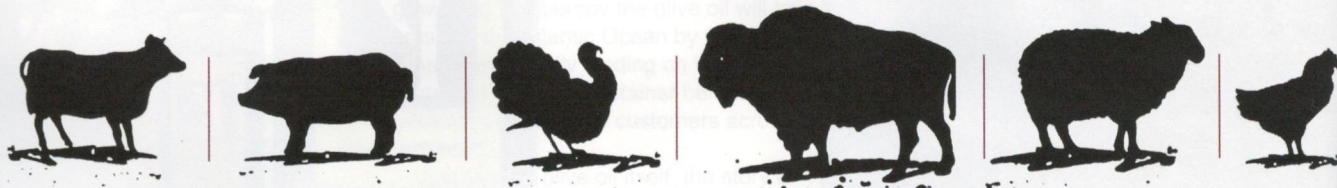
[BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT]



EPIC FOUNDERS TAYLOR COLLINS
AND KATIE FORREST

EPIC

PROVISIONS



WHEN TAYLOR COLLINS FIRST MET HIS BUSINESS AND LIFE PARTNER, KATIE FORREST, in college, he knew he had found the yin to his yang. “We started a commercial recycling company that serviced 30 big accounts—restaurants, condos, bars,” he recalls. “It was really an excuse to spend time together and make some money collectively—and if you can face a swarm of rats together, you can probably handle just about anything!”

Taylor and Katie’s experience with the recycling company taught them that they worked well together, and that their strengths were complementary, and it wasn’t long until they began to look for new opportunities to join forces.

Both Taylor and Katie were competitive endurance athletes

who enjoyed long runs and bike rides along the back roads of Central Texas. As they began to push their physical limits, they realized that better gear and a willingness to endure pain would only take them so far—they needed to improve their diets. At the time, both Katie and Taylor were vegans, so their early efforts to create portable, whole-food snacks took the form of sweet potato and walnut cookies, and beet and carrot muffins. These early efforts, combined with their quiescent entrepreneurial spirit, led to the development of the Thunderbird bar, a gluten-free, soy-free, vegan food bar.

As they grew their new business, Taylor and Katie continued to grow as athletes. They began to gather local bicycle races,

Tony Federico, BS, ACSM, HFES



“YOU COME TO THAT POINT IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU DECIDE TO TRUST PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE OR YOU DECIDE TO TRUST YOUR GUT, AND I THANK THE HEAVENS EVERY SINGLE DAY THAT WE WENT FOR IT.”

—TAYLOR COLLINS, EPIC BAR CHIEF AND CO-FOUNDER

marathons and triathlons under their belts, and eventually entered the 2010 Wisconsin Ironman. It was at that event that Katie won her division, earning a spot in the Ironman World Championship Race in Kona, Hawaii. It was also at that event that Taylor and Katie officially launched Thunderbird, wearing homemade shirts and hats and passing out bars to fellow competitors.

On the surface, everything seemed to be going well: The fit, successful couple appeared destined to continue crushing personal and professional goals, all while powered by plant-based foods—but underneath, trouble was brewing.

Katie and Taylor had begun to experience increasingly frequent bouts of gastrointestinal distress, in addition to other mysterious ailments. While seeking a solution, they stumbled upon the book *Eat Right 4 Your Type* by Dr. Peter J. D'Adamo. Both Taylor and Katie have O+ blood, and according to Dr. D'Adamo, they should be consuming a high-protein diet focused on meat, fish, vegetables and fruit, with limited grains, beans and legumes.

The couple began to eat meat for the first time in years, and despite the fact that they had forgotten how to prepare it (Taylor admitted that he may have boiled a steak or two during this period), they began to experience an immediate improvement in their health. As you can imagine, though, running a vegan food company while eating meat presented them with a problem. On one hand, they were promoting plant-based eating, and on the other, they were living what we would now refer to as a Paleo lifestyle.

Partly due to their own health transformation, and partly due to customer requests for a lower-sugar, higher-protein food bar, Katie and Taylor began to explore the idea of creating a new company. “We didn’t have any paradigm,” Taylor recalls. “We took the information we knew from plant-based bars, found some early partners who were really enthusiastic, and kept kicking ideas around, and that evolved into the primordial form of Epic bars.”

Word got out that they were developing a meat-based bar, and letters from irate vegans began to pour in. “We got some crazy letters,” Taylor recalls. “We really upset people.”

Many of Katie and Taylor’s business mentors and retail partners were upset, as well. The couple was told that they had lost their focus, and that Epic was a horrible idea. “They didn’t understand it,” Taylor says. “Telling someone about it is different than holding it, tasting it. There was this re-education that needed to be done.”

The couple moved forward with their plans and, inspired by a bison bacon hamburger they ate at Wenzel LoneStar Meat

Company in Hamilton, Texas, they released the first Epic bar, the Bison Bacon Cranberry.

Several years on now, the Bison Bacon Cranberry bar has been joined by numerous other flavors like Sriracha Chicken and Pineapple Pulled Pork, but it’s still their best seller, and not just within the Epic bar line—it’s one of the top-selling food bars in the entire country. Supported by customers who have embraced the Paleo lifestyle, Katie and Taylor have proved everyone wrong and demonstrated that a 100 percent grass-fed meat, fruit and nut bar could not only be tasty—it could make money.

Success hasn’t stopped Katie and Taylor from doing what they’ve done from the beginning, though: They still train together, enjoy the outdoors and go on epic adventures.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EPIC’S 100 PERCENT GRASS-FED ANIMAL PROTEIN BARS, GO TO EPICBAR.COM

