

# trendspotting

## START-UP STORIES

Small-batch food businesses are the next big thing, as more and more home cooks go pro. F&W honors these entrepreneurs and their DIY dreams.

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### RECIPE

## chicken alambre

**TOTAL: 30 MIN • 8 SERVINGS**

Food entrepreneurs have a new way to get started: “incubator” kitchens that lease space at reasonable rates. After hatching her business in San Francisco’s La Cocina incubator, Veronica Salazar of El Huarache Loco ([huaracheloco.com](http://huaracheloco.com)) opened a Mexican restaurant serving dishes like this fajita-like alambre.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 6 ounces 1/3-inch-diced slab bacon
- 12 ounces fresh chorizo, casings removed and meat crumbled
- 12 ounces skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into strips
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into strips
- 1 large red onion, thinly sliced
- 8 ounces Oaxaca cheese or mozzarella cheese, torn

Heat the oil on a large griddle. Add the bacon and chorizo and cook over high heat, stirring, until browned in spots, 5 minutes. Add the chicken and cook, stirring, until cooked through. Add the peppers and onion and cook until softened. Scatter the cheese on top and stir until it just starts to melt, then serve.

**SERVE WITH** Flour tortillas, avocado, cilantro, salsa and lime wedges.

**BEER** Nutty brown ale: Avery Ellie’s.



KNOWN AS ALAMBRE, THIS TUMBLE OF GRIDDLED MEAT AND CHEESE IS A MEXICO CITY FAVORITE.

## CHOCOLATE CASE STUDY

In just two years, the owners of Washington, DC's Fleurir Chocolates went from selling adventurously flavored truffles at farmers' markets to owning their own boutique in Georgetown. Here's the story of their journey.



FLEURIR CHOCOLATES

### IN THE BEGINNING

After four years of culinary school and training with a chocolatier, Robert Ludlow launched Fleurir with his wife, Ashley Hubbard, in 2009. To test the waters, they set up a production kitchen on Ludlow's parents' property in Virginia, then drove three hours to sell the chocolates at markets in DC. Fleurir built a following, but sales plateaued. "If we wanted to become profitable, we needed our own shop," said Hubbard. They opened in Georgetown last April and are now focused on finding kitchen space in DC to save on the \$400 they spend on gas each month driving back and forth from Virginia. 3235 P St. NW; fleurirchocolates.com.



**DIY Disaster** *With a bad case of artisan envy, writer Charles Antin attempts to launch his own food business.*

ONE WEEKEND, after walking around yet another Brooklyn flea market with happy artisans selling everything from local soda to local taffy, my girlfriend, Kate, and I decided to start our own little business. We were decent home picklers, canners and brewers (as is practically required to live in the borough), but the market was cornered. Eventually we hit on something: gum. We ordered a "Make Your Own Chewing Gum" kit from Amazon.com, billed as "the chemistry lesson you can chew on." It came with the sap of the Sapodilla tree, the real deal, even though it's shipped from Central America, and therefore, perhaps, not so local. Also included: a bag of corn syrup. That didn't seem artisanal enough, so we opted for Brooklyn honey, which tastes better because the bees have read David Foster Wallace. For flavor, we scoffed at the bag of "mint powder" and harvested sage grown in my roof garden. (At this point, some of you are thinking, "There is a Brooklyn Gum." I know, and it's made near Milan.) I melted the Sapodilla pellets with the honey, Kate minced the sage, we settled on a price point (\$17 per pack). But soon, it became apparent that chewing our gum was like spreading honey and sage on a hot flip-flop and gnawing on it for a while. Turns out, becoming a Brooklyn artisan requires some real craft, which it seems I don't have. But plenty of other Brooklynites do, and I plan to take advantage of local haggis, or whatever's next.

*Charles Antin is a wine specialist at Christie's.*

### Fleurir Chocolates Opens Its Books

<b>\$32</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>\$2,775</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$32,000</b>	<b>\$39,000</b>	<b>\$87,000</b>
worst sales day at a four-hour market	best sales day at a four-hour market	monthly rent and utilities for the shop	the boutique's renovation and decoration costs	total sales in 2009, all earned at markets	total sales in 2010, from markets and online	total projected sales for 2011 for the company



### BOUTIQUE ON A BUDGET

**FREE**

**TREE SCULPTURE**  
Friend and artist Nicole Bourgea (nicolebourgea.com) built wall art using tree branches.

**FREE**

**LIGHT FIXTURE**  
The cone chandelier was a gift from a friend who helped design the shop.

**\$1,500**  
POINT-OF-SALE SOFTWARE

**\$110**  
PER ROLL OF FERM LIVING'S "WILDERNESS" WALLPAPER

**\$795**  
VINTAGE WORKBENCH

Coated in copper-based paint and then left to oxidize.

**DESIGN MATTERS**

"PART OF A GREAT PACKAGE IS MAKING PEOPLE FEEL MORE WILLING TO PAY WHAT THEY HAVE TO PAY."  
Louise Fili, logo and package designer (louisefili.com), on how food entrepreneurs can increase profits



### Quinn Popcorn

Organic microwave popcorn comes in flavors like maple-sea salt and Parmesan-rosemary. \$5 for two 3.4-oz bags; [quinnpopcorn.com](http://quinnpopcorn.com).

## EDITORS' PICKS

From the hundreds of new small-batch products we taste every year, these are some of our recent favorites.



### Whimsical Candy

The signature item from this small Chicago sweets company is the La-Dee-Dah, a chocolate-dipped nougat-and-caramel swirl. \$6.50 for 2.25 oz; [whimsicalcandy.com](http://whimsicalcandy.com).



### Ajiri Tea

The profits from this strong Kenyan black tea, packaged in boxes that feature handmade banana leaf labels, go toward education in Kenya. \$9 for 16 tea bags; [ajiritea.com](http://ajiritea.com).

### Big Spoon Roasters

These North Carolina nut butters are ground with local wildflower honey and nuts. \$7 for an 8-oz jar; [mark@bigspoonroasters.com](mailto:mark@bigspoonroasters.com).



### RECIPE

## sweet-and-sour shrimp

TOTAL: 25 MIN • 4 TO 5 SERVINGS

Two Brown University undergrads created Sir Kensington's, a small-batch ketchup that balances sweet and tangy ([sirkensingtons.com](http://sirkensingtons.com)). To show off its aromatic side, F&W's Grace Parisi uses it in a sauce for a shrimp stir-fry.

2 tablespoons ketchup	1½ tablespoons rice vinegar
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
¾ cup chicken broth	2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
2 teaspoons sugar	1 garlic clove, minced
1 teaspoon Chinese chile sauce	1½ pounds medium shrimp, peeled
1 teaspoon cornstarch	

- In a small bowl, whisk the ketchup with the soy sauce, chicken broth, sugar, chile sauce, cornstarch and vinegar.
- Heat a large skillet until very hot. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add the ginger and garlic and cook for 10 seconds, until fragrant. Add the shrimp and cook until curled, but not cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk the sauce and add it to the pan. Cook, stirring, until the sauce is thickened and the shrimp are cooked through, 3 minutes.

**SERVE WITH** Snow peas and steamed rice.

**WINE** Zippy, citrusy white: 2010 Ameztoi Txakoli.

## ARTISANAL STYLE

### FROM SMALL TO BIG

Even national stores are selling handmade products created by artisans.



#### Charlotte Storrs

The UK-based potter sells this stone cutlery holder to garden shop Terrain, owned by Urban Outfitters. \$128; [shopterrain.com](http://shopterrain.com).

#### Lostine

Anthropologie picked up a new line of rustic home items, like this two-tone sycamore cutting board, from Philadelphia designer Robert True Ogden. From \$128; [anthropologie.com](http://anthropologie.com).



### FROM BIG TO SMALL

Designers are catching the DIY bug and quitting corporate jobs to go out on their own.



#### Suki Cheema

The former Diane von Furstenberg designer makes aprons, place mats and embroidered runners. From \$20; [sukicheema.com](http://sukicheema.com).

#### 603 Here & There

Nell Dodge left Chilewich to sell small-production items, like New Hampshire maple syrup in a growler. \$32 per liter; [603 hereandthere.com](http://603hereandthere.com).



### Help for the Budding Food Entrepreneur

#### MIDWEST ROOTS

Good at food but bad at business? Kyle Schott's firm helps food start-ups with everything from marketing and packaging to distributing. She'll even go on the road and do demos at local markets. [mwrroots.com](http://mwrroots.com).

#### GOOD FOOD JOBS

Similar to Monster.com for the artisan food world, this site features job listings for gastro-jobs around the country, from tiny Vermont farms to NYC's Murray's Cheese shop. [goodfoodjobs.com](http://goodfoodjobs.com).

#### DIY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

A new company that connects and educates indie entrepreneurs. Design\*Sponge's Grace Bonney and Etsy's Danielle Maveal spoke at its first conference in Brooklyn in 2011, and the association is hosting events around the country in 2012. [diybusinessassociation.com](http://diybusinessassociation.com).

#### FOOD CRAFT INSTITUTE

The founders of Oakland, California's massively popular Eat Real Festival are launching a new school with courses in marketing and production, designed for the aspiring food entrepreneur. [eatrealfest.com](http://eatrealfest.com).

### RECIPE

## toasted sesame cookies

🕒 ACTIVE: 20 MIN; TOTAL: 45 MIN • MAKES 32 COOKIES

After baking at health-food stores, Sarah Kelby Lewis created *Sustenance*, her line of sweets that uses alternative sugars, which she sells at Pittsburgh's Public Market.

½ cup whole wheat pastry flour	½ cup evaporated cane sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour	½ cup Sucanat sugar (see Note)
¼ teaspoon baking soda	1 large egg
¼ teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened	1 cup toasted sesame seeds (4 ounces)

- Preheat the oven to 350°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. In a small bowl, whisk the flours, baking soda and salt. In a large bowl, beat the butter until creamy. Beat in the sugars then beat in the egg and vanilla. Beat in the sesame seeds and the dry ingredients.
  - Scoop tablespoons of the dough onto the baking sheets and roll into balls; press into 2-inch rounds. Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes, until golden. Let cool for 10 minutes, then transfer to racks to cool completely.
- NOTE** Sucanat is available at health food stores. ●



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF TERRAIN (CUTLERY HOLDER), COURTESY OF LOSTINE (CUTTING BOARD), COURTESY OF SUKI CHEEMA (PLACE MAT), NELL DODGE FOR 603 HERE AND THERE (SYRUP)

### A LITTLE IDEA

"I TOOK BITE-SIZE SHORTBREADS TO A TRADE SHOW AS SAMPLES, AND EVERYONE ASKED IF THEY WERE FOR SALE. BOOM—ANOTHER PRODUCT WAS BORN." *Sondra Wells, Botanical Bakery (botanicalbakery.com)*