



Powered by Clickability



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

> [Silk Road Winds Into Food Pavilion](#)

Silk Road Winds Into Food Pavilion

Apr 21, 2008 12:00 PM, By AMANDA BALTAZAR



ANACORTES, Wash. — Brown & Cole's Food Pavilion here is testing a new tea and spice bar concept called Silk Road.

Bulk teas and spices imported from India, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Hungary and Africa are on display in the approximately 200-square-foot staffed section, which features dark wood counters and a mural of landscapes and advertisements from India. Some spices are prepackaged, but most are weighed to order and can be ground in a handheld grinder if a customer so chooses.

Shoppers can order as much of any product as they like, although there is a 0.02-pound minimum on whole spices and teas and a 1-ounce minimum on spice blends and rubs.

One ounce of each spice and tea is displayed in a glass jar so customers can pick it up and smell it. Only small amounts are displayed because both light and air are harmful to spices and teas, making them less potent.

In fact, the lights in the Anacortes unit will soon be deliberately turned away from the spice and tea cabinets, and shades will be designed to cover the glass doors when the store is closed.

The section is sandwiched between the meat department and the general merchandise area, where tea presses and teapots are merchandised.

To create excitement around Silk Road — which is named for the ancient trading route that ran from Southern Europe to China until around 1400 — the store holds regular tastings and cooking demonstrations in the section. Sales have more than doubled during days when demonstrations have been featured, said a store associate.

These demos have tied in to holidays like Easter and Mother's Day, but are expected to soon run each week from Thursday through Saturday.

A recent cooking demonstration featured spice rub blends that were used by spice and tea manager Shane Cemore to prepare pork berbere and chicken adobo. A variety of teas were also available for tasting. Nilgiri Blue, 500 Mile Chai, Cape Town Rooibus and Honeybush tea from South Africa are among the varieties merchandised there. Turkish Anise Seed, North African Tabil, an Indian Fenugreek Leaf are among the tea varieties available at Silk Road.

If the pilot proves successful, it will be launched in some of Brown & Cole's busier locations. The Bellingham, Wash.-based retailer operates stores under the Food Pavilion, Food Depot, Cost Cutter, Everson Red Apple Markets and Save-On-Foods banners.

Find this article at:

http://subscribers.supermarketnews.com/ethnic_specialty/silk_road_winds/index.html



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© 2008 Penton Media, Inc. All rights reserved.





Powered by Clickability



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Adding a concept like this is a sure sign that a store is becoming more upscale, said Jim Hertel, managing partner at Willard Bishop, Barrington, Ill. It's going a step beyond the typical grocer, who relies more on prices, he explained.

It also encourages consumers to be adventurous.

“If you've got people making things for the first time, by providing portion control, you're allowing them to spend less and feel like they're minimizing the risk,” he said.

Tea and spices are a natural together, and there's certainly a market for bulk tea, said Joe Simrany, president of the Tea Council of the USA, New York. “The growth of tea shops across the U.S. is big, and they're picking up steam and introducing consumers to new flavors in tea.”

These tea shops are also encouraging consumers to brew their own tea at home. The small amounts of the products offered at Silk Road make it easy for consumers to try several to find their favorites.

The only thing that concerned Simrany is that tea readily picks up odors, so retailers offering a tea and spice bar need to ensure that they're protecting it from cross-flavoring.

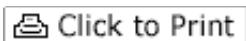
“Otherwise, they'll end up with some new blends — inadvertently!”

Spice prices at Silk Road are comparable to commercially packaged spices such as McCormick. However, given the small quantities it's typically selling, and the bonus of better flavor, Food Pavilion could even increase prices a little, said Hertel.

Retailers need to differentiate, he added, so he wouldn't be surprised to see tea and spice bars adding some zing to more supermarkets.

Find this article at:

http://subscribers.supermarketnews.com/ethnic_specialty/silk_road_winds/index1.html



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.