

Supplier Business



SaltWorks triples headquarters

SaltWorks relocates operations

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and wakeboards, Zoske also sourced and imported goods for the sporting goods industry before starting an online salt store for business-to-business and direct-to-consumer sales. From 2003 to 2006, SaltWorks's sales increased 2,000 percent.

SaltWorks imports premium gourmet sea salts and bath salts from countries worldwide and supplies them in bulk to the wholesale, retail and consumer markets.

In 2005, the company launched its Artisan Salt Co. brand of retail packaged salts. Artisan Salt features more than 30 varieties in different packaging and gift sets.

At the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco, SaltWorks introduced several

smoked salts as well as a Sicilian sea salt and a Premium Japanese Sea Salt.

Other recent introductions include a World Salt Sampler that contains 24 miniature glass jars packaged in a bamboo gift box.

Four varieties of Salt Trios were added to the line up and are available with either glass or plastic jars packaged with a glass serving dish.

Don't expect SaltWorks to come out with a line of spice rubs anytime soon.

"We sell a lot of bulk. We haven't done anything with spices. We supply to companies that do that (spice rubs) really well. It's not really our business. We're trying to be the salt experts," Novotny said. **GN**

By ANNA WOLFE

WOODINVILLE, Wash.—With sales of \$5 million in 2006 and a forecast of \$10 million in 2007, SaltWorks Inc. tripled its facility when it moved to a 30,000-square-foot facility here in November.

Formerly based in a 10,000-square-foot facility in Redmond, the privately held importer—which markets its salts under the Artisan Salt Co. label—estimates it will sell more than 10 million pounds of sea salt this year, said Naomi Novotny, vice president and co-owner. About 60 percent of its business is bulk sales.

At its headquarters, SaltWorks can inventory 2 million pounds of sea salt in its 14,000-square-foot, climate-controlled warehouse space. Additionally, the headquarters houses 6,000 square feet of office space and a 10,000-square-foot packaging facility.

The torrential rains that drenched the Pacific Northwest in December did pose some hurdles as the salt importer was settling into its new space and preparing orders for shipment. "We were without power for almost a week," said Novotny. "We had to install generators, as it was our busiest shipping time. We are proud to report that we didn't miss a day of shipping although we were all pretty cold without heat."

A surging interest in sea salt has escalated sales, said Novotny, who previously worked in business development for a software company. Four to six positions will be added to the company's employee roster in the next month, boosting the staff

count to 20. "Sea salt, in general, is very popular right now. People really appreciate the flavor of salt. People want to eat healthy and have flavor too."



About 40 percent of SaltWorks' revenue comes from its Artisan Salt line.

Finishing salts such as French Fleur de Sel and Murray River Flake Salt are popular sellers, Novotny said, along with the smoked Fume du Sel and Salish that's smoked on alderwood.

With a finishing salt, cooks can "use less and get more flavor," she said.

Owner Mark Zoske's passion for gourmet sea salt inspired his hobby-turned-import company's creation in 2002. Previously a designer of water skis

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