

The Keller Citizen

Keller chef finds the recipe for success

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KELLER -- Peter Mollett may not have a formal culinary training but he has something other chefs may lack -- a degree in organic chemistry.

A cooking passion that began as a child coupled with a love for science has helped Mollett create Smokin' Texas Gourmet, a product line of sauces and rubs that are selling out at local markets and used regularly at restaurants.

Similar to the Food Network's Alton Brown, the Keller resident uses his knowledge of chemistry to formulate recipes.

Mollett's said his friends and family would often ask for his barbecue sauce recipe but he wouldn't budge.

"One day my daughter said, 'Dad, why don't you just bottle it and sell it?'" Mollett said. "So I did."

Mollett began selling the barbecue sauce and a garlic, salt and pepper seasoning blend at the Keller Farmers Market a few years ago.

"Peter has been a vendor at and a sponsor of Keller Farmers Market since our first full market season in 2010," said Patricia Eltiste, market manager.

Eltiste said the Garlic Salt & Pepper, known as "GSP" to its faithful users, is one of the most requested items in the line.

"It really does go well on everything," she said.

Eltiste said what sets Smokin' Texas Gourmet apart from the competition is that it's so well-rounded, offering everything from pepper sauce and salsa to steak sauce and seasonings.

"The products are also easy to use and easy to give, since they're free of MSG, gluten and high fructose corn syrup, and they're vegan friendly," she said. "You can put the steak sauce on your steak and on your tofu burger."

Eltiste said since the beginning, Mollett's products have continued to diversify, which has rewarded him with a growing customer base.

Marcelo Vasquez, executive sous chef at Omni Fort Worth Hotel, said besides the barbecue sauce, his kitchen staff uses about 20 products from the line including a tomatillo salsa, peach salsa, jalapeno honey mustard and a tres chiles salsa.

"It's a very good product, we're very happy with the result," Vasquez said. "It's important to keep a level of consistency and quality. ... This product does that, it's a unique mix of different flavors. We use it not just for the restaurant but in banquet operations."

Mollett said though used in restaurants, the idea behind the product line began as a way for home cooks to create delicious, healthy meals in about 30 minutes. He said the variety of flavor combinations are a result of childhood experiences.

At age seven he took the role sous chef for his mother, who he says was a perfectionist in the kitchen.

"I grew up in a German household, sauces are a specialty in Germany," he said.

Mollett said moving every three months and living in different parts of the world also contributed to his wide food palette.

"I was an Air Force brat, we moved every three months," he said. "That really helped me understand food culture."

Mollett's wife of 13 years, Deanna Mollett, said she's happy her husband is now working the business full-time, getting to use his talent and doing what he loves.

"He made me a beautiful meal on one of our first dates," she said. "He's been creating seasonings and sauces for a long time. He's talented, and really knows what he's doing."

Information: www.smokintexasgourmet.com