



pure cool

It's the perfect
time of year for
ice cream

— meet three
ice cream makers
who are keeping
it simple...

KOHU ROAD
ICE CREAM



Greg Hall of Kohu Road
Photo by Becky Nunes
Text by Nicole Curin Birch

Kohu Road

No other food brings out our inner child faster than a bowl of ice cream on a hot summer's day. Sweet, creamy, heavenly. In fact, New Zealanders each eat a staggering 23 litres of ice cream a year¹, falling just behind the United States.

How fortunate then that ice cream maker Greg Hall has come up with a range that satisfies our inner five year old, while keeping our adult selves happy too.

Just try his Kohu Road, Espresso. It's very grown-up. So grown-up he doesn't let his own children eat it. There is none of that cloying sweetness you get with many other coffee-flavoured ice creams. Greg's is made with Arabica coffee and tastes like an affogato made with the darkest, deepest espresso and the most sumptuous ice cream with just a hint of sugar to take the edge off. And that's exactly what it is. Kohu Road is all about purity of flavour and Greg is just shy of fanatical about it.

You'll find no numbers, flavourings, enhancers or preservatives listed among the scant ingredients on the label. Instead, each punnet of Kohu Road's five flavours – Dark Chocolate, Milk Chocolate, Vanilla, Matcha (Green Tea), Espresso, and Cookies and Cream – contains the bare essentials for making the ice cream. Namely: milk, cream, eggs, sugar and the flavouring ingredient. If that happens to be dark chocolate then it comes courtesy of a decadent 72 per cent cocoa solid chocolate Greg has sourced from France. And the vanilla has telltale flecks of scraped Tongan vanilla bean sprinkled liberally throughout.

"It's important to me that things are what they say on the label," says Greg. "We wanted to keep things pretty plain and simple and focus on the best ingredients we could find. Our eggs are organic; we use real organic milk and real cream and a blend of sugar along with the main flavour. We are also very eco-aware when we produce. Basically I liken it to making fine wine: where you have the classics like Chardonnay and Pinot Noir we have Vanilla and Chocolate. Cookies and Cream is about as wacky as we get and even then we use only the true Oreo cookies from Nabisco combined with the ice cream. It's just a simple process."

Greg also recommends letting the Kohu Road ice cream soften (or breathe) before eating.

"If it's too cold you can't really taste all of the flavours, you just get the cold. I guess it's like red wine. You decant it before serving to allow it to open up."

So where did this passion for ice cream start? After 10 years of living and working in Japan with little access to the same quality of dairy products we have here in New Zealand, Greg returned with his wife and family and made one of his first purchases an ice cream maker.

"I had become really quite conscious about what I was eating by then, partly because Japanese food is so healthy, so I wanted to have a play around with making it myself."



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Dinner party guests were treated to a bowls full of his early attempts and Greg would often take a batch when visiting friends.

When everybody kept commenting that his was the best ice cream they'd ever had, and that he should be selling it, a seed was sown.

"I was looking at getting into business here for myself, but at the time wasn't quite sure what I should be doing. I mean, having people tell you they love your ice cream is one thing but getting them to pay for it is another."

Together with his wife, Yayoi, a Japanese Kaiseki chef, they came up with the recipes and began a series of tastings.

"Yayoi has the most incredible palate. She would tell me to add a gram of this here or 10 grams of that there to fine tune it. It was her idea to add salt to the chocolate ice cream because it brings out the sweetness and so we found an organic sea salt to use. We tested the range on people we knew and everyone ordered a punnet. That made us think we might have something."

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Thus Kohu Road, named for their Titirangi address and graced with a Kauri tree motif in recognition of their three children, was born.

Next it was off to the Farmers' Market circuit where Greg met with immediate success. But there was one problem: hauling his freezer around every weekend meant he needed to be more than a one man band.

The solution has been found in his new factory and retail outlet in Newton. Here he can be found hand-making his ice creams before popping them into his sparkling \$40,000 ice cream churning. Customers can pop in for a tasting, buy a punnet or place an order which Greg can later deliver around town by scooter.

"I know this sounds crazy, but I'm not in this to make a lot of money. To me the best payoff is seeing someone's face after they have had their first taste and watching people scrape the bottom of the bowl looking for more. I don't want to have to compromise the process one bit. I love what I am doing so much that I think that taste comes through in the product."

Visit kohuroad.com or call 0800 564 876

16 St Benedicts St, Newton

'Source: New Zealand Ice Cream Manufacturers' Association

Gourmet Ice Cream Co

Mark and Rae Scorgie's original ice cream churn came with no instructions and ran backwards for eight months when they first launched their Gourmet Ice Cream Company in 1995.

Thankfully, an engineer came to their rescue and fixed the churn, and after 12 years in the business the couple is forging ahead with their Dunedin-made gourmet ice cream.

Mark, a former bank manager and financial planner, had been making home-made ice cream flavoured with Galliano and other liqueurs for dinner party guests and finally saw his opportunity to leave the finance industry.

The company began by churning out 700 litres of ice cream a week from the old Dunedin Milk Co-operative building. Now, the family business has five employees with Mark as the Managing Director, his wife Rae as the ice cream maker and their daughter Carolyn handling marketing.

Last year the company moved into its brand new Birch Street premises in Dunedin, which houses the ice cream factory and latest venture, the Gourmet Chocolate Company. Customers can taste the ice cream and confections on a factory tour, and watch the in-house chocolatier and Rae at work through glass windows.

It was in fact a pint of Speight's and Mark's ability to experiment that spearheaded the company's successful move into New Zealand's gourmet ice cream market.

After a summer of making tubs of ice cream in the morning and selling it in the afternoon, Mark was working on new ideas for the 1996 Dunedin Food and Wine Festival. He wanted to do something different, and as no-one else was producing unusual flavours Mark approached the Speight's Brewery about making a beer ice cream and subsequently launched "Speight's Old Dark Malt" in a single serve pottle at the festival.

The ice cream was such a hit that word spread and helped secure Ansett Airlines, Singapore Airlines and Air New Zealand as customers.

What makes their ice cream special is Mark and Rae's basic ingredients: egg yolk, cream, and sugar with no additives – a recipe which still holds true today.

"We said we were going pure. We didn't want to put emulsifiers, preservatives or additives in it," says Mark.

The Gourmet Ice Cream Co also tries to use as many local products as possible: seasonal stone fruit such as nectarines, peaches and apricots are sourced from Central Otago, along with honey, while milk is brought down from Canterbury.

Raspberries arrive from North Otago and Dunedin farmers supply the eggs. The bright yellow yolks in the occasional free-range eggs they manage to source have captured Mark's eye, and he is working on securing free-range eggs permanently. "The colour difference is quite amazing," he says.