

CONNECT

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Sweet on You Daniel Perryman

In 2008, Connect issue #5, featured two American entrepreneurs who planned to bring Holland's signature Stroopwafel cookies to India. Today, Dan & Ed's Stroopies is a successful enterprise that has tickled our taste buds with its interesting range of goodies. Connect caught up with Daniel Perryman, who's handling the India



operations, to know how this local Dutch delicacy has fared here so far.

In September 2010, you officially brought the taste of Holland to India. How has the experience been so far?

I love your India! No, I love my India! It is an adventure that has defined me, and helped me grow as a person. What I love most about India is that although everything seems impossible initially, there is always a way forward. Anyone coming in to India needs to understand the culture here. One important piece of advice for foreigners doing business here is that India offers "jugaad" which, loosely translated, means 'what it takes to get it done'. This is a culture that I experience in my negotiations with my suppliers, employees, distributors and customers. It helps infuse meaning into our promise, even if there may be a thousand factors that affect delivery and quality. I'm proud of my team and am lucky to have found the right people. We choose to do all our dealings in Hindi and handle the relationships personally, so that our promise has the best chance of coming to pass. Working in the local language has made all the difference. Understanding the local culture has made it easier to come to consensus and get things done.

How did you come to choose Moradabad as the preferred place of production?

I define myself as a pragmatic entrepreneur, not a rich one. I surveyed many places and this was the best for cost ratio and also for its proximity to Delhi, which was our choice for initial targeting. The labor is experienced in manufacturing and the rent is inexpensive. Our proven process and our secret recipe are our competitive advantages, so we prefer to train people who have no experience in food. This also allows us to put our DNA into every level of the company. Every employee that works for us understands their contribution to the bottom line, and courageously serves our company. It is a very exciting and rewarding place to work. Our products are consumable with a generous 2-months expiry date, so we have the luxury of handling some distance in shipping to its destination. Also, my family and I have a beautiful house next to the Ram Ganga River.

Besides Stroopies, what other delicacies are you offering to the India market?

We are offering a hand-baked Granola under the brand Dutch Sunrise, for the private label bakery market as well as for the high-end consumer line, to compete with imports. The highest quality ingredients are used for the granola, which is hand turned multiple times during baking to get a toasty warm taste. We have a Chocolate and Almonds (made with imported Belgium Chocolate), a Walnut with Raisins, and a Peanut Butter with Dates and Cashews as flavor choices. Also, we are undercutting the imports with a fresher taste while remaining cheaper. We offer significantly better taste than most of the Indian brands which often don't have very high quality ingredients and aren't baked.

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Where can we get our hands on these caramel filled goodies here in India?



Stroopies are available at Gloria Jeans' Coffee Shops in Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. In Delhi, specifically, one can also shop at Openhands Café, Inn & Out, Red Moon Bakery, Swiss Gourmessa Bakery, Le Marche, Modern Bazaar, Oriental and other smaller outlets.

Stroopies do have an edge over the standard cookies available here, but who would you consider as your

competition in the Indian market?

There are a few Stroopwafels being made in India – let your mouth tell you which you prefer! I am extremely proud of our taste and quality in every way. We are glad that there is more exposure happening to Dutch culture and foods. We put our heart and soul into these cookies and that love shines through.

You've taken Stroopwafels to US, Indonesia and India. What is the next destination going to be?

I think you should expect our next step to be all over India. It is a huge market, and much more difficult to penetrate because of size and infrastructure.

What is in store for India?

We are getting up to speed to market Granola for private labels, which we think is a key market to grab. We're also aiming at breakfast cereals as our next leap. Watch out for Cranberries as our next flavor of Granola – they are impossible to find here in India and worth it for the taste. With these new recipes, we may be able to introduce single serve or "impulse packaging" for a 75-100 gram snack packs of granola, snack mix, or a bar, that will be available in high-end groceries across metros.

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