Buzzy ice cream company casts a spell on locals

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Briggs Barrios (BSM ’14) and his wife, Mandy, in the Super Witch ice cream shop.

Nothing says summer like an ice cream cone, and thanks to a Freeman School of Business alumnus, New Orleanians now have another way to celebrate the season.

Briggs Barrios (BSM ’14) is the founder of Super Witch, an ice cream startup that’s been hand packing pints at its distribution center in Harahan since 2023. Now, to the delight of local ice cream lovers, the company is swirling soft serve cones at a new physical location in Old Metairie. Though it’s new on the scene, the brand has already become known for its rotating roster of flavors, including Oreo Trifecta, Strawberry Shortcake, Classic Fudge and Minty Cookie Swirl.

“I’d say most of our flavors are nostalgic leaning,” Barrios says. “We use traditional flavors like Oreos, fudge and caramel because we want flavors that unlock memories for people and create a kind of *Ratatouille* moment of remembering.”

True to that sentiment, Barrios named the company after his grandmother, who was affectionately known among her family as “super witch.”

“It’s really an homage to her and all she did for us,” Barrios says. “I think she’d be proud if she could see us now. If you had told me three years ago that we would have a soft serve shop and a pint shop making 1,000 pints a week, I would not have believed you.”

Barrios’ path to ice cream making has been circuitous. He began his career as a stock trader for the energy investment boutique Howard Weil before joining Fanatics’s Major League Baseball jersey division. In search of his passion, he later worked as a chartering manager for ED&F Man Liquid Products, helping to coordinate shipping with conglomerates all over the world.

His entrée into ice-cream making began, ironically, with a resolution to avoid it.

“I was on a fitness journey, and I was eating really healthy all the time,” he says. “At a certain point, though, I started shifting my mindset and started going to ice cream as my sweet treat.

“That led me to create a review account on Instagram where I would post pictures of the ice cream I was eating. I started off reviewing grocery store ice cream, and it slowly ballooned until I was getting ice cream shipped on dry ice from small batch makers all over the country.”

Just how much ice cream was he eating?

“I was eating so much that I had to buy a chest freezer for my kitchen,” he says.

Barrios looks back on his days reviewing ice cream as a form of market research. He audited the competition, learned what he liked and generated ideas for his own creamery. When he finally churned his first batch (cookies and cream), he knew he had found his calling.

“I kind of had the feeling that I could do this for the rest of my life,” Barrios says. “I ordered eight or nine cookbooks to find recipes and determine what I liked in terms of texture and flavor. I developed my own ice cream base recipe over a six-month period, and I started making recipes for all the inclusions that we put in the ice cream.”

While some creameries offer custard-based ice cream, Super Witch specializes in Philadelphia-style, which is made without egg yolks. The result is a clean flavor profile that’s perfect for add-ins like fudge, cookies, fruit and candy.

Barrios approaches ice cream with the attention of a food scientist, with flavor, texture, scoopability, mouthfeel and freezing temperature all top of mind.

“Every flavor that we make is crafted with intention, from the texture and fat content to the sugar content of the actual cream,” he says. “Even two degrees can change how a caramel freezes in the ice cream. It all makes a difference for the overall experience.”

That attention to detail sets Super Witch apart from other New Orleans creameries, as does its pint drop business model. Each week, Super Witch “drops” a new menu of flavors, which become available for online purchase Wednesday evenings. Customers can sign up for text alerts about upcoming drops and then pick up their pints at the company’s Jefferson Highway facility.

Barrios attributes his knack for this kind of business strategy to the time he spent at Freeman.

“Going to Freeman gave me the confidence to know that I have the ability to manage a business well,” he says. “Every decision I make has to be based on the product, first and foremost. But it also has to make sense from a financial perspective. Freeman gave me that foundational knowledge.”

As he looks back, Barrios says there’s one ice cream flavor that encapsulates his journey as an entrepreneur: Salty Malty, a malted vanilla ice cream with salted caramel and pretzels swirled throughout.

“There’s been some salty moments and some really sweet moments, and the end product is just plain delicious,” he says.