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Print Date: Thursday, November 30, 2006

Last modified: Friday, October 13, 2006 4:34 PM PDT

One's Just Desserts

By: Brad Alexander, The Press-Tribune

October could be a month filled with cavities. All the big name candy companies send out mountains of specially packaged bags for Halloween.

But October is not only the time to prepare for ghouls and goblins, but also a time for other desserts.

October is National Dessert Month and today is National Dessert Day.

As it turns out, October is chock-full of days that celebrate sticky sweets and Roseville is the perfect place to celebrate special events throughout the month.

If you want to cover two bases at once - National Cookie Month and National Dessert Day - swing by Cookie Connection.

With two stores, one in Roseville and the other in Sacramento, co-owners Jake Hoffart and Mark Wright started out in the business unsure if they could even bake a single batch, let alone fill an entire store. The men said they originally got into the baking biz for the business aspect, not the cookie aspect. Things have turned around since.

"We have the best recipes for cookies," said Hoffart. "Our No. 1 seller is definitely chocolate chip, but regulars' favorites are usually the chocolate crackle or the coconut spice cookie."

The chocolate crackle is an especially soft cookie topped with powdered sugar. The coconut spice is a coconut-flavored cookie with a bite, exclusive to Hoffart and Wright.

For the hot summers the Cookie Connection stresses the importance of their cookie ice cream sandwich. Customers get a choice of their two favorite cookies to smash a hefty portion of vanilla ice cream between.

Thirteen cookies are a mainstay during the six-day business week for Cookie Connection, while two cookies rotate daily; all are baked fresh every morning.

If just a taste of ice cream isn't enough, then A Dash of Panache is where you can get your fill with the "Giant Caboose," seven scoops of ice cream of as many as five flavors topped with hot fudge or caramel.

"It's said to give you a giant caboose if you eat too many," joked manager and owner Scott Alvord.

Panache boasts a full ice cream parlor with 12 rotating flavors, as well as a tea room, birthday party room and full café.

The store features Gunther's Quality Ice Cream, a Sacramento-based company that is reported to offer the richest ice cream on the market, second to only to Ben & Jerry's, said Alvord.

"For the holidays, we feature a Sweet Pumpkin. Even I wasn't sure about it at first, but it tastes incredible, just like pumpkin pie," said Alvord.

Panache is currently in the works for getting its "Broken Sugar Cone Sundae" officially trademarked. The sundae

consists of crushed sugar cones layered with hot fudge, a generous serving of creamy vanilla ice cream and more fudge and crushed sugar cones on top.

And what goes best with a scoop of ice cream? Pie!

Debbie Manhart and her oldest son, Shon, have dedicated the last 21 years of their lives to serving up gourmet pies at A Slice of Goodness.

With a menu selection that could give even Marie Callender's a run for its money, A Slice offers more than 40 different types of freshly baked pies every day, not to mention traditional style breakfast and lunch, including a large selection of healthy options to make up for the perfectly prepared pie.

"We've had quite a few offers to franchise out for other locations, but we turned them down. We are very proud of our recipes," said Shon Manhart.

From fruit pies to crème pies, A Slice of Goodness has a slice for everyone's tastebuds.

For a double whammy, maybe the hot caramel apple pie, topped with vanilla ice cream, is in order.

The passion employees from A Slice have for good tastes extends beyond just desserts. The family owned and operated business recently released a hardback book, "Treasures of Northern California," uncovering many other delicious places to eat in the area.

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