

# Smitten in Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



"Brrr" churns and instantly freezes ice cream. Photos Andy Scheck

Molecular cuisine is becoming main stream. Chin Chin Labs in London, Lab Made in Hong Kong, and now San Francisco-based Smitten, which just opened its fourth Bay Area location in Lafayette, offer liquid nitrogen creations to tantalize ice cream lovers.

For many years, innovation on the ice cream market revolved around new flavors; now the process that instantly makes ice cream to order is spreading all over the world. For Smitten founder Robyn Fisher, this is the way to create incredibly smooth, delicious ice cream – without the preservatives, stabilizers, or emulsifiers needed for packaged ice cream – so she can showcase the true flavor of the best local ingredients.

Fisher discovered the freezing property of liquid nitrogen in a lab at Stanford where she was a graduate student. "I was immediately taken by the way the liquid would create very fine crystals when it came in contact with another liquid at room temperature," she says. As a gas, nitrogen comprises roughly 78 percent of the air we breathe; it becomes a liquid at -320 degrees. As it warms it starts to bubble, returning to its gaseous form and instantly cooling the environment it is in contact with. Liquid nitrogen is not toxic at all, but it needs to be handled with care; touching it is not a good idea – it can do serious damage to skin. It's been used all over the world to create instantly frozen delights such as ice cream, sorbet and meringues.

"The problem was to find a way to turn the ice cream efficiently enough to make the smoothest ice cream," explains Fisher. She says that most people who make liquid nitrogen ice cream use a KitchenAid, as she did when she first got started, but the result was not good enough for this perfectionist. For two years, she worked in partnership with different engineers to create "Brrr," a churning machine that

makes one to four servings of ice cream to order.

Fisher took to the streets of San Francisco eight years ago with Brrr on a wagon. Now with four locations, the young business woman and mother of an 8-month-old baby says she does not want to grow her business too fast. "I own three patents for Brrr," she adds, "and I have been asked to partner with others to grow faster, but I don't want to. What I want is to make the best ice cream in the world, which means controlling the quality of the ingredients; and that takes care and time."

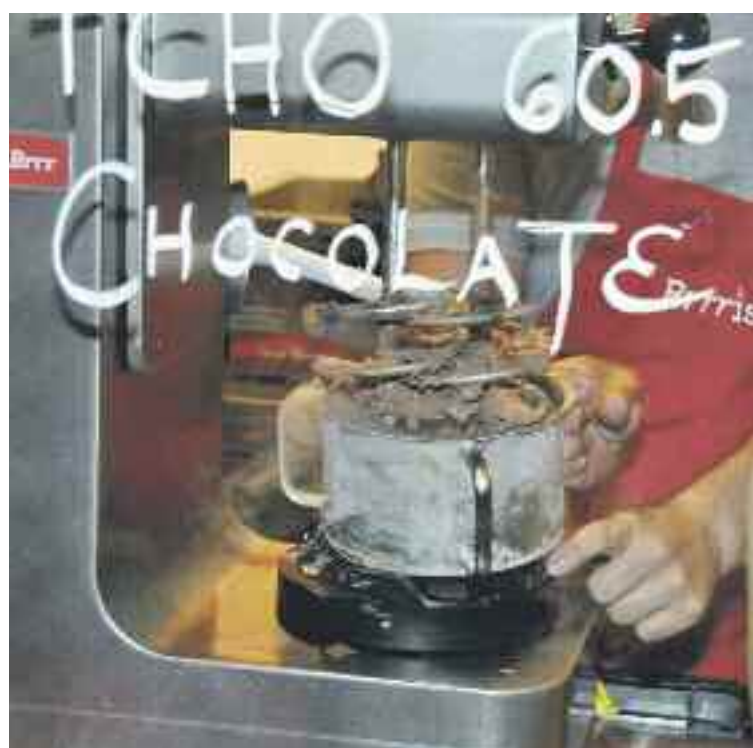
Most of her ice cream is made from cow's milk – although she offers a few coconut milk-based specialties – and that major ingredient comes from the organic dairy farm Beretta in Santa Rosa; the berries are from Swanton Berry Farm, also organic and based in California; the chocolate is from Tcho New American Chocolate in Berkeley.

"With the best process and the best ingredients, I also needed a chef who would create the recipes," says Fisher. "Our consulting chef is Robyn Lenzi, who designs all of our tastes."

The seasonal flavors change every week, but some favorites come back regularly. The Lafayette store was an immediate hit with flavors like strawberry, white balsamic, salted caramel, fresh mint and Tcho chocolate. You can also get an ice cream sundae. "People can buy pints of ice cream to go," says Fisher, "but since it does not contain any additive or preservatives it should be eaten quickly."

Smitten is open daily from noon to 10:30 p.m. (11 p.m. on weekends) at 3545 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette; phone (925) 385-7115 or visit [www.smittenicecream.com](http://www.smittenicecream.com).

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.



A fresh batch of Tcho chocolate ice cream.

## Multi-Unit Residential Specialist

Expert in the sale and purchase of duplexes to 18 unit properties



### Another New Listing-Coming soon!

Rockridge Triplex. Incredible location, over \$112,000 in annual rent!

Call or email for more information

### Rare Opportunity:

5 Units in Montclair. All units Condo quality 2 bdrms, private decks with SF and Golden Gate bridge views. \$170,000 in annual rental income.

**Pending \$2,249,000**



### John Caronna

Coldwell Banker, Orinda  
Top 100 Agent, SF Bay Area 2012  
CalBRE: 01898437  
Cell: 415.531.5225  
[www.liveinlamorinda.com](http://www.liveinlamorinda.com)

- 14+ Years experience as owner/hands-on manager of residential and commercial apartment buildings.
- Market rent analysis by neighborhood to maximize property values for current owners.
- Strategies for successful multi-unit property ownership
- Identify and advise on 1031 Exchange opportunities



©2014 Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker® is a registered trademark licensed to Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office is owned by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. CalBRE License # 01908304

## Excellent Care AT HOME

Hearfelt & Supportive Care At All Times...  
3645 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite D Lafayette (beside Trader Joe's)  
[www.excellentcareathome.com](http://www.excellentcareathome.com)



Our mission is to provide personalized care, help maintain independence and enhance our client's quality of life on a daily basis.

- Fully bonded and insured
- Geriatric care management
- Hourly care
- Live-in care
- Transportation to and from medical appointments
- Medication reminders

Call to schedule a free assessment and plan care review. 925-284-1213

## Do you want the best in home care for your family? Call Home Care Assistance.



"Named national winner of the 'Best of Home Care Award' by Home Care Pulse."

It starts with our caregivers. We carefully screen nearly 25 applicants for each caregiver we hire. *Only the best are good enough for Home Care Assistance!*

We follow this with extensive training. Finally we invite geriatric experts to meet with our caregivers so that they are up-to-date with the newest ideas about senior care.

**Hourly and Live-In Care.** Our caregiving services focus on two basic types of care: hourly and live-in. The service you choose is determined by your particular needs.

**Hourly caregiving** works well for many families. In this situation we provide trained caregivers on an hourly basis. Here the caregiver focuses all her attention exclusively on the senior.

**Live-in care** differs from hourly care in that we provide personal aides on a daily basis. Live-in caregivers are often the best choice for those seniors who need the companionship of another person, but who do not have intense "all the time" personal needs.

At Home Care Assistance we mean it when we talk about providing the best in senior care—whether it is on an hourly basis or a live-in basis.



**Meet Jill.** Jill Cabeceiras is the client care manager for the East Bay. She has been working with older adults for more than ten years and is an expert on managing care within the home. Let Jill help you and your family!

Call Jill today to schedule your free assessment!



925-820-8390 • [HomeCareAssistance.com](http://HomeCareAssistance.com)  
190-G Alamo Plaza, Alamo, CA 94507  
We've moved to Alamo!