



Canadian Food & Wine Institute Innovation Centre offers recipe for success for small businesses

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Whether developing an award-winning, alcohol-free lager or implementing food safety protocols to allow a production plant to expand across the country, the Canadian Food & Wine Institute (CFWI) Innovation Centre offers many ways for industry partners to innovate in the food and beverage sector.

The CFWI Innovation Centre, located at the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus of Niagara College, exists to provide solutions for small- and medium-sized businesses in this thriving field, by offering a full suite of services, including new product development, shelf-life testing and nutritional labelling, as well as sensory sciences.

Through regional, provincial and federal funding, the CFWI Innovation Centre pairs businesses with faculty, recent graduates and students who have the expertise to support industry innovation and commercialization of new products and processes in the food and beverage sector.

For example, the innovation team recently worked with MADD Virgin Drinks to develop a craft lager with zero alcohol. From recipe development to creating the label, the research team

was an integral part of the process. Today, MADD Virgin Craft Brewed Lager has distribution at 5,000 locations in North America, and earned gold in its category at the 2014 U.S. Open Beer Championships.

“Without access to Niagara College’s faculty, students, equipment, and network of co-packers, MADD Virgin Craft Brewed Lager would not have been possible, let alone become one of our best sellers in the U.S. market,” notes Brian Bolshin, President of MADD Virgin Drinks.

Other recent successes include:

- Niagara Essential Oils and Blends (neob) wanted to fill a need in the market for a high-quality botanical beverage, while overcoming the product’s reputation of being potentially overpowering or bitter. The research team and neob worked together to develop a high-quality carbonated botanical flavoured beverage grown, developed and produced all in the Niagara Region, using natural flavours such as lavender and lemongrass. After collaboration on recipe development and a series of sensory panels, the final product is in the commercialization stage.

- Colossus Fine Greek Foods wanted to develop a Canadian-made version of a traditional Mediterranean spoon sweet, which is a whole fruit preserve used as a yogurt accompaniment. The research team developed and tested several recipes



The CFWI Innovation Centre research team worked with local company neob to develop a high-quality botanical beverage. /PHOTO NIAGARA COLLEGE

through sensory panels, which resulted in three top recipes for further refinement and commercialization in 2014. A Canadian recipe saves the company money as it reduces international import costs, and the Spoon Sweets preserve is now served at the company’s Greek Yogurt Bar and Movenpick.

- Vij’s At Home is a retail line of frozen curries representing 13 favourite recipes from the menus in celebrity chef Vikram

Vij’s internationally renowned Indian restaurants. Vij wanted to distribute its meat-based product line, produced in a British Columbia facility, across the country, but the company did not have the expertise in-house to determine their ability to meet food safety guidelines. Therefore, the CFWI Innovation Centre team implemented proper food safety protocols to enable the line to have national distribution, in turn increasing

the capacity at the processing facility, and leading the way to increased jobs in the sector. In fact, one of the college’s research assistants on the project has been hired full-time to continue quality assurance once production expands.

“By engaging in these partnerships, the Centre is able to play a leadership role in revitalizing the regional economy, enhancing the productivity and increasing the competitiveness of area SMEs, and supporting the creation of new jobs through these successful collaborations,” says Nigel Corish, project manager with the CFWI Innovation Centre.

The college facilities include a microbiology lab; chemistry lab; sensory and consumer testing labs; a shelf-life and packing lab; a commercial brewery and hops yard; a commercial winery and vineyard; and commercial kitchens.

The opening and operation of the Canadian Food & Wine Institute Innovation Centre has been made possible by the support of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Ontario Research Fund, and several key industry partners such as Fallsview Casino Resort and Olson Food Concepts.

For more information on the CFWI Innovation Centre, visit NiagaraCollege.ca/Research

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Solutions for Industry

Access world-class culinary and food science expertise, facilities and equipment at the Canadian Food & Wine Institute Innovation Centre, your company’s R&D partner, located at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus of Niagara College. We provide a key competitive advantage to small- and medium-sized businesses in the food and beverage sector.

Our recent successes:

DEVELOPED A
0.0%
ALCOHOL
award-winning
craft-brewed
lager for **MADD
VIRGIN DRINKS.**


CREATED A
high-quality
SPARKLING BEVERAGE
from **ESSENTIAL
BOTANICALS** for neob,
grown and produced
in Niagara.

IMPLEMENTED
**FOOD SAFETY
PROTOCOLS** to
allow cross-country
expansion of a line of
frozen curries for
Vij’s at Home.



CREATED
3
MADE-IN-CANADA
recipes of **SPOON
SWEETS** for the
Colossus Greek
yogurt bar.

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