



It's cool, it's on fire, it's red-hot chilli chocolate

Josh Robertson

AFTER dabbling where other chocolatiers fear to tread SEATONFIRE is set to take its devilishly hot chilli chocolate to the world.

The Lockyer Valley-based company's products, which come in "mild" and "wild" forms, piqued the interest of buyers from Moscow to New York at last week's Fine Food Australia exhibition in Sydney.

Jason O'Connor, pictured, who left behind a 15-year marketing career in Melbourne to found SEATONFIRE with his chocolatier mother Lynne Seaton-Anderson, will be in the Big Apple next week talking distribution deals.

"It's very exciting for a little farm in the middle of the Lockyer Valley to be able to have this product available to the world," Mr O'Connor said.

While he was working in business development for global fashion and jewellery brands — as well as running his own wedding planning business — the family farm west of Brisbane was feeling the Big Dry.

But while cattle operations ceased, the farm's hardy "Red Devil" chillis prospered.

"The Aztecs have been blending chocolate and chilli for a gazillion years but we did a tour through Belgium and France last year and looked at what's available in the market

and there was nothing to the effect of ours," he said.

Packaging and branding reflect Mr O'Connor's own experience pitching to the high end of the market.

"The packaging's been designed as a gifting item to accompany a bottle of wine at a dinner party or a thank you or a happy birthday or whatever," he said.

Key markets are expected to be the US, UK, Korea and Japan.

While SEATONFIRE has gained some interest from David Jones, Austrade chief economist Tim Harcourt said it was a company that was "born global".

"Global brands can be built from small local companies — especially in rural and regional Australia," Mr Harcourt said.

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