

BUSINESS INCUBATOR

A Sweet Future: Two Students Put Class Time to Work And Launch Paris Delights



Phylline Loza '12, left, and James Lowery '11, right, say their business-school education is “the backbone to our business.”

Like so many delicious and beautiful stories, the tale of Paris Delights Pastries (www.parisdelightspastries.com), a bakery owned by Phylline Loza '12 and James Lowery '11, began in the City of Light. While on a summer trip to Paris, the two Mihaylo students were smitten by the city's many *boulangeries* and *patisseries*, and by two pastries in particular: the *chouquette* and the *macaron*.

Back in Orange County, they decided to recreate the sweets they'd fallen in love with, adding touches of their own – and launching a business. “Our pastries are made from the freshest and French-imported ingredients,” says Loza. Knowing their health-conscious California audience, the entrepreneurs opted to specialize in healthier versions of classic confections, using gluten-free, organic, naturally-sweetened, and lactose-free ingredients whenever possible. And, their sweets may be found in the cafés of a popular, upscale department store.

Loza and Lowery call their business-school education “the backbone to our business.” The duo refined their business plan within a two-semester management class with Professor Brent Evans. With the help of other students in the course, they worked through areas such as inventory and pricing for Paris Delights. “With Professor Evans' help, we figured out where to set up shop and how to get equipment,” says Lowery. In Professor John Jackson's entrepreneurship course, they worked on the company's Web site, logo and branding. Lowery also credits the pragmatic guidance they got from Marketing Professor Christopher Anicich. “Taking his class motivated us to continually progress,” Lowery explains. “It was his real-world stories that captivated us, and we put what we learned into action.” This included getting direct feedback from customers to fine-tune each recipe until it was perfect.

What's next for the bakers? A gift line and the purchase of their own bakery to grow a wholesale business are in the works. When they need inspiration while dealing with the frequent challenges all entrepreneurs face, it's never hard to find, says Loza: “The most rewarding part is seeing a customer's eyes widen and a smile as they bite into our pastries and say, ummmm, as they finish off their bites.” **M** *Lorie A. Parch*

