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**Hazelnut Contest Adds Five New Products on Market**  
Hazelnut Truffle Wins as Best New Product

As consumers incorporate more nuts into their diets, they will seek variety in the nuts they choose. In an effort to increase the number of hazelnut products on the United States market, *Stagnito's New Products Magazine* and the Hazelnut Council sponsored a product development contest.

The winning product, "Hazelnut Trio," is a hazelnut truffle made by Santa Cruz based chocolatier, Chocolate Visions. Chocolatier Lloyd Martin and his winning truffle, a trio of crushed hazelnuts, hazelnut paste, and Frangelico (hazelnut liquor) were introduced at Stagnito's New Products Conference September 9 in Chicago.

Fifteen finalists were selected from contest participants. Runner-up recipes ranged from a creamy hazelnut spread by Dawn Food Products, healthy hazelnut espresso squares by ADM and a hazelnut pesto sauce by an RCA chef. Five of the finalists have decided to launch their hazelnuts products to market.

Chocolate Visions was established in 2004 by Lloyd Martin to make chocolates that are visually unique as well as incredibly delicious. "I designed the chocolate on a computer and had a three-dimensional model of the interior of the chocolate made for casting the shell," said Martin. "We try to surprise people with unique flavors and textures."

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Martin is one of the few chocolatiers left in the world to create their own transfers. With a background in computer software engineering and degree in art, Martin is able to create designs on his computer and print them on to transparencies with food dye. While the chocolate is still warm, he then lays the transparencies on top and refrigerates the product for an end design that eventually awarded him first place in the Hazelnut Council contest.

“I was thinking about making a chocolate hazelnut truffle, but I didn’t have a specific goal to do so until the Hazelnut Council contest came around.” said Martin. “Hazelnuts should be used in every way possible.”

Contest judging took place at the Charlie Baggs, Inc. Innovation Center, an internationally recognized food service consulting company specializing in marketing support, flavor and product development and culinary training. Finalists were evaluated on taste, texture, consistency, and presentation. The Hazelnut Trio was selected for its tri-blend of hazelnut flavor and attractive appearance with a cocoa butter hazelnut transfer.

The grand prize includes 250 pounds of free hazelnuts, an expense-paid trip and recognition at Stagnito’s 2006 New Products Conference in Chicago, promotional advertising from the Hazelnut Council and a feature article featuring Chocolate Visions in *Stagnito’s New Products Magazine*. Total value is \$13,000.

The Hazelnut Council was formed in 1996 with the end goal of increasing the awareness, distribution and consumption of hazelnuts in the United States. The hazelnut industries of Turkey and Oregon and the Association of Food Industries, which imports Turkish hazelnuts, comprise its membership. For more information, please visit [www.hazelnutcouncil.org](http://www.hazelnutcouncil.org).

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