

ETCETERA

The latest scoop

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Move over vanilla, chocolate and strawberry and make way for lychee, green tea and ginger. In the past five or six years, ice cream, the quintessential summer treat that leaves children with dripping vanilla beards and sticky fingers, has made life increasingly difficult for its fans.

If choosing between chocolate and vanilla wasn't difficult enough, wait until ice cream enthusiasts see the myriad of flavours ice cream parlours and manufacturers now have available.

They range from the exotic, such as grape nut and rum and raisin; to the ethnic, such as the Japanese green tea and Indian saffron kulfi flavours; and the strange, such as the

Help yourself to frozen Viagra!

Take a lick of lychee!

Ice cream takes on a whole new flavour!

and Guinness beer-flavoured ice creams. Store owners and manufacturers say the flavour invasion is due in part to the cosmopolitan and multicultural nature of Toronto.

"Ethnic cultures exist in Toronto and these ethnic Canadians are looking for tastes as a reminder of back home," said Thornhill resident Zahir Keshavjee, part owner of Tropical Treats, an ice cream company that specializes in ethnic and exotic fruits.

Keshavjee, who once had a customer ask for chili and another for lobster-flavoured

ice cream, says experimenting with ethnic foods is popular and the ice cream industry is migrating toward the exotic.

"There are few desserts and foods that transcend age, traditional and ethnic boundaries, but ice cream is one of them," said Keshavjee, who has launched his kulfi, green tea and pistachio-flavoured ice cream lines this year in response to consumer demand.

"I'm open to (making) any kind of ice cream. We're at the customer's request." Hart Melvin of Gelato Fresco in Toronto says he, too, would create the unusual if requested.

"As long as it makes sense, I'll give it a shot."

For CN Tower functions last year, Melvin, whose company supplies custom ice cream to many of Toronto's high-end restaurants, created caramel banana. This year, he was asked to make green tea ice cream.

For the Air Canada Centre, Melvin is concocting a Lindt chocolate ice cream.

"Ice cream is one of those frontiers people explore more than others so that, with this so-called Asian fusion, people want to try the ethnic, tropicals and exotic fruit-flavoured ice creams," said Melvin.

"They're selling like hot cakes because there's an appetite out there for them." Newmarket resident Adam Kahansky,

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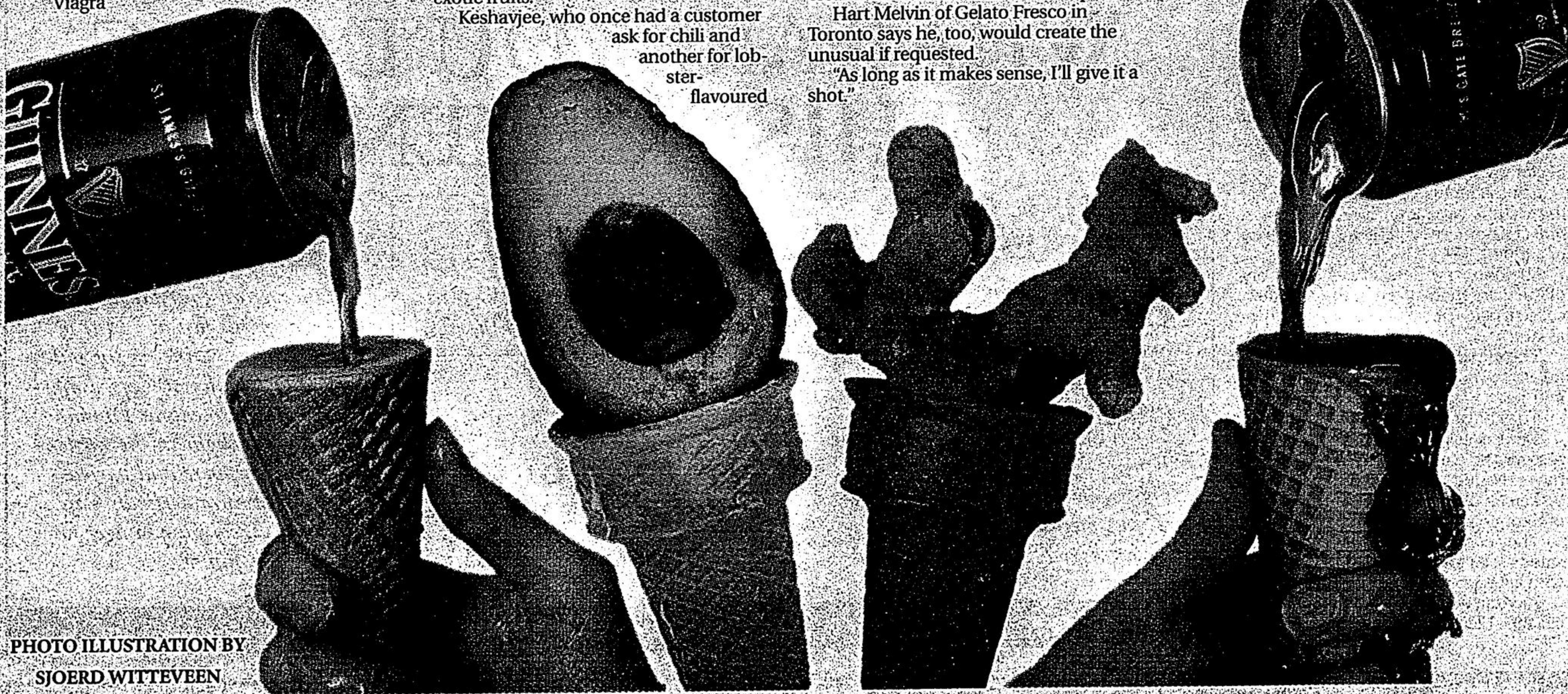


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