

# SAUCE BOSS

*Ex-cop didn't warm to store-bought hot sauce, so he made his own  
— in 15 varieties*

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
sbolan@yrmg.com

When it comes to cooking with peppers, there is a fine line between fiery, numb-your-tongue hot sauce and the warming sensation of the peppers travelling to the back of one's mouth and setting off a taste bud firestorm.

The latter is what Stouffville's Ken Wilson has been creating for about 10 years under the moniker Kenny Bob Sauce.

"It wasn't that I couldn't find anything in the stores. What was on the shelves bothered me because it had a lot of preservatives," said Mr. Wilson.

The retired Toronto police officer uses a natural brine of vinegar, water and sea salt. All of the sauces are gluten-free and have no added preservatives, artificial flavours or colourings, according to the company website.

The 64-year-old started creating his own hot sauces about 30 years ago, but Kenny Bob Sauces came about as a gift to a friend opening a new restaurant.

Today, Mr. Wilson offers about 15 hot sauces, many of which are based on customer requests.

Whether it be Buggy's Special, Mango Surprise, Island Bunny, Red Neck Fire or Greek Summer Heat, they all start with the pepper selection.

"Any hot pepper will make a great sauce," Mr. Wilson said.

However, some peppers are more suited to certain food pairings than others. Such as the scotch bonnet. It is best in wing sauces. It also rates about a 9.7 on the peppermania.com heat meter.

The chili pepper, on the other hand, has a medium heat with a bit of sweetness to it and goes well with chicken and fish, according to Mr. Wilson. When mixed with milk or buttermilk, the chili pepper becomes a marinade, he added.

But when it comes to the use of hot sauce, Mr. Wilson said a lot of people get it wrong. The flavouring is not to be added at the end, but during the cooking process as it helps quell some of the fire in the sauce, thereby enabling its flavours to come out.

"You have to control the heat. At the end, you can't control the heat," he said.

Having said that, "I use hot sauce on everything," he noted.

"Wherever you want to liven up the flavour of something, use a hot sauce," he said.

Along with using it on wings and fish and in chili and jambalaya, it can be used to saute shrimp, in mashed potatoes, as "it gives the potatoes a nice lift", and in pasta sauce because "it livens the tomatoes up," Mr. Wilson said.

Perhaps some of Mr. Wilson's most unique flavours are his seasonal creations such as Knocked Up Strawberry, which he made for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival three years ago.

The sauce is comprised of aged chili peppers combined with strawberries and once deglazed can be poured over pound or angel food cakes for a sweet treat with a bit of a kick.

East Gwillim Barb is made with rhubarb, while Buggy's Special is made with aged chili peppers and carrots in honour of Bradford West Gwillimbury's annual Carrot Fest.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Retired Stouffville police officer Ken Wilson, aka Kenny Bob, with his sauces at the Stouffville Farmers' Market this fall. He got into the business after making a sauce for a friend's restaurant.

## HOT, HOT, HOT! PEPPERS 101

One need not fear the heat of hot sauce. But if you do find the dish too spicy, don't reach for water to tame the fire as that will actually make it worse.

Capsaicin is a colourless and odourless oil-based compound found in the pepper veins, which does not mix well with water. Using water to douse the heat actually causes it to distribute the heat throughout the mouth.

Instead, drink milk or ingest some other dairy product to cut the heat. You can also eat starchy food such as rice, beans, bread or potatoes.

Or, you can build up your tolerance by eating more spicy food.

Hot peppers do a body good. Ounce per ounce, chilies have more vitamin C than oranges. They also contain more vitamin A than carrots and can help a person lose weight not only by speeding up one's metabolism but by helping to curb a person's appetite, in particular for

sweets and fatty foods, according to [hotsauce101.com](http://hotsauce101.com)

The hot pepper's heat is concentrated in the interior vein/ribs, not the seeds, according to [hotsauce101.com](http://hotsauce101.com)

On a scale of one to 10, the mildest pepper is the bell, followed by the Hungarian wax, Anaheim, sweet cherry, pasilla and New Mexico, according to [peppermania.com](http://peppermania.com)

Medium heat comes from the poblano, which is about a 4.5 out of 10 on the [peppermania.com](http://peppermania.com) scale.

Increasing in heat is the red cherry, jalapeno, serrano, hot banana and Thai, which registers a 7.5 on the [peppermania.com](http://peppermania.com) heat index.

'Hot' peppers are cayenne (8), tabasco (8.5), chiltepin (9.1), scotch bonnet (9.9), habanero (10) and red savina (10-plus), according to [peppermania.com](http://peppermania.com)

Kenny Bob sauce is available at The Hearty Artichoke in downtown Stouffville and at [www.kennybobsauce.ca](http://www.kennybobsauce.ca)

— Sandra Bolan

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