



## A MATCH MADE FOR THE SWEET TOOTH

San Francisco is about to experience what Yuba-Sutter residents already know about — the baked pleasures available from The Cookie Tree in Yuba City.

But visitors to the City by the Bay will be the first to taste the new Fudge Infusion, a creation combining three of The Cookie Tree's cookies with fudge from Bella's Confections, an e-commerce business based in Yuba City.

The businesses are featuring their new product at the 14th Annual Ghirardelli Square Chocolate Festival on Sept. 12 and 13 in San Francisco.

Between 60,000 and 65,000 people are expected at the festival, said Tiffani Williams, general manager of The Cookie Tree.

Fudge Infusion, with the names of both The Cookie Tree and Bella's Confections on the box, will be available for sale at the Yuba City store starting Sept. 14.

"This is the first really big" event that The Cookie Tree is involved with, Williams said about the San Francisco festival. "Hopefully this is the first of many."

The Cookie Tree, located in the Towne Centre retail complex at the corner of Bridge and Shasta streets, is involved in many of the Yuba-Sutter area's various festivals, she noted.

Almost 40 vendors will have samples on display from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in Ghirardelli Square, with those attending able to buy tickets for 15 tastings at \$20 each.

Williams, Cookie Tree owner Sue Smith and several customer service representatives will represent the bakery in the San Francisco show. The owner of Bella's Confections, Yuba City native Eric Dehoff, his mother, Carole Spiller, and sales representatives will represent the gourmet fudge company.

In addition, Williams is scheduled to appear on the baking portion of the one-hour television show "A View from the Bay" on San Francisco's ABC 7 at 3 p.m. Friday.

While the new treat, to be available at the Yuba City store at 441 Bridge St. and online through [www.bellasconfections.com](http://www.bellasconfections.com), will bring more attention to the two businesses, The Cookie Tree is staying at its newly expanded site.

The extra 1,000 feet of space added last October have let the business "open up," Williams noted. "There's always room to grow," she said. "There are no plans to open another store at this time."

In addition to selling baked goods from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Saturday, The Cookie Tree has offered baking classes for children and adults, classes in handmade pasta making and its first series of free summer concerts in the Towne Centre parking lot.

It also donates to events such as high school grad nights and hosts "benefit nights" for various non-profit groups in the area, donating a portion of a day's sales.

Williams would also like to extend The Cookie Tree's closing time to 11 p.m. to start an evening dessert service.

The Cookie Tree's core is "not only a great product, but good customer service," Williams said.

Currently, owners of several cookie stores in Northern California, including the former Cookie Tree in Gridley, purchased the license to use Cookie Tree recipes.

The original bakery opened on Plumas Street in December 1981 and moved to Towne Centre soon after.

Bella's Confections, without a storefront but available online and locally at the Country Florist, Twigs Fine Gifts, Creative Interiors and The Cookie Tree, is growing, noted Dehoff, now a resident of New York.

The chocolate festival has brought two separate businesses together, Dehoff said. "You pull out two powers (and) we came up with an incredible product," he said.

The two businesses will be next to each other at the festival, with samples of Fudge Infusion between them.

"This should be fun for us," Williams said.

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