

Yuengling's Ice Cream Returns to Shelves

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Shown are cartons of Yuengling ice-cream at a Weis supermarket, Monday, Feb. 10, 2014, in Huntingdon Valley, Pa. Yuengling's Ice Cream is back after an absence of nearly 30 years, available at hundreds of stores in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

POTTSVILLE, Pa. (AP) — Breyers, Ben & Jerry's, Edy's and Yuengling's: Which thing is not like the others?

Trick question. They all make ice cream.

The supermarket freezer aisle got a little more crowded Monday as [Yuengling — a name more associated with ale, porter and lager](#) [1] than vanilla, chocolate and strawberry — took its place alongside the familiar brands.

Beer drinkers up and down the East Coast know Yuengling as a 185-year-old family-owned Pennsylvania brewery whose lager flows from taps in countless bars and restaurants. What they might not realize is that Yuengling used to make ice cream, too, starting in 1920 at the dawn of Prohibition.

Now Yuengling's Ice Cream is back after an absence of nearly 30 years, available at hundreds of stores in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey. Additional stores and markets could be added later.

"I was brought up with it," said Bob Pomian, picking up a \$4.99 carton of chocolate marshmallow at a store in Pottsville, a few miles away from the brewery. "If it's the same ice cream I ate 50 years ago, then I'd be happy with it."

This incarnation of Yuengling's Ice Cream is a separate company with no connection to the brewery. But it has already capitalized on that famous name. Yuengling's

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initial run of 100,000 quarts rolled off the production line ahead of schedule because of high demand, fueled by nostalgia and the popularity of the eponymous beer.

"One of the biggest things in putting a new product on the market is getting brand-name recognition, which is a problem we don't have," said Yuengling's Ice Cream President David Yuengling, a cousin of brewery owner Dick Yuengling and great-grandson of the man who started the original ice cream company 94 years ago. "We are really popular for not having been on the market for 30 years."

Made by a small dairy in Tamaqua, Pa., Yuengling's is available in 10 flavors, including black and tan (Belgian chocolate and salted caramel), an homage to the ice cream's brewery roots.

The brewery side of the family, in fact, had no problem with a relaunch of the ice cream brand, so long as the frozen treat met expectations. They gave their blessing after trying samples of chocolate chip and mint chocolate chip.

"Needless to say, these received a thumb's up from all of us!" Jennifer Yuengling, the eldest daughter of Dick Yuengling and a member of the brewery family's sixth generation, said via email.

The original Yuengling's dairy was spun off into a separate company after Prohibition ended, and continued selling ice cream and other dairy products for the next half-century. David Yuengling's father closed the business in 1985 because neither of his sons was interested in taking over, and Yuengling spent the next three decades in the computer industry.

A few years ago, a family friend approached him about rebooting Yuengling's Ice Cream. Yuengling, 51, was ready for a career change, but wanted to make sure there'd be room for another brand in the \$6.8 billion take-home ice cream market. He realized the Yuengling name would probably get his product an initial lick — but to scoop the competition, it had to be good.

"What is it that's going to keep us going? What are people going to like about this to keep them buying it?" Yuengling said he asked himself. "It's a tough nut to crack, and it's not an easy business."

Yuengling said his ice cream is made without artificial ingredients, a higher percentage of butterfat and less air. The ice cream is marketed as premium, occupying a space between the mass-market brands and a super-premium label like Haagen-Dazs.

Branding expert Rob Frankel, author of "The Revenge of Brand X," said defunct but well-regarded brands can do well when they're resurrected.

"In Yuengling's case, there's a lot of really great, rich history. The fact that it was an ice cream born of Prohibition has a neat story to it. It's almost like it was bootlegger ice cream," he said. "As opposed to 'Bob's New Ice Cream' that has to go through all

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of these trials and tribulations, you are revitalizing a brand that has a history and there's a value to it."

Beer-flavored ice cream, alas, isn't in the cards. And while there's been talk of floats made from Yuengling beer and Yuengling's ice cream, you won't find David Yuengling partaking.

"I'm certainly not gonna try it," Yuengling, a direct descendant of the brewery's founder, said with a laugh. "I just can't see beer and ice cream together."

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