

Original Bain's Sauce Hits the Market

by [Hanna Raskin](#), Posted Dec 25th 2009 @ 11:00AM

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Photo: Pendennis Club.

More than a century after Henry Bain first tried to patent his now [legendary sauce](#), the private club where he worked has bottled it for commercial sale.

Louisville has been flooded with Bain's sauce knock-offs ever since Bain, the head waiter at the [Pendennis Club](#), created the condiment to pair with steak.

"It was one of those sauces that people really, really loved," Bain's eventual successor, John C. Johnson, told [Southern Foodways Alliance's](#) [Amy Evans](#) in a [2008 interview](#). "And, of course, I can recall how crazy people were about it. I've seen people put that Henry Bain on chicken. I even know one man that used to put it on ice cream, he loved it so much -- and that's really taking it another step."

After Bain failed to patent his concoction -- Johnson recalls it used too many patented ingredients -- he sold it to the club, which became the only source of Bain's sauce made according to the original recipe. But, until recently, "you had to know a member" to get it, general manager Jim Amundson explains.

The club's kitchen toyed with the recipe, adjusting chutney levels and tweaking spices, before the sauce made its public debut this year.

"It was a process," Amundson says. "We went through several tastings, and it finally clicked."

Club spokeswoman Cyndy Tandy describes the sauce as "rich and slightly tangy," with a "mellow and woody flavor."

"It's not a tomato-y base, but it's rich, deep-brown in color and has the big taste of a Cabernet," she adds.

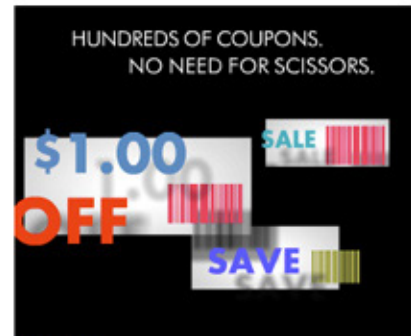
Tandy uses a Bluegrass State-approved analogy to put the sauce's release in context. Henry Bain, she says, is like Colonel Sanders: Anyone can make fried chicken, but it takes a special recipe to produce [KFC](#).

Still, Amundson says he was taken aback by the enthusiastic response to the Pendennis Club Original Henry Bain's Famous Sauce, which has emerged as a leading Christmas gift around Louisville.

"It has exceeded our expectations," he says. "We're now scheduling our second batch."

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