

News Release

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ARTISTA[®]
GOURMET

**Figuroa Brothers Extend Gourmet Brand Success
With Launch of Artista Syrups**

*Gourmet Syrup & Flavorings Line Posts \$1 Million in Pilot Test Sales,
Nets International Distribution*

New Orleans (February xx, 2005)— The gourmet food marketing experts at Figuroa Brothers today announced the launch of Artista[®]Gourmet, a manufacturer of gourmet syrups, smoothie mixes and flavorings. Artista is the latest concept from the team at Figuroa Brothers, best known for popularizing the Habanero pepper in the United States when they launched Melinda's[®] Original Habanero Pepper Sauce over 15 years ago. Since then, Melinda's has grown into one of the country's top five pepper sauce brands and Figuroa Brothers has notched numerous other successes in specialty food, including a specialty coffee company, a private label gourmet food business and a global line of specialty food products including flavored oils, marinades and spice mixtures.

"As brand developers, we're always on the lookout for needs that aren't being met by current specialty foods," said Artista CEO Greg Figuroa. "Artista will provide better service and world-class flavorings with the primary goal of helping specialty coffee retailers rev up their own creative beverages. Artista will certainly stir things up. The goal of the company is to grow this into a \$15 million brand over the next five years."

Artista products are already posting strong sales. During a yearlong pilot test, Artista syrups sold over \$1 million through national retail chains. The company has already signed national distribution deals to supply the syrups to coffee houses and other specialty coffee retailers. Artista syrups will also be sold at retailers and online. Artista has an international distribution deal and is enjoying successful sales in England, France, Germany, New Zealand and Australia. In addition to Figuroa, the company is led by co-founders David Figuroa and Glenn de Gruy.

Artista will offer 70 syrups during the first quarter of 2005, including a line of Artista Sugar Free syrups flavored with SPLENDA[®] Brand Sweetener. The company is also introducing a line of 10 smoothie mixes during the quarter.

"This will be the biggest brand we've ever launched," said Figuroa. "It's another example of spotting an emerging trend creating great products for a new need. Artista has all the things our company has learned to do well over the years – great packaging, great flavors, complete quality."

About Artista

Artista Gourmet was founded in 2004 by a team of taste experts with deep experience in the specialty coffee and gourmet packaged goods business. The company offers a complete line of syrups, gourmet sauces, smoothie and iced-beverage mixes to specialty coffee retailers, restaurants, bakeries – anywhere creative food & beverage professionals are found. Artista is distributed throughout the United States, Australia, New Zealand and several European countries.

For complete information on Artista, please visit ArtistaGourmet.com.