

SPICY CHILE CHIPOTLE

Goober goes global

Palace chef gives humble peanut exotic makeover with spice blends

By Karla Sluis
Herald Staff Writer

In the American South, peanuts imported from Africa were first called "monkey nuts" or "goober peas." They evolved into a sticky spread and salty partner to beer — hardly a glamorous food.

Until now.

Paul Gelose, owner-chef of Palace Restaurant in Durango, is giving the humble peanut a new spin in the blender of world cuisine. Gelose and his wife, Carolyn Lamb Gelose, launched Ricky's Lucky Nuts last year.

Why "Ricky," and not Paul?

The saga of the lucky nut began with a special recipe and a Christmas party in 2005. Gelose's longtime friend and former Palace chef Rick Jensen created the recipe for the original flavor of nuts, which are dry-roasted with a salty-sweet coating. Friends at the party found the taste addictive and wanted the recipe. Gelose said the idea and the company's



JACK PINCUS/Herald

Paul Gelose, president of Ricky's Lucky Nuts, is the owner-chef at the Palace Restaurant in Durango.

name "just popped into my head."

"It occurred to me that no one had made changes to the basic peanut product since I was a kid."

Gelose initially made test batches of the nuts in his home kitchen. To make the brand stand out, he created three exotic flavors from the base of Jensen's original recipe: Bombay Curry Coconut, Spicy Chile Chipotle and Black Pepper & Salt.

"The spicing is part of our business hook," said Gelose. "We saw what the potato-chip industry was doing and said 'let's look at

the peanut.'"

The company's logo features a globe to emphasize the multicultural flavors.

"So many cultures around the world have peanuts in their cuisine, and the taste for spices in the U.S. is diversifying."

Gelose said other flavors were developed in the initial kitchen tests, and they

See Nuts, 2C

BOMBAY CURRY COCONUT

JERRY McBRIDE & KARLA SLUIS/Herald

ORIGINAL STYLE

BLACK PEPPER & SALT