

ICING THE COMPETITION THE REGION'S BIG PLAYERS

Cold Stone is aiming to take 10% of the UAE ice cream market by next year and a further 25-30% in 2009. *Arabian Business* takes a closer look at Cold Stone's competition.

Ben & Jerry's

Life-long hippy friends Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield started their multi-million dollar ice cream company shortly after completing a correspondence course on ice cream making at Pennsylvania State University.

Their first store in Vermont became hugely popular following its "large portions of whatever they felt tasted good on the day".

Famously the first brand of ice cream to be taken into space abroad the shuttle, Ben & Jerry's has 580 franchise shops, 15 of which are international.

Ben & Jerry's is committed to its ice cream making as much as its social activism. The company is now owned by Unilever following its acquisition by the multinational food giant in 2000 for US\$326m.

Häagen-Dazs

Probably one of the most well-known ice cream brands, Häagen-Dazs was also founded by a couple in the US. Founded by Reuben and Rose Mattus from the Bronx, New York with just three flavours this premium brand of ice cream is now available across the US and 54 countries worldwide.

Sold to The Pillsbury Company in 1983 and licensed by Nestlé, Häagen-Dazs may not have mix-ins but this brand's secret ingredient is its lack of emulsifiers which means little air is mixed in during the

manufacturing process as well as its high butterfat content.

Baskin-Robbins

This is the ice cream brand Cold Stone expects to overtake in the next year. Founded in 1945 by Burt Baskin and Irv Robbins this global chain of ice cream parlours claims to be the world's largest ice cream franchise business with more than 5600 locations, 70 of which are in the UAE alone.

Baskin-Robbins is famous for its "31" flavour slogan. When the first store was opened it offered 21 flavours, an innovative concept at the time. The idea to introduce a further 10 flavours came from the Carson-Roberts advertising agency which introduced its "Count the Flavours" slogan. 31 flavours — three more flavours than famously offered at Howard Johnson's restaurants. Its small pink spoon is also something of an icon as Burt and Irv insisted that people should be allowed to try before they buy.

Marble Slab Creamery

It might have started five years earlier but the direct competitor to Cold Stone only has 541 stores compared to 1500. Similar to its direct competitor, this brand of ice cream uses mix-ins such as Maltesers, Snickers and Heath Bar which are mixed together on a granite slab (the end result is that the ice cream is 'marbled').

"They do a lot of similar things but on the whole we think our whole store experience is better. The fun factor, the enthusiasm and the quality of the ice cream are all better. They may be our competitor but we are consistently ranked higher in our sales per store, growth and quality," says Lee Knowlton head of Cold Stone Creamery, about Marble Slab Creamery.

With a presence in the US, Puerto Rico and the UAE, Marble Slab has 11 stores across the Emirates and another 14 under development — could this mean the start of a new cold war?