

## **HILTON HEAD COOKIE COMPANY IN THE DOUGH WITH BEACON**

HILTON HEAD, SC, June 2000 -- Hilton Head Island, located near Savannah, Georgia just off the coast of South Carolina, has long been known as a mecca for golfers and beach aficionados. Each year thousands of tourists descend upon the scenic enclave for the glory of hitting a little white ball on beautifully manicured golf courses that accentuate the picturesque community.

Jerry and Marcy Elam came to Hilton Head for vacation from their native Pittsburgh for 10 or 11 years before moving permanently to the island in 1986. Jerry, a veritable Renaissance man who had worked in the high-tech field in Pittsburgh, did general heating, ventilation and air conditioning installation and maintenance work on Hilton Head before he and Marcy opened a confectionery called the Gourmet Alligator.

The Elams bought gourmet foods and then resold them at their store, which also served ice cream, chocolates and other culinary delights. The real crowd-pleasers, though, were the homemade cookies baked by the Elams themselves. Chocolate chip, chocolate chip walnut, cranberry walnut, double chocolate and other flavors were gobbled up by residents and tourists alike to the point where Jerry and Marcy thought about changing the focus of their business.

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page 2

“The Hilton Head Cookie Company is about five years old now,” says Jerry. “Primarily we manufacture cookie dough, which we pre-portion into one-ounce, two-ounce or three-ounce size cookies.” The Elams employ five people at their Hilton Head plant, which takes up about 7,000 square feet.

“I put in a big, brand new freezer and was looking for the right refrigeration for it,” says Jerry. “What we actually do is mix the dough and then pre-portion it. Then we freeze the dough in boxes at minus 15 degrees Fahrenheit.”

Frozen dough is shipped by the Elams to customers such as restaurants, country clubs and caterers. The customers in turn bake the dough into the delicious cookies for which the Hilton Head Cookie Company is so well known throughout the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida.

“Our freezer is about 750 square feet, 30-by-28-by-12,” says Jerry. “I’ve known Ed Hendrix of Baker Distributing since I had my own HVAC business. So I called Ed and he said, ‘Take a look at the Bohn Beacon system.’”

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“Mr. Elam was one of my clients on Hilton Head,” says Hendrix, who has been selling Bohn refrigeration equipment for 38 years with Baker Distributing Company from its Savannah office. “I cover about a 75-mile radius from Savannah, most of Georgia along with Hilton Head in South Carolina.”

Elam says that he was already aware of the Beacon system, having heard about it from other people in the HVAC business. The Bohn Beacon system was installed and turned on at the Hilton Head Cookie Company plant in January, says Elam. “It’s working wonderfully. First of all, I’ve got a three-phase system, and so I set up three-phase wiring rather than single-phase. It runs very efficiently from an electrical cost standpoint.”

Ron Andrews, sales representative for Bohn who deals directly with Hendrix and the Baker Distributing wholesaler, was also involved in the project. “Ed called me and said he wanted me to help him on a project at Hilton Head,” says Andrews. “We talked to Jerry about his operation and what kind of installation we could provide for him.”

Andrews saw the Beacon system as an excellent fit for Elam’s company. “We priced it to be equal to the standard system,” says Andrews, “but Jerry could control the system with the Beacon smart controller and not have to go inside the box.”

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page 4

Adds Hendrix, “We got all the design criteria from Jerry. He told us what temperature was required, what amount of cookie dough the system would need to refrigerate, and to what temperature to bring the system down.”

Elam had been aware of a Beacon system installation at a blueberry farm in Georgia.

“That got his interest, and then we showed him what the Beacon could do,” says Andrews. “Jerry actually did the installation himself, along with the Air South Inc. service department. He sized two, 7.5-horsepower, outdoor discus air-cooled condensing units, with smart controller and smart defrost.” Two Bohn three-fan, low-profile, electric defrost evaporators were installed.

“The Beacon system “holds the temperature right where I want it,” says Elam. “The system runs very smoothly. There are no vibrations in the equipment, so I don’t have a problem with lines jerking on start-up. It does a great job. And the smart controller is wonderful to work with. It’s easy to change anything you want to change with it, and it’s simple to operate.”

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There are actually two Bohn Beacon systems at Hilton Head Cookie Company. “I wanted redundancy,” says Elam, “and I wanted to make sure the system was adequate. I have thousands of dollars invested in equipment. Also, I probably have between 25,000 and 40,000 pounds of cookie dough in the freezer at any one time. And with the Beacon system, I can eliminate unnecessary defrosts.”

Beacon’s Smart Defrost technology actually senses frost accumulation and projects whether the system will need to be defrosted again before its next programmed defrost. It eliminates defrosts from the normal defrost cycle that are unnecessary. By eliminating unnecessary defrosts Smart Defrost saves energy and reduces costs, maintaining more consistent box temperature for improved product integrity.

Keeping the dough frozen properly leads to piping hot -- and delicious -- cookies for consumers throughout the Southeast. The Beacon systems have to be excellent so that the Elams can meet the demand for Hilton Head Cookie Company cookies.

Hendrix, for one, is a big fan of his customer’s wares. “I told Jerry I just want to know when this company goes public,” he says with a laugh.



Cutlines for photos:

(page 1): Bohn sales rep Ron Andrews, Hilton Head Cookie Company owner Jerry Elam and Ed Hendrix of Baker Distributing Company (left to right) stand in front of the Bohn condensing units at the Hilton Head Cookie Company plant.

(page 2, top right): Elam, Hendrix and Andrews (left to right) stand inside the freezer where two Bohn evaporators maintain the temperature for proper storage of cookie dough.

(page 2, bottom left): Bohn evaporators maintain the required temperature for cookie dough stored in the freezer at owner Jerry Elam's Hilton Head Cookie Company plant.