

Taquería El Vecino

LUNCH SPECIALS

\$5.00 Lunch Plates
\$1.50 Tacos and free
Homemade Limeade
& Iced Tea
from 11:30 - 3:00
Call ahead for FAST
carry-out!

BEST OF BIG A LIST!

We were chosen as one of
the Top 5 Best Mexican
Restaurants in Atlanta by
the food critics of the AJC!

Fresh Salsa Bar with 9
different salsas. Beer,
Wine and Margaritas.

\$10 OFF
Of \$40

Show Ad to Receive Offer

2743 LaVista Road Decatur GA 30033 • 404.929.0301
Hours: Everyday @ 11:30A-9P • taqueriaelvecino.com



POP-O-MATIC

Peachtree City entrepreneur
launches new line of popcorn

BY HOPE S. PHILBRICK

You probably eat more popcorn than you realize: According to the Popcorn Board, Americans consume 16 billion quarts of popped popcorn each year—or 52 quarts per person. Popcorn is a \$350 million industry in the United States.

After stints in the landfill and motor sport industries, Peachtree City-based entrepreneur Steve Dale was inspired to venture into popcorn over a dinner conversation with his family. With Bentley's Premier Popcorn, which officially launched in 2005, he has found a unique way to unite two things most Americans adore: dogs and popcorn. The Sunday Paper recently phoned him to learn more.

WHAT'S COOKING

Q Why the popcorn business?

A The idea came during a visit to Chicago with my wife. We were on Michigan Avenue getting ready to leave. I went to school in Chicago and am familiar with the city. I said to my wife, "I'm going to get out, and while you drive around the block, I'm going to run down the street and get some popcorn for the trip home." At the shop, I was told there would be an hour wait to buy popcorn. I thought they were kidding, but turned around and the line snaked back and forth. I knew they had three stores, so I went back empty-handed and told my wife the story in disbelief. The second store was pretty busy, with a line outside the door. The third had a 20-minute wait. I got it, and we drove home. That was the weekend before Thanksgiving.

My daughters flew home from college, and at dinner, we were telling them about our trip and the popcorn story. My one daughter said, "Dad, why don't you investigate it for us? It might be something we want to get involved in." We started traveling around the country investigating companies and developing recipes. We liked our concept and the popcorn industry in general, so we decided to go ahead and do it.

The company is named after your wirehaired terrier?

We call it Bentley's because we had a dog named Bentley. He was deaf, but when you

made popcorn, it didn't matter where you had him locked up or where he was, if you turned around, you'd darn near step on him. He loved popcorn!

Five percent of all sales are donated to the Homeless Pets Foundation, which is operated by local vet Dr. Michael Good and helps dogs and cats find new homes.

What have you discovered about popcorn?

One thing about the popcorn industry is that virtually everybody knows what popcorn is from age 3 and can enjoy it into old age. It's very healthy, high in fiber and low in fat—by the way, it's very good for dogs, both for their digestive system and for cleaning their teeth. Popcorn has been with us for a lot of years—some in the Smithsonian dates back more than 5,000 years! Originally popcorn was eaten more as a cereal with milk. Traditionally, as the economy goes down, popcorn sales go up. It's just one of those comfort foods. During the Great Depression, many bankers became popcorn street vendors.

Where is popcorn grown?

We blend two different kinds of popcorn selected for taste and texture. Both are from Indiana, which is the largest grower of popcorn in the United States (Nebraska is No. 2). The country with the largest popcorn growing capacity is the United States, followed by Argentina. The world market for popcorn has been growing every year for the past 25-plus years.

How's customer response?

It's been very good. We manufacture approximately 25,000 bags each day. We have already run a trial on one of the major airlines and it will be on board soon—it's currently available at five locations in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. It works really great as a dessert or a delicacy with coffee or wine—in fact, it's at Biltmore Estate. One reason we went with small 1.5-ounce bags packaged in tins is that it's more sanitary, because only your hands touch the popcorn you eat. By the end of this year, we'll have six different flavors: chocolate, cheddar cheese, honey cashew, cinnamon almond, butter pecan and toffee caramel. **SP**

To learn more, visit www.bentleyspopcorn.com.

TIN LIZZY'S

buckhead/grant park



coming to midtown spring 2010

buckhead

3639 piedmont rd.
404/846/6000

grant park

415 memorial dr.
404/554/8220

bring this ad
in and receive
\$5 off \$25
or more

not to be combined
with any other offers.



tinlizzyscantina.com