

# DAILY CAMERA

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## BUSINESS

# Nuevo is going national

By Alicia Wallace

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Jim Hoagland is glad he took Spanish in fifth grade.

He hoped the dialogue, which seemed to come naturally, could help him in the business world. The language eventually spurred trips overseas where he became immersed in Hispanic culture and cuisine.

Now, Hoagland's hoping to share some of those tastes with others, and he's getting a boost from the natural products industry's two largest retailers to do so.

## Wild Oats, Whole Foods to sell Boulder company's products

Wild Oats Markets Inc. and Whole Foods Market have picked up Tambobamba, the first line of products from Hoagland's Nuevo Latino Natural Foods. Tambobamba's Latin American- and Caribbean-influenced meals and side dishes will be carried in Wild Oats stores nationwide and in Whole Foods in Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Texas.

"Getting it on the shelves is one part of the battle," said Hoagland, 45. "The second part is connecting with consumers and really getting them to buy it."

Hoagland selects recipes and ingredients for Tambobamba dishes. The final products are manufactured in Gunbarrel by a co-packer that also provides sales, customer service and logistics support.

Hoagland hopes his professional and leisure experiences can help his one-man company succeed, he said. On the business side, he has worked for 20 years in the food and beverage industry at companies such as Lipton, Shady Brook Farms and Monarch Beverage Co. On the personal side, he has spent time traveling and exploring other cultures and foods, something he hopes to convey in the product.

"I really want the brand to kind of take them there," he

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said.

Consumer taste for the exotic is expanding, especially in the natural products industry, said Jamie Brent, national grocery category manager for Boulder-based Wild Oats.

"Americans are becoming more adventurous," Brent said. "Rather than just eating bland

food, Americans are waking up their taste buds to ethnic foods."

Scott Simons, a spokesman for Austin, Texas-based Whole Foods, said the growth in ethnic cuisine is a matter of the world getting smaller.

"To some degree, especially when it comes to food, the melting pot's working," Simons said.

The increasing interest in ethnic and regional foods was just one of the trends Hoagland noticed when he started Nuevo Latino Natural Foods three years ago. The others: a growing natural and organic products sector and a movement toward convenience.

That's why Tambobamba's first offerings are all-natural, vegetarian and ready in 10 min-

utes, he said.

"People are time-starved," he said.

The products are expected to be available at those Whole Foods locations later this month and in Wild Oats stores this summer.

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