

Acai supplier gives pieces a chance

Shane Starling

November 2007

Proprietary technology opens new door for Amazon superfruit

Two New Zealand-based companies have joined forces to offer much-in-demand açai in the form of fruit pieces in what the companies call a world first.

Using açai berries sourced from the Amazon by supplier NU Fruits, and utilising fruit extracts specialist Taura's technology, the companies are offering açai fruit pieces they say are "a perfect inclusion for nutritional snack, cereal and bakery applications."

Açai usually is offered as a powder or a purée, and a fruit piece was thought to be impossible to produce because the açai berry is 95 per cent hard pit. Indeed, one açai competitor told *Functional Ingredients* "you will never encounter any product with açai pieces."

NU Fruits and Taura say the pieces are produced using Taura's Ultra Rapid Concentration (URC) technology that "concentrates the fruit purée to less than 10 per cent moisture in 60 seconds to create the URC açai fruit piece," which has "low water activity, bake stability and great taste."

Açai has risen to prominence as an antioxidant-laden superfruit, and products such as Sambazon açai juices and smoothies have recorded booming sales in the US.

www.tauraurc.com
www.nufruits.com
www.plthomas.com

Roger Jonas, new business development manager at New Jersey-based supplier, PL Thomas, said açai-powder sales were buoyant, along with acerola, pomegranate and kamu. "We've not heard much about fruit pieces but wouldn't rule it out," he told *Functional Ingredients*.

<http://www.functionalingredientsmag.com/fimag/articleDisplay.asp?strArticleId=1485&strSite=FFNSITE&Screen=ARTICLEARCHIVE>