

# GOING LIVE WITH SPICY GOODNESS





By John Allaire

Those foodie pictures you see on your friends' social media pages are more than an exclamation of momentary bliss over reaping the spoils of a life well spent. There is actually a need buried somewhere in the human psyche driving people to share their good experiences with others. Kendall explains, "You know when you find a new recipe or have a great meal at a restaurant that you really love and want to share with everyone? And you take pictures and post it on social media? That's what [TastingTheHeat.com](http://TastingTheHeat.com) is all about. We are offering the information we have gathered from all around the world and we have turned it into an easy, fun way to look up these different hot sauces and find out more about them."

When a business venture is driven by pure passion, the excitement it creates can ooze off the webpage and onto your plate. Literally.

Such is the case with [Tastingtheheat.com](http://Tastingtheheat.com), a website dedicated to lovers of hot sauces, salsas and just about anything that will make your taste buds stand up and sing! Kendall Stadler, a retired rock and roll musician out of St. Clair, Michigan teamed up with his wife Tracy and decided to let their passion guide them into their future.

Three years ago, while honeymooning on a beach, they started talking about those TV ads you see where people declare "I can work from anywhere. I have an Internet business." The wheels started turning and Tracy referenced Kendall's love of hot sauces as a possible business direction. An avid connoisseur of hot sauces from around the world, the idea made perfect sense to Kendall. Specifically, a review site where people could quickly look up and read about the best sauces being produced on the market today. A reference guide to the new independent hot sauce revolution.

Spotlight on Business Magazine spoke with Kendall Stadler about his website, his social media presence, his motivation, and how he and his wife are hitting the road in search of the best hot sauces and spicy foods from around the world.

The independent or "craft" revolution is no longer limited to breweries and distilleries. Boutique coffee producers, soda producers and hot sauce inventors are throwing their hat into the indie producers ring, and the potential for growth seems limitless. "If you look at the craft beer industry, the hot sauce industry is doing kind of the same thing," Kendall points out. "Where your Budweiser and Miller is kind of like your ketchup... You know, name two or three brands of ketchup, and you would say Heinz or Hunts, but there aren't a lot of them out there. And hot sauces used to be the same — just Tabasco and Frank's. And now it is just exploding with independent hot sauce makers, just like the craft beer industry. The choices out there now are amazing!"

**"We are offering the information we have gathered from all around the world."**

This is evidenced by full stores and mall outlets across North America being dedicated solely to hot sauces, salsas and other spicy condiments. Kendall explains that this is where you can use [TastingTheHeat.com](http://TastingTheHeat.com) to full advantage. "You can go into these hot sauce boutiques and bring up [TastingTheHeat.com](http://TastingTheHeat.com) on your smart phone, find reviews for many of the hot sauces on the shelf, and make informed choices. And we only review what we consider to be the very best. Consumers can really benefit from the legwork we have done for them."

Unlike the craft beer and distillery world, where craft products are still hovering around the 5% mark of total marketshare, The Stadler's research tells a different story in the hot sauce world. In fact, the independent producers have flipped the tables, leaving a mere 30% of the marketshare to the major players. "The other 70%, which is huge, are these small-batch boutique hot sauce makers. And there are now thousands of them, and the numbers are growing every day. It is getting to the point where they are making new sauces, and the flavor is becoming more important than the heat. The heat is becoming an added benefit."

Of course, social media plays an increasingly large role in



the success of most businesses, and in particular, internet-based review sites that strive to hit a broad-spectrum audience. In fact, probably the best way to find out what's happening and what's new on [TastingTheHeat.com](http://TastingTheHeat.com) is to join their [Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/tastingtheheat) (www.facebook.com/tastingtheheat).

Kendall mentions, "The Tasting The Heat Facebook page is the hub of their information for the hot sauce world. We can point you towards the events, to our actual website, and to our YouTube page with our video series. We also do a live show, Tasting the Heat Live. That's where I interview these hot sauce makers from around the world. Just last week I interviewed somebody from Australia, and I get requests to be on the show, because the way things work now with social media, they can take the video and share it with their friends and customers on their own websites and social media pages. It increases their exposure 100-fold."

**"If you look at the craft beer industry, the hot sauce industry is doing kind of the same thing."**

Kendall is very clear with his mission statement. Their efforts all point to giving a voice to the hot sauce makers and enthusiasts — a forum that serves as a hub or clearing-house for the hot sauce community.

Stepping back from the canvas a little and waxing philosophical, Kendall explains the important role sauces play in the preparation and diversification of dietary planning and fulfillment. "The whole world has the same basic four proteins: beef, poultry, fish, and pork. With hot sauces, you can completely change the profile of the food you are cooking on many different levels. If you have 1,000 dif-

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ferent hot sauces, you can cook that chicken a thousand different ways.”

He goes on to point out that this variety plays directly into the hands (or the tastebuds!) of a society hooked on multiplicity. “I find that, especially here in United States, we get bored with stuff really quickly. Cooking with all the different hot sauces, especially for people who are on specific diet, they can spice up what would normally be pretty drab meals day-in and day-out. This is a way to bring excitement back to your food like never before because they’re such a vast amount of new and upcoming hot sauce choices. It’s endless.”

Perhaps part of the uptake on independently produced sauces has something to do with lower start-up costs and less red tape to deal with than their counterparts in the alcohol busi-

#### **CLASSIC HABANERO from SEAFIRE GOURMET.**

First off, if you like the flavor of garlic then you’ll love this sauce! When I first cracked open this hot sauce the entire room was filled with the aroma of garlic. The intense aroma was absolutely mouth watering. This Classic Habanero sauce is just fantastic. The hint of orange juice added to the habanero sets the flavor apart from all other habanero sauces. I love the combination of all these ingredients and they work so well together. Seafire Gourmet’s Classic Habanero would really work well on anything you would want to add garlic, spice and heat to. I just love this sauce!

**TASTE..** 10 out of 10  
**HEAT..** 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥



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**TASTE..** 10 out of 10  
**HEAT..** 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

nesses. Whatever the reason, Kendall offers that the popularity of the ever-expanding industry is nothing short of revolutionary.

“It is exciting to be part of that explosion right now,” he beams. “It has increased at a rate of about 150% over the last few years. And people following this revolution expect it to be a \$24 billion industry or more by the end of the year.”

**“We want to give a voice to the whole hot sauce industry.”**

“You can see it happening in front of your eyes,” he adds.

“Go to your grocery store and walk down the aisle that used to have only Tabasco and Frank’s sauces. Now the hot sauces are becoming large sections in the supermarket. And then go down to where the chips and nachos are, and you will find all these new spicy flavors.

Everybody is getting into this market because they are seeing a huge trend that way. I get e-mails and questions on Facebook from around the world because they want to know what we are doing here in the USA when it comes to hot sauce production. We are world leaders in this industry.”

Asking Kendall to pick his favorite hot sauce is like asking a record store owner to pick his all-time favorite LP. The field it is just too large, and there are so many external circumstan-

**THROAT PUNCH** from **SH' THAT'S HOT...**

Get ready to get punched in the throat! This is definitely a **HOT ONE!** This is another sweet sauce from **SH' THAT'S HOT**. It has an amazing flavor coming from molasses, peaches, carrots, vinegar and salt. But what really gets noticed in this sweet sauce is the heat from the Carolina reaper powder. Use with caution because this one will make you think twice about adding more. You will want to, but can you handle the heat? The flavor is spot on, so mix this with some cream cheese to start out as a cooler version, then work your way up to full strength. I'm thinking another version should be made in a medium heat. I loved this mixed with the cream cheese to put on a bagel or added to ranch dressing to make amazing sweet hot wings. Great job Shane & Shelli.

**TASTE...** 10 out of 10

**HEAT...** 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

es at play that can dictate ones taste at any given time. "I get asked this question a lot," he agrees. "It's an extremely hard question really. There are so many amazing sauces out there that just make you go wow! Like the habanero sauces. I love the habanero sauces because of the flavor of the

**SH' THAT'S HOT!**

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pepper, but also because of the way these boutique spicy sauce makers blend it with other things. Carrots, tomato, garlic and so many more amazing ingredients. Look at the ingredients of some of the sauces on the website and it will blow you away reading what they add to them to get these unique flavors.”

And what’s more, hot sauces aren’t just for dinner-time chicken wings anymore!

Every meal can be enhanced by its own unique choice of spicy condiment. Kendall hints at some of his favorite categories and pairings. “Of course, it depends on what food you are eating. If I’m having eggs in the morning, I like a habanero sauce on them. However, if I am having some red meat that needs to blend well with something else on the plate, I like a good scorpion pepper sauce because I feel it attaches well with the red meat.”

### CAROLINA REAPER PEACH IPA from VOODOO CHILE SAUCES..

Here’s another great collaboration with Flying Dog Brewery. The first collaboration of their amazing FEVER DREAM (review below, on this page) gave us a great mango hot sauce. This one starts out with peach and the essence of hops that will slide across your taste buds and into the back of your nose from the heat and flavor of Smokin’ Ed’s Carolina Reaper. There is also a small amount of sweetness from the combination of the peach and apricot preserves, and the flavor doesn’t stop there. The carrots, lemon juice, pink sea salt, onion powder, coriander seed and allspice round out the taste to make a super hot and very flavorful sauce. After testing this new sauce from VooDoo, I immediately knew I was going to grill some dark meat, legs and thighs. Using as a glaze made the chicken burst with flavor and lots of heat. This sauce is definitely for the IPA lover with beer from Flying Dog Brewery. Well done!

TASTE.. 9.5 out of 10  
HEAT.. 

“Our goal is to take Tasting the Heat Live to the mainstream.”

Like the beer and spirits industries, celebrities are getting in on the hot sauce action. And yes, there is a special section on Tastingtheheat.com specifically dedicated to celebrity sauces. "I had the pleasure of interviewing Eddie Ojeda from Twisted Sister. He has some excellent sauces. They're called Twisted Hot Sauces.

I've had him on my show, Tasting the Heat Live. That interview is now on our YouTube page. It was really cool talking with him because I understood some of the things he was talking about with regard to music and he talked about the similarities between the two industries (music and hot sauce production). You're playing to peoples' tastes one way or the other."

As well, Dexter Holland from the best-selling punk band The Offspring sent Kendall a case of his own Gringo Bandito line-up of hot sauces. He actually went the extra mile and signed the bottles so we could give them away as prizes on his talk show.

Speaking of the talk show, Tasting the Heat Live is a Facebook/YouTube channel show and an ongoing concern for the Stadlers. It airs live on their Facebook page on Sunday nights at 8pm EST and is archived on their YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/tastingtheheat](http://www.youtube.com/tastingtheheat)). "We do give-aways on Tasting the Heat Live and in that way, people feel they can get involved. People respond live with questions and we answer them on the show, I'm working on bringing

**FEAR THIS from HELLFIRE HOT SAUCE..** Smokin' Ed's Carolina reaper pepper is the only pepper in this sauce, so you know the flavor will be true reaper and it's going to be hot! With the addition of three different types of vinegar, sun-dried tomatoes and much more, the flavor is still reaper up front. All the other ingredients come together to bring this super hot to a new level of flavor and heat and you will definitely feel your temperature rise! You will want to take it easy at first, but then you'll want to use even more. This great flavored sauce will go great on just about anything. Mix a few drops in your eggs before you scramble them to make them come alive and wake you up!

**TASTE..** 9 out of 10  
**HEAT..** 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥



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**PEACH AGAVE GARLIC** from **PEPPLISH PROVISIONS**. This sauce explodes with a medley of delicious flavors to enhance your foods taste. The hint of peach mixes so well with the garlic and spices and a hint of apple cider vinegar. (I'm picking up cumin, paprika, salt and black pepper) There is a slight sweetness coming from the addition of fresh peach, agave syrup and sugar. All these flavors mix so well with the balance of heat coming from the habanero and ghost pepper. Just tasting this sauce will make you want to bring it home, but you will really get to know how wonderful the flavor is when you use it on your food. This is a great sauce for chicken, wings, mixed with bbq sauce, eggs, hash browns, bloody marys and so much more. Great job Timothy!

**TASTE..** 10 out of 10  
**HEAT..** 🔥🔥🔥🔥

in a phone line so people can call in live during the show. Tasting the Heat Live is the original spicy food talkshow on Facebook."

Kendall feels we are bringing a new light to an industry that no one has thought of before in terms of special interest TV shows."

The end-game for the Stadlers is, of course, greater exposure. And that means trying to get them a commercial and mainstream television show to expose this spicy food revolution. "Our goal is to take Tasting the Heat Live to the mainstream. What Tracy and I would like to do next is try and take Tasting the Heat Live on the road — attending different shows and conventions and interview people live and hopefully make this industry explode even more."

Kendall emphasizes that there may never have even been a concept for this venture without Tracy's input and continued support. "My wife Tracy is a big supporter of what I'm doing here. Without her there's no way that this would happen so I have to thank her up-and-down. She puts up with a lot of my obsessive love of this hot sauce revolution!"

On the business side, Kendall is talking to companies to hopefully develop an iPhone and Android app. "So when you're out and you come across hot sauces, you



can immediately look them up on the app and get reviews to see if you think it would fit into your taste profile." Right now there is a survey on [tastingtheheat.com](http://tastingtheheat.com) to help us develop the phone app best tailored for your needs.

**"If you're doing something you love and you're helping others, eventually it's going to come back around to you."**

But the burning question is, how is all this financed? Kendall admits, "There is the donate button on the site, but at this point, I'd say 99% of the funding comes out of our pocket. It is truly a labor of love. And the way I feel is, if you're doing something you love and you're helping others, eventually it's going to come back around to you. And I really believe that. I think we are doing a professional job that is helping spicy food makers to reach an audience they may not be able to on their own. Eventually the goal is to do this on a TV show. Then you'd really see the explosion of this industry, and it would



**EVIL COWBOY from TEXAS TRIANGLE GROVE..**

As soon as you crack the top on the bottle of EVIL COWBOY the entire room comes alive with the aroma of smoked hickory. This sauce has a LOT of flavor. The first flavor you get is the smoke, but then there's the mixture of tomato, mustard seed, garlic, chili pepper, turmeric and a hint of vinegar that will rush your taste buds. It's like a hot sauce and a smoky non sweet BBQ sauce with a fantastic mix of heat coming from the ghost and chili pepper extract. I mixed this into hamburger meat before grilling and it was amazing! You would definitely love this added to your pork and beans, any grilled meat or anything that could use a smoky flavor. This also made an awesome dipping sauce mixed with some ranch dressing. Your gonna love it! This sauce ROCKS!

**TASTE..** 9.5 out of 10  
**HEAT..** 🔥🔥🔥🔥



really help these people who are working two or three jobs just to keep their hot sauce business going."

To quote the famous Field of Dreams line, "If you build it, they will come." The Stadlers have built it, and people are logging on. The momentum is building, both for [TastingTheHeat.com](http://TastingTheHeat.com) and the industry as a whole.

"We really want to help people achieve their dreams, and the best way to do that is for us to achieve our dreams."

Sign-up for their Facebook and YouTube channels and start Taste the Heat for yourself! You'll be glad you did! [facebook.com/Tastingtheheat](https://facebook.com/Tastingtheheat) [YouTube.com/Tastingtheheat](https://YouTube.com/Tastingtheheat) ●

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