

# CONSUMING NEWS

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## Candle-licious Candles: A Wick above the Rest

*I found the Candle-licious website when searching for a new source of waxed potpourri beads online and was immediately impressed with their product; it was fairly priced, came in a lot of varieties and had fragrance staying power. I contacted the company to tell them how happy I was with my purchase and soon began emailing back and forth with Sue Davey, the owner. When Sue told me the story of how she got into the candle business, I asked if she would share her inspiring journey in a letter to our readers.*  
—JJ Rusch

Dear CWM Readers,

We loved burning candles, and kept a large shoe box full of burned down candle scraps thinking one day we'd just melt them all down and make one giant candle for ourselves. Little did I know that when my fiancé Dave bought me a candle-making kit for Christmas in 1999, (hoping I'd finally make use of all those wax scraps), that our lives would drastically change because of it.

My kit also came with unlimited support from a man who made his own candles and ran a small candle store near our home. I made my first batch, called him numerous times with questions, and then made some more. I was on a mission. The proverbial turning point came the day I burned a small votive I had made.

We lit my latest creation on the main floor of our tri-level house and to our amazement we could smell it both upstairs and down, which was highly unusual. Most candles smell good when you put them to your nose, but typically don't smell much beyond the immediate area where they are burning. This one was different. I spent the next year researching and making more candles. I read everything I could find about candles and improved upon the formula given to me in the kit. We tried hundreds of fragrance companies and literally a thousand different types of wicks. The candles just kept getting better. I gave votives away to all of our friends and asked for feedback. They all loved them and wanted more. Candle-making became an addiction – and an expensive one at that. Our friends then began offering to pay us to get more candles.

'Just to see what would happen', we brought a few candles to a flea market one day and sold every last candle we'd brought for a whopping grand total of \$11. We dabbled in a couple of small craft shows shortly thereafter and immediately started getting calls from show customers asking for more. They sounded almost desperate on the phone, "Please, PLEASE...your candles smelled up my whole house! How can I get more?" And the calls kept coming, each one more inspiring than the next. It was the intensity of these calls that really got us going; we bought more supplies and did more craft shows.

A few months passed by when we realized our kitchen just wasn't big enough to make candles in anymore. Between that and the fact we hadn't had a decent home-cooked meal since we'd started making candles because it was just too much of a pain to put all the candle-making stuff away to cook dinner and then have to drag it all out again, we moved our wax work area down to the lower level of the house into our 10' x 12' wet bar area.

What ensued was a rapid and repetitive chain of outgrowth that inspired us to build a 16' x 20' room addition; once the addition was finished, we soon realized that space wasn't big enough either. Before we knew it, there wasn't enough time either to get the orders done even though we had enlisted the help of our daughter and a part-time high school girl. At this point, both Dave and I were working full time, doing this "candle-making thing" in the evenings and spending our weekends going to craft shows. The business was consuming us.

In July of 2003 Dave was laid off after 22 years with the same company – and it couldn't have happened at a better time since the launch of our website, candle-licious.com, was drawing numerous internet orders in. Dave became a full time candle maker, pouring, labeling, packaging and shipping all day long while I still worked my full-time job at Motorola. When I got home from work, we continued working every night of the week until 1 a.m. You'd think this non-stop effort could have afforded



both of us full time candle-making status, but the money from our candle sales went right back out for supply and craft show costs, so we remained dependent upon my steady paycheck and the need for insurance benefits.

By September of 2004, we could no longer ignore our lack of space. Short on cash with only one "real" income flow, we had a hard time finding a bigger house for less money until we found a property in Morrison, Illinois. It was like a gift from God, with a much bigger house and a 30' x 50' Morton building, perfect for the business, that included a bathroom, 220 outlets and heated cement floors, plus over 3 acres worth of land we could expand upon when we needed. The next year, however, was the hardest.

Dave worked 16 hour days in the Morrison candle building and I drove 143 miles each way from Morrison to the Motorola location I worked at in

Arlington Heights. I spent 5 hours driving, 8 hours working for someone else and continued pouring candles into the wee small hours daily. After twelve long months, he finally convinced me we could run this business well-enough to support ourselves, and to put an end to my commuting insanity.

Quitting my full-time job was the scariest yet most liberating thing I have ever done.

It's now been a year since I did and words cannot convey how running our own business has absolutely changed our lives.

We run into many people who want to start a business who brood over what they can do that will "make them money", which is the wrong way to go about it in my opinion. We didn't sit down and decide to run a candle business to make money it was our hobby that grew into a business. I haven't had a day in 6 years where I didn't want to make candles, and I cannot say that about any of the corporate jobs I've had. If you find something you're good at, do it, because when you work at something you absolutely love, it's not so much like work at all.

We continue to get hundreds of calls and emails every week from customers telling us how great our candles are, and that remains to be the true inspiration behind what we do.

Happy Holidays,  
Sue Davey

*If you'd like to sample Sue's candles for yourself, she will be exhibiting at several upcoming craft shows in our area. First, on Sunday, November 5th at Elk Grove High School from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and then on Thursday, November 30th through Sunday, December 3rd at the annual Lamb's Farm Craft Show held at the Rosemont Convention Center. Candle-licious is also a member of the CWM Reader Discount program. Log onto [chicagowellnessmagazine.com](http://chicagowellnessmagazine.com) and click on "Reader Discount" for details.*

CWM

# SAHALE

## SNACKS™

### ULTIMATE VALDOSTA STUFFING

*Sahale Snacks are the ultimate "grab on the go" snack. They're also that "something special" you can add to your next meal or social event. Created by Chef Danielle Custer, this most delicious, traditional tasting stuffing has a touch of that "something special." Make for your favorite holiday table or anytime you crave a comforting taste.*

- 1 cup dry cranberries or tart cherries
- 1/2 cup Madeira (fortified wine from Portugal)
- 5 cups (1/2") cubed day-old French or Italian bread
- 3/4 cup butter
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 2 cups chopped celery
- 2 cups peeled, cored and chopped tart apple
- 1 pound nitrate free, all natural sausage
- 2 teaspoons dry sage
- 1 teaspoon dry thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 10 ounces Sahale Snacks Valdosta Blend



- In a small bowl, combine the cranberries and Madeira. Steep 2 hours.
- Spread the bread cubes on a baking sheet and toast in a pre-heated 325°F oven for 20-30 minutes. Stir once. Place in a large baking dish.
- In a large skillet or sauté pan, melt butter. Over moderate heat, cook onions for 5 minutes or until soft but not brown. Add celery and apples and cook for an additional 5 minutes or until celery is softened slightly. Transfer mixture with a slotted spoon to the baking dish with the bread.
- In the remaining butter, cook the sausage, breaking it up with a spoon. Transfer cooked sausage to the baking dish. Add the spices and parsley to the baking dish and stir the mixture to combine. Let cool.
- Add the cranberries with Madeira and Valdosta just before baking. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 1 hour and then bake uncovered for an additional 15-20 minutes. Makes 12-14 servings. Enjoy! (Meatless Variation: Use twice the apples in lieu of sausage.)

You can find Sahale Snacks in many of Chicago's natural and gourmet stores including: Bouffe, The Chalet, The Chopping Block, Convito Italiano, Fox & Obel, Pulse, Sunrise Farms, Target, Whole Foods and Wild Oats.

See [www.sahalesnacks.com](http://www.sahalesnacks.com)  
for additional retailers and delicious recipes.