

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Market of Choice Opens Doors for Oregon's Newest Food Brands Through Strong Partnerships**

*How Four Oregon Food Makers Are Winning Hearts – and the  
Food Network Behind Their Success*

**EUGENE, ORE., Sept. 10, 2025** — Independent, family-owned grocer [Market of Choice](#) has been a supporter of local makers since its founding. As a cornerstone of Oregon's robust food innovation ecosystem, Market of Choice has nurtured thousands of partnerships with local maker start-ups through its MOJO program alone. Market of Choice doesn't just stock local products—it makes itself available to assist makers at each step of their journey, whether that means offering guidance through Oregon's Food Innovation Center, serving as a judge in statewide food entrepreneur pitch fests and food shows, or mentoring new brands directly.

Through this collaborative network, Market of Choice champions makers such as [Pistakio](#), [Buji Brown Butter](#), [Iliana Maura Divinely Dairy-Free Butter](#), and [Manny's Choice](#)—helping transform passion into products and bring them to the shelf and into customers' hands.

"Oregon's food culture thrives on connection and collaboration," says John Boyle, chief merchandising and marketing officer for Market of Choice. "By building connections between makers and resources within Oregon's innovation community, Market of Choice helps create the conditions where new entrepreneurs can grow and succeed."

### **Oregon's Recipe for Success**

Getting onto grocery shelves is one of the toughest challenges for small-batch producers. Oregon's food scene thrives on cooperation, with makers frequently sharing advice, facilities, and resources. This collaborative spirit, combined with a unique mix of support organizations, retail partnerships, and community-driven opportunities, creates one of the most welcoming food innovation ecosystems in the country. In this environment, entrepreneurs have a partner at every step, receiving guidance and in-store support, helping makers refine products, build a loyal customer base, and bring their creations to market.

- **Strong support network:** Organizations like Built Oregon, the OSU Food Innovation Center, Xcelerate Women, Oregon Entrepreneurs Network (OEN), and Portland Community College's Get Your Recipe to Market provide product development resources, funding connections, and expert guidance.
- **Retail launchpad:** Market of Choice's MOJO program gives small-batch producers a full suite of support, including free statewide distribution through centralized hubs, tailored business advice and mentorship, a one-year guarantee at shelf, content creation, and four annual promotional events with discounts of 20% or more at no cost to the maker. These promotions drive consumer interest and sales velocity, which they need to grow. Unlike many retailers, Market of Choice charges no slotting fees and upholds its "Full Potential Promise," meeting startup makers where they are and allowing them to grow in one store or across multiple locations.
- **Community incubators:** Farmers' markets, Food Hub systems, and co-ops act as a proving ground to test ideas and connect with customers directly.

### **MOJO Makers Spotlight**

Through its MOJO program, Market of Choice gives local entrepreneurs a pathway to market. When paired with Oregon's broader food innovation network, makers gain the guidance and resources they need to grow

— more —

and thrive. Here's a closer look at four recent MOJO participants and their journeys to the shelf.

### ***Pistakio – Pistachio Spreads***

What started as a college project has transformed into a pantry essential. Co-founders Nicola Buffo and Francine Voit discovered that the few pistachio spreads on the market were premium products and often didn't taste like pistachios. They began testing their pistachio nut butter at local farmers' markets and quickly realized it was a hit. Through Market of Choice's MOJO program, Pistakio scaled from small-batch testing to store shelves, gaining mentorship and visibility.

"We met Market of Choice at a Food Innovation Center event," said Buffo. "They've been incredible partners—patient and supportive as we scaled from producing 50 to over 1,000 jars a day. With Market of Choice by our side, Pistakio is now in more than 300 stores nationwide."



### ***Buji Brown Butter – Rich, Nutty, Artisanal Butter***

Lisa Herlinger's Buji Brown Butter elevates baked goods and is incredible as a finisher for meats and vegetables with its decadent, all-natural flavor. MOJO provided a launchpad for Buji Brown Butter by providing shelf space in Market of Choice stores and introducing Oregonians to her award-winning butter.

"Buji Brown Butter started from the best baking mistake I ever made," said Herlinger. "Winning a Trend Setter award at the Food Innovation Holiday Boutique was just the beginning. Market of Choice has supported me every step of the way—from marketing help to covering promotional costs and distributing my butter statewide. MOJO is truly one-of-a-kind."



### ***Manny's Choice – Clean, European Flour, Baking Mixes & Sourdough Starters***

Cindy Anderson's Manny's Choice brings non-GMO, gluten-sensitive, and clean, additive-conscious baking products to Oregon kitchens. Market of Choice's MOJO program allowed her to introduce her mixes made with 100% clean European flour to a wider audience without the usual barriers of slotting fees or minimum orders.

"MOJO is designed to help startups grow at a realistic pace," says Anderson. "From product development to marketing guidance, Market of Choice has been the perfect partner for our journey."



### ***Iliana Maura Divinely Dairy-Free Butter – Creamy, Plant-Based Butter***

Iliana Maura's dairy-free butter captures the taste and texture of European sweet cream butter. This organic, vegan, nutrient-dense, seed-oil- and palm-oil-free butter protects animals while supporting sustainable agriculture and reducing environmental impact. Market of Choice supported Iliana's journey from farmers' markets to store shelves, giving her dairy-free butter a platform to reach customers across Oregon.

"I first connected with Market of Choice through the Pacific Northwest Food & Beverage networking group in 2022," says Iliana. "Mentors, organizations including Xcelerate Women, OEN, and Market of Choice, all played a crucial role in helping me succeed. Seeing my butter on Market of Choice shelves is a dream come true."



Market of Choice continues to open doors for local makers, celebrating artisanal new products, and directly impacting or contributing to Oregon's robust maker movement.

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**About Market of Choice**

Founded in 1979, Market of Choice is Oregon's largest family-owned, independent grocer with 12 stores located throughout the state. Driven by the joy of and admiration for Oregon food and its makers, Market of Choice has grown into a thriving grocery retailer with nearly 1,400 dedicated employees. With stores in Ashland, Bend, Corvallis, Eugene, Medford, and the Portland-metro area, Market of Choice has developed deep, meaningful relationships with farmers, ranchers, fisherfolk, and food and beverage producers across Oregon and is committed to fostering a vibrant local food economy. For more information, visit [www.marketofchoice.com](http://www.marketofchoice.com). Stay connected with Market of Choice on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Pinterest](#).

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