KitchenAid Mixes It Up With New Platform Devoted to Culinary Makers

On Friday, a slick new platform devoted to culinary content joined the panoply of sites vying for the attention of the serious home cook. It features a host of articles about banana leaf steaming, seed cultivation and the history of tea in America.

But the marquee element is a short film developed and directed by creative shop Idea Farmer titled The Possibilities of Honey. Shot on location in Hawaii, Colorado and California, the video takes viewers on stunning flyovers of waterfalls and volcanic shores. We see closeups of dripping honeycombs and slow-motion footage of bees laden with nectar. Most edifying, though, are the segments of artisans discussing the ways that artisanal honey is harvested, blended and fermented into mead.

If you didn’t check the URL, you might think the site is the latest thing from the Food Network or perhaps an offshoot of Saveur magazine. But no; The Possibilities of Honey is brought to you by KitchenAid.

Why is a 101-year-old company best known for electric mixers investing in a new portal called KitchenAid Stories and, for that matter, a high-production video devoted to a tasty but nonessential foodstuff like honey? To hear KitchenAid’s senior brand manager Megan Walters-Pirri tell it, the company is thinking more expansively, departing from the traditional spiels about performance attributes of appliances in order to associate itself more broadly with the maker movement.

In part one of The Possibilities of Honey, Domeier and his team cultivate kiawe, one of the worldâ€™s rarest varietals.KitchenAid
“There is a rich global community of makers from every part of the culinary world seeking out content that is in line with their passions,” Walters-Pirri said. “The platform is a place for us to share and celebrate unique maker stories with all of our consumers.”

The approach of burnishing a brand’s perception with upmarket content that’s only tangentially related to the core product isn’t a new one. Ritz-Carlton, for example, has a site called The Journey that features content about things like whiskey-making around the world, the Berlin State Oper, and desert-appropriate attire. These topics might have nothing to do with booking a room, but they’re all in the same socioeconomic orbit as the sophisticated global traveler who would want to stay at the Ritz.

In a similar vein, Walters-Pirri added, the aims of the artisanal honey video don’t have be about finding a recipe that calls for honey and then making it on your KitchenAid stovetop. If the content whisks watchers into the culinary realms in which they wish to be, the job is done.

“Our goal as a brand has always been to inspire all makers in the kitchen. That includes high-level chefs along with those who may just be starting out,” she said. “But we understand that these diverse makers also seek inspiration outside of the kitchen to go deeper into their creative process. KitchenAid Stories bridges this gap.”

Or does it? Given today’s short attention spans and consumers’ propensity to research product attributes before they purchase, a deep dive into artisanal honey might be a few too

many steps removed from what a consumer looking to buy a refrigerator or mixer really needs.

“The KitchenAid brand—despite the fact that it sells high-end items—is still a mainstream brand in the appliance world,” said veteran brand consultant and Shift Ahead author Allen Adamson. “[A video on honey is] a foodie story that’s not literally connected to anything they make. After watching a video on honey, the journey back to why I should think about KitchenAid is a long and winding road.”

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