

# Cannon Beach candy store offers ‘Schwiet’ deal on franchises

By MIKE WILLIAMS  
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — A longtime city sweet spot took its business model nationwide in 2014 by offering franchises.

Schwietert's Cones & Candy has five solid leads to open stores, owner Jeff Schwietert said.

"It's a big financial commitment," he said. "It takes people awhile to get all that in order."

Being the new franchise kid on the block can be tough, he said. There are so many companies for prospective owners to choose from.

"Once we get a few franchises off the ground we'll be ready to run," he said. "Those first few will be the hardest for us."

It's basically like starting a whole new business, he said. It has to have its own legal framework. Schwietert chose to get some help with taking the business, known as The Picnic Basket for 28 years, beyond the Oregon coast.

He worked with Francorp of Chicago to get the franchising business structured. There's a lot to know.



Jeff Schwietert hopes to transplant the cones and candy business model beyond the North Coast by selling franchises.

MIKE WILLIAMS  
EO Media Group

"You have to make sure they have the money to do it," he said. "It's super important to know what you're getting into for both sides, especially with candy. You're looking for people who are fun, family oriented but still business minded. You've got to love kids and family."

Franchisees will spend six to eight weeks training at Cannon Beach before opening their own stores.

### Quality control

Once a franchise is up and running, the company will keep track of the fledgling business.

"We live in a great age in a way," Schwietert said. "We'll have cameras installed in the stores that I'll look at."

Once a franchise is operational, the business will get quarterly visit from a corporate representative, plus they submit regular reports on machine maintenance and cleaning.

"We'll have a lot of ability to make sure standards are maintained," he said. "You want to make sure the customer gets the same experience wherever they go. We're not going into this half-heartedly."

For franchise information: Call Trevor Weber, director of franchising, 503-436-1470.

Schwietert's abides by federal franchising guidelines. Some states, including Washington, Oregon and California, require separate registration and approval before franchises can be sold there. It takes a little more finesse to get legal in those states, Schwietert said.

They're ready to go in all but 20 states.

"Eventually we'll be legal in all states," he said.

The company is registered in Northwest states and California.

"In franchising, you want to focus on concentric circles of growth," Schwietert said. "Although we're getting lots of interest from California. We think it will do really well there."

He's excited about going into more urban areas that are less susceptible to the seasonal swings the North Coast experiences.

### Re-imagining The Picnic Basket

Schwietert brought in a designer to give the franchises a uniform, high-end look. The interiors will have cotton candy clouds and gumball pillars. There will be icicles around the ice cream cases.

"It will be very bright and exciting," he said. "(It will be) a place people will want to return to. More corporate than the current store, but still our own."

The Cannon Beach store will

eventually get the same makeover.

The stores will be 3,000- to 5,000-square-foot. The company may offer smaller stores eventually, but the size is part of the attraction, Schwietert said.

Think "Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium," except with candy.

### The right fit

The company needs the right franchisee for the business to work, he said.

# Build one violin to play ... a life's journey follows

By GREG STILES  
Medford Mail Tribune

MEDFORD (AP) — John Hill discovered long ago there was more than one way to make music.

After exploring other options, Hill found his calling in making violins and other stringed instruments 17 years ago. After taking a break of sorts during 2013, he has re-emerged in a newly built studio and shop off Kings Highway in southwest Medford.

A single-syllable, Hill-fashioned violin or viola may not evoke the romance of Stradivarius, but his creations are drawing rave reviews. A viola he fashioned won a tone award at an international competition in 2003, attesting to his artistry.

There are 220 parts in every violin, 200 of which Hill fashions in his shop. He starts with five blocks of wood, often Alpine spruce or Bosnian maple from Europe.

"Good wood is a violin maker's gold," he said, waving about a stick of \$300 Bosnian maple. "I have used local woods, Sitka spruce and big leaf maple for a cello — and it came out very nice for the larger instruments. But for the smaller instruments, most makers agree European wood can't be beat."

Any of the 30 to 40 elements in the instrument-making process can lend its influence to the instrument's final sound.

"Each violin takes the same amount of time, and the more you do, the better idea you have of what the sound is going to be like," said Hill, whose bow slides proficiently over the strings. "I really don't know (for sure) what the sound is going to be like until I string it up and the interplay comes together."

The critical juncture is crafting the bridge, held taut by the strings against the body.

"It's all difficult, but that area is really challenging," Hill said. "It's the transducer.

How it's carved, shaped and the choice of wood all come into play."

Hill has produced a violin or viola about every two months during the majority of his 17 years as a violin maker. His creations average \$6,500, with a high end of \$10,000. A cello sold at a San Francisco shop a few months ago went for considerably more.

"When I began, I had no idea how deep this well was going to be," Hill said. "I thought if I could make a really good violin, then I'd have a really good one to play. I had no idea I was getting into a lifetime study."

Hill's journey to his present corresponds to the circuitous route he took in his profession. In his early 20s, guitars were his passion, and he sought to become a luthier. He got married, however, and became a firefighter. He's also a bit of an inventor. When he found that pillow slips on gurneys routinely came off, he developed a demobilizer to keep things in place.



John Hill, who started making violins and other stringed instruments 17 years ago, works on an instrument in his newly built studio and shop off Kings Highway in southwest Medford.

AP Photo/The Medford Mail Tribune, Bob Pennell

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