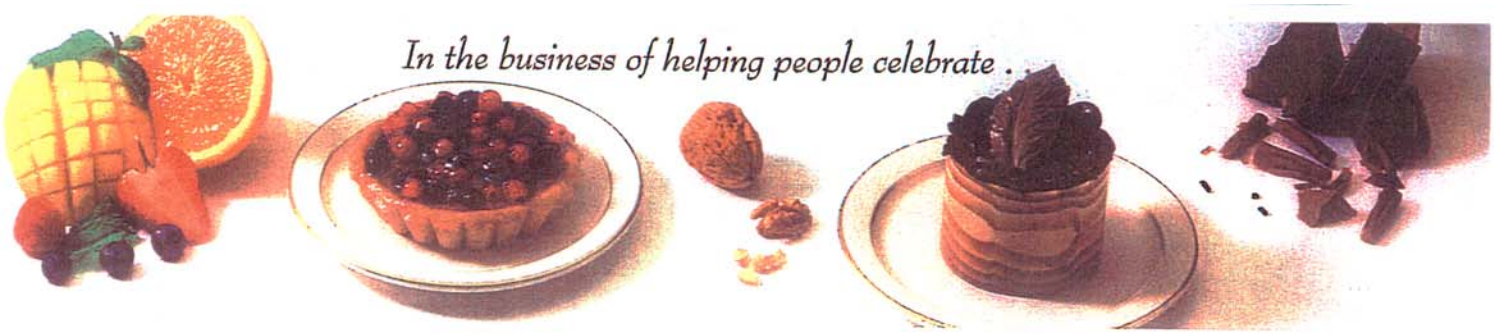

A Galaxy of Desserts *for every Celebration*

By Nick Zielke

Founded in 1998 the San Rafael based Galaxy Desserts makes handcrafted, all natural, premium mousse cakes, tarts, cheesecakes and other pastries for retail, wholesale and food service customers worldwide. The company was founded on the traditions of true French Pastry combined with the beauty of California cuisine's fresh seasonal influence.

Their unique products are only one reason the company has experienced such robust growth. They use a triangular top-level management team, overblown with experience, with each partner equal to the other, forming a perfect business liaison to be a financially sound company. **Chef Jean-Yves Charon** is the creative talent behind Galaxy Desserts, **Danny Rubenstien** is Chief Orbiter and **Paul Levitan** is President & CEO.

Jean-Yves has baked desserts for more than 25 years, has developed expertise in design, innovation and production management. He began his career in 1976, at age 14, as an apprentice at Gerauls bakery in Rennes, France. In 1980, he joined **Brioche Doree/Paris Croissant**, an international bakery with more than 500 retail outlets worldwide, he was responsible for production, quality control, purchasing, vendor relations and training for company facilities in Paris, London, New York and Canada. In 1984, he served as production manager for Saralan, a cookie manufacturer. In 1986, he became the Executive Pastry Chef for Harris' Restaurant. Jean-Yves founded Paris Delights in 1988, a baking company which created premium mousse cakes and tarts for premier restaurant and hotels in the Bay Area. In 1998, Paris Delights merged with Paul Levitan's The Cheesecake Lady to form **Galaxy Desserts, Inc.**

After merging the two companies, Paul Levitan became the President and CEO of Galaxy Desserts. He is responsible for directing the company's overall vision, corporate strategy, and key internal initiatives. He developed a friendship with Jean-Yves in the culinary trade while producing gourmet cheesecakes with his company The Cheesecake Lady. His prior experience is as a management consultant for Bain & Company after graduating from San Diego State University Phi Betta Kappa and earning his MBA from Stanford University Graduate School of Business in 1991. The two shared a passionate commitment for premium ingredients and superior taste and began distributing their products together to fine restaurants, hotels and retail stores.

When Chief Orbiter Danny Rubenstien came on board, they had all the necessary ingredients to make and market their premium desserts. Danny brings more than 16 years of industry experience to the company. He joined Galaxy Desserts in January 1999 and leads the companies marketing, finance and business development efforts. Previously, Danny served as Director of expansion for **Odwalla.** He also co-founded **Naked Foods**, a fresh juice business, which he grew and sold to Chiquita. Based on his success in growing small natural and gourmet food companies into household names, Danny recognized the potential for building an outstanding brand with Galaxy Desserts. He could also see a trend toward gourmet individual desserts, knowing that customers look for products offering both the quality of a fine restaurant dish and the ease and availability of a supermarket item. He joined Jean-Yves and Paul and together they built Galaxy Desserts into the company it is today.

They are currently in their third-year of a five-year plan as they move into expansion mode, implementing a fundraising cycle to add to the $1 million in equity financing from institutional and private investors. It remains a privately held company with expected sales to exceed $5 million in the fiscal year 2001. Growth has been phenomenal, averaging over 50% per year, with this past year capping out at a 75% increase. There will be over 1000 stores this year, focusing on promoting the single serving product line, "Le Petites Doucers", with the name making sure the company remains true to it's French pastry origins. Jean-Yves subtlety explains, this could be the motto of Galaxy Desserts that they are, "In the business of helping people celebrate."