

Website

<http://icecream-gallery.weebly.com/index.html>

What is Ice Cream Gallery?

It is a food lab, a concept store and a cafe all rolled into one. Why gallery? Well, because I believe that each and every new flavour created is a work of art. Customers are called Artists. They pay for a particular package, and generally speaking, what they get is this: a lesson on some techniques used in molecular cooking, and a chance to try their hand at these techniques. The ‘original’ package takes 8 hours and involves the Artist(s) creating new flavours of ice cream, using our extensive array of high quality ingredients. Their Formulae are entered into our database (to ensure no ‘plagiarism’) and the flavours are named and described as they wish. If more than 5 scoops are sold to cafe customers within the next day, AND customers give a positive response (measured by a touchscreen device at each table in the cafe), your flavour will be made permanent in our seasonal menu. However, because Singaporeans are busy people, we’ve got an Express Package, where you only learn how to make the ice cream, and you reproduce someone else’s original flavour.

We’re different because unlike most cases where you simply eat the products of molecular cooking, we teach you how to produce them. And we don’t just teach you the conventional methods of ice cream making. We use the most cutting-edge technology.

More details

Participants get a guidebook on the techniques, and fun facts like, what’s the difference between ‘normal’ ice cream and gelato. They also get to wear a lab coat!

What’s in a name?

I had several ideas for names: Ice Cream Artist, Ice Creamonger. I eventually settled on Ice Cream Gallery, because it rolled off the tongue nicely, and it also encapsulated the concept of the store, which is to **showcase** people’s creations - novel ice cream flavours. “Gallery” also suggests the existence of an Artist, so it was a bit like two names in one.

(I did realise, later, that there is another shop in Singapore called Ice Cream Gallery! So I guess I have to think of another name.)

The white colour of our webpage is also meant to reflect the meaning of the name. An art gallery, a blank canvas. These all contain white spaces in which the art is showcased or created. Ice Cream Gallery is no different.

Molecular Gastronomy and Cooking

I was inspired firstly by the ethos of several chefs who fall under this category - Ferran Adria, Sam Bompas and Harry Parr are among them. I noticed a common thread in their work: all emphasised the idea of the **experience**. Adria likes to say, "The ideal customer doesn't come to El Bulli to eat but to have an experience." Bompas and Parr, popularly known as the Jellymongers, have done pretty wacky things to create an experience for diners - flooding a building with four tonnes of cognac to recreate an event from the 1600s, and making the world's first chocolate climbing wall. I could give customers an experience - the satisfaction of having learned something about the science of food, of creating something unique which others could also enjoy, of being a piece of history (in the sense that they've contributed something to our collection of flavours).

The emphasis on the **experience** is also why I used the idea of the concept store, such as the Starbucks in Amsterdam. Some ideas I 'borrowed' from it include a **high level of interaction** via social media. In-store baking at Starbucks will be accompanied by tweets when fresh hot cookies roll out of the oven. Similarly, Ice Cream Gallery will keep customers updated of new flavours via Twitter and Facebook. It is my hope that this will become an **alternative social activity for customers** - equivalent to going to the movies, to the club, or to a karaoke lounge.

Like molecular cooking, part of the experience is also experimenting. I want to encourage Artists to be creative. This philosophy even permeates the way we organise events. We encourage customers to work closely with us on planning their special events, complete with Ice Cream Gallery Creations.

More specifically, I also want to incorporate some of the techniques used in molecular cooking. In particular, cryogenic freezing using liquid nitrogen is used increasingly to give ice cream a creamier texture. Other techniques include the making of popping sugar, and spherification.

Masterchef TV Series

I was also inspired by this TV series. The store likewise introduces an element of competition, which is the fun part, for some people. Arguably, it gives them a taste (no pun intended!) of the process that is required to create novel and different flavours that consumers will prefer, because the food business is always a competitive one.

External Contributions and Collaboration

This is where the **value exchange** so central to transactional art takes place. With the contributions of the Artists, I get economic capital in terms of cash and also flavours. Theoretically, I do not need to think of new flavours. I may also get social capital: if people like my concept enough, then hopefully word will get around and this would benefit me should I decide to do more similar art works. The Artists, on the other hand, gain in cultural and symbolic capital - cultural in the sense that they gain knowledge and walk away with a novel experience, symbolic because they have created an ice cream flavour, which is essentially a new product!

In the pipeline

An iPhone/Android app where people can submit recipes. We will make ice cream according to those recipes and try to sell ice creams of these recipes, much like the ones made onsite. If they can sell, we will send them an Ice Cream Gallery Ticket via SMS. They can come to the Ice Cream Gallery, show us the ticket and they'll get a tour of the Lab as well as a free scoop of their choice. They won't get the experience of making the ice cream, but they'll at least get to design and name an ice cream flavour!

Issues yet unresolved

What is a reasonable price to charge? How do I ensure that I don't have too much of one flavour? Location? On my website, I chose Iluma as my location, because it's a place with a lot of indie shops, giving it the 'creative' vibe, and it's centrally located, but I'm convinced that there is somewhere better which I haven't thought of. More research needs to be done.

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Website Picture Credits

Liquid Nitrogen Machine: <http://blog.geeksaresexytech.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/nitrocream.jpg>

Food Processing Lab. http://s4.hubimg.com/u/1498247_f520.jpg

Ingredients: http://sci-toys.com/scitoys/scitoys/thermo/ice_cream/ingredients.jpg.

Row of ice cream cones: <http://marciaprinple.blogspot.com/2010/09/lollipop-ladies-meet-iscream.html>

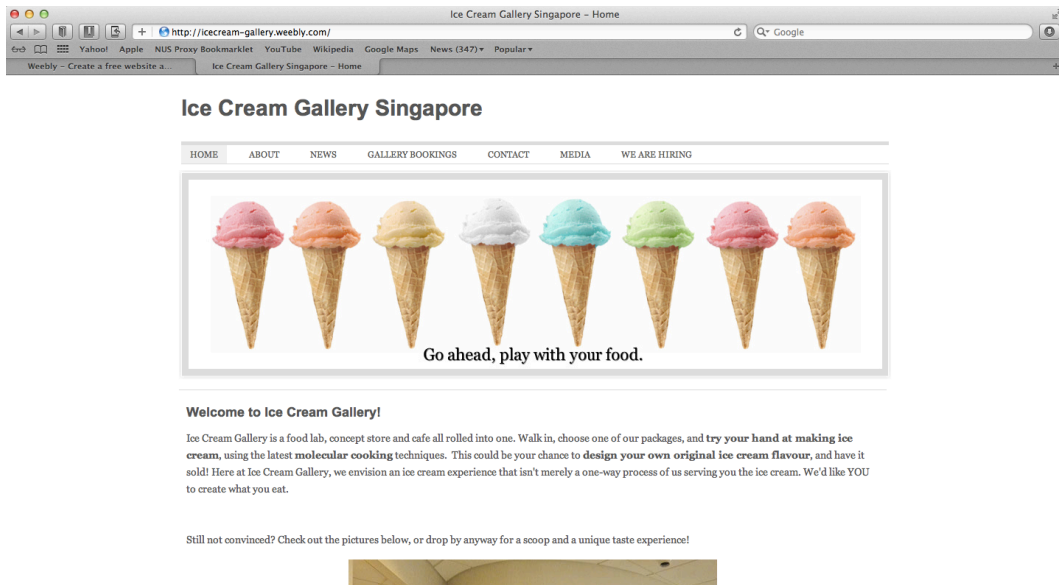
Pink ice cream scoop: http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3605/3657567292_c44c16947e.jpg

Touch screen rating system: http://farm6.static.flickr.com/5056/5405300938_3f0e43b1b0.jpg

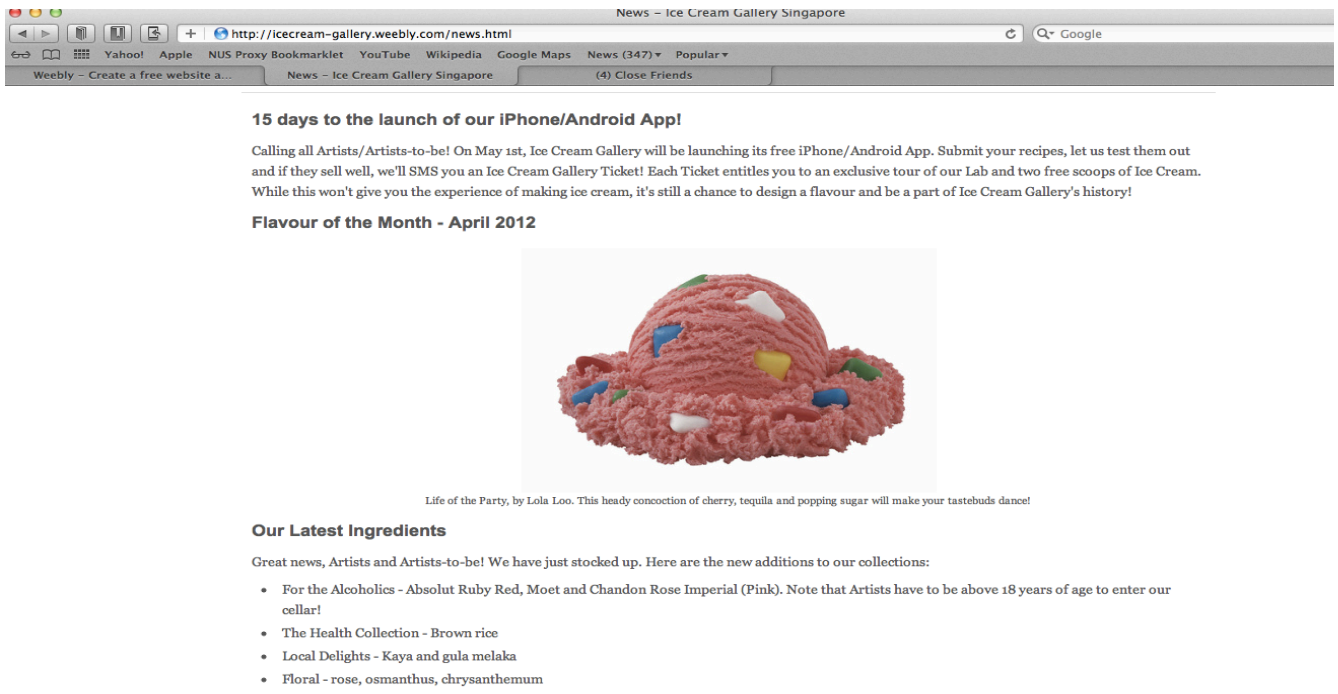
Artists at work (making ice cream): http://farm4.staticflickr.com/3110/3119292193_d75927f382.jpg

“Storefront” (which is actually the storefront of Berkey Creamery, Pennsylvania State University):

Appendix



Screen shot of our homepage. The cheeky tagline, “Go ahead, play with your food” embodies the experimentation we are trying to encourage.



Screen shot of our “News” page, featuring updates on our soon-to-be-released iPhone app, the most popular flavours as well as the latest additions to our ingredient supply which Artists can use.

At the Ice Cream Gallery, we're all for creating experiences for you. If you like what we do, and want us to be a part of your special event, we'd be more than delighted! Please contact Louise (louise.chng@icecreamgallery.com) to make arrangements.

Some things you could do:

- Book the Gallery for your party. Your guests will have a whole range of ice cream flavors and toppings to enjoy!
- Why not make the party more fun and interactive? Book the Gallery AND the Lab, for the complete Ice Cream Artist's experience.
- Hire our Ice Cream Gallery van and scoopers for a party at your home, school or office.

Really, the sky's the limit. If you have an idea of how we could add a little color to your party, talk to us. We'll work something out.

In keeping with our experimental spirit, we encourage customers, on our "Gallery Bookings" page, to work closely with us in integrating the Ice Cream Gallery experience into their events.