



Alfajor, Por Favor

BY MICHELE MCMURRY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAULINE STEVENS

There's a new pastry in town, which has found its way to an Alamo Heights storefront by way of a repeat customer. Tatakúa Alfajores, started six years ago in Monterrey, Mexico by a Paraguayan couple, maintains its small family-like South American-style cookie operation of 12 employees now with two Monterrey locations and the first U.S. distributorship in San Antonio, run by Carmen Tarragona and husband Adrian G. Rosas.

How did you get involved with Tatakúa Alfajores?

"You're not going to believe this," Tarragona laughs. "We were customers at first. I was searching online for a unique First Communion gift; I didn't want the typical gift. We thought it was a great concept. They shipped them to our event in Mazatlan and we just fell in love with the product."

How did you go about opening the first distributorship in the U.S.?

"When we moved to San Antonio, we approached the couple about the idea of letting us open and run a distributorship here. It took over a year's work to open — they were not a very well-known product in the U.S.; people didn't know what it was. We had to obtain insurance and USDA registration, and are now the legal importers. They are also kosher certified."

What brought you to San Antonio?

"We own a pecan orchard in Mexico, and for the past 15 years our harvests have been bought by a U.S. company. Starting

this year, a company in Fabens, TX shells and processes our pecans — praline, cinnamon and chocolate-covered — that we also sell in our store.

"We have always loved San Antonio; it is a friendly, warm, welcoming city. I attended Camp Arrowhead since I was 10, so ever since I can remember I've come to San Antonio."

How's the response so far?

"People are very intrigued; they love the concept. They say, 'they taste as good and even better than they look!' We couldn't be happier."

You can special-order alfajores through Carmen Tarragona or visit her shop on Broadway for in-store product. They sell quickly. Allow two weeks for delivery, as cookies must clear U.S. customs. Product is preservative-free, and freshness is guaranteed for four weeks.

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Alfajores facts

- An alfajor, with ties to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, is a small sandwich cookie filled most commonly with dulce de leche, and then covered in dark or white chocolate and topped with grated almonds or coconut. Alfajores are hand-made and elaborately decorated for any occasion.
- Tatakúa means "clay oven" in Guaraní, an indigenous dialect of South America. The name "Tatakúa Alfajores" reflects the proprietors' Paraguayan heritage and adherence to traditional preparation techniques, although today's alfajores are baked in a regular oven.