

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

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# That's the way the cookie doesn't crumble

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Howard Dicus](#)

We all have our favorite crackers and cookies. But not one crunchy munchable in your supermarket sells better locally than the collected products of **Diamond Bakery**.

That's the company behind the Saloon Pilot, a sturdy cracker descended from the pilot house of steamships and meant to hold its own in sea air. In Hawaii cuisine it occupies a space somewhere between School Kine Cookies and lavash.

By the way, the Honolulu Saloon Pilot would be a great name for a newspaper.

Brent Kunimoto, the president of the company, squired us around the Diamond Bakery factory in Kalihi. (In December you'll see him give the tour on "PBN Friday" on PBS.)

The crackers and cookies begin as a soft mass spread across a conveyer belt. Slowly it travels the length of the building inside what amounts to the world's longest oven.

The assembly line cuts the munchies into their final shape and wraps four at a time in plastic. Considering the fragility of crackers and cookies, it's nothing short of amazing how few break and fall off the line.

After having seen food product assembly lines at Diamond Bakery, Meadow Gold Dairy, **Hawaii Coffee Co.** and two chocolate candy companies, I realize there are common traits.

No matter how much you automate the product, somewhere it makes sense to use humans. Usually this is near the end of the line where, in addition to packing product, they may spot any problems the machinery missed.

All of these assembly lines have devices that are clearly improvised -- a piece of metal with a wheel on the end to keep a cord out of the way of something that could snag it; a small rod to hold tea bag strings out of the way of moving parts; a sensor whose function is to stop the line if the product begins to gridlock at a bottleneck; a change in the azimuth of the assembly line belt to facilitate the orderly breaking of foodstuffs into portions.

These things clearly weren't in the original design: the inventor or someone working the line figured out that a small adjustment would make the machinery work better.

### Candy is dandy

Local candy companies tend to roll out their new products just before the holidays, so you have something new to send to loved ones now exiled in temperate zones.

**Hawaiian Host** sent along a festive "Christmas Macadamia Medley," a mixture of its products in red and green holiday packaging.

**Lion Coffee** also does this, and puts out some seasonal flavors with fanciful names, too, though the staff rebelled when Hawaii Coffee Co. President Jim Wayman wanted to put a Christmas carol sound chip in the packaging. See that? You hire good people and they make you look good.

While writing this I have been grazing shamelessly on **Royal Crunch**, a combination of macadamia nut caramel popcorn combined with popcorn and mac nuts that have been coated in chocolate. It's the latest from Island Princess, the answer to the trivia question, "What local candy company is owned by a dentist?"

Not usually a popcornophile, I appear to have duodecimated my supply while typing happily. Decimated means "reduced by one-tenth," so I'm guessing that "duodecimated" means reduced by two-tenths. I'm not certain, however, because you can't look up what you make up, and also I think duodecima in Latin means 12. But I got to eat two more bites while musing over that.

Michael Purdy will surely be excommunicated from the **American Dental Association** for these tasty treats.

### PBN Friday

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- Sundays at 3pm
- KHET Ch. 11 (Oahu)
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