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Cream of the Crop

The more things change, the more Fosselman's ice cream stays the same—thankfully

STORY BY // [Adriana Anderson](#)
PHOTOGRAPHS BY // [Andrea Bricco](#)

The Fosselman's ice cream story started in 1919, when a soda pop maker from Iowa named Christian Anthony Fosselman came to a bottling convention in Los Angeles. He left with a newfangled freezer and a plan to use some fancy mechanized ice cream manufacturing equipment to start a new business back home. It wasn't long before Fosselman turned right back around, moving his family and his growing passion for ice cream and dairy to Pasadena in 1921. He bought a house in Altadena and set up his first shop on Fair Oaks.



The business thrived, until the Depression hit and Fosselman was forced to sell the company. Then in 1937 he started over, opening his soda-fountain retail store on Mission Street in South Pasadena in 1937 under his initials, C.A. Fosselman. For decades, the place was a center of life in South Pas, serving sandwiches and coffee as well as ice cream. An Alhambra Fosselman's location, added in 1941, also became a fixture of life in the San Gabriel Valley, with friendly service and the classic Fosselman's recipe, which never changed.

The South Pasadena shop closed in 1974 because of a redevelopment project, but the Alhambra location is now run by a third generation of Fosselman brothers, Chris and John. The two had worked at the ice cream store during high school and college, and pitched the idea of taking over to their father and uncles. "And then Chris and I both have kids, too," says John Fosselman. "They're a little young, but they're there, and hopefully one of them will want to continue the business." With only about 12% of family businesses making it into the third generation, the Fosselmans have already pulled off something remarkable.

Fosselman's routinely makes it onto "Best of" lists, both local and national. What makes everyone keep coming back, year after year? Food critics swoon over the creative, exotic flavors, many with a multicultural twist, like the lychee (Jonathan Gold once called it "smooth and sweet and creamy and funky in just the right way"). Fresh spins on seasonal fruit flavors are another Fosselman's specialty, such as chocolate-dipped strawberry. Now, they've created a special flavor exclusively for Pasadena Magazine: Peach with Wild Mint Sorbet. It's refreshing and delicious. It tastes like summer. It's a little bit of Fosselman's magic right in your own home.

Peach with Wild Mint Sorbet

4 cups chopped peeled peaches (about 2 pounds) or 4 cups frozen peaches
1 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 (4-inch) mint sprigs, crushed

PREPARATION:

1. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 7 minutes. Discard mint sprigs.
2. Place mixture in a blender or food processor; process until smooth. Pour into a bowl; cover and chill.
3. Pour chilled mixture into the freezer can of an ice cream freezer; freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

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