

Wunderkeks Builds Safe Spaces With Baked Goods

Local queer-immigrant-owned company shares love through cookies

BY CAMILA LLORENTE, 8:00AM, FRI. JUN. 3, 2022

Published: [The Austin Chronicle](#)



Hans Schrei and Luis Gramajo, founders of Wunderkeks

Sometimes a box of cookies is just a box of cookies. But if that box of cookies is bright pink and carries the Wunderkeks logo, it has a more significant meaning – you have found a place where you can let your guard down and be yourself without fear of discrimination.

"Every time you see 'Wunderkeks' on a T-shirt, the bright pink box on a kitchen counter, under the Christmas tree, or on the doorstep of someone, you know that you're safe around those people," says Luis Gramajo, one of the owners of the Austin-based cookie company.

The bright pink box comes to life in a bakehouse in a strip mall in Northwest Austin. This place filled with sounds of machinery and a delicious smell of cookies and brownies fresh from the oven has become the home of Wunderkeks and a safe space for its owners. Like their cookies, Luis Gramajo and Hans Schrei have unique sweet and warm personalities and strive to create this same environment with a bright pink box full of their decadent treats.

"The essence that we are finding in Wunderkeks and everything that we do is that we want to build safe spaces around our brand," Gramajo says.

In their home country of Guatemala, the couple couldn't get married and found it difficult to express themselves. They gained the freedom to be themselves as they arrived in Austin, started selling their cookies at farmers' markets, and realized how different the city's culture was, making their packaging, brand, and mission evolve. Where the bright pink box in Guatemala encapsulated what little queerness they felt comfortable showing to the world, now they have a brand full of queer elements ranging from colorful pompoms, a disco ball, and a dinosaur with a pink tutu as the mascot.

"We always say that Wunderkeks back in Guatemala was like the closeted version of Wunderkeks," Gramajo says.

In three years, the couple went from not knowing what a snickerdoodle was to baking brownies for goodie bags at the Oscars and creating relationships with people who have become allies of Wunderkeks' message.

One of these allies is Jeff Furman of Ben & Jerry's, who co-founded the ice cream company and is now president of the Ben & Jerry's Foundation. He joined the advisory board of Wunderkeks because he believed in their story and because their mission, as he said, "touched his heart."

"Recognizing the human value of that and our responsibility to each other to create and support the idea of a safe space, especially in this country today, not only [for] gay people and not only students but women, people of color and you start to add it all up, and it's three-quarters of the country," Furman says.

Just like Furman, actress Tori Spelling (*Beverly Hills 90210*) also believed in the cookie company's story. She decided to join them by creating a new product, the Safe Space Brownie, which is now

available to help you celebrate Pride Month, calling upon everyone, queer community and straight people alike, to celebrate with them and become allies.

"Allies have huge power that most people don't know. They could be saving lives," Gramajo says.

Spelling's idea of the Safe Space Brownie was to represent her family. Each of Spelling's kids was asked to choose an add-on, resulting in a layered treat of half chocolate chip cookie and half brownie with layers of Oreo cookies, a coconut/caramel/pecan secret mix, and sprinkles. Each layer represents one of the kids, and the whole brownie represents Spelling, "because that is what she is. She just welcomes everybody into her world, and she just makes a safe space around her," Gramajo says.



Tori Spelling with her Safe Space Brownies

As they started celebrating Pride Month with their company in the past years, they questioned whether they were using it as an excuse to sell. But, after receiving messages from customers talking about how they used their products to show support to their loved ones, they realized the power that the bright pink box can have. They want to use their cookies and brownies to open conversations and raise their voices, which leads them to have a new goal for this year's Pride Month – looking for allies.

"Our idea is for you to get [the brownie] as an ally for someone else to show them support or if you need the support to get them to someone so you can ask for help," Gramajo says.

Creating these connections, spreading their message, and building a welcoming environment is what Wunderkeks has done from the beginning.