

Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 72: Spring Shopping List

[Light upbeat music.]

Matt: Let's count.

[Paper rustling.]

Matt: Fourteen items on our Spring Shopping List Episode.

Tara: We have some products that are entirely new.

Matt: Wait, um, there's 13 on this list.

Tara: 13?

Matt: Yep. Nope, 12. Some of these new spring products are selling out really quickly.

Tara: This podcast may be over before it even starts.

Matt: Now 11.

Tara: You ready?

Matt: No.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: So, let's go *Inside Trader Joe's*.

[Theme music begins and two bells at a neighborhood Trader Joe's.]

Tara: I'm Tara Miller, director of words and phrases and clauses.

Matt: And I'm Matt Sloan, the culture and innovation guy at Trader Joe's.

Tara: Okay, Matt, help me out here. Why would Trader Joe's sell out of new products? Isn't it like Retail 101 to keep products that customers want *in* stock?

Matt: Yes, and we do exist to sell things and selling things is what we do, we would rather sell things than have things, to be completely honest.

Tara: A lot of retailers get paid to have stuff. They get paid for that space on their shelves. We don't do that. And I think one of the reasons that a lot of our stuff, especially our kind of limited-edition stuff, comes in and out so quickly is because it represents such a great value.

[Theme music ends, transition to upbeat music.]

Matt: And that value really comes from a business model that is free from extraneous distractions, sources of revenue, different from just ringing up a can of corn at

the register. We have one place and one way in which we make money by selling great products. And that's it. It's the Trader Joe's way.

Tara: Okay, our Spring Shopping List Episode, that's why we're here today, is to help you find out about products and we get to tell you about them maybe before they've hit the shelves, or right as they're hitting the shelves, you're getting the inside scoop.

Matt: Scoop as in ice cream scoop.

Tara: Like Dulce de Leche Ice Cream is actually on our list,

Matt: And it's a limited product. Let's just save that one and some other limited things for later in the show. Those limited products, we really don't plan to keep them year round all the time.

Tara: But let's start with some new everyday products. These are products that we plan to have on the shelves every day as an item you can pick up on any shopping trip.

[Small transition.]

Matt: Hey, Tara, smell that?

Tara: (sniff, sniff) Smell what?

Matt: Exactly. I'm wearing the new Trader Joe's Unscented Deodorant.

Tara: I cannot smell you, so I'm thinking it must work. So, let's start with the package, okay? It's like a little cylinder. It's green. Would you call that green?

Matt: Sort of a bluish green.

Tara: You'll find it in like our, we call it the HABA section, right? Health and beauty.

Matt: Health and beauty, okay.

Tara: And the package is like a paper-based cylinder package. It's a significant reduction in plastic from most deodorant containers.

Matt: Mm-hmm.

Tara: And it just Trader Joe's Deodorant, Aluminum and Baking Soda Free, Unscented. Say this next word.

Matt: It doesn't have any chemicals that are known as phthalates or parabens.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: It's on a deodorant basis, a pretty simple ingredient deck. It's mostly a coconut oil base.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: With a few other mineral things, forms of magnesium among them in there.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: And um, there's not much to it on an aroma basis.

Tara: No.

Matt: Which is the whole point.

Tara: I also love that there are directions on the package. Apply liberally under arms.

Matt: Well, we're here to help,

Tara: (laughs) So, "natural deodorants" tend to be super expensive and this one is not super expensive. I mean, this one comes in at, um, let's see, what is it? This one, it's \$4.99. That's a deal.

Matt: That is an amazing price difference.

Tara: It's a super value. And just in time for spring when you might be outdoors more, and you might be sweating a little bit more, you might, you might be a little smellier than normal. You want to like just, keep yourself smelling neutral.

Matt: Clean up the joint.

[Small transition.]

Tara: Let's move on to things that we can eat, shall we? Okay, next on our list of new everyday products: Piquant Popcorn. What is Piquant Popcorn?

Matt: Well, let's consult the dictionary. It's a variety of maize, corn, dried kernels of which swell up and burst open with a small, explosive sound when heated.

Tara: I know what popcorn is. What is piquant?

Matt: Piquant?

Tara: Oh, I've been pronouncing it wrong my entire life.

Matt: Adjective. Having a pleasantly sharp taste or appetizing flavor.

Tara: Okay, synonyms, please.

Matt: Tangy, flavorful, appetizing.

Tara: Okay, use piquant in a sentence.

Matt: I can't wait to frequent the Piquant Popcorn.

Tara: P-I-Q-U-A-N-T, piquant.

[Ding and polite applause.]

Tara: This bag, okay before we open it, this bag is awesome.

Matt: That was a project expertly covered by Designer Bobby. This looks like a paper bag.

Tara: And it says, "Seasoned with nutritional yeast, onion, sea salt, and garlic." Can you give us a little brief explainer of nutritional yeast for those who are like, "What are you putting yeast on popcorn for?"

Matt: Cause it might sound weird, but you might know it by the name nooch. You know nooch is similar to what was maybe previously understood as brewer's yeast. It is a form of yeast and it has this amazing flavor and in certain combinations, amplified with a little salt or maybe even some garlic or onion, it takes on an almost aged cheese-like flavor, approaching Parmesan. But there's no dairy, there's no cheese. I just like the flavor on its own. It's More-ish.

Tara: It's what?

Matt: More-ish as in, I would like some more. (chuckles)

[Bag crinkling.]

Tara: Let's try the popcorn. Oh.

Matt: So, I get a soupy brothy richness. It's an umami..

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: ...richness of flavor.

Tara: It's not spicy, but it is zesty. That should be an everyday addition to our snack section.

Matt: Let's hope. I mean, customers will decide if it is so.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: If it is meant to be, it will be because customers like it.

Tara: It just arrived and...

Matt: I can go get it today.

[Transition.]

Tara: What could be better than chocolate glazed donuts?

Matt: Answer: Chocolate Glazed Donut Holes because donut holes are the center cut filet of the donut.

Tara: These are even better. These are Gluten-Free Chocolate Glazed Donut Holes.

Matt: I respectfully submit that gluten-free as an add-on thing to make it even better is a new concept for me.

Tara: In this case, these Gluten-Free Chocolate Donut Holes, which by the way are actually dairy free too, better than most commercially available donut holes I've ever tasted.

Matt: So, donut holes for me come with a whole raft of expectations.

Tara: A whole raft, really?

Matt: A whole raft.

Tara: Mm, okay.

Matt: Because the donut hole is not so much a hole, it's not an absence, it's a thing unto itself and that is a beautiful ratio between outside glazed, crunchy texture, and inner squishiness.

Tara: Okay, but I would rather eat donut holes than...

Matt: Than listen to me talk.

Tara: Well, yes.

Matt: Fair enough.

Tara: But actually, the person who I would like for us to talk to about donut holes is the category manager of our bakery team. Amy, welcome.

Amy: It's a pleasure to be here.

Tara: Please help us understand why, when we decided to bring donut holes into Trader Joe's, we went gluten-free with them.

Amy: We've got exceptional suppliers that are able to really impart that moist, chewy, indulgent texture and flavor in spite of it being gluten-free or is an additional attribute to it. So, in this case, you get an even airier bite to a product with the benefit of it being gluten-free.

Matt: And I remember on a strategy basis, you working an angle of saying the donut hole format actually works particularly well with a gluten-free base. And so, then you can kind of cover a couple things like we don't have any other donut holes.

Amy: Correct.

Matt: And this one that we have happens to be gluten-free. So, if you're maintaining a gluten-free diet and you'd love to have a donut treat, we now have something.

Tara: So, this is a, it's kind of a crinkly bag, right? So, don't bring this to the movie theater. This is not gonna...

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: This is the ASMR portion the show.

Tara: (laughs) Yeah. Here we go. And I kinda just want to try them because if they're really...

Matt: Kinda?

Amy: They're very rich and full of chocolatey cocoa.

Tara: In other words, it's gluten-free, it's not health food like it's a donut still.

Matt: It's a treat.

Tara: It's still a treat, right?

Matt: It's a sweet, sweet treat.

Tara: But there's like 21 of these little donut holes in the box.

Amy: Rather than having to eat an entire donut, these are pop-able. You can take them. They're an easy snack. They're pop-able if you...

Matt: First one's free kids.

Amy: (laughs)

Tara: You do have to buy the donuts. They're not free.

Amy: But the bite-size occasion is just perfect. Right amount of glaze on the outside too, to make it quite the treat.

Matt: I don't have many bite sized occasions in my life it turns out.

Tara: And this I say with the best of intentions, if you hadn't told me those were gluten-free, I would, I would have no idea. They just taste like little chocolate donuts.

Amy: Absolutely. They're as delicious, I think even as our Chocolate Muffins that happen to be gluten-free also. So you really get that flavor, the texture, the bite, and you don't really need the gluten.

Matt: They have a great, freshly made, by that I mean fried donut flavor in the best way. And then the texture is so, so nice.

Amy: I will say they're amazing once you heat them up in an air fryer.

Tara: Ooohh.

Matt: Is there anything we will not air fry?

Amy: (laughs)

Tara: No. The idea here is that this becomes an everyday product in the bakery section at Trader Joe's, right?

Amy: Absolutely.

Tara: So, if you go in with like a donut craving...

Amy: You will always have your fix.

Matt: That's a tall order. Challenge accepted.

Tara: Yeah. We can't guarantee that you're gonna go into your store every single day and the minute you walk in, they're still gonna have them. Cause somebody might have bought all the donuts that day.

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: Just look for that iconic pink package. It's the reference to the classic donut shop pink box. I love that.

Tara: Oh look, I missed that reference. Alright. This might be a good time to transition into our discussion of limited availability products for spring.

[Music transition.]

Matt: When these products sell out, they're gone.

Tara: Not everyday products.

Matt: Limited for 500. Limited Lemon Sheet Cake.

Tara: This one's not new.

Amy: It is not. It's returning.

Tara: And last year we kind of thought we'd sell it well, but we didn't quite understand how well...

Amy: Two weeks.

Tara: ...we'd sell.

Amy: Yeah. It was sold out in two weeks.

Tara: What do you attribute the success of the Lemon Sheet Cake to?

Amy: It is the most exceptional cake that you can have anywhere, and it just happens to be lemon, but it's very light and airy. It has a sour cream base, which makes it indulgent. It's stackable, so you can use it in lieu of just a sheet cake for parties and entertaining.

Tara: Oh, so make a layer cake.

Amy: Exactly.

Tara: These sheet cakes, the mini sheet cakes, the Vanilla Chantilly, and then the Chocolate, and then with this one last year, there is this phenomenon on social media...

Amy: Mm-hmm.

Tara: ...of the purse fork.

Amy: Yes, exactly.

Tara: The purse fork seems to have become a thing because of these cakes.

Amy: Yes, if you can make it home, that's why you keep the purse in your fork so that you can eat it on the go.

Tara: Other way. Keep the fork in your purse.

Amy: (laughs) Yes, that's right. Sorry.

Matt: As long as you have that...

Room: (laughter)

Amy: Please don't put that out. (laughs)

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: I mean, it could be a pocket fork. Just watch how you sit down.

Tara: Yes, as long as you have a fork in your car or in your bag.

Matt: This is 18 ounces. It's a little over a pound. It's \$5.49? Like this is an amazing thing for that kind of price. It actually, like, it sounds crazy to say, "It comes from a bakery," so...

Amy/Tara: (laughs)

Matt: ...this is like a bakery made thing, which sometimes means it must be high priced. It must be expensive, not the case here.

Tara: It should be in stores middle March.

Amy: Yes.

Tara: Middle March, look at that.

Amy: And it runs through May. We wanna make sure everybody gets a chance to enjoy the sheet cake cakes.

Matt: Another bold statement.

Tara: Right.

Matt: That is really dependent upon how many people buy this up quickly.

Amy: We realized how exciting it is, and we wanted to make sure that we were well prepared.

Matt: This year versus last year, how many more mini sheet cakes did we buy?

Amy: More than double.

Tara: Wow.

Matt: Here's a story, a real *Inside Trader Joe's* story. So, in the office we have what's known as the Magic Table. And the Magic Table is where samples and remnants of samples go to be eaten, I guess.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: Um, it's like the elephant graveyard of product samples, kind of. And I...

Tara: It's a good place.

Matt: It's a great place. And like in the iterative process through tasting of different versions of sheet cakes, I have had so many magical magic table moments with sheet cakes.

Tara: (laughs) Do you have a favorite?

Matt: The Vanilla Chantilly is my absolute favorite, the lemon's fun because it's just like, it shows up like this strike of lightning, at least it did last year.

Amy: That's a great way to describe it.

Matt: And it's like, oh man. It's like, oh yeah, lemony flavored. It's got lemon zest.

Tara: Oh, it is so...

Matt: Lemon zest makes so many things better.

Tara: It's so fragrant. Oh man.

Matt: Dear Sheet Cake. You are so fragrant.

Tara: (laughs) All right. I have my purse fork.

Matt: A prodigious amount of frosting on this cake.

Tara: But not overly done.

Matt: But it's really well frosted.

Amy: This is my absolute favorite of the sheet cakes.

Tara: Oh my God, it smells so good.

Matt: Do you like the center of the sheet cake or the corners?

Tara: I like the center. (takes a bite) Oh, that is so lemony.

Amy: It is lemony. I mean that's, and that's what we were going for. It also has lemon juice in,

Tara: In the cake?

Amy: In the cake itself to really make sure that the flavor pops, you know, in every bite.

Matt: You really smell the cream cheese part of the cream cheese frosting.

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: This would be outstanding with a cup of Earl Grey tea. Oh, man.

Amy: I think it would also be great stacked in layers with the vanilla as well if you really wanted to impress.

Matt: How many layers does it take to impress?

Amy: I would say a good four.

Matt: Oh, four. I was going to say odd numbers only.

Tara: It really only takes one layer to impress because it's so delicious.

Amy: Very true. (laughs)

Tara: And impressive. Wow. In stores by the time this podcast lands. And the plan is hopefully to have it through May.

Amy: Absolutely.

Tara: Don't wait till May. We ordered more than double what we had last year. However, we can't just go to the bakery and say, "Oh no, we need more," all of a sudden. Because that takes months of planning on their part as well.

Matt: Now, thinking of plans, what else do you have planned coming into stores?

Amy: Our Cinnamon Danish Twist Pastry. We've been fortunate enough to find a variety of incredible products from Denmark this year, and this one really brings kind of the history of what we know to be the Kringle to life from kind of an authentic perspective.

Matt: The History of Kringle Comes to Life.

Amy: (laughs)

Tara: It's a new Rankin/Bass cartoon.

Matt: Yeah. Or like an animatronic interactive experience.

Amy/Tara: (laughs)

Amy: Well, we have quite a Kringle craze in our stores. (laughs)

Matt: It's true. And yet, this is different.

Tara: This doesn't look like Kringle as we know it at Trader Joe's.

Matt: It's a circular pastry. It's bigger than a bread plate, smaller than a hub cap.

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: I don't know. Um, I don't know what the diameter is on this thing, but man, this is like a lot of pastry.

Amy: It is a lot of pastry.

Tara: It's a round coiled pastry with cinnamon and custard and sugar.

Amy: That's exactly what it is. So, it's traditionally known for a pretzel knot shape, but depending on the season, it's also baked like a wreath or a large round cake, like our cinnamon twist. It's a super-sized cinnamon bun almost. And just referencing the Kringle that we, I think are more familiar with in the States, it's about the same diameter.

Matt: Hmm.

Amy: It's just a much denser product.

Matt: This is a little over 21 ounces, so this is a lot, well over a pound.

Amy: Four servings.

Tara: Four? I get to eat a quarter of that in one sitting? (laughs)

Matt: Even for me that seems like a lot.

Tara: (laughs) That four very ample servings. If people are listening to this and hear Kringle, we're not calling it a Kringle, but in Denmark this is a Kringle.

Amy: Exactly.

Tara: I think that would be interesting for people because *that's not a Kringle*. It's a different one.

Amy: You're like, no. Then all of a sudden, are we gonna have enough? (laughs)

Matt: Perfect.

Tara: But that's awesome.

Amy: Yes.

Tara: Right? Like what a great problem to have.

Amy: Yes, and we will have Raspberry Kringle on the shelf at the same time. They can pick and choose.

Tara: It's an embarrassment of Kringle riches.

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: And what do we call it again? What's its formal name?

Amy: Cinnamon Twist Danish. A Danish pastry with cinnamon and custard style filling.

Matt: We could have called it Danish Cinnamon Twist Danish.

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: Because it's both.

Tara: Because it's from Denmark and it's a Danish pastry.

Amy: It's been baked in Denmark since the Middle Ages.

Tara: Really?

Amy: And it's a huge part of celebrations known as the Danish Hygge, which is an expression of being together around with fans and family around a warm atmosphere.

[*Music transition.*]

Tara: So, I noticed on the box there are optional heating instructions. If you heat it up, it's gonna taste even better.

Amy: Exactly.

Tara: But it's just three to five minutes.

Amy: And this one is another great option for the air fryer.

Tara: Ha-ha. I have an ally here, Matt.

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: There are air fryers large enough to hold this Danish?

Tara: Hey, cut one of your four servings.

Amy: Exactly.

Matt: Every cinnamon roll born in a mall food court dreams of achieving this level of deliciousness.

Amy: (laughs)

Matt: That's great. So much cinnamon.

Tara: Wow!

Amy: So much cinnamon. It is very enrobed in all the layers.

Matt: Cinnamon can sometimes, in great amounts, impart bitterness.

Tara: None.

Matt: Not the case here.

Tara: Nothing.

Amy: Not at all. It's very balanced with the sugar and the dough.

Matt: Yes. It's so delicious.

Tara: I'm kind of blown away by how good the flavor is here. And the texture, it's soft. I understand the box says four servings, but to me this is like...

Matt: Eight.

Tara: ...this is eight.

Amy: I think it's, yeah.

Tara: You know?

Amy: Multiple occasions as well.

Tara: Yeah.

Amy: It could replace your coffee cake in the morning...

Matt: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Amy: ...or brunch. Yes.

Matt: Says the guy with his mouth full of Danish.

Amy/Tara: (laughs)

Tara: This one's gonna show up in stores later in March, a little bit...

Amy: Correct. Around Mother's Day, Easter, we'll have it also.

Matt: Oh perfect. Well done. Nicely timed.

Tara: I'd say pull out the purse fork again, quite honestly.

Amy: You might need a forklift, it's so large.

Tara: A purse forklift.

Matt: It's a new Olympic sport.

Amy/Tara: (laughs)

[Music ends.]

Tara: Amy, thank you so much for spending time with us. This was fun.

Amy: Absolutely. And delicious.

[Upbeat music begins.]

Matt: We'll see you at the Magic Table.

[Transition.]

Tara: We just had a gooey Cinnamon Twist Danish. Yes?

Matt: Yes! And I'm still just so appreciative of that moment.

Tara: Right? So, I have something else that's gooey.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: We have a new candy item. They are Brown Sugar Boba Mochi.

Matt: Yeah. So, this is just all about the texture.

Tara: It's squishy rice dough on the outside and then inside a little boba pearl.

Matt: Like pillowy, like squishy, pillowy. And it's this very soft, soft texture. Very sweet. And that's fun to eat. It's just kind of like a neat, sort of chewy, fluffy thing.

Tara: They're individually wrapped so they don't, 'cause otherwise they would stick together, and it would just be a big...

Matt: It would be like a boba log.

Tara: Yes, like a boba brick, basically. It'd be all stuck together.

Matt: New product idea.

Tara: They should be in stores right about when this podcast lands. Hey, you know what? I forgot about something.

Matt: What?

Tara: We have ice cream.

[Music transition.]

Matt: Good grief.

Tara: Trader Joe's Dulce de Leche Ice Cream. Caramel flavored ice cream with a smooth milk caramel swirl.

Matt: 'Cause if you think of like the phrase 'dulce de leche,' like candy from milk, I guess if you got literal with it, I love that cooked sugar approaching burnt sugar flavor. I have high, high hopes for this.

Tara: Alright, I'm digging right in.

Matt: Oh man.

Matt: My preferred way to eat this will be a small scoop with a screamingly hot shot of espresso poured over it. A version of an affogato.

Tara: Mm.

Matt: It'd be like a caramel macchiato affogato.

Tara: Mama mia, mama mia let me go.

Matt: Yeah. When do we think we're gonna have this ice cream?

Tara: Late March. It's a limited thing because we don't have a lot of room for ice cream because we don't have a lot of room. Right? Our stores are small. Our freezer cases are small, so we cycle ice cream flavors in and out so that we can have a whole bunch of different ones, right?

Matt: We have to, yeah.

Tara: If we had it every day, we wouldn't have the opportunity to bring in other flavors at other times of the year.

Matt: We're even further constrained because only one part of the frozen aisle is cold enough to hold ice cream. A special part of that frozen aisle that runs at a colder temperature than the other stuff. So, ice cream needs to be colder than frozen blueberries, say.

Tara: Really?

Matt: I'm glad that we made room for this. This doesn't have a lot of inclusions, as they say in the business. This is what eats like that idea of a super premium ice cream, meaning not a whole lot of air whipped into this.

Tara: No.

Matt: So, ice cream, as we've mentioned before, in this country, it's sold by volume, not by weight. So, how you fill the container matters. So, some ice creams are lighter in weight than others because they have more overrun, more air whipped into 'em. This is a heavy ice cream.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: And it feels nice and dense and rich and oh, that, that dulce de leche caramel flavor, it's so great on its own. I actually think it would be really good with bananas, like a version of bananas foster with some of this would be wonderful.

Tara: This is delicious.

[Small transition.]

Tara: When life gives you lemons...

Matt: Have them made into Sicilian Organic Lemon Juice. This is a shelf stable bottle of lemon juice. And while not unusual to find lemon juice in different places, it's often made with the use of preservative chemicals to hold its color, to hold its aroma. This is just lemon juice from Sicilian lemons from Italy.

Tara: Oftentimes the lemon juice that you find in bottles in grocery stores is lemon juice from concentrate, so it's all pressed and concentrated and then reconstituted to be bottled later on. This is freshly pressed and pasteurized.

Matt: Mm-hmm.

Tara: Which is impressive.

Matt: And of course, someone's probably listening to this and saying like, isn't it easy to squeeze a lemon? Easy peasy lemon squeezy. But if you don't have the time or the inclination, this is at the ready.

Tara: And by the way, there is a very particular flavor profile that you get from a Sicilian grown lemon. And they're famous. And I don't always have access to a Sicilian lemon.

Matt: I got a guy.

Tara: The only ingredient in this juice is organic lemon juice. On the nutrition facts panel, it's zero calories, zero fat, zero sodium, zero carbohydrate, zero protein. And that's because it's a small serving. A one teaspoon five milliliter serving does not have enough of any of those things to register as one or more.

Matt: If you're below 0.5, you round down.

Tara: Right.

Matt: And so, it doesn't mean there's an absence of carbohydrates, it's just to your comment, there's so little there it doesn't register because we have to round to effectively a whole number.

Tara: Right. Organic Sicilian Lemon Juice should be arriving in stores right around the time this podcast lands on your podcast players.

Matt: And do we think that's a special limited kind of thing?

Tara: This one will be there every day, so...

Matt: I think that'll be handy.

[Transition.]

Tara: Hey, there's another product that's every day. This is the one I'm probably most excited about. Trader Joe's Thai Peanut Satay Sauce.

Matt: Mm.

Tara: Love this stuff. It's already in stores. We've had peanut sauce before.

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: But it's been a while and I think this is better than any of the peanut sauces we've had.

Matt: It is a thinner, more pourable consistency than some of the more paste like versions. Using this is really easy to spoon over grilled chicken, grilled tofu, grilled fish, to spoon over and toss into noodles. It's got amazing flavor.

Tara: Sort of unintentionally, it is vegan. It has no derived...

Matt: No fish sauce probably.

Tara: No fish sauce. It has red curry paste, but it does not have any animal derived ingredients in it.

Matt: So, let's *satay*.

[Music transition, transition to wine.]

Tara: It is wine time.

James: Hi.

Tara: James, tell us who you are. This is your first time on the podcast.

James: I'm the category manager for wine, beer, and spirits. Seeking out new wines, new additions, working with national brands as well, maintaining a lot of our customer favorites that we have already.

Matt: We had a specific wine, we had it last year, we had a small amount of it. It went a little crazy. We called it The Puppet. It was a form of orange wine.

Tara: The Puppet. It has nothing to do with Kermit the Frog, not Howdy Doody. Explain to me orange wine and The Puppet.

James: Orange wine, also known as skin contact wine, it's made in a similar way as white wine, ultimately is spending more time in contact with the skins of the grapes, in that sense is pulling more color out of the grape skins into the final product.

Tara: I'm still a little bit confused and I apologize. So, what is the difference between an orange wine and a rosé?

James: That's a good question because orange wine or skin contact wine is similar in a lot of ways in the sense that rosé was made from red grapes and pulled some of the color out of the grapes, and from those skins of those grapes, but didn't have the extended period that a red wine might have.

Matt: And other than the color of the wine, what's interesting about orange wine?

James: There's a little different intensity of flavors that comes through, as well as, kind of a different feeling in the mouth. There's a little more texture and phenolics that come through the final product.

Matt: Phenolics.

Tara: Tell us what that means.

Matt: Break it down, James.

James: Phenolics are essentially coming...

Matt: Want me to beatbox behind you?

James: (laughs)

Tara: (laughs) I just keep thinking of phonics, which can't be the same thing as phenolics.

Matt: Hooked on phenolics.

James: Um..

Tara: Poor James. (laughs)

James: (laughs) So, phenolics are component of the wine that kind of impacts the mouth feel and the texture that you're experiencing, as a result of how the wine was made so it can vary a lot.

Matt: This is not a sweet wine and yet it has a full mouth feel, heavier body that I found really worked nicely with food.

James: Yeah, I agree. It offers that difference from a full white wine. I think the way it was made with a kind of a gentle approach of extracting that color, and tannins into the wine, helps it pair well with a lot of different types of foods.

Matt: I know that we had an, a very limited quantity last year of this, and it really caught people's attention and people were clamoring for it and it was not available in most of the stores that sell wine. What's gonna happen this year?

James: Good news. Last year it was very limited, as you said, in California, this year we will be releasing it across the country.

Tara: That is good news. What I saw on our list was a new entry into this label that we've called The Puppet, and it's described here as a chillable red. So, tell us about a chillable red 'cause my understanding is you tend to not chill red wine.

James: In the world of wine, there's a lot of different variations of how much it's suggested to chill wine from heavy reds with less chilling, to a lighter style like Pinot Noir or Beaujolais using the Gamay grape. If there's a lower tannin structure for the wine, then it might be better to chill it, to enjoy it at its best.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: I've often heard about or thought about room temperature as different from cellar temperature, and I've heard some people talking about drinking wine at cellar temperature, cooler than room temperature. And I've heard other people talk about this in this country, in the US, that we generally drink our red wines too warm and our white wines too cold. Is there like a sweet spot that doesn't use Celsius that I can figure out how to handle?

Tara/James: (laughs)

James: I think for this chillable red, the sweet spot is in that 50-60 degrees Fahrenheit and likely closer to the 50 end of that range.

Matt: Okay.

James: Knowing that once you take it out of the fridge or an ice bucket and pour it, it's gonna start warming up to your surrounding temperature. And if you leave the bottle out, then it will do the same.

Matt: And maybe I should just chill. But is this like hipster nonsense or is it a real thing? I mean, what is going on here?

James: There's a trend aspect of it, but there's also a really long history aspect of it too. In America, we may be chilling incorrectly in a lot of cases. Perhaps in the Old World regions where Gamay originates, that history is a little more ingrained into the common practice.

Tara: These wines called The Puppet, there'll be the skin contact wine, the orange wine, and the chillable red. And this year they should both be available in all of our stores that sell wine.

James: That is correct.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: So exciting.

Tara: Yes. End of March. I know that prices vary by region because different areas have different pricing restrictions, but I've seen orange wines out there for \$20 and more. We're hitting a price point well under \$10.

James: Correct.

Tara: That's pretty great.

James: Yeah.

Matt: This is exciting stuff and I can't stop singing that great song, "I'm Your Puppet."

Tara: You just sing it quietly and we'll all be okay. Still don't understand why it's called The Puppet.

Matt: Naming wines can be tricky because there are a lot of wine names out there and you think you land on a great idea and maybe you can't use that and this name, The Puppet, was already in use for a wine from this producer.

Tara: Hmm. Screw top bottles, not cork?

James: Correct, both are screw top.

Tara: Easy for summer.

Matt: Picnic-able, ready for the picnic?

Tara: Oh, that's, I thought you said lickable. I'm like why would you lick it?

James: (laughs)

Matt: Pic-a-nic basket? Everything tastes better if you're outside.

Tara: These two wines are officially on our Spring Shopping List for the podcast. Anything else you're excited about?

James: We have plenty of new wines coming, especially in our TJ Reserve Program. A lot of new imports in the mix including from regions in France like Rasteau and Bandol. A lot of different types of labels coming soon.

Tara: So this is your first visit to the podcast. Hopefully it won't be your last visit to the podcast.

Matt: I don't think it will be 'cause we're going to want to talk about more stuff.

Tara: Hope we didn't scare you off.

James: No. (laughs)

Tara: (laughs) Okay. We're gonna let James go now. (laughs)

Matt: You're excused. Okay.

James: (laughs)

Tara: Thank you, James.

[Closing music begins.]

Tara: So, that's it. There are new everyday products at Trader Joe's and new limited products for Spring.

Matt: Of course, there are lots more of both. This is just a partial list.

Tara: Check out the Fearless Flyer, check out [traderjoes.com](https://www.traderjoes.com). Keep your eye on our Instagram. And to make sure you get every new podcast episode, hit that free subscribe or follow button.

Matt: It *is* free and worth every penny.

Tara: Until next time, thanks for listening.

Matt: And thanks for listening.