

# Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 58: It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like a Trader Joe's Holiday Shopping List

*[Sleigh bells.]*

Tara: All right Matt, it is time for the most wonderful episode of the year.

*[Festive holiday music begins.]*

Matt: Ah yes, the Holiday Shopping List episode. Let's start with some holiday candy and cookies, and some cheese and wine.

*[Door flies open.]*

David: Did somebody say, holiday episode?

Tara: Why yes we did, David. Welcome.

Matt: You couldn't wait to get in here, could you?

Tara: Crew member David has been kind enough over the last several years to come and sing us a special Trader Joe's carol on our Holiday Shopping List episode.

Matt: And a 1, 2, 1 2, 3.

*[David cuts him off.]*

David: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. This year I've outdone myself. Is the satellite feed ready?

*[Digital tuning noise.]*

David: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls coming to you from Chicago, we proudly present...

*[Carollers start to warm up in the background, then fall off key.]*

David: ...the Canterbury Carollers.

Carollers: (singing to the tune of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas")

*With no real intended bombast  
We present to you at long last  
A brand new Trader Joe's podcast  
For th' holidays are here!*

*There's so much in store, so we thought we'd assist  
By way of recording this new Shopping List!*

*So sit back while we untangle  
All the treats that you can wrangle  
Like pretzels with Jingle Jangle  
For the holidays this year!*

*There's stockings to stuff, but don't lose your calm  
Just try our new Gummy Bear Lip Mask & Balm!*

*Our Chestnuts are soft and chewy  
Our Fondue gets nice and gooey  
Plus Bites made from Ratatouille  
For th' holidays – that's clear!*

*We'll keep ourselves warm, with baked Brie En Croute  
Then toast the new year, with a Platinum Brut!*

*With Snack Mixes that are awesome  
Swiss cheese that's shaped like a blossom  
Plus a Candle with Cedar-Balsam  
...For the holidays...are....here!*

*[Huge applause.]*

Matt: Bravo. Brava. Bravo.

Tara: Thank you, Canterbury Carollers. That was fantastic and thank you, David, for your witty words once again.

Matt: Let's go Inside Trader Joe ho, ho's.

Tara: That's gonna be hard to follow.

*[Sleigh bells over theme music and two bells ring 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 marketing product guy.

Tara: The holiday season really is filled with magic.

Matt: And so is your neighborhood Trader Joe's. You know, all these holiday products don't just magically appear on shelves. Every category team at Trader Joe's has been working on developing new holiday products since the last holiday season and really even well before that.

Tara: I mean, the official holiday tasting panel happened like in February of last year.

Matt: Yes, that is correct. We wear ugly sweaters for Valentine's Day, and we get together to evaluate what worked and what didn't from that proceeding holiday season to figure out what we might want to try to offer in the season ahead.

Tara: This year we have a total of 473 holiday season products. And 407 of those products are returning, our products that we sold last year that we wanted to bring back again.

Matt: That's pretty good.

Tara: The other 66 are brand new products that we're trying for the first time this year.

Matt: So we better get started.

*[Theme music ends. Light upbeat music begins.]*

Tara: Let's start with snacks. And kind of the granddaddy of Trader Joe's holiday snacks is the Step Up To The Snack Bar Mix which is in a very distinctive black canister. You kind of look at the canister, it's like, yeah, okay, it's a snack mix, but you open it up and it's so, the interesting things inside...it's our Cheddar Rocket Crackers, which you can buy in a box in the store, but here they're in the mix, it's corn chips with flax seeds, which are very interesting, honey roasted peanuts, honey roasted sesame sticks, honey mustard pretzel pieces, and chili lemon corn sticks.

*[Opening canister.]*

Matt: I think of the snack mix as a great example of something greater than the sum of its parts. I think everyone has like a favorite thing that you hunt for in there, but everything's good.

Tara: I wait for this to come back every season and stock up a little bit. You know, it doesn't have a super long shelf life, so it's not like you can save it for a year, but it's good through the spring.

Matt: There was one component in there that had a little bit of spiciness, at least in its name. What was that?

Tara: That's the chili lemon corn sticks.

Matt: Okay, and that makes me think of the Stepping It Up Spicy Snack Bar Mix, which is the red canister, a companion product. And again, mostly savory, a little bit of sweetness with a unifying spice to things. So you're talking about sweet jalapeno, pretzel pieces, and pasilla chili sesame chip, and spicy cheese corn sticks, and chili almonds, and chili lemon corn nuggets, and...

*[Shakes canister.]*

Matt: I will enter any room (shakes canister) when I hear that.

Tara: Pavlov.

Matt: Exactly.

Tara: Yeah. If you're having a gathering or if you're just sitting around watching holiday movies or, you know, football games or whatever it is your family likes to do in the holiday season. Oh, I love them.

Matt: I don't think it'll be so spicy as to turn anyone off. I think it'll be just enough to keep them coming back for more and more and more. It is a more-ish situation.

Tara: So speaking of more-ish, we have the return of the Sweet & Salty Snack Mix. It's a 12 ounce bag. It's a pretty substantial bag of snacks. It has mini peanut butter filled pretzel nuggets, half dipped chocolate covered potato chips, roasted and salted Virginia peanuts, and chocolate drizzled caramel popcorn. Like, this is a treat.

Matt: Like this is a family movie night kind of thing.

Tara: It says there are 12 servings in the bag. And, you know, those are government regulations that say what a serving size is and what that means. For me, if I'm sitting watching a Marvel movie or say if I'm doing my 74th rewatch of *It's A Wonderful Life*, this could very easily become a single serve for me.

*[Music ends.]*

Matt: When I think about the holidays, I often think about special family meals.

*[Light upbeat music begins.]*

Matt: And sometimes when I was a kid, if we were lucky, it might even be at a fancy restaurant. And I knew it was a fancy restaurant because at the end of dinner you would get an individually foil wrapped mint chocolate, and I knew, wow, this was something special. I'm a sucker for nostalgia, certainly. But we have a product that makes me think of that. I'm talking about Minty Cocoa Truffles. These are a little chocolate truffle, and they're minty, and they're cool, and they're creamy, and these are so delicious. And (shaking box) that is them there in their little box, their little green box.

Tara: Those are really good. It's got a little crunch. Are you getting that?

Matt: It does indeed, yes.

Tara: And they're lightly dusted on the outside with cocoa powder, so...

Matt: And it's a beautiful, very ruddy red cocoa powder.

Tara: Yeah. Those are just a holiday season product. I mean, I would probably buy a few boxes of those and keep them on hand.

Matt: Well, I'm right back with Grandma Madie at Rob Roys in Newport Beach for a holiday meal. That's fantastic.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: Another one of those sort of nostalgic holiday themes is gingerbread. We this year have...are these new?

Matt: Those are new.

Tara: These are new. These are Dark Chocolate Covered Gingerbread Cookie Folk. Little gingerbread people covered in dark chocolate.

Matt: These are not gingersnaps. These are similar to European, almost like a Lebkuchen cookie style gingerbread. So softer chew, um, really nice flavors, all the warm spices.

Tara: (opening bag) There's a lot of cookies in there. That is a...

Matt: A lot of folks in there.

Tara: There's a lot of folks. You're gonna love these. So many ginger cookies, gingersnaps, gingerbread people cookies are really, really, really sweet, and this one is it, you're right, it has all of those gingerbread spices and a nice, almost subtle ginger flavor. It's not super sharp ginger. Those are really good eating cookies. Kind of really want a cup of strong coffee to go with that. Like that would be an excellent pair.

Matt: That chocolate coating is not quite a shell, but it's a nice contrast against the softer pillowy cookie.

Tara: Plus they're adorable.

Matt: Yeah.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: Oh boy. As we get ready to celebrate the holidays, I think we need a celebratory beverage.

Matt: Something with a little sparkle. How about a Trader Joe's Platinum Reserve Sonoma County Brut, a sparkling wine.

Tara: Okay, I believe the Canterbury Carollers referred to that as a Plat-i-num Brut.

Matt: Wherever you put the em-pha-sis on the syl-la-ble, it's a great drink. Absolutely. And this is made in the méthode champenoise, so the bubbles come naturally. This is not a carbonated thing. Those are actual bubbles that come about from the fermentation. Um, I think, did I say Sonoma County? Great area to grow grapes with which to make great sparkling wines. It's a blend of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and a little bit of Pinot Meunier grapes. It's classic, it's dry, a little toasty. I like this brut with salted buttered popcorn, to be honest with you. We also have a rosé that is actually made with the same grapes in a slightly different order. Pinot Noir, that Pinot Meunier, and then a little bit of Chardonnay. And that of course is given when they're mashing all the grapes together and letting it start to ferment. And so they give it a little longer contact with those Pinot Noir skins, and that gives it that wonderful blush color. I love a good brut rosé as a celebration thing in a glass, that pink color is so fun. A little hint of fruit flavor. A little more fruity forward flavors on this. It's not sweet though. It is brut, and in this case, that means that drier, a little bit more of bracing acidity here.

Tara: If you're looking for a sparkling wine to serve for your family holiday dinners, or if you're looking for a sparkling wine to bring as a host or hostess gift to a holiday gathering, these two, the Sparkling Brut and the Sparkling Rosé Platinum Reserve from Sonoma County. They're pretty impressive for the price. I mean, our Platinum Reserve line is fantastic quality and we're bringing it to you at a price that is kind of unheard of for what you're actually getting in the bottle.

Matt: Absolutely. The producer of these sparkling wines, they have their own label and these same wines under that label is a much higher price than at Trader Joe's. And you know, when you think of sparkling wine, you almost always think of champagne that's synonymous with sparkling wine. Of course, technically speaking, champagne comes from a very particular place in France and it's limited geographically, it's physically limited, with scarcity and increased demand. Costs keep going up. You don't have to have true champagne, although it's wonderful, to have a celebration. And the price and quality intersection on these Sonoma County bruts, the rosé and the classic brut, is phenomenal. These are, I think, a steal. A steal you have to pay for. A steal nonetheless.

Tara: Okay, I'm gonna switch gears a little bit. If your Trader Joe's carries beer and wine, it's the Winter Ride, Double Bock Lager. We've had this particular beer at the holiday season for like 15 years or more. But new this year, it's moving from a six pack of bottles to a six pack of cans. So we're sort of making that transition back into cans.

Matt: (opening a can) I'm gonna make the transition into tasting this.

Tara: Okay. (opening a can)

Matt: Within sort of German styles of beer, German lagers, there are different times of year to make different styles of Bock lager. So this is a Winter Double Bock. It's a darker, heavier flavored, multi type of Bock lager. It's really tasty. It's a little higher in alcohol by volume.

Tara: Yeah 7.5%.

Matt: This would be great with any number of stews, roasted root veggies, things like that. And this is a really, really tasty beer. I love this.

Tara: When a seasonal product like this returns season after season after season, there's something special there. You really have to earn your place on the shelf.

Matt: Glad to see it coming back.

Tara: That's like right up my alley, the dark malty.

Matt: Mm-hmm.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: I think we need some appetizers.

Matt: We do indeed. And we have something new. A really fun take on a classic dish, ratatouille. But these are Ratatouille Bites and it's a frozen appetizer.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: These Ratatouille Bites, inside the classic combination of tomatoes and eggplant and peppers, and they're slow cooked, almost caramelized, almost jammy in texture inside. They are enclosed in a crunchy, almost breading-like shell.

Tara: Yeah, it's like panko breadcrumbs on the outside.

Matt: Exactly.

Tara: They're good finger food. If you're having a holiday gathering and you're looking for something that's different, a little interesting, that might be a conversation starter. The conversation would go something like, "What the heck is that? It's a Ratatouille Bite, try it." And then, you know, you try it and the conversation might be over, but at least there's a conversation.

Matt: Cuz everyone's mouths are full, but they will be delicious.

Tara: Okay. All right, Ratatouille Bites. By the time you hear this podcast they should be in your freezers. You should be able to find them, and they should be delicious. All right, what's up next?

*[Music transition.]*

Matt: Well, also in our frozen section, we've offered this for many years now with good reason, this is Brie En Croute. And this is a ready to bake thing, so it does take some time in the oven and it is a classic round of brie enclosed in pastry.

Tara: I decided to pop one into the oven while we were recording.

Matt: And it cooks by itself.

Tara: At about 375° and about 35-40 minutes later, you have this beautiful golden crusted pastry encased round of brie. One of the cool things about this product, other than the fact that it's delicious just as it is, there are instructions on the box for doing a little extra prep.

Matt: Hmm.

Tara: So sometimes when you bake a brie inside of pastry, you might want to add like apricot jam or fig butter or something like that to the inside. So what you do is you take it out of the freezer and you let it sit for about 30 minutes, so the crust on the outside just, it loosens just a little bit so it's not completely frozen, and you would put your jam or whatever you'd wanna put on top of the brie and then put the crust back on top and bake it as usual.

Matt: Open it up, put in some preserves.

Tara: Yeah. Or how about some sun-dried tomatoes or sun-dried tomato pesto type of thing.

Matt: Or maybe you could go spicy like harissa.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Uh, or something along those lines.

Tara: Or Crunchy Chili Onion. Ooh, that could be interesting. I'm very much about the Crunchy Chili Onion. I'm gonna cut into this one. The pastry is really golden and flaky and pretty great. No complaints here. That's a really great appetizer. Easy for you to do. Pretty cool stuff.

Matt: That would be great if you were having a holiday lunch and that with a salad.

*[Big transition.]*

Tara: We interrupt this shopping list to talk with a very special guest who is waaaaay up north.

Matt: Oh, all right, Santa.

Tara: Well close. It's Sophie at the Trader Joe's in Portland, Maine, only 3,201 miles from the North Pole.

Matt: Practically next door.

*[Dialing a phone.]*

Matt: Hi, Sophie.

Sophie: Hi, Matt. Hi, Tara.

Tara: Hey, is it cold there today? Cause when we visited Maine for episode 50 you said that Portland is, and I quote, "So, so, so, so cold."

Sophie: (laughs) It is not so, so, so cold yet. It's been a pretty balmy fall.

Matt: Heading out of fall and into the winter when this podcast airs. Have you been able to see any changing of the colors on the trees?

Sophie: My commute into Portland provides an amazing array of foliage on my whole way down. It's been really nice. Yes.

Matt: As we head into December, looking into those December holidays, anything that you're hearing from Mainer customers?

Sophie: Well, everyone is excited about the Almond Kringle. The Kringle is very popular here in Maine. I imagine you all get the kringle in California as well?

Matt: We do. We don't understand it, but we do get it.

Sophie: (laughs) Well, there's not much to really understand. It's just a delicious pastry and we get about four or five different flavors throughout the year. But the almond flavor is definitely the most popular flavor. But I think we all look forward to the Jingle Jangle the most.

Matt: The buying team, the merchandising group, they've worked hard to secure a lot more Jingle Jangle. We have probably about 25% more tins of Jingle Jangle this year than last year, which at this point I'm almost nervous about. But I'm excited to hear that Mainers, at least, are looking forward...

Sophie: (laughs) Don't be nervous. We are gonna sell all of that Jingle Jangle.

Tara: You know, we could reveal the Jingle Jangle news right about now. Don't you think, Matt?

Sophie: Please.

Matt: We could.

*[Trumpets blaring.]*

Tara: Yeah, so here's the Jangle surprise, okay? I wish you were here to see this right now, Sophie. We have a box of Jingle Jangle Pretzel Twists.

Sophie: (gasps) Now tell me...

Tara: Okay, that's a good reaction.

Sophie: ...are they chocolate?

Matt: They are indeed chocolate.

Tara: They are chocolate. So they're large pretzel twists, like really crunchy, covered in peanut butter candy coating, topped with candy coated dark chocolate gems and Joe-Joe's cookie bits.

Matt: Gems.

Tara: Gems.

Matt: Everyone loves gems.

Sophie: I wish you could see my face!

Tara: (laughs) I wish you could see this box.

Sophie: That is a thrill.

Matt: And it's a good thing that you put the summer whites away after Labor Day because you know, these look like you might have to have a Shop-Vac with you. These could be messy in the best way.

Tara: These have been...

Sophie: Thankfully if you eat them in your car, like I eat most of my snacks.

Matt: But the likelihood of your finding a bonus gem under this car seat a month later is pretty high, so.

Sophie: (laughs)

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: (laughs)

Sophie: I'm going to put a blanket and Wet-Naps in my car for the winter so I can enjoy them on my way home every day.

Tara: My advice to you Sophie, when they come in, get 'em before they're gone.

Sophie: Oh, I will, I do the same with the Jingle Jangle. I get at least three.

Tara: (laughs) Okay. We heard that a lot of people drive really great distances to get to your store cuz you are the only store in Maine.

Sophie: Yes, they do.

Tara: And people come from Canada, people come from all over northern New England. What do they stock up on for the winter?

Sophie: They definitely stock up on snacks and frozen foods.

Tara: Okay. And you don't even need like a cooler driving home, right?

Matt: Just roll down the window.

Sophie: (laughs) Well, they do bring their coolers though.

Tara: Okay, okay.

Sophie: They bring...

Matt: Cause they're Mainers.

Sophie: ...big coolers, they bring ice. And they sometimes will do one full shopping cart with frozen goods and another full shopping cart with just regular dry goods. And then of course the chicken stocks, pastas, the canned beans, you know? It's a long winter, you gotta have all your, all your solid basics.

Matt: You forgot how smoked trout is always on that list, too.

Sophie: And the lightly smoked mussels, of course.

Matt: Yes, okay. Points for you. Thank you for that. I love that product.

Sophie: (laughs) Those are actually a real hit amongst the crew.

Matt: They're so good with pasta.

Tara: Hey Sophie, what kind of message would you like to share with Trader Joe's customers and podcast listeners during the holiday season?

Sophie: I wanna say, soak up every minute together. I think for us in the northeast, the winter really invites us to be home, to be with our families, to be with our friends. And I think the more togetherness that we have, the better. It's hard for me to speak for the folks in California. I don't know what you all do all year.

Matt: We tan.

Sophie: But for us, we're so reliant on the seasonality of our lifestyles. So I'm ready to eat, I'm ready to bake, I'm ready to watch great TV, and I'm ready to be with the people that I love. That's a pretty universal concept overall. I would say this is the time to absolutely just enjoy the company of the people that you love.

Matt: I love that, and I thank you for it.

Sophie: Yeah.

Matt: That's great stuff.

Sophie: I think this is the time.

*[Music ends.]*

Tara: Everything that comes in just for the holidays is incredibly special in its own way.

*[Light upbeat holiday music begins.]*

Tara: My favorite Trader Joe's cheese of all time is the Toscano that's rubbed with cinnamon that we have in the fall. And in 2020 we introduced a Toscano Cheese Soaked in Chardonnay Wine. This one proved to be an immediate success. It just flew out of that cheese case. People were instantly drawn to it. It has that nutty, creamy flavor profile that the Toscano is famous for and that, just a little bit of Chardonnay right around the edges and you, it's subtle, but it's so satisfying.

Matt: There aren't any visual signifiers that it's going to be different from regular Toscano and yet aromatically, certainly flavor-wise, it is in fact distinctly different.

Tara: If you're making, you know, a cheese board or any kind of a charcuterie tray that includes cheese, this is a great addition and it's a cool cheese because it's slightly crumbly. It's not completely crumbly, or you could just slice it and it looks pretty that way as well. You can grate it. It melts really well. I really like it with apples. That's the Creamy Toscano Cheese Soaked in Chardonnay Wine. And that is absolutely in stores for most of the holiday season.

Matt: That will last in your fridge, in the cheese drawer for months truly.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: I'm also thinking about a really neat product that is the second year that we've had it. It's known as Tête de Moine, which is French, which means monk's head, but it's from a French speaking area of Switzerland that's right there on the French border in an area known as the Jura. This cheese has probably been around for maybe even a thousand years. It started at the abbey of Bellelay, made by monks from raw milk. It is produced and it has a protected designation of origin so it must be made in a certain way, in a certain place. It's from cows that graze on pastures in like eight little villages. They typically use springtime milk to make this rich cheese. It's aged on Spruce planks. We have it actually, not as a block, not as a wheel, not as a chunk, we have it in rosettes, so they're almost little, sort of, curly Q shavings. Visually, they strike me as looking like cauliflower florets, sort of a creamy yellow ivory color. In 1982, a mechanic invented this spiral scraping machine called a Girolle, which is the French word for chanterelle mushroom, because the shavings look kind of like a chanterelle mushroom. And we have a container of these rosette or girolle shavings, and the thin slice does for this cheese, what thin slices do for prosciutto. When you eat it, it's almost like it's melting in your mouth probably literally. This is a wonderful cheese. It's very limited, it's fun and it's just kind of weird in a great way.

Tara: Visually on a board with other cheeses and meats and crackers and other and other things, it looks stunning.

Matt: This is ready for your beautiful photo worthy cheeseboard and for those of you making shopping lists, that's spelled T-E-T-E D-E M-O-I-N-E. So that's Tête de Moine.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: All right. Oh, and there's another cheese, Matt. We only carry this at the holidays. We are known at this point for having this microwavable fondue. We just call it La Fondue. It's in a little tub, sits in our cheese case. Take the lid off, put the entire tub into the microwave. In five minutes you have fondue that is ready for whatever you might want to enjoy with cheese fondue.

Matt: Turtlenecks not included, but you're welcome to wear one. I love this because it's so easy. You don't have to have the set. You don't have to have an open flame. Just have plenty of crusty bread, maybe even some gherkins or cornichons, and whatever else you feel like having with fondue.

Tara: Yeah, this is one that my household waits for every year. We're so excited. It's just all those great flavors that you want from fondue without any of the work.

*[Music transition.]*

Matt: Thinking about La Fondue from France makes me think of France, in general, and how great the French are with chestnuts. They grow chestnuts, they enjoy chestnuts, and we have, what I think might be, one of the most convenient forms of chestnuts on earth. These

are organic, peeled and cooked chestnuts. They are from France. They're in the refrigerated section with the other refrigerated produce, and they're so, so easy. I think of them as roasting on an open fire, and I never know what to do with them after that. I guess people put them in stuffing. That's a classic thing. I have had some soups made with chestnuts. If you were to put these into stews or casseroles where you would put new potatoes, little baby potatoes, I think that would be interesting.

Tara: So how about popping them into the oven with some nicely seasoned brussel sprouts, a little olive oil, a little salt and pepper.

Matt: I love that. I think I would give the chestnuts a good rough chop so that you increase the surface area so that when they're roasting in the oven, they might get a little crispy and not be so soft.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: That sweetness is gonna be a great counterpoint to the bitterness and the brassica funk of brussel sprouts that we all love. Brassica funk.

Tara: Brassica funk.

Matt: See them Saturday night.

Tara: (laughs) They're already peeled. They are fully cooked, so you could just take them out of the package and eat them if you were so inclined. They're organic. We have them pretty much just at the holiday season.

Matt: I'm going to give myself a challenge to use chestnuts with celery, celery root, and cream of mushroom soup.

Tara: Ooh.

Matt: You know, all this working with chestnuts, my hands are a mess. What have we got here by way of lotion?

Tara: O-M-G. For years and years and years, we have sold at the holidays what we call the Ultra Moisturizing Hand Cream Trio. They're silver tubes of hand lotion. This year we kinda changed the formulations a little bit. Added some scents that are really interesting and popped it into a really cute package that has fun designs on the tubes themselves and has a little hanging ribbon at the top, so you could hang it from a Christmas tree, you could hang it from a stocking. You could just place it in front of somebody and not hang it on anything.

Matt: And one thing formulation-wise that hasn't changed with this product, it is still 20% shea butter. And if you've looked for shea butter hand creams elsewhere, you'll know that 20% shea butter is not the norm. And when you can find it, it's really pricey. And this is

certainly not that. This is a fantastic deal. We have three different fragrances, I think, in this new setup, and they're really nice.

Tara: Orchid & Olive Oil, Cherry Blossom & Almond Oil, and Lavender & Bergamot. Be a great gift really for anybody. Honestly, for me, it's a gift for myself.

Matt: All three scents are great.

Tara: Oh, you know what we forgot to mention? The new packaging has removed all the plastic from the outside of the packaging. So it's a paperboard package.

Matt: Which is great in and of itself. We continue to do the work to use as minimal and amount of materials when packaging the products that we offer as we can. And it looks a little even fancier.

Tara: Yeah, for sure. Okay, what else is in our what we call HABA, the health and beauty aids category?

Matt: This is a new product and I am just intrigued by this. It's a Gummy Bear Flavored Lip Duo, which includes lip balm butter and an overnight lip mask. Now, I like gummy bears a lot, and I'm wondering, is there a general gummy bear flavor? Like there's this platonic ideal of gummy bear essence and this must be it in lip balm form. It's really cute. I will say that as a package, it's a wonderful pink color with illustrations of gummy bears and this would hang really nicely on a holiday tree or off of a stocking, somewhere, anywhere. This looks pretty neat.

Tara: It's adorable actually. I have a feeling this is gonna be a big gift for the tween set, for keeping your lips from getting completely chapped and just falling apart all winter long.

Matt: Gummy bears to the rescue.

Tara: (laughs) Gummy bears to the rescue, we love that.

Matt: Finally.

Tara: (laughs)

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: All right, we need our frozen desserts.

Matt: Okay, I'll be right back.

*[Footsteps going away from mic.]*

Tara: My gosh, this is quite a list. The holidays are gonna be done before we're done. We've saved the best for last perhaps.

*[Matt returns.]*

Matt: I'm reminded of my father telling me to desert the table. That was often what I got for dessert.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: What would you like to do first?

Tara: These. For all you fans of the Mini Hold The Cones! Ice Cream Cones, time to rejoice because the Peppermint Hold The Cones! are back.

Matt: They are so good. One of my favorite things about this particular Hold The Cone!, the Peppermint Hold The Cone!, is the cocoa cone. I love that cocoa cone.

*[Opening box.]*

Tara: (laughs) That's the box. There are eight mini ice cream cones. Matt, would you like one?

Matt: Oh sure.

Tara: These are just so good. And there's not a single Hold The Cone! flavor that I don't like, but I do think that this peppermint one is my favorite. And I'm always excited when it comes back.

Matt: Really?

Tara: Mm-hmm. These I'm gonna buy some extras so I can have 'em in my freezer for a while. Yeah, chocolate and mint is a thing for me.

Matt: Yeah, okay. And it's so cool in so many ways. Actual temperature-wise, the coolness of the mint flavors, that menthol.

Tara: Yeah, everything about it is great.

Matt: These are just so cute.

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: Okay, Tara, I see your Peppermint Hold The Cone! Ice Cream Cones frozen treat from the dessert case of the frozen section, and I raise you another ice cream.

Tara: Oh!

Matt: Gingerbread Ice Cream.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: Here we go. Gingerbread Ice Cream with Triple Gingersnap Cookie Pieces and a Gingerbread Swirl.

Tara: Okay, pass me a spoon.

*[Spoons clinking.]*

Tara: Okay. Oh, wow. You know what's weird about this? Cuz obviously it's cold, but it tastes almost warm. It's all of those gingerbread spices. Do you understand what I'm saying? Does that...

Matt: I do. Oh, this is like our Gingerbread Cake Mix, gingerbread mix, in ice cream form. There's a hint of molasses here and of course all those great spices. That is wonderful.

Tara: And it's not overly sharp from a ginger perspective.

Matt: No, no. There isn't that spicy intensity. Probably helped greatly by that creamy, creamy ice cream. This is our usual super premium approach. This is very thick, very dense. It's a heavy ice cream on purpose. You get a lot out of this pint.

Tara: That's really good. I don't know what else to say about that.

*[Closing theme music with sleigh bells begin.]*

Tara: Our list is done. The actual Trader Joe's Holiday Shopping List is virtually endless, but this podcast is not.

Matt: We'd like to share our thanks and our gratitude for you and everything that you do to get to our stores, your store, and spend time with us. And thanks to the crew for everything they do every day in every store across the country.

Tara: We'll be back soon, maybe even before 2023 with another episode. To make sure you get it, 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.

Tara: Happy holidays!