

## Blast From The Past

# Soup's On

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ntrepreneur Kevin Fortun started in the foodservice industry in 1978. It was in 1981, while working in the purchasing department of Schwartz Bros. Restaurants in Bellevue, WA, Fortun noticed something peculiar — an inconsistency of soup from restaurant to restaurant.

Soon, an idea emerged to develop a premium line of prepared soups for restaurants that not only delivered a “from scratch” taste using all-natural ingredients, but was convenient and consistent batch to batch.

In his home kitchen Fortun honed his culinary skills, creating made-to-order small batches of soup. He used an innovative quick-chill technology to preserve freshness. The end result was a fresh, homemade soup with no MSG, no preservatives and no artificial ingredients.

Fortun's first client was Schwartz Bros. Restaurants and Stockpot Soups was born. Business grew rapidly, and soon Stockpot began servicing other local restaurants and institutional customers. The company picked up a national customer base, including TGI Friday's, Claim Jumper Restaurants, Sysco, grocery chains and a small gathering of international clients.

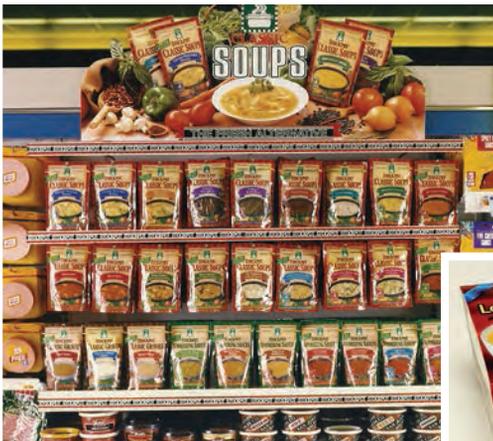
In the early days, Fortun made his soup by day, delivered to his clients in the afternoon and invoiced at night in his garage. A few years later, he brought his two brothers into the company and the company continued to grow, eventually moving into a manufacturing site in Redmond, WA.

In 1996, Stockpot expanded into the retail market with the introduction of a line of premium-refrigerated soups that used a new stand-up pouch technology. Stockpot Soups grew into the largest fresh-refrigerated soup company in the world, with distribution in 23 countries.

After selling to Campbell in 1998, Fortun invested in other ventures, including land development; a winery in Napa, CA; his own restaurant, Desert Sage, in LaQuinta, CA; and an equestrian center in Kirkland, WA.

With an itch to get back into food development, in 2009 Fortun launched Fortun's Finishing Touch Sauces, a collection of 12 gourmet finishing sauces that can be found in grocery stores and foodservice nationwide. For this line, Fortun consulted with top chefs and perfected the formulas himself. The gourmet sauces are cooked in small kettles, sautéed, simmered and perfected with just the right amount of fresh ingredients and spices.

In addition to the finishing sauces, Fortun Foods has developed a line of gourmet ready-to-serve soups for both the foodservice industry and retail market. Made in small batches, one kettle at a time and using natural ingredients, the soups are vacuum-packed in plastic bags and sealed while they are still fresh, then refrigerated until they are ready for use.



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