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# Sunny D owner buys L.A. natural juice maker Bossa Nova

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Sunny D has long been known as a children's drink, but its owners are looking to reach a healthier and more mature consumer -- and they're going to use a West Los Angeles drink maker to do it.

Beverages Holdings bought Bossa Nova Beverage Group Inc. today for an undisclosed amount, said Lloyd Greif, president of Greif and Co., the investment bank that facilitated the sale. Bossa Nova is best known for its acai juice drink and also produces several other flavors.

"You won't find Sunny D selling in a Whole Foods or a Trader Joe's," Greif said. "But this acquisition gets a Sunny D product into those stores. And this will get Bossa Nova even more into the mainstream supermarket and mass channel."

Bossa Nova will remain in Los Angeles with the same staff of about 15 people, said Alton Johnson, Bossa Nova's founder and CEO.

"It's nice to see a major beverage group from outside of the area invest into the L.A. area," Johnson said.



Bottles of Bossa Nova juices.

"We're all from California, and our operations and our employees are going to stay here, and that's important."

Bossa Nova will still run as an autonomous company but will fold into the portfolio of Cincinnati-based Beverages Holdings, he said. Johnson will take on a role in his new parent company as vice president for natural beverages.

"A lot of entrepreneurs say it's sort of like you're giving birth to a little entity in the form of a company," Johnson said. "I wanted to ensure the brand received the resources it needs above all else, and I'm very excited about the opportunity we've got here. Sunny D has truly shown an appreciation of our mission."

The purchase of Bossa Nova gives the Sunny D maker an infusion of credibility in the natural beverage market while giving Bossa Nova wider distribution and more marketing resources than it had before.

"They've got things down to an exact science as far as procurement and distribution," Johnson said of Beverages Holdings. "Their marketing resources allow us to take a deeper breath and really focus on building this natural, super fruit drink space in the market."

Late last year, Bossa Nova expanded its line to 10 juices from five (new flavors included goji, acerola and mangosteen). The sale should enable Bossa Nova to continue to expand its drink lineup, Johnson said.

All parties involved wouldn't say how much Beverages Holdings paid for Bossa Nova, but Johnson noted that his



Alton Johnson, founder and CEO of Bossa Nova Beverage Group.

company had well in excess of \$10 million in sales last year.

Sunny D's sales exceeded \$575 million in 2008, said Sydney McHugh, a spokeswoman for Beverages Holdings.

Johnson started Bossa Nova in 2000 as an MBA student at the University of Southern California, researching the scientific properties of the acai berry and its ability to be turned into a drink and mixed with other juices, Johnson said. Bossa Nova drinks hit shelves for the first time in 2005, he said.