

BEVERAGE BUSINESS INSIGHTS

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PROFILE: Soho Waterworks Building Platform to Popularize Obscure, but Mineral-Rich, Bottled Waters from US and Beyond With sale of its North American bottled water biz, Nestle gave up on getting consumers to pay a premium for sourced brands like Poland Spring, Ozarka and Zephyrhills. But a newcomer to bevs named Angela Cooper who's built a mortgage brokerage in Philadelphia sees plenty of upside for naturally sourced brands with great purity and taste. Operating out of Brooklyn as Soho Waterworks, Cooper has teamed up with her brother, a logistics expert, and one of her best friends, a data analytics pro, to offer a marketing and retail service that will bring undeservedly obscure mineral-rich bottled waters from US and overseas to wider audience. Among her first clients are the American brands Clear Alaskan Glacial and Jackson Springs as well as German brand Radius 99, with more announcements imminent. Soho name was taken for its connotations as stylish, upscale NY nabe, tho realities of NY real estate dictated that co actually operate across East River, out in Brooklyn.

The launch has been a work in progress, as initial plans for bricks & mortar showcase were sidelined by pandemic, so partners tilted focus to B2B and B2C. "We're going to go down this road and see where it takes us," Cooper said bluntly. Effort is driven by her conviction that environments like Italy, New Zealand and Costa Rica are abundant in pure water sources that might find a following in US if there was a partner available to ease the burden of communicating their benefits and getting them placed. Her partners are her brother Richard Dale, who boasts 40+ years at Ricketts Home Centers, Auto Depot and Home Depot, and her friend Ilia Shatashvili, a BNY Mellon vet who brings data analytics and foreign exchange skills to table. Co touts a program it calls True Cost Pricing that Cooper said takes the bargaining out of establishing margin structure and shelf price. Cooper is ceo, Dale strategy chief and Shatashvili coo, tho roles clearly overlap.

Cooper said co is in discussions now with major retailers about establishing shelf set populated with brands like Jackson Springs and Radius 99 and also is preparing to launch a B2C subscription program. Co is in hunt for sustainably sourced waters with demonstrated health properties, packed in range of formats including plastic, and for now has no plans to move into adjacencies like seltzers, said Cooper, who was preparing to head out to Alaska tomorrow to inspect Clear Alaskan Glacial operation at Eklutna Lake. Info at SohoWaterworks.com.