



Photo: Jennifer Chase Esposito

# She's got spice

## For local entrepreneur, variety of spice is the spice of life

**BY JENNIFER CHASE ESPOSITO**  
FOOD WRITER

Alisa Taylor-Kapoor looks infinitely more “Taylor” than her married surname “Kapoor” insinuates. Flaxen haired, light eyed and ivory skinned, she doesn’t strike you as someone who could be so well versed in spice blends of the world.

But we’re taught young to never judge a book by its cover. And this case is no different. The 28-year-old founder of the company Spice Genie is wise beyond her years and ethnic beyond her looks, thanks to her lifelong fascination with a world that stretches far beyond the South End home she shares with her husband, Al.

If you have been to Lionette’s Market or Appleton Café & Bakery and have seen some colorful packets labeled “Italian,” “Herbs de Provence,” “Thai,” “Indian” and “Mexican,” those are hers. So are the larger-sized, attractively designed tins with the same names, a tower of canisters that makes a perfect gift, and specialty flavored sugars like “Lavender Ginger,” “Raspberry Vanilla,” “Lemon,” “Chai” and “Mint,” each with its own recipe and suggestions for usage, supplied by Taylor-Kapoor.

Taylor-Kapoor took the concept we’ve seen



The South End’s Alisa Taylor-Kapoor founded Spice Genie, which takes the guesswork out of cooking authentic, international foods by putting all the flavor you need at your fingertips.

in pre-packaged spices and has made them available in various sizes, and in authentic flavors without anything chemical or artificial added. Now, thanks to research trips to China, Spain, El Salvador, Mexico, Italy, Morocco and of course India, and with gentle guidance from her India-born mother-in-law, Rani Kapoor, Spice Genie gives home cooks the chance to reach their inner celebrity chef and cook like the international culinary rock stars

they believe themselves to be.

“People like experimenting with different foods,” she continues. But in her experience, non-Indian cooks looking for authentic Indian spices could go to some of the authentic shops in Central Square; but the packaging is often in Arabic or Hindi and discourages English- or non-Arabic-reading cooks from buying them.

Spice Genie products are completely the opposite, and for that reason, Taylor-Kapoor is likely to see a boon in sales because Spice Genie fills a need. She’s too considerate to come out and say it, but Taylor-Kapoor’s packets are really for the spice-inept. More kindly, they’re for the busy cook, or, as she explains, the cook that generally can’t afford the investment of preparing, say, authentic Indian food because so many different spices are required to achieve the right flavor that it can really get costly.

“Every family in India has its own ‘masala,’ which is basically a spice mix,” says Taylor-Kapoor. “What is traditional is that the same spices go into them: cinnamon, coriander ... but some families have up to 15 different spices in them and that could be their basic blend.” Now, Spice Genie will help make achieving those tastes a reality.

And it’s a reality a lot of people are already