

America's Most Promising Startups



By Nick Leiber (posted on Apr. 7, 2009)

Pancakes from a Spray Can

[Batter Blaster](#)

Sean O'Connor and Nate Steck

Sean O'Connor opened his first restaurant in San Francisco shortly before the dot-com bust. As business tanked, O'Connor, who had grown up in a restaurant family and studied hospitality management, retooled his concept, turning the full-service establishment into a bar and laying off most of his staff. For fun, he spent a lot of time in the kitchen, playing around with various gizmos. A failed experiment making beignets with a whipped-cream charger sparked an idea: Why not put pancake batter in spray cans and market them to consumers? In 2005, he teamed up with Nate Steck, a food manufacturing wizard, and raised \$1.5 million to create the line and buy manufacturing equipment. Last year, San Francisco's Batter Blaster and its 16 employees squeezed out \$9 million in sales, retailing the cans for \$5 a pop in over 10,000 stores across the country, including Costco ([COST](#)) and Whole Foods ([WFMI](#)). O'Connor, 37, and Steck, 40, plan to reinvest the 30% of their gross revenue into marketing and hope to double sales in 2009.