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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Horn & Heat Launches Chef-Crafted Hot Sauce Line Born in South Africa and Built Around Rhino Conservation

New food brand debuts with three chef-crafted hot sauces and hot honey, bringing together layered flavor, real heat and support for baby rhino conservation in South Africa

Columbia, SC, August 25, 2026 – Horn & Heat, a new premium hot sauce and specialty food company born from an unexpected connection in South Africa's Northern Cape Province, has officially launched its first collection of hot sauces and hot honey in the United States.

At the center of the launch are three hot sauces: **Rhino Doctor Reserve**, **Rhino Gold** and **Rhino Baby**, each developed around a flavor-first approach that treats hot sauce as more than a condiment. The collection also includes **Rhino Nectar**, a hot honey pairing natural sweetness with slow-building chili heat.

Horn & Heat began during the filming of the documentary [*Rhino Rescue: Battling Extinction in South Africa*](#). While working on location at Rockwood Conservation, founders Fernando and Bri Coelho met South African wildlife veterinarian Dr. Liam Theuns Smit, known as The Rhino Doctor.

Smit oversees the health and care of more than 450 rhinos at Rockwood Conservation, a 33,000-acre reserve in South Africa's Northern Cape Province. His work includes routine health checks and vaccinations, microchipping individual rhinos, treating injuries, assisting with the movement of animals across the property, and helping care for orphaned and vulnerable calves. Rockwood's extensive security efforts have helped keep poaching incidents exceptionally rare, with only one reported incident during the reserve's operation.

Recognizing the extraordinary cost of caring for orphaned calves, Smit and Rockwood Conservation founder Wicus Diedericks created the Rockwood Conservation Fund to help support their feeding and care. A single baby rhino can require more than \$10,000 per year in milk alone.

Away from his veterinary work, Smit had also been making hot sauce by hand on his own farm using peppers he grew himself.



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During filming, he shared the sauce with Fernando and Bri. What began as a bottle passed between friends eventually became the foundation for Horn & Heat.

When Fernando and Bri returned to Rockwood Conservation in 2025 to film the series [A Taste of Africa](#), the idea took shape. Together with Smit, they began developing a food brand designed to preserve the character of the original sauce while expanding the concept into a broader collection.

"The whole thing started with the flavor," said Horn & Heat co-founder Fernando Coelho. "We weren't looking for a hot sauce company to start. Liam handed us a bottle of something he had made for himself and the folks at Rockwood, and it was completely different from the one-dimensional sauces we were used to. The conservation story came naturally because that is the world this sauce came from."

Hot Sauce Built for Cooking

Horn & Heat takes a different approach from hot sauces built primarily around heat or vinegar.

The company's sauces are developed using peppers, fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices and aromatics intended to create layers of flavor rather than simply increasing heat. Chef and co-founder Bri Coelho developed Rhino Gold and Rhino Baby around the idea that hot sauce should work throughout the cooking process, not just as something shaken onto a finished meal.

Horn & Heat encourages customers to use its sauces in marinades, vinaigrettes, butter sauces, soups, chili, burgers, roasted vegetables, glazes, pasta sauces, dips and other recipes before using them as a finishing sauce.

"It's really about rethinking what hot sauce can do," said Bri Coelho. "Heat matters, but flavor has to come first. A good sauce should add depth to food, not just make it hotter."

The initial hot sauce collection includes:

Rhino Doctor Reserve

The flagship sauce and the closest expression of Smit's original hot sauce. Rhino Doctor Reserve is built around an eight-pepper profile and designed for customers looking for serious heat without sacrificing flavor.



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Rhino Gold

A medium-heat, chef-developed sauce with a thick, complex texture and layered savory flavor. Rhino Gold is designed for everyday cooking and finishing without overpowering the food around it.

Rhino Baby

The mildest sauce in the collection, created for customers who want the flavor and versatility of Horn & Heat without aggressive heat.

The line is joined by **Rhino Nectar**, Horn & Heat's hot honey, made with African piri piri peppers, giving it a flavor and heat profile rarely found in the category. The result is a distinctive, slow-building heat balanced by natural sweetness, ideal for pizza, fried chicken, biscuits, cheese, grilled foods, and more.

Heat With Purpose

The connection to South Africa did not end when the cameras stopped rolling. A portion of every Horn & Heat bottle and jar sold supports the **Rockwood Conservation Fund**, founded by Rockwood Conservation owner Wicus Diedericks and Dr. Liam Theuns Smit.

Rockwood Conservation protects more than 450 rhinos across approximately 33,000 acres in South Africa's Northern Cape Province. Among them are orphaned and vulnerable calves requiring intensive care in Rockwood's dedicated rhino nursery.

Feeding a single orphaned baby rhino can require more than \$10,000 in milk alone. Funds generated through Horn & Heat help support calf feeding, veterinary care and long-term rhino conservation efforts.

The company calls that philosophy Heat With Purpose.

"People should buy the sauce because it tastes great," Fernando Coelho said. "But if something they were already going to put on their food can also help feed and care for an orphaned rhino, that gives the purchase another level of meaning."

The story behind Horn & Heat and the conservation work at Rockwood is featured in the documentary *Rhino Rescue: Battling Extinction in South Africa*, available free through major streaming platforms including Amazon Prime Video and Tubi.

For more information about Horn & Heat, its products, recipes and the company's work



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with the Rockwood Conservation Fund, visit <https://hornandheat.com/>.

About Horn & Heat

Horn & Heat is a specialty food company founded by Fernando and Bri Coelho in partnership with South African wildlife veterinarian Dr. Liam Theuns Smit. Born from their work together at Rockwood Conservation in South Africa's Northern Cape Province, the company produces chef-crafted hot sauces and specialty foods built around real flavor, real heat and real impact.

Horn & Heat's flagship lineup includes Rhino Doctor Reserve, Rhino Gold, Rhino Baby and Rhino Nectar hot honey. A portion of every bottle and jar sold supports the Rockwood Conservation Fund and its work caring for orphaned and vulnerable rhinos in South Africa.

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