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**Illuminating a Craft**  
By [Danielle Sonnenberg](#)  
TheStreet.com Staff Reporter  
2/23/2007 2:22 PM EST  
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Frederick Bouchardy wakes up every day to a job he loves.

Founder of [Joya Candle](#), a high-end candle line, Bouchardy, 27, gets to set his own rules.

With lushly colored waxes and unusual scents such as cacao bean-fig, lavender-bergamot and lilac-cyclamen, these candles (more than \$20 each) have attracted quite a following.

A detailed, handcrafted feel is essential to this small domestic business, which is experiencing strong growth: Joya has more products launching in the first half of this year than all other previous products combined, and is looking into distribution in Europe and Asia.

TheStreet.com recently caught up with Bouchardy to illuminate the details of his fragrant company.

**The Street.com:** *When did you found your company?*

**Frederick Bouchardy:** Joya was founded in 2003, after a year of researching different material waxes and fragrance oils. It was essential to get a tangible product people could touch, see, feel and smell.

*Why did you decide on candles as your product?*

Candles are a traditional and comfortable item for people. They have been used since ancient times, are ubiquitous and people are expected to have them in their home.

*What was the first place you shopped the candle to?*

It was [Saks Fifth Avenue](#) (SKS - [Cramer's Take](#) - [Stockpickr](#) - [Rating](#)), and they bought it for the 2003 holiday season.

*What stores carry Joya candles?*

We have worked with Bloomingdales, Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, Barneys, **Urban Outfitters** (URBN - [Cramer's Take](#) - [Stockpickr](#) - [Rating](#)) and then more-targeted places like Fred Segal and the Museum of Modern Art design store.

*How long did it take for Joya to make a profit?*

It took one year because the start-up costs (\$75,000) were significant. We also had to employ a staff, and it costs a significant amount to warehouse all the materials necessary to have a complete collection (different packaging, oils, etc).

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**Illuminating a Craft**  
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*Did you have mentors to guide you?*

I did, in fact. My folks were very helpful. ... My mom has an excellent eye and is forward-thinking in her tastes, and my father, who was an economic major, has an excellent business taste. I also have friends in fashion and design. Lastly, [Jimmy Belasco], who founded his own candle company *Er'go* ... gave me a lot of input. He was one of the few people in the industry to share his ideas with me.

*How big is your company?*

Currently, we [employ] eight people. We also have a complete nationwide group of sales representatives.

It's a very intimate company. We all work very closely together, and essentially every single product we distribute touches everyone's hands along the way.

*What makes your company unique?*

We manufacture in New York -- to be specific, in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. This lets us ... do limited editions of 100 pieces at the same time we are creating giant labels' pieces. We are catered toward the individual need.

*Are you the sole owner of Joya? And what impact does that have?*

Yes, I am the only owner in the company. It's a very comfortable place to be in, not having investors dictating that the bottom line always comes first. The home-fragrance market is directly tied into the fashion market, and sometimes you have to take risks that are ahead of the curve to stay on top to raise brand awareness.

*Do you design everything?*

No, not everything, I also work with three excellent young designers. I would consider myself the creative director of the company.

*Are you in this business for the long run?*

We are, which is another point of distinction. Some people only launch candle lines because it's trendy. We carefully consider each new product launch and think about what it is going to mean or say about us.

*Are your days still long?*

Yes, I work almost every weekend. For example, I just worked the whole Presidents Day weekend, but it was fun, as I was being creative -- I was generating artwork and strategizing about new products.

*Does Joya do any advertising?*

No, just editorial. We think editorial is ... more powerful. People don't trust advertising. Advertising in this market is tricky, as people are understandably skeptical [about advertising]. We also donate a lot of candles to charity.

*What advice would you give to a young entrepreneur?*

The best advice for your business model and the product is to be consistent. Also, make sure people understand your mission, your point of view and what makes your company unique. Lastly, if you have a good idea, don't sit on it for too long -- the world is full of creative and potential competitors.

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