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CHIC SPOTLIGHT: LINDA FRITZ, FOUNDER OF CRESBI



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Chic Spotlight: Linda Fritz, Founder of CRESBI

Tired of lugging countless bags to and from the grocery? One local lady developed lightweight crates that collapse, stack and insulate, while fitting into any cart. Read on to learn more.



Linda Fritz, founder of CRESBI

Cincy Chic: What is CRESBI?

Linda Fritz, Owner of Sun Sugar Farms, LLC and founder of CRESBI:

CRESBI stands for Collapsible Reusable Environmentally-friendly Stackable Box Idea. The basic CRESBI crate system (the Convenience CRESBI) includes the collapsible, dishwasher-safe crate, a strong customizable strap that allows you to pop it open and carry it like a basket or hands-free over your shoulder and a thermal insert. This system can be used to shop with instead of the store's convenience basket. Depending on what you're buying, one crate can replace up to 6 plastic bags. All other CRESBI systems also include a strap and thermal protection.

Cincy Chic: What inspired the design for the crates?

Fritz: As it was getting harder to get paper bags at the store for weed control for my sustainably-grown edamame, and I was tired of recycling all the plastic bags I'd get; I also hated that I had to deliver my edamame to markets in cardboard that would just get soggy and probably thrown away. I ordered a couple of small, collapsible bins like the produce guys use at the grocery store and started thinking: If the bins I'd bought were just lighter, taller and less industrial they could fit and stack in a grocery cart and everybody could use a crate instead of plastic or cheap reusable bags.

Cincy Chic: When did you design your first crate?

Fritz: In April 2012 I documented my CRESBI crate idea, researched manufacturers, seamstresses and freight forwarders and in November 2012 I took delivery of the crates and launched the [website](#).

Cincy Chic: How are CRESBI crates unique?

Fritz: CRESBI crates are unique in many ways. You can shop with them open and put your items in, barcodes up and the checkers at stores with handheld scanners can scan all your products right in the crate. Unlike most reusable bags that are only supposed to be hand-washed in cold water, CRESBI crates are dishwasher-safe so you can totally kill any E.coli-type bacteria. Although collapsible crates have around for many years, CRESBIs are unique in the fact that they fit and can stack in every type of shopping cart and how they are bundled into systems to fit any shopping lifestyle. The CRESBI "system" of strap, thermal protection and crate has never been done before and is currently patent-pending.

Cincy Chic: How are you getting the word out about your product?

Fritz: Locally, I have joined the Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati chambers, I've become Woman Business-Owned certified, I'm a part of the Green Umbrella group, I cold-call local businesses where I think there might be a good match between my product (the strap can be customized with their logo) and their company and I participate in some sort of tradeshow about once a month. My website has attracted customers worldwide and I've sold thousands of crate systems online.

Cincy Chic: What are some of your goals for CRESBI?

Fritz: I'd like to partner with a major grocery chain who sees how much their scans per minute will increase if they market CRESBI crates via email or customer service pickup (vs sitting on a shelf) and combining CRESBI usage with reward points. Then I'd like to find more cities like Shoreline, Wash., where they instituted a plastic bag ban and then purchased 1,000 CRESBI crates as an Earth Day giveaway for their residents. I hope to gain national exposure via television programming such as Shark Tank, Huffington Post, Today Show, etc. I want CRESBI to get enough business that I not only recoup my initial investment and startup costs but am able to lower the cost of the crate systems so that more people can easily afford them. I would like to find cities that have banned styrofoam and bags and get a major chain restaurant to use the Carryout CRESBI crate and Eco-Takeout for their deliveries and regular to-go customers and I'd like to see every home in America have at least one CRESBI crate.

Cincy Chic: How are things going with the crates thus far?

Fritz: Since launching I've had some really great successes such as landing SkinnyMom as an affiliate. Several Huff Real Estate agents bought red crates with their name on the strap, CincyFavorites is doing a big promo with the CRESBI cooler, Bank of Kentucky bought 350 Convenience CRESBI crates for their Earth Day event, Shoreline, Wash., purchased 1,000 and I was a finalist for the Cincinnati Chamber's WE Best New Product/Service of the Year Award for 2013.

Cincy Chic: Is there anything new on the horizon?

Fritz: I am currently trying to find a U.S. manufacturer for the crates, looking into other materials that the crate can be made out of, designing a new "USA" pattern for the strap in time for Memorial Day and partnering with a needy group to manufacture the reusable bag items we sell since most reusable bags are not accepted by any recycling centers.

Cincy Chic: Where can readers go to learn more about CRESBI and purchase them?

Fritz: Readers can visit [cresbicrates.com](#) or call me directly at 859-630-2694. If they buy online with a credit card they can choose free local delivery and I can drop off their crate order to any Remke customer service desk for pickup. If they're interested in having a custom strap made I can meet with them to show them the options (minimum order for that is 20 systems). Some people instantly fall in love with CRESBI crates and are interested in selling them. I offer a totally low key reseller program where a person gets \$175 worth of product for \$100, 30% commission and absolutely no minimum selling requirements, ever. It's just to enjoy and if you sell a few, great!

Sara Elliott -



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