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Anti-aging chewing gum made with olive oil wins international innovation award

OLIGUM uses microencapsulated extra virgin olive oil to deliver health benefits and sustainability in a biodegradable, plant-based product

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The Olive Oil World Congress (OOWC) has announced the winner of its international “Beyond Olive Oil” competition, an event designed to discover innovative uses for extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) outside of traditional culinary applications. The winning entry, called “OLIGUM,” introduces a new concept: an anti-aging chewing gum made with

microencapsulated EVOO. The product, developed under the slogan “Chew Your Beauty,” aims to create a new category of health-focused, sustainable products that align with current wellness trends.

OLIGUM was created by Mónica Di María, a doctoral student at the University of Palermo in Italy. She is part of the Department of Agricultural and Forestry Systems (SAAF) and specializes in food science and technology. Di María’s formula is entirely natural and combines scientific research, Mediterranean tradition, and ecological awareness. The gum’s main ingredient is extra virgin olive oil that has been microencapsulated using advanced technology. This process allows the polyphenols—antioxidant compounds found in EVOO—to be released gradually during chewing, which supports their absorption and provides anti-aging and anti-inflammatory benefits.

In addition to EVOO, OLIGUM contains natural botanical extracts such as Sicilian lemon, mint, and rosemary. These ingredients add a fresh flavor and offer digestive properties. The gum is sweetened with honey and plant fibers, which also improve its texture. The base of the gum is Chicza, a 100% biodegradable and plant-based material sourced from the Mayan rainforest. The product is packaged in a reusable aluminum container designed to keep the ingredients fresh and maintain the stability of the polyphenols.

The “Beyond Olive Oil” competition was organized by OOWC as part of its lead-up activities to the main congress event. The goal was to find products that use EVOO in non-food contexts, focusing on health, cosmetics, technology, or sustainability. According to Ricardo Migueláñez, General Coordinator of OOWC, OLIGUM embodies the spirit of the competition. He noted that proposals were received from several countries but highlighted OLIGUM for its innovation, commercial viability, and potential positive impact on public health.

The jury praised OLIGUM’s ability to transform a traditional ingredient into a functional product for everyday use. They also recognized its role in promoting healthy habits through an accessible format and offering an ecological alternative to conventional chewing gum, which often contains plastic bases that contribute to environmental pollution.

The announcement took place as part of OOWC’s ongoing efforts to encourage new ideas around olive oil use. The competition reflects a growing interest in leveraging traditional ingredients for modern wellness solutions while addressing sustainability concerns in consumer products. With OLIGUM’s recognition at this international event, extra virgin olive oil finds itself at the center of innovation beyond the kitchen, opening new possibilities for both industry professionals and consumers interested in health-conscious living.