

Feb/Mar 2019

BAKING

BUSINESS

FLOUR AND CHOCOLATE | MULLUMBIMBY | DISCOVER SEA SALT



**BILL
FULLER**

*Golden
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A TALE OF FLOUR AND CHOC OLATE //

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In 2012 Kylie and Lachlan Scott opened the doors to their bakery, Flour and Chocolate. Since then, the business has gone on to achieve cult status in Brisbane however, it was just the start for the dynamic duo with a second bakery opening to great fanfare in January.



You could argue it's the phone call you never really expect to get, however, when Kylie Scott answered her phone with "I wake up with Today" and received a \$20,000 windfall from the TV program in the process, it helped to dramatically change both her and her husband Lachlan's lives.

Thanks to that unexpected cash injection the Brisbane-based business owners were able to put the wheels in motion to realise a long-held dream of owning their own bakery. In 2012 they signed a lease on a small bakery space in Morningside and began the long haul towards creating a baking institution in the river city.

Those early days were long for the Scotts, who manned the business alone for the first five months. Kylie would wake their two small children at 5am to begin the morning commute to join Lachlan at the store ahead of the doors opening at 6.30am, after which they'd toil together before closing for the day at 4pm. This routine was repeated seven-days-a-week until, eventually, the workload caught up with them.

As a result, more team members joined the Flour and Chocolate family, trading was cut back to five days and an earlier closing time was implemented.

Now, seven years later, the duo has achieved what they set out to do. Flour and Chocolate has become a household name in Brisbane

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and, in January this year they opened the doors to a second Flour and Chocolate bakery at Northgate on Brisbane's north side to great excitement.

Lachlan explains there were a number of reasons behind the decision to expand the business, not least being a lack of space at the original store.

"We're really tight for space at Morningside. We've got 90sq m and more than 21 staff in there and it's incredibly tight," he says.

"That's also why we created days of the week for products at the Morningside store; we just couldn't physically do all those products every day. There's no space. We'd have customers say 'I want doughnuts or I want bagels' and I'd say 'OK, but we can only do them once or twice a week, or bagels on Fridays'.



“Whereas over here we’ve got a bit of freedom to play with different products and come up with new ideas.”

It’s this willingness to play and experiment with new creations that Lachlan credits with putting Flour and Chocolate on the culinary map.

Following a passing comment from Kylie’s aunt about the rising popularity of the croissant and doughnut hybrid, the cronut, in New York City, Lachlan and his team decided to try their hand at creating their own version of the delicacy. And while Lachlan puts the success of their own cronut recipe down to baking experience, what he never imagined was just how popular the small baked good would become.

The delicacy went viral from almost the first day it was on sale and the rest, as they say, is history.

“We were really caught off guard, to be honest. When we first started at Morningside it was more about creating the products we loved doing but also listening to our customers and their requests,” Lachlan says.

“When we started selling cronuts – we don’t call them that. We call them doughnuts – we just got

slammed. It was crazy. I think we ate a lot of those little baby round things and they really did help us along in business and helped us get the reputation because at the time we were one of the only bakeries that were doing them.”

The cronut may have helped put Flour and Chocolate on the map, but these days each of the products lining the shelves have their staunch fans. Walking into the Northgate Flour and Chocolate store, alongside the cronuts you’d also find firm crowd favourites such as sourdoughs, a full range of pastries and croissants as well as crowd-pleasers such as brownies and cakes.

However, Lachlan says it’s the opportunity to develop and expand on the sit-down dessert options as well as freshly made sandwiches that has he and his Northgate team really firing up at the moment, as the inclusion of a sit-down coffee option at the new store has resulted in consumer demands for an entirely different range of products.

“At Morningside we just had take-away coffees, which were easy to pair with the range we had there. So



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HAND PICKED



what we're finding is with the sit-down coffees at Northgate our customers are ordering completely different products. For us it's a new experience and we've already had to alter what we make and how many of each thing we make," Lachlan says.

"We're looking at including more dessert-style things now, and we're also starting up sandwiches. I've got a chef coming on board and we'll make everything from scratch from the bread all the way through. With us doing this from start to finish we can be comparable to other places in the area cost-wise, but the sandwiches we will produce will be that much better again."

It's this foresight, along with taking on board customer input that helps to keep the Flour and Chocolate product line fresh and in line with what the public wants.

"A lot of our products are the result of someone coming in and hassling us, saying 'oh come on, just make it!' So that's essentially where we start an idea," Lachlan laughs.

"Not all customer requests get popular, but we try to see if there is a market for a product. Here we know there's a lot of interest in sandwiches and things like that, so that's something we really want to get into."

When asked what he personally favoured from the Flour and Chocolate menu, Lachlan admitted he found it hard to go past a

traditional butter croissant.

"I think that's why we have such great croissants. I'm always eating them. There's nothing better in the world in my mind. But another favourite is our danishes. They are just delicious," he says.

Naturally, at this time of year the conversation turns to plans for the future, and Lachlan already has a few new goals on the horizon, beginning with getting the Northgate Flour and Chocolate store flowing like clockwork in its business operations. Following that, city-wide domination is a potential target.

"We really want to get the point where if someone wants a particular baked item, the first thing they think about is us," Lachlan says.

"We still see this as a first chapter for us. For now we'll really focus on getting this new business stable and building the team up. Then we may look at opening another store on a different side of town, as we really want to cover Brisbane eventually. It's a fantasy, but it's something we're working really hard at to achieve.

Until then, Flour and Chocolate will focus their attention a bit closer to home.

"We want to be community-based and, if people want to catch up with their friends they can bring them here" Lachlan says.

"We just want to make it a really homely and pleasant space." **B**

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