



BITE SIZE STORY

THE REAL BITE SIZE STORY WAS BORN IN A CAFÉ IN EUROPE ... ANY CAFÉ IN EUROPE, ACTUALLY. GREECE, ITALY, SPAIN ... THE PLACE IS INTERCHANGEABLE, BECAUSE WHAT IT'S REALLY ABOUT IS THE EUROPEAN CULTURE OF HOSPITALITY, WHERE A CUSTOMER IS TREATED AS A GUEST ENTERING YOUR HOME. YOU WANT THEM TO FEEL WELCOME, TO FEEL COMFORTABLE, TO RETURN WITHOUT HESITATION. SO YOU TREAT THEM TO SOMETHING SPECIAL, SOMETHING THEY DIDN'T ASK FOR, JUST FOR THE SAKE OF GIVING.

Being involved in cafés for years and of course, growing up in Europe, we understood the importance of client appreciation. In the last café we were involved in, we served a little chocolate on the side of the coffees. It was not only a nice gesture, but also a point of difference between the surrounding cafés and us. Chocolates were then the 'in thing' in the market and pretty much the only option when it came to coffee accompaniment.

On one particular day I was sitting down going over the rosters, and I asked one of the wait staff to bring me over my standard piccolo. She was new, and I guess wanting to show me she was efficient, put one of the chocolates on the side of my coffee. I laughed when I saw it. I was so used to drinking my coffee standing, that this was an indulgence for me. In all our years serving chocolates on the side of coffees, it was the very first time that I actually had one on the side of my coffee.

So I tried it, sucking the chocolate until it dissolved in my mouth and then taking a sip of my piccolo. I was expecting the rich flavour to flood my taste buds, like it usually did, but I was amazed to find that the coffee actually tasted bitter and nothing like what it should taste like. I couldn't understand why. Our baristas were good, specially selected to be the best at what they do, and we knew it wasn't them. Our coffee brand hadn't changed, because we were drinking it every day and it tasted just as creamy and rich as ever. We checked the milk, the machine, everything and could not understand why

this particular coffee tasted bitter. Eventually it dawned on me that there was still one variable left to consider: the chocolate.

So naturally, the management then tried it for themselves. We each took a sip of our respective coffees, made exactly the way we each loved them: sugar, no sugar, strong, weak, milk, no milk, and then we had a bite of our chocolates.

And then of course, another sip.

All I remember was looking around at my partners and seeing a blank look on their faces. Nino, one of the baristas, broke the silence with two words in his thick Italian accent: "That's 'orrible". We all burst out laughing.

Coffee and chocolate was a terrible combination. The coffee after the chocolate tasted burnt and dull, definitely not as full bodied as the first sip. Who would have thought, when mochas taste so sweet? The espresso and the deep chocolate flavour actually worked against each other when isolated, as if they were fighting for the attention of your palate. We just couldn't believe it. After years of serving chocolates on the side of the coffees, we had never stopped to actually try what we were serving!

We went back to the drawing board as they say, but there was nothing on the market that fit the size, taste and price requirements that we had. The problem was that we didn't want to lose the relationships we had built with our customers over this time, nor did we want to give up on a concept we knew was working and would potentially work even better when we found the right kerasma. We had little choice, but

"The Royal Agricultural Society has a charter to promote agricultural excellence. Therefore in the Sydney Royal Fine Food shows, we reward those companies who transform fantastic raw ingredients into outstanding products such as these Bite Size Coffee Treats. The RAS of NSW uses qualified, independent judging panels and maintains the same high standards every year. An Award of Outstanding Excellence really is something very special."

Lyndey Milan - "food and wine personality" and Founding Chair, Sydney Royal Fine Food Competition.



AWARD WINNING
HONEY BITE

to begin baking our own coffee accompaniments.

Luckily for me, my business partners in the café were my mother and my aunty. Trained from a young age in the art of baking, they didn't waste much time before applying years of home schooling to developing our new coffee accompaniment. It took months and many trials of biscuits to perfect it, but we eventually developed our own Bite Size Coffee Treat to serve to our clients. It was a crispy almond shortbread made by hand and baked in my aunty's own kitchen. It was their mother's recipe, made the same way it had been for generations, but Bite Size.

This time we made sure we had a taste with coffee, before we started feeding it to our customers. The results were unanimous. No one could stop at one. Our coffee sales were hitting the roof, and we were doing week after week record trade.

People were ordering coffees and asking for their biscuits – a lot of regulars even opting to get a second coffee, when for years they would only ever have one. Our cake sales also increased; it seemed that people didn't realise they wanted

had made us realise that hospitality was an industry no different to any other, where people appreciated an incentive to pick one brand over another. Our customers were no longer just the people on table 2, but educated consumers, who were making informed decisions on where they would eat and/or drink based on what they got in return.

Atmosphere. Relationship. Value.

Traditional concepts of service, quality and reliability were proving to only get cafés or restaurants so far in our saturated hospitality market. If our experience taught us anything, it was that it's the small things you do in business that make all the difference.

After we sold the café, my mother, aunty and I decided to go into business together again, but this time not in the café business ... in the coffee accompaniment business. We actually wanted to help other café owners create a point of difference in their business just like we did. So in June 2006, we registered Bite Size Coffee Treats Pty Ltd. We started baking out of my aunty's kitchen, with just two clients. Today, the business produces over 7.5 million biscuits



BITESIZE ORIGIN

Sometimes it's a shot of grappa or maybe a petit four, other times fresh fruit, depending on whether you have a café or a restaurant. The message however is consistent. I appreciate you and your business. In Greek we call this kerasma, which translates to "on the house", because that's exactly what it's about; reminding your customer that they are in your house and you are a good host.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS 2006



SUZANNE DAKIS & SUSAN KOTROS



THE FACTORY 2012

something sweet until they had a tiny taste. We became known as the café that gave you something when you ordered coffee and overall, our customers were very happy.

After 18 months of serving these home-made accompaniments to our clients and seeing the café go from 18 kilos a week to 32 kilos a week, we decided to sell. But in that time, a shift had finally occurred in Australia. It might have been in a handful of cafés, but it affected thousands of customers, whose expectations of their dining or drinking experience had been altered in a way that could never be undone.

They now understood the concept of value adding to a café experience: of being thanked at the owner's expense for merely choosing us rather than our competitor; of being welcomed into our place, in the hope it will become your place.

It was a wake up call even to us, who already appreciated the idea of bringing this European trend to Australia. The success of the concept

a year, employs 12 full-time staff, services over 350 clients Australia wide and has won 13 Royal Fine Food Awards for best accompaniments in the country, including Champion Biscuit 2012.

The most prestigious award, however, came only a few weeks ago, when we were awarded the "Award of Outstanding Excellence". This award is the highest accolade given out by the Royal Agriculture Society of NSW and to be eligible you must have already won a Gold and Champion medal in your chosen field. The "Award of Outstanding Excellence" is rarely given out; in fact, there have only ever been 3 other companies in the history of this award to win such a prize since its inception nearly 20 years ago – none of them, however, in the field of biscuits.

This special award is summarised in the following way: "It is awarded to a product considered by all judges to be of Outstanding Quality, well above in superiority than all others. The judges must in their professional opinion

believe that this product can't be altered or perfected any more than what it currently is". We can now comfortably say our products have been tried and tested and found to be "the perfect coffee accompaniment" – not just by us, but by clients, customers and now by judges alike.

But the truth is that despite all the awards, the success, the fact that people now know our name, the biggest satisfaction still comes from being told that your product has helped someone improve their business. The smile on the face of a business owner as you watch them take their dreams and mould them into real places – that is my favourite part. Knowing that we assisted in creating those dreams, in increasing their coffee sales, in making them stand out against their competitors, it's a pretty nice feeling.

Business owners in Europe had it right all along. Bring them into your home. Show them your hospitality, because that's what this industry is all about.