



A few years back, the expose on what processed meats are usually made of and how the notorious 'pink slime' went into fast food meats shocked consumers. Independent deli

meat makers then took a challenge to create quality, premium processed meat products to cater to a burgeoning refined modern market, writes RAJESWARI RAMANEEL.



From left, LoSaRaTha's General Manager Raymond Anthony, Sailor's Editorial and Communications Christina Lye, Sailor's Director Gavin Welman, Louis Joubert and Sailor's Business Manager Mir Najaf Ali.

# Sailor's gourmet sausages venture into larger ocean



Sailor's sausage platter.

Malaysia's middle class has been growing for the past 25 years, with those who have had the opportunity to live or travel abroad picking up a taste for deli meats. However, sausages or frankfurters made its appearance together with burgers at local roadside stalls around 30 years ago. The economic explosion in the 1990s increased the presence of expats in the country and drew

restaurants to serve more European fares, including an array of different flavored sausages. This led to a change in taste for locals, who also wielded a buying power for better meat products.

Good, European style sausages are one of the most versatile deli items that could be transformed into and used in various types of dishes.

With this thought in mind, the Sailor's brand of premium gourmet ▷



◀ sausages decided to go national with their products. What started out as a home kitchen operation around 2006 as a business to cater to yachtsmen in Langkawi, has become a full-blown commercial operation with large-scale factory production.

### It begins from yachts

The desire of company founders, South Africans Don and Jeanne Pickers, for a taste of home, propelled them into making sausages, burgers and pies on their own yacht, which they also supplied to other yachties.

Word of mouth and the principle of 'caring is sharing' brought their small business onshore and into a small factory in Padang Matsirat. As the business grew, it came to the attention of Brit Gavin Welman, who together with his partners decided to acquire the business in 2016 with a view to expanding its operations not only in Langkawi but nationally, and in due course internationally via exports.

"My partners and I were big fans of the products and we were well aware of the range as well as consumers. We knew how popular it was with the yachting community both in Langkawi and the outskirts of Thailand," Mr Weiman told *Asian Meat Magazine*.

"From sales of less than USD 200,000 in Langkawi, the business has now doubled and is on track to book its first USD 1 million in sales. Looking to the future and the key initiatives we've set in motion, our intermediate goal is to expand to USD 10 million."

Going national also means a much larger operation, so next to the current

factory located at Padang Matsirat is a new meat processing plant starting operations in April 2019. This new plant will be HACCP compliant and accredited as Sailor's is also looking to bring their products across the oceans to Thailand and Singapore in the future.

### Authentic sausages

The sausages are authentic and bring a taste of home especially for South Africans. They are made with 100% meat (beef, buffalo meat, chicken, lamb) with no fillers, bulking agents such as soy, additives and preservatives.

The beef and buffalo meat are sourced from India while the chicken meat is from a halal-certified factory in Thailand. The lamb comes from New Zealand and Australia.

"It is important to note that we are halal-certified. It made sense to get that certification early on since our main consumers were in Langkawi, which is predominantly a Muslim area and where all the staff are Muslims too. Our sausages and other products are targeted to all segments of the market in Malaysia," said Mr Welman.

Their main herbs and spices come from South Africa while fresh ingredients are sourced in Langkawi. They include coriander products, dried chili flakes, cumin, paprika, fennel, all spices, nutmeg, cloves, etc.



**Sailor's Boerewors and Chili Beef Sausages**

Sailor's sausage range includes chicken, beef, boerewors, lamb and rosemary, chili beef, chili chicken, merguez, cheese grillers, beef herb, and Mexican chicken chorizo.

One important part of the sausages is the casing. "Our casings are also halal-certified and sourced from Spain and the Philippines. They are plant-based collagen casing, which is standard in the industry nowadays for mass production," Mr Welman said.

### Production safety

Safety is paramount in Sailor's operation. At the plant, they keep the production line and freezer within 10m of each other to minimize movement time.

The factory is sterilized and cleaned from floor to ceiling twice a day and their products are kept in freezers at 16-18 degrees. The estimated shelf life is two years depending on how the cold chain is maintained.

With the new processing plant, they are complying with HACCP and other safety standards to maintain the cold chain process and ensure consumer safety. The Sailor's brand also carries the Malaysian Food Safety accreditation MeSTI.

### Market expansion

Their expansion into the national



**Sailor's Plain Beef Sausages.**

market in Malaysia is being handled by LoSaRaTha Gourmet Foods, where another group of the products fans decided to join in.

Directors Louis and Sabita Joubert, Tharshini Kantan and Raymond Anthony oversee the retail part of the business.

"I used to know a South African lady who brought the sausages to Klang Valley and I got it from her. But then she decided to leave the country and I wanted to make sure I never ran out of my boerewors supply," said Mr Joubert, who is also South African.

"With some research and networking, I put up LoSaRaTha Gourmet Food with my wife Sabita and Raymond to set-up the marketing and retail supply for the Sailor's brand. One of our main channels is the Jaya Grocer chain."

All the sausages are now available at the 25 Jaya Grocer stores, which targets the upper middle-class consumers. The retail price for their plain beef and chicken sausages range from USD 5-7 per pack of six, respectively.

### Product and market expansion

The frozen sausages will soon be joined by frozen pizzas, pies and Cornish pasties.

Sailor's also makes smoked cheddar cheeses, *biltong* (a South African specialty dried meat), pepperonis and salamis among others. Their r&d process is a team effort catering to the local palate and local recipes such as rendang and curry which are used in their bakery products. They are also looking at expanding the range to other cooked cold cuts as well.

Other distribution channels include independently owned cafes and restaurants in the Klang Valley that want to offer consumers gourmet meals.

Despite starting small in terms of profit, Sailor's sales have doubled since entering the Klang Valley market where it is expected to expand comfortably this year.

"Once we've settled in well in the national market, our expansion will continue to Singapore and Thailand. As soon as our new processing plant is HACCP accredited, we'll most probably look at starting our foreign venture in Phuket as the bulk of our yachting consumers will be there," said Mr Welman. **AM**



Sailor's Lamb & Rosemary Sausages.



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