

The sweetest kind of memories: Treats for home feasts

A Dandenong South online business has the perfect ingredients to send out love – and comfort food – during Covid lockdown.

With an array of indulgent chocolate bouquets and edible gift hampers, the times seem to suit Taste Buds and its online deliveries.

During the pandemic, it has branched into further similar companies Hampers Galore and Healthy Essentials Australia.

Hampers Galore offers luscious gift packages of snacks, chocolates with wine, champagne, beer or Moscato.

They target a range of tastes and occasions, with products as lockdown survival kits, tradies snack hampers, and Moet Lovers pack.

Healthy Essentials Australia delivers 1400 healthy foods and supermarket items including vegan hampers, gluten-free hampers, household cleaning and laundry products, baby food, nappies and wipes.

Since buying Taste Buds in 2019, husband and wife Ash and Sasha Hewawasam quickly refined and struck on a thriving formula.

Its annual revenue soared from \$800,000 to \$3 million.

With 40 per cent market share, it's the second-largest online food hamper business in Australia.

In the process, the savvy couple cut some of the less trendy products, and got a feel for what was popular.



Edible chocolate bouquets are among the Taste Buds popular treats. 246286

They tinkered with products' colours, sizes and prices, and spent up on marketing on Google and Facebook.

The business was a brave new venture for the couple. Mr Hewawasam, a former accountant and Dulux chief financial officer, said his wife suggested they make a change and carry out their own business.

"She said why should you work seven days a week making other people rich.

"Why don't we work for ourselves?"

Brokers presented a few options for businesses to take on. They latched onto Taste Buds because they "loved the idea" and thought they could "take it to the next level".

Gift hampers are tailored for 'him' and 'her', with Father's Day offerings including combos



Taste Buds customer service manager Eva taking orders for home-delivered hampers. 246286

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

of chocolates and snacks with tawny port, beer, bourbon or Scotch.

Peak times are the indulgent events on the calendar such as Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Easter and Christmas.

Half-metre chocolate Christmas trees are particularly sought.

To order, call 1300 733 968 or got to taste-buds.com.au, hampersgalore.com.au or healthinessentialsaustralia.com.au

dandenong.starcommunity.com.au