

The hole truth on donuts

A humble family favourite is celebrating 50 years - but almost never existed.

Dandee Donuts owner Susan Bell said her parents started the business back in the late 1960s.

"The earliest photo that I can trace it to is 1968," she said.

"It's all just hearsay, but I believe my mother and stepfather had a donut business.

"Dad then decided to build his own hamburger van.

"They got upset because they thought he was building a donut van."

The story goes that he thought he might as well follow through on the rumours, and Dandee Donuts was born.

"There's not too many businesses that have been around this long," Susan said.

"It's really good. It makes you feel good to know that you've got something people love."

She's not among Dandee Donuts' fans, though.

"I spent my entire childhood in a donut truck," she said.

"I hated it.

"I did used to eat donuts, but I can't do it now. I've been around them too long.

"My kids love them, of course."

Susan's dad used to pay her one cent for each donut she put on a tray. She saved up for her first car and her house with donut money.

"I went to uni and decided I never wanted to see another donut again," she said.

She helped with the books when her mum died in 1993, and gave her dad a hand when he got sick in the late '90s.

He died in 2002, leaving the business to Susan and her brother. She bought his share in 2007 and started to build the business.

"The recipe hasn't changed in 50 years, except the colouring agent's been removed," she said. "They're freshly made. They're twice raised."

This means the trucks need to be equipped with a proving oven.

"They have to be refrigerated until they're put in the truck, and if we don't sell them they get thrown out at the end of the day," she said.



Susan Bell is keeping the family tradition alive.

"That's why we sell out sometimes."

The two Dandee Donuts vans move from Dandenong Market to the roadside in Hallam and the Berwick market on Sundays.

A third, older truck can come into play to meet demand, and there's a trial coming up at the Cranbourne Home shopping centre.

They appeared at AFL matches earlier this year but "they were picking and choosing which games they were giving us ..." and Susan was looking for consistency to build up a customer base. "Footy was the mainstay back in the day," she said.

"We had about 10 trucks back in those days."

She also has plans to set up a shop, which could birth new filling flavours and special takes on the classic hot jam donut.

"We've experimented with them a couple of times at the market," she said.

"We don't do massive amounts of them. We don't have the room in the trucks."

Dandee Donuts will serve up special edition donuts to celebrate its 50th birthday.

The Tim Tam donut, featuring whipped

cream and jam, will be available on Tuesday 10 July and Saturday 14 July.

On Friday 13 July there'll be Dandee Donuts sundaes on the menu, with two original, Nutella, custard or peanut butter Dandee Donuts, vanilla or cookies and cream ice-cream, and chocolate fudge.

On Sunday 15 July there'll be a birthday party theme.

The lamington donut will take the traditional Dandee Donut and top it with chocolate and coconut.

The fairy bread Dandee Donut will be covered with strawberry icing and sprinkles, and the lolly donut will be dressed with strawberry or chocolate sauce and classic Aussie lollies.

Dandee Donuts will also cut a birthday cake at its Dandenong Market van at 2.30pm that day.

Everyone who buys a bag of six Dandee Donuts between Tuesday 10 and Sunday 15 July can enter the draw to win a year's supply of donuts - that's 52 bags of six donuts.

Visit www.dandenongmarket.com.au for more information.



The donut sundae.



The fairy bread and lamington donut specials.



The Tim Tam donut.