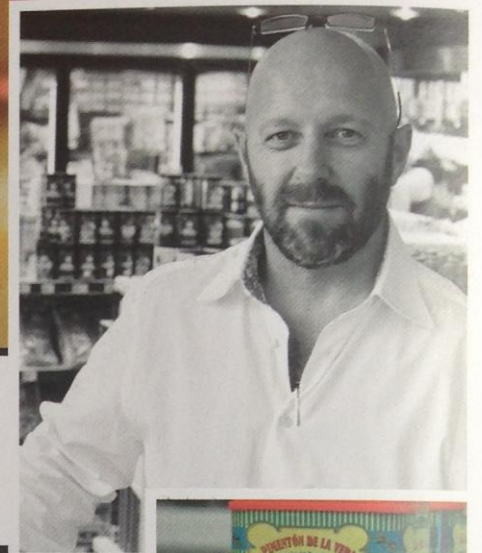


SHOP TALK

A hidden gem

La Marina Deli at the La Marina Foods factory in Modderfontein is getting both foodies and non-foodies in a flat spin. We speak to owner Kirsten Jooste





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When and how did you get into the food industry? Approximately 20 years ago. After selling my restaurant, my oyster supplier of that time asked if I would join him. I was an agent for him and had to find my own customers and my own way. This made me determined and resilient at the same time.

What inspired you to start La Marina? Life is too short to experience bad food and bad service, so I felt compelled to go it alone and take it to the next level.

How did the La Marina Deli come about? In my old factory I had no space, so when we designed our new one I specifically allocated an area for the deli. Travelling abroad I noticed delis all over and this inspired me. The deli allows our customers to get a good idea of what we stock.

How and where do you source all your products in the Deli from? We source products locally and import some, but the deciding factor is always quality.

What do you love most about the La Marina Deli? I love the direct interaction with our customers and seeing them enjoy our products to the fullest.



Above: General manager Karl Franke. Top and below: Some of the delectable goodies on sale at the deli.

If you could choose any product in the Deli as your favourite, what would it be? Difficult one. I'd hate to upset any of my suppliers, but if pushed then I'd have to go for the Organic Mozambique Prawns and the Crab Leg.

I've heard people refer to the Deli as a hidden gem – why do you think this is so? It's due to the simple fact that it's hidden within an industrial park and when you enter it, it's like a treasure trove for all your senses.

Where would you like to see the business in the next five years? Would you like to see the Deli expand? I'd like to be retired but, alas, I know myself, and I still want to take the business to the next level – being the best supplier of quality products to the industry. I would like to make more people love food the way I do. **IS**

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