



Damian and Carol Goriup sampling product at the One of a Kind Christmas Show



Sampling their Kranksa and Choriza Sausages at the One of a Kind Christmas Show

“Membership with the OIMP is important because it allows us to grow our business confidently. We have the backing and the know-how to provide us with the necessary knowledge and training. We know we are not alone.”

~ Carol Goriup, Florence Meats

Positively Perfect

The key to staying competitive in business today is to give customers excellent service and finest products at the right price. Florence Meats does just that.

Florence Meats opened its doors in 1977, on Florence Drive in Oakville. Mario Goriup, a butcher by trade, ran the small butcher shop and taught his son Damian everything he knows. Damian became a partner in 1991, and worked hard to keep the business growing while keeping up-to-date with all of the new government regulations. About five years ago, Florence moved their thriving business to its current location off the beaten path on Speers Road. The move allowed them to fully comply with new regulations and gave customers much needed parking and a larger retail area. Customers responded favourably to the move and business continued to grow.

Customers remained loyal. Damian grew up serving these people, working weekends and evenings through high school, and now serves their children, now adults with children of their own. As a family business, serving families, Carol and Damian make sure they continue these relationships by providing the same high quality service and products Mario did for over 30 years.

Although a destination for the loyal customers of Florence Meats, as luck would have it the Bronte Go Station expanded across the street in 2011, with the exit/entrance directly across the street from Florence. About 800 cars park just yards away each day, a seeming goldmine.

Have they done much to attract this potential new market? Not really. New people come in regularly, and they are all welcomed as if they were long-time customers, but Damian is not interested in amassing a huge empire of meat shops. Work/life balance is very important to the Goriups. It's not all about the money but enjoying what they do, having time off to relax and maybe travel a bit, and not stress about expansion into other locations.

The Goriups employ eight full-time staff plus their own children, Michael (23) and Alina (21), on a part-time basis. Turnover is low at Florence largely due to the management style of the owners. Every job at Florence is important and every employee vital to the operation. Whether you are a butcher or washing dishes, you play a role in bringing delicious, top-quality products to customers.



The customer base varies largely, from those who have shopped at Florence faithfully for over 35 years, to those who come for their holiday meats, to those who pop in to pick up something for that night's dinner. Their large South African clientele come for their specialties, including Biltong, and Boerewors (farmer's sausage), and others have been catching on to these delicacies. Biltong is a beef product, spiced and air-dried in a sterile drying room then hung almost like decoration in the front. The Biltong slicer was brought over by Mario from South Africa and slices a piece of biltong into fine shavings (kids call them meat chips). On the other end of the scale, the Boerewors is an all beef fresh sausage that is coiled rather than linked, seasoned with coriander and exhibits a really unique flavour customers love.

In a store filled with treats, many of them award-winning products, what would be the favourite of the owners? Damian couldn't decide – he loves it all – if it's not something he would enjoy in fact, he wouldn't prepare it. Carol named a number of dishes but landed on the smoked duck breast as her absolute favourite. Although "amazing", it seems the duck breast isn't a big seller which surprises the couple given the deliciousness and versatility of the product. The marinated flank steak is another cut that could do better although is growing in popularity through word of mouth as a quick and easy dinner.

When asked what the future of the industry looks like, Damian quickly answered, "The sky's the limit." And although equally positive, Carol suggested that continuing to provide traditional homegrown products using traditional methods and recipes may conflict with increasing regulations designed to keep food safe for

consumers. Put another way, adhering to regulations is crucial to business success even if that means a product is no longer made and put on the shelves regardless of demand.

On the flip side, Damian is most happy when he has time "to play" as his father would put it – to be imaginative when setting up the counter, to make new creations that look as beautiful as they taste. Carol prefers to be on cash to see who's buying what but to also get to know their customers, build rapport, and get feedback on past purchases. "The holidays are stressful," Carol says, "we're not just selling a piece of meat, we will be a part of our customer's festivities – it has to be good."

"It has to be perfect," agrees Damian. And perfect it is, as so many customers return to rave about the meal they had or served to their guests. "It's what gets me out of bed in the morning. That our customers appreciate what we do," adds Carol. Her response to her customer's glowing reviews however? "You must be a really good cook."

Florence Meats
Premium quality since 1977

Florence Meats
2136 Speers Road
Oakville, ON L6L 2X8
Tel: (905) 842-2066
info@florencemeats.com