

Local Food Innovators: Shhmoakesys Gourmet Pies



Like many of us, **Chris Oakes** spent much of his time during the COVID-19 lockdowns baking up a storm, but what started as a passion project soon grew into a **booming business**. Today, **Shhmoakesys Gourmet Pies** are well known for their eight hour smoked meat creations and knock-your-socks-off flavours. In fact, they were even named 'Best Pie' by **Wotif.com** in their 'Uniquely Aussie Awards'! Here, we chat to **Chris and Ebony** about how a little innovation and creativity has transformed their not-so-humble pies into a national sensation.



Firstly, congratulations on all of your success! We reckon anyone who has been lucky enough to sample your product knows why Shhmoakesys pies are a cut above the rest, but what do you see as being your real point of difference?

I would say it's our quality product and unique taste, as well as our friendly customer service. And of course... the volume of smoked meat in our pies!

Absolutely - no one wants a skimpy pie, do they? In fact, in naming you as their winner, Wotif.com even made special mention of your 'delicate, melt-in-your-mouth pastry' and the 'generous size of the pies'.

Do you think this is what your customers love most about you, too?

Yes, and our customers also really love our service. Not only do we give our customers what they want, we also make a unique product that's made individually and with love.

We really love to see local businesses hitting it big on a national stage, as it helps to lift the profile of the whole of the Central Coast. Do you work with any other local suppliers or producers at the moment?

Yes - we use all local suppliers, from our fruit and vegetables, to our meat and our condiments.

At present, we also wholesale to over 15 cafes on the Central Coast, and we hope to continue expanding over the next year.

We enjoy supplying fresh pies using fresh local produce, as it allows us to continue satisfying all our customers.



It's been great to watch your business go from strength to strength over the last 12 months, but this kind of rapid growth can be a little tricky for anyone to navigate.

What have been some of the biggest challenges you and your team have faced recently?

It would be keeping up with the increased customer demand, while still trying to grow the business in a positive way.

Using a commercial space to allow for growth and progression has really helped us to deal with this.



And what other kind of support do you think would be most beneficial to you, so that you can continue to grow?

It would be inflation ending, so we can continue to give a quality product at a reasonable price!

Agreed - coming off the back of the pandemic, it's has been a challenging for a lot of businesses, but thankfully the Coast's food scene has still been going strong.

With this in mind, where do you hope to see our hospitality industry heading in five years' time?

We'd love to see booming local businesses that create spaces for quality food products, and on a personal note, we're really looking forward to the challenges over the next few years.

Above all, we're trying to create a friendly business that not only provides a quality product for our customers, but that also gives back to the local community by expanding our team and recruiting local employees for these roles.



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