




# Vaughan's Cafe Deli



Sometimes inspiration strikes us at the most difficult of times, or at least it did for married couple Andrew and Agnes Falzon when they opened up their dream business Vaughan's Cafe Deli in Inverloch.

## A local business inspired from a butterfly spirit



By Ally McManus

When I enter the cafe, Andrew is behind the counter and Agnes is in the kitchen. It's clear they're hands-on-deck owners. They're both aged 33 and have been married for eight years. Born and bred in Morwell, the couple spent a bit of time in Melbourne before deciding to relocate to Inverloch four years ago. The coastal lifestyle seems to suit them perfectly. "We've got the beach, parks, it's beautiful," Andrew says.

Throughout their working lives, Andrew and Agnes have had experience in hospitality, cafes and delis. Agnes was also in human resources for eight years, while Andrew was a carpenter. "All the skills we've learnt throughout our careers we can really use here," Agnes says. They opened up Vaughan's in September last year, it was five months yesterday," Andrew then adds thoughtfully.

They also have two young children. Their daughter, Ania, is four-years-old and their son, Jordan, is nearly two. Andrew then calls the business their third baby. The success of this figurative third child has been incredibly overwhelming, but equally rewarding for them. "We've just been flat out - Christmas, New Years, the summer period has been bigger than we ever imagined," Agnes tells me.

I ask them how they decided on this type of business to run. "We love our antipastos and our smoked meats... we always said to each other we'd love to one day open up our own deli somewhere, and then we said a coffee machine as well... then that led to a small kitchen," Andrew tells me through a smile. This is how their small dream expanded so greatly.

They love their local suppliers: the second I ask them about this they name ten different companies. The cafe's back wall is full of pre-prepared local produce, such as Karingal Berries, Fish Creek Olives, Promontory Preserves and Grassy Spur Olive Oils, Their most popular item in the cafe is even the Humper Crunch muesli packs from the back shelf. You can buy their packs there (Cranberry Crunch or Original Toasted) and they serve it in the cafe for breakfast too. "People just keep coming back time and time again for the muesli, it's a big seller here," Andrew says. He also mentions the wines and cider are local.

Andrew and Agnes are currently re-doing their menu, pushing gluten-free and vegetarian meals to accommodate every type of customer. They also want to incorporate more of the deli ingredients into their meals, so people can buy what they're eating at the cafe easily as individual components or the meals themselves. They wanted this to be a relaxing and enjoyable experience for customers.

They also tell me excitedly they have a new supply coming - spices, which are amazing, Agnes tells me. She then says they, want to make their juice menu even healthier too by adding more greens as opposed to just fruit. "We're catering for their needs," Andrew tells me. "We don't want to be the same, we want to change things all the time," Agnes adds.

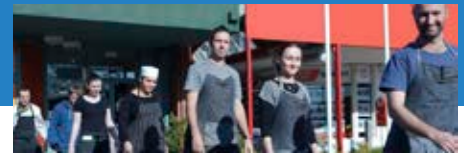
The cafe is open 8-4 every day, but they also hold night functions every now and then and hope to continue this. They even have a hen's night next Saturday. Agnes tells me excitedly. Their initial plan with the business was to just have night functions, but cafe hours are more kid friendly while their children are still young. "We want to spend as much time with them as we possibly can," Agnes says, but they also understand they need to meet the requirements of their careers at the same time.

I ask how they manage raising their kids while growing their business. Their philosophy seems to work well. We believe it not about the quantity, but it's about the quality," Agnes says. They admit one of the hardest things about opening the business was not being around their children 24/7. Day AND night too, Andrew likes to remind me as we all share a laugh. But they're also very grateful for their family support network that helps immensely, particularly on the weekends.

"When we close the shop here, we go down to the beach or we go to the park," Agnes says. They even have one-on-one dates with their kids. Andrew took Ania to the circus the other week, while Agnes went out to lunch with Jordan. "We try to give them one-on-one time as well as together time," Agnes says. We're always outdoors playing together, building blocks, reading books, that's the quality time," Andrew adds.

Agnes has a favourite part of the cafe, which is when the cake cabinet is fully stocked. When that's full and fresh it looks amazing... I love doing that, it's my favourite part," she says. What stands out for Andrew is the everyday interaction with customers. "The feedback has been very overwhelming from all the locals and all the people that come down," he says. They are very grateful to the local community for their success. "We've got some really good regulars that we just love and adore," Agnes adds.

Agnes then tells me about her happiest memories from the business which are both incredibly special stories. Her heritage is Polish and her parents were overseas during the cafe's opening night. When they returned, the couple brought them into the cafe late one night and seeing the looks on their faces is something she will never forget.



I then find out why their cafe is called Vaughan's. "You'll have to say it," Agnes says to Andrew, but he shakes his head. I know from their exchange that we're about to tread on emotional ground. Agnes takes a deep breath and I already see the tears in her eyes. Their close family friends lost their three year-old boy, called Vaughan, to Leukaemia in 2011. "He gave us the inspiration to really do this," Agnes tells me through a few tears.

"It's always been a dream of ours to open this up," about 20 years in the making Andrew tells me, and Vaughan had a lot to do with their final decision to do so. "After going through everything with Vaughan and his parents and family, it just inspired us to do it now" Andrew says as Agnes adds, "life's too short."

Vaughan's parents even surprised Agnes and Andrew at the cafe opening night, as they weren't expecting them to come. "It was so emotional and special" she tells me. Looking at Agnes and Andrew as they tell this special story, I can see the true sentiment behind their business and how Vaughan, one beautiful young boy, truly inspired them. "It's very hard to talk about," Agnes then admits.

The couple then tell me about their business logo, which has an incredibly symbolic butterfly around Vaughan's name. When Vaughan passed away, there was a butterfly fluttering around the windowsill. "Every time we talk about him, or go away somewhere there's always a butterfly somewhere, so we really think that's his spirit." After Agnes tells me this, I look down at my arms and notice I have goose bumps. When Vaughan's dad did a fun run, there was also a butterfly fluttering around his face while training, which they all know was Vaughan. "He was a pretty special little man," Agnes tells me as Andrews agrees. "He really gave us the inspiration to go for it. she adds.

It was a specific day while stuck in Melbourne traffic after the devastating news, that Vaughan helped the couple decide to do this. "We said let's do what we really wanted to do, what we really love, what we're passionate about," Andrew says.

Whether it's on their business card, the cafe's front door or in every heart that knows this story - Vaughan's legacy will continue throughout Andrew and Agnes' cafe deli.

There will always be a fluttering butterfly to remind us of this.

