

Love and Quiches Desserts Delivers

Our Specialty is to Create *Your* House Specialty.



Above: L'il Lovers are the newest entry in the Gourmet Grab & Go® product line.

The Sbarro quick-service chain was founded on a menu that featured cheesecake from family matriarch Carmela Sbarro. As the concept pushed out from its Brooklyn roots, growing to 80 units by the late '70s, that posed a challenge.

“Our commissary couldn’t keep supplying the cheesecake as we got bigger and more spread out,” recalls Anthony Missano, a 35-year veteran of the chain who now serves as its president. “We sourced out bakery companies, but no one could make it exactly the way we wanted. It just wasn’t the same.”

The chain was put in touch with Susan Axelrod, the matriarch herself of a growing company in the food trade. Axelrod had started baking cakes and quiches in her Long Island home, parlaying the business into a restaurant supplier called Love and Quiches Desserts.

“Susan took our recipe and said she was going to make it exactly the way we’d make it in our commissary, using the same ingredients, mixing it by hand the same way, baking it the same way,” says Missano. “We’d heard that before. But when we tried it, it was Carmela Sbarro’s cheesecake. Susan had figured it out.”

Thirty years later, the now-1,200-unit Sbarro chain is still getting its desserts from Love and Quiches Desserts. More remarkable, says Missano, is the rock-hard sense of partnership—the understanding, collaborative thinking and responsiveness—that still prevails.

“Today we’re a lot bigger, and they’re a lot bigger, but they’ve managed to keep that,” he explains. “They really know us and still give our business a lot of thought. It’s like they’re on our payroll, working for us.”

The benefits, he says, can be seen in the gourmet brownies that are now merchandised near the cashier’s stations of Sbarro stores. The Gourmet Grab & Go® treat was the solution delivered by Love and Quiches Desserts to another issue in the pizza, pasta and salad chain’s evolution.

Sbarro started as a mall-based concept, operating sizeable units, complete with seating, inside high-traffic shopping arcades. An abundance of the chain’s branches are still in malls, but the retail centers have gravitated

to food-court set-ups where the quick-service outlets are largely service lines flush with one another.

“We don’t have the room anymore to showcase wedges of cheesecake on a dish,” says Missano. “At the same time, coffee concepts started opening in the food courts. That affected our coffee sales, which affected our dessert sales to some extent.”

Love and Quiches Desserts provided a pre-packaged but high quality brownie that Sbarro could put on its line at a price of no more than \$1.50, making it more of an impulse buy.

“What I really like about it is that the customer can take it with them, maybe nibble while they shop or eat on the drive home for a treat,” says Missano.

The portability also benefits Sbarro at its growing proportion of units in travel centers like airports. “A guy in a suit with a carry-on bag and a laptop isn’t going to buy a wedge of cake,” continues Missano. “But he might slip a brownie in his pocket for the flight.”

Tailoring desserts to the particular needs of a restaurant client is a big reason why BD’s Mongolian Grill does business with Love and Quiches Desserts, says David Plancon, director of purchasing and research and development for the grill chain. “They are our R&D kitchen,” he says.



Love & Quiches Desserts products have no added trans fats.

Plancon forwards the Freeport, Long Island-based company his annual marketing calendar so they can provide ideas for each promotional period or menu change.

“They give us unfettered access,” says Plancon. “I’ll talk with [Vice President of Research and Development] Michael Goldstein or [Vice President of New Business Development] Joan Axelrod Siegelwax. We’ll give them parameters—‘we want a certain price point,’ or ‘we want a certain portion size.’ And they’ll come back to me with three to six ideas.”

If the idea is good but the costs don’t work because of the quality, “they’ll figure it out and think it through,” he says. “Because they know us and how we operate, they’ll work backwards through our systems to maybe shave off a few pennies and make it work.”

When the QuikTrip convenience-store chain decided to feature freshly baked treats in its deli display cases, it turned to Love and Quiches Desserts for desserts

that would be seen as high in quality but not in price. Love and Quiches Desserts responded with a premium scratch-bake brownie. After working with QuikTrip, it then suggested the line be extended to include blondies. It also drafted a menu of seasonal suggestions: carrot cake for the spring, s'more brownies for the summer, an apple cake for the fall, a pumpkin cake for the winter.

"Consumers are looking for smaller pieces of quality product, whether it be an individual portion or a shared sampler," says Goldstein, a Johnson & Wales graduate. "It could be a wedge, a square, a shot glass, a scoop, a coupling of two items. So that's one of the things we're really focusing on."

Love and Quiches Desserts' strategy of functioning as a partner extends beyond the development of products, portion sizes or presentations to fit a customer's needs, says Joan Axelrod Siegelwax, Susan's daughter. It also offers clients such support as writing menu copy, developing promotional pieces, providing research, performing quality-assurance checks on every batch of desserts that leaves the warehouse, introducing new products to franchisees, distilling trends into practical advice for a system, and carefully matching production to demand.

"We've never run short on an LTO," Siegelwax says.

"We're a global company, but we're still small enough to be responsive," says Andrew Axelrod, Susan's son and the president of the company.

The company also strives to shift its production methods to match sweeping shifts in consumer preferences. None of its products are now made with trans fats. Packaging and processes have been updated to cut waste and otherwise make the company "greener," an effort that helps customers engineer a more eco-friendly supply chain.

"Let's face it, there are a lot of companies out there with resources, and a lot of people say they'll help you if you buy from them," says BD's Plancon. "Love and Quiches Desserts really figures out how to do it."

"We started with them when we had 12 units, now we have 35. They have given us quality products and quality ideas, and we're not stopping now."



For more information on how Love and Quiches Desserts can become your Dessert Partner®, contact:

Love and Quiches Desserts, 178 Hanse Avenue, Freeport, NY 11520
1-800-525-5251 • 516-623-8800 • www.loveandquiches.com