

THE GARLO'S PIES STORY



Little did Sean Garlick know when searching for a career after football in the year 2000, that his future would end up in pies.

Rather ironic, given the hooker wasn't renowned for scoring meat pies on the football field during his playing days, he now finds himself overwhelmed with the little Aussie Icons in a business which ticks over more than 35,000 pies a week.

It all started in 2001 when Sean teamed up with his younger brother Nathan who was a Pastry Cook by trade. Nathan had grown tired of working for wages and had given the game away. Their father Terry had been a wharfie all his life and was nearing retirement. So the circumstances were ripe for the coming together of different skill sets and Garlo's Pies Maroubra was born in March 2001.

Rugby League followers would no doubt remember the Pie Eating Competition staged live on the Footy Show, which launched the Garlo's Pies phenomenon. Sean called on some of his league friends to be on deck in legendary pie eater Artie Beetson, Daryl Brohman, Mark Carroll, Mark Geyer and Craig Salvatori, and in doing, got a flying start on his competitors.

Such was the success of the Maroubra store, 12 months later the Footy Show were back to televise the opening of Garlo's Pies Mascot for a State of Origin themed Pie Eating Competition. This entrenched the Garlo's name in the local community and Souths supporters took advantage of a promotion which allowed them to get free pies after Souths home games.

Sean recalls: "After the Mascot shop opened we began getting enquiries from all over Sydney from customers who wanted their own Garlo's Pies store. It was more than we needed or wanted at the time because my focus was working for Souths as Football Manager. The Pie thing was only supposed to be a hobby. Nathan was keen on me joining the family business full time, but I had a passion for Souths to be successful and wanted to be a part of the Rabbitoh revival."

Nathan eventually got his way and Sean left Souths to join Garlo's Pies fulltime in August 2003. Garlo's had two stores then. 18 months later, they now have 8 with stores at Maroubra, Mascot, Coogee, Kings Cross, Parramatta, Blacktown, Manly and Luna Park.



"At the moment we're trying to keep a balance between franchise and company owned stores."

So how many stores are Garlo's going to stop at? "People often ask how many stores and at the moment I don't have an answer for them," Garlick said.

"We're building a store at Bondi Junction and Darlinghurst which will open in June and have over

a dozen franchisees waiting on our books. We're also planning on opening a store in Los Angeles next year to service the army of homesick Aussies in the United States - that's going to be fun.

"I have big plans, but everything takes time. I've got to be careful not to sacrifice lifestyle too much for ambition. I have three boys who play for South Eastern

in the Souths Juniors competition this year and I want to see all their games. They are footy fanatics and love the Rabbitohs. They'd kill me if I didn't bring them to all of Souths' home games."

For those of you who thought you can't live on pies... here's a Rabbitoh success story doing a pretty good job of it.



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