

# FROM FASHION TO fruit cakes



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**M**OTHER AND DAUGHTER SUSI AND MARLY Calladine have a 14 year history with food in the Highlands, but their latest venture has roots reaching back decades – and across the world.

Since 1996, when Susi and her husband Martin opened Pizzas in the Mist at Robertson, Susi has dabbled in making and selling fruit cake from an old family recipe. Even after the couple sold the business, later opening Three Creeks Cafe, also in Robertson, Susi continued to occasionally sell her cakes.

Although they were always snapped up, Susi never marketed them in a big way, but last May Marly, who has a background in fashion marketing, decided to jumpstart the business. They are now baking weekly and have added two biscuits to their increasingly popular Burrawang Village Fruit Cake range.

"We've always had this recipe in the family," says Marly. "We used to make it for friends and family, and people would just say, 'Oh, can we have more?' It's moist and delicious and it doesn't have anything unnatural like glaze cherries or preservatives."

They make two varieties, brandy and almond, and rum and walnut. "We've introduced two of our favourite biscuits (Flourless Almond Fingers and a traditional Vanilla Choc Chip) and we'll see how they go," says Marly, "but the fruit cake is our showstopper."

The cake's origins are German. Susi's parents left Germany with three children in 1957. They settled in Wollongong, where they had four more children (she was one). Oma (Susi's mother and Marly's grandmother) is 76 and still bakes every week.

Marly says: "Mum has a box of old family recipes and there is an original handwritten recipe for the fruit cake, but we had to manipulate it a bit to make it viable."

What does Oma make of their variation?

"She loves what we cook, but I think she knows she's the queen in the kitchen."

Marly was 13 when her parents opened Pizzas in the Mist.

"I hated it," she says. "We lived behind the business, so...it just took over our lives."

After school she studied fashion. She became marketing and communications manager with Lisa Ho Designs in 2006 but left in 2008, intending to find a young fashion designer to invest in. By September 2008, she had narrowed her choice to two, one in Australia and one in New York, when the bottom fell out of the financial market. "I came back to Sydney very disheartened and thinking I'll wait and see what happens."

In the meantime, Susi was making cakes but finding it hard on her own. Marly decided to help before returning to fashion. "I didn't realise how satisfied I'd be doing cakes. I'm not missing fashion at all. That might change, but now it's fantastic."

They started making the cakes in Marly's kitchen at Wildes Meadow but have since bought a commercial oven which is housed in a food grade shed on the property, where they do all the cooking and packaging.

Marly's kitchen still gets regular baking workouts, however, especially at this time of year. In the German tradition, they make lots of biscuits for Christmas.

"Last year I had a German baking day," says Marly. "I had 10 friends, some speaking German, some not, and my Oma and my mum. We did the lebkuchen and the stollen (lebkuchen is a spicy gingerbread biscuit dipped in chocolate; stollen is a bread-like fruit cake).

"It was such a lovely thing to do. And having Oma in my kitchen was very special because I've always been in her kitchen. But," she adds smiling, "she took over!" **HL**

*Burrawang Village Fruit Cakes (400g, \$16; 1.3kg, \$36) are available at Harris Farm, Bowral; Burrawang General Store Cafe; Burrawang Village Hotel; Palm Beach Wine Co, Palm Beach; The Christmas Shop, Ramsgate; or see [www.burrawangvillagefruitcake.com.au](http://www.burrawangvillagefruitcake.com.au)*

