



EDITOR'S PICKS

8 years into their online cake biz, this couple has opened their own dessert café in KL



CLAUDIA KHAW • 07 DEC 2023



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Established in 2020, Kuké (<https://kuke.my/>) might be a business you mistakenly believe is the result of the pandemic.

However, even though the Kuké brand name only came to be in 2020, it actually has a much longer history.

Husband-and-wife duo Inn and Corina actually started their baking business in 2015, though the both the business model and its name was quite different.

Called Whipped Cakes at the time, the business was focused on being a cake supplier to cafes and restaurants.

But five years later, the two decided to shift their attention to serving customers directly. Given the pivot, Inn and Corina also decided to change the brand name to something more unique.



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(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-Malaysia-dessert-cafe-002.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke

Pronounced “koo-kay” (think how a Brit would say cookie), Kuké has grown to open its very own dessert café just last month in November. To better understand the couple’s journey with the “desserterie”, let’s first go back to how they got into baking in the first place.

From banker to baker

Before she was the chief baker at Kuké, Corina was actually a banker. Meanwhile, Inn was in marketing in the education sector.

However, she decided to leave her job to care for her children around 2010. That was when she embarked on her own baking journey, which eventually blossomed into a home business.

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Before Whipped Cakes, she was actually selling cakes to friends and family, but the couple saw an opportunity in the market to sell to cafes.

At the time, Inn recalled that coffee shops were booming, so the couple believed there was a demand to serve this clientele quality cakes.



(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-Malaysia-dessert-cafe-003.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke

“Over time, the economy became more challenging and we discovered that there was greater pressure to reduce the price of the cakes,” he revealed. “We tested several cheaper alternatives using cheaper ingredients but we didn’t like those creations and decided against this direction.”

The decision not to compromise their quality ended up being the catalyst for Corina and Inn to go direct to customers, whom they believed would better appreciate great-tasting cakes.



To mark the start of a new chapter for the couple, they also changed their name to Kuke.

“Whipped Cakes was created when we were supplying cakes and we thought a generic name would suit the business,” Inn explained. “Now that we were going to brand our business to the general public, we realised we have changed over the years.”

(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-Malaysia-dessert-cafe-006.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke'

For one, Corina had found a niche in Asian flavours, inspired by mixed roots of Chinese, Filipino, Indian, and Western tastes.

So, the name Kuke was adopted, taken from the words “kuih” and “cake”.

Opening a desserterie

Running their dessert business, Inn and Corina always had an ambition to open up a bakery where customers could drop by to dine on their cakes.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, Corina had further experimented with various desserts, creating items such as tarts, choux puffs, and babkas. These were delicious (at least, according to Inn), but required batch orders.

“Opening up a cafe makes a lot of sense with these new offerings,” Inn pointed out.



(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-1.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke'

With that, the couple began work on creating their dessert café. They moved from their old central kitchen, which was very spacious but not the most space efficient.

Remaining in the Sri Hartamas area, the café now features a smaller kitchen and a tiny admin office, but houses more bakers, a large dessert display, and a dining area that can seat up to 30 patrons.

“It’s much, much better now,” Inn shared proudly.

Other than bakes, the café menu also includes a range of coffee, teas, matcha, chocolate and some of their own specially created drinks. As a dessert café, though, they have no intention to start offering savoury foods—at least not in the near term.



(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-Malaysia-dessert-cafe-004.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke'

Going forward, the team is focused on ensuring the physical cafe is a success.

“For us that means to have repeat customers and make it a place that the neighbourhood will think of when they want to have desserts,” Inn explained.

(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-3.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke'

“In the medium term, we would love to be part of the established dessert dining scene in Klang Valley—a destination to try out and treat yourself. And perhaps eventually be regarded as one of the top must-eat cafes in the city.”

Not a cake walk, but a sweet journey

Much has changed for the husband-and-wife team over the years. Starting with eight cake flavours in 2015, Kuke' now offers over 45 flavours of cakes, 20 types of pastries, and eight types of sweet breads. (x)

This diversification certainly helps with staying competitive. From a consumer's perspective, it feels like there have been more and more options of bakeries to choose from.

To that, Inn said, “I think competition has remained fierce and it has always been this way. There are always new players and they bring something fresh to the dessert landscape, while established players are also constantly evolving.”

(<https://vulcanpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kuke-Malaysia-dessert-cafe-005.jpg>)

Image Credit: Kuke

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Aware of the need to continuously grow, Kuke takes care to stay abreast of trends and won't shy away from playing around with them.

EDITOR'S PICKS ([HTTPS://VULCANPOST.COM/CATEGORY/EDITORS-PICKS/](https://vulcanpost.com/category/editors-picks/))

If a new flavour arises from those trends that meets the team's standards and expectations, it may very well become a new menu item for customers to try. That

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said, it'll always have a Kuke spin to it.

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“We are unique when it comes to only following our own path and way of doing things,” Inn explained. “There is no need to make something just for the sake of it. If we just want a regular chocolate or cheesecake there are so many other bakers to go to. It's not our goal to be just like everyone else.”

(<https://vulcanpost.com/912897/jettters-incz-singapore-waste-management-company/>)

Aside from being unique, one of Kuke's ethos is to make desserts that must taste good, because they must be worth the calories.

“We are a guilty pleasure,” Inn said. “We have the privilege to give customers joy and solace.”

(<https://vulcanpost.com/912853/singaporean-spent-seven-figs-opening-ryokan-toyama-japan/>)

Thinking back, Inn believes they should've started as a direct-to-customer business instead of going the supply business route from the get-go.

“The times were good but it required too much manpower and sacrifices for us,” Inn admitted. (<https://vulcanpost.com/912805/sudden-closures-valu-stores-whats-going-on-japan-home-singapore/>)

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Image Credit: Kuke’

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“We are too much of an artisanal business, not willing to just accept customer requirements. We were not confident enough—especially as we didn’t have much industry experience—and thought that our cakes were not aesthetically attractive enough to compete with other bakers that make much prettier cakes.”

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However, their eight-year journey, with all the lessons along the way, has brought them where they are now—<https://vulcanpost.com/912897/jetter-incz-singapore-waste-management-company/>—with its own café, and much more to come.



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