



sSs BBQ Barns

Our Stories - A Great Place To Do Business

Wild west magic a family experience

The Gwatkins have proven that with a shared vision and commitment to succeed, mixing family and business can work.

Ross and Jo Gwatkin are the owners of sSs BBQ Barns in Port Macquarie and have brought a little bit of 'wild west' magic to the otherwise coastal modern vista of the city's food strip.

Buying into the franchise was not only a long-term investment in their retirement, but also the future of their children Meaghan and Kieran.

When the franchise advertised for expressions of interest in opening a store in the heart of Port Macquarie, it all made perfect sense for the family who were already entrenched in the sSs way of life.

Meaghan was working at the Tamworth steakhouse while her brother Kieran and his wife Melissa were an important part of the franchise's Brisbane crew. "Knowing how the business operated and what was expected of us and our staff was invaluable. While it is a franchise and you are given direction, it was invaluable having that experience behind us before we even opened the doors," Meaghan explained.

Meaghan co-manages the Port Macquarie steakhouse with sister-in-law Melissa, which officially opened on the waterfront at the end of Clarence Street in April 2007.

Kieran has taken a behind the scenes role in the kitchen, dad Ross mans the bar while mum Jo and Melissa manage the floor. They are supported by a team



of 16, which includes two apprentice chefs.

Most franchise businesses come with a formula - the sSs vision is 'quintessential country' with a smile and good hospitality.

"We were lucky everything fell into place right from the start. With sSs, there is a formula for everything - if you follow that, not much should go wrong," Meaghan added.

But beyond the swinging doors, the signature barrel of peanuts and



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popcorn, timber floors, hearty list of mouth-watering meat dishes and family atmosphere, the Gwatkins have stamped their own mark on the sSs brand by ensuring their staff share their vision and passion for good quality service and creating a memorable dining 'experience'. "Mel and I interviewed for staff and we really did know what we were looking for. We were willing to give people a go if they had a bright and bubbly personality that matched the fast and upbeat atmosphere of the restaurant. "We believe we are bringing something different to Port Macquarie that is good quality and affordable dining out for families. People can come here with their children and feel comfortable, it's laid back, they can make a mess and go home afterwards all having had a good experience." The restaurant encourages feedback with cards on every table providing customers an opportunity to rate the food, staff and service. Meaghan says the cards have proven to be invaluable in ensuring the team stays on track and the business evolves with their customers needs. "We are always trying to improve things and the best way to do that is to find out what the customers like and what they don't. It's the best feedback we could get." And by all indications it seems that sSs is hitting the mark with Christmas

2008 a record-breaker. More than 800 people every week over the summer holiday break enjoyed the sSs experience. "We all work very hard and we all contribute to the success of the business in our own way," Meaghan said. "Being a family business we all share the same commitment."



Our journey:

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Meaghan Gwatkin, sSs BBQ Barns, Port Macquarie



- *sSs BBQ Barns Port Macquarie is a proud supporter of the Customer Care Program*



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