

The Journey of Metamorphosis Orchestrates a Symphony of Taste and Health

美麗蛻變 以心譜出 健康味美交響樂



Charlene Tse
Co-Chairlady and Executive Director
Cookies Quartet

謝寧
曲奇四重奏聯席主席兼執行董事

Specialised in hand-made cookies and palmier since 2008, Cookies Quartet has created over 50 flavours, offering seasonal flavours in accordance to different Chinese solar terms. Charlene Tse, one of the founders of the bakery brand, pays special attention to healthy eating tips that correspond with various nature's patterns, so they can bring out the best ingredients and provide the best care to consumers' health at different times of the year. "As we enter into Fall/Winter season, we will offer health cookies with ginger and red dates which will help warm the stomach and body. Earlier during Spring/Summer season, we had Sakura-flavoured cookies that brought a refreshing and delicious taste to consumers, immersing them into the atmosphere of Spring."

The Symphony of Taste and Health

Apart from preparing healthy food at different seasons, Cookies Quartet also selects ingredients with the best quality. "Though margarine is a cheaper hence common choice for making cookies, we insist on using natural butter despite its higher cost, as this brings a richer aroma to our cookies and relatively a healthier choice." In addition, the brand also uses organic whole wheat flour from the US, with less sugar, so the cookies are less sweet and less greasy. Charlene says, "My mother-in-law is my biggest fan, she eats a pack of our palmier or cookies every day."

Healthy diet is moving up the consumer agenda, but actually Cookies Quartet has made cookies that are suitable for babies, infants or even diabetic patients in their early days of operation. "My mother was suffering from serious diabetes, therefore instead of white sugar, I used coconut flower sugar and trehalase which have lower glycemic index, so even diabetes patients like her can try my cookies." Charlene also pays huge attention to the quality of food production. As the production of palmier involves a lot of manual labour and workmanship, random check on samples are conducted regularly to ensure the quality.

曲奇四重奏自2008年開業至今一直專門製作手工曲奇和蝴蝶酥，目前鑽研出超過50款不同口味，因應不同天時節氣推出，因其品牌創辦人之一謝寧相信，這才能發揮食材最佳質素及配合身體狀態。「秋冬將至，我們將推出薑味、紅棗等養生曲奇，有助健胃驅寒、增添暖意。早前推出的櫻花曲奇不但配合春夏氣色，亦散發清新味道，提升賞味程度。」

美味與健康並重

除配合時節外，曲奇四重奏亦對優質原材料絕不吝嗇。「以往市面的曲奇主要使用成本較廉宜的人造牛油，但我們始終堅持採用天然牛油，雖然成本較貴，但製作出來的曲奇味道較香，亦相對較健康。」曲奇亦用上美國有機小麥粉並減少用糖，所以入口不太甜亦明顯少油膩。

謝寧笑言：「我奶奶是品牌最忠實fans，幾乎每天都要吃上一包蝴蝶酥或曲奇呢。」

健康飲食近年成為風尚，其實品牌早於開業初期已推出適合嬰幼兒甚至糖尿病人食用的曲奇。

「我媽媽患有嚴重糖尿病，便想到利用升糖指數較低的椰子花糖和海藻糖代替砂糖，讓糖尿病患者亦能品嚐。」謝寧表示她對食品製作品質亦非常嚴格，因為蝴蝶酥的製作過程需經過人手製作、工夫考究，所以不時會抽查產品，確保質量。



Cookies Quartet is named with the emphasis of the four elements - **“Color, Scent, Taste and Health”**, Charlene explains, “Everybody in my family plays piano, the symphony of the four elements can best represent my beliefs and experience.”

謝寧坦言曲奇四重奏這名字便是品牌對**「色、香、味、健康」**這四大原則的執著。「我一家人都會彈奏鋼琴，所以品牌名字揉合了我的信念和經歷。」

“Taste Before you Buy” Composes the Splendid Quartet

At the time when they opened the first store in Kowloon City, they had already offered shoppers with free tasting, and they are still doing the same. “Our store is close to a lot of schools in the area, therefore a lot of parents and students would come visit and try out the new flavours. We are grateful to see their smiling faces, as this proved the success of our tactic. We were the first cookie company to offer free food tasting way back in 2008.”

As time goes by, Cookies Quartet now nurtures little chefs and storekeepers with cookies making classes, and offers membership scheme for loyal customers. The quality products and excellent consumer care offered by the company perfectly matches with the objective of GS1 Hong Kong’s “Consumer Caring Scheme” - a Scheme recognising local organisations that demonstrate excellence in consumer care by creating consumer value, with the ultimate goal of uplifting product and service quality of industries.

任意試食打響名堂

謝寧回憶起當年在九龍城首間店舖開幕時，便以隨意試食作招徠，一直維持迄今。「由於九龍城舖位處校區，當年許多家長與學生放學後都特意到店舖一遊、試食新產品，見到他們這麼開心我便覺得這樣做對了。當年我們算是第一間推行任試任食的曲奇店呢。」

時代轉變，曲奇四重奏亦開始透過曲奇製作班培養小廚師和小店員，及利用會員計劃吸引常客。品牌為消費者提供優質產品及貼心服務，正符合GS1 HK的「貼心企業」嘉許計劃的理念。計劃旨在表揚「以消費者為先」的本地企業，實踐與消費者價值相關策略，最終協助提升各行業的產品及服務水平。



The Local Souvenir Goes Global

It usually takes long-term brand building and a great deal of rave reviews for a product to become a signature souvenir for travellers. With minimal marketing budget throughout the 10 years, Cookies Quartet has successfully built a market presence simply using media interviews and word-of-mouth referrals, attracting local connoisseur and tourists from Japan, Taiwan, Mainland China and Korea to purchase as souvenirs. The brand has also opened a store at the Hong Kong International Airport to meet such demand.

Cookies Quartet has garnered an even split between local and foreign customers in terms of sales volume, and has entered the Canada and Taiwan markets through distributors. Charlene learnt the importance of the globally recognised GS1 barcodes during her journey in expanding to overseas markets, as barcodes can help share real-time product information with overseas sellers. Noticing that her products are sold by third-party on the e-marketplaces in China, she is considering expansion to China online markets with the help of barcodes.

The brand is currently applying for Halal certification, so they can enter the Muslim market. The certification is very strict to assure products are in compliance to the procedure defined by Islamic Law - without pork and meat of carnivores, and has to be processed and cooked according to Islamic law.



本地手信衝出國際

產品成為一個地方的手信，通常都要經年累月的品牌建立和口碑傳播。曲奇四重奏10年來一直沒什麼市場推廣預算，只靠一些傳媒訪問及食客口碑，便已足夠吸引本地老饕以至海內外旅客趨之若鶩，從日本、台灣、中國內地、韓國等地前來購買作手信，難怪品牌會在香港國際機場開店以滿足需求。

現時品牌的本地及海外顧客各佔一半，並已透過代理商進駐加拿大及台灣市場。謝寧指出在開拓海外市場時始得悉需要申請全球通用的GS1條碼，將產品資訊即時與外地商家分享。她亦留意到產品在中國內地電商網站有售，正積極考慮應用條碼在國內網上發展。

現時品牌正申請認證為清真食品，期望打入穆斯林人口的市場。清真食品即符合伊斯蘭教教規的食品，除禁止豬肉、雜食性動物如食肉動物、猛禽外，其宰殺方式和煮食方法都須按教規處理，所以認證條件極為嚴謹。



“ Treat Customers Like Family

Throughout the interview, Charlene shared a number of anecdotes about her family, which were in fact the reason why she set up her business. “We moved to a foreign country after getting married, but my family missed the food of Hong Kong so I started cooking for them using the freshest organic ingredients. After divorce, I used my cooking skills to set up my own business, together with my most original intention and principle ‘cooking for family.’” Staying true to herself, Charlene believes the brand will only thrive and become a legacy if she dedicates the time and effort in perfecting the one thing that she knows best.

對待顧客有如對待家人

在訪問過程中，謝寧一直提及家人的故事，原來這是她開設食品店的初心。「當年我結婚後搬到外國居住，但家人掛念香港的食物，便開始學習烹調並親自下廚。為家人預備飲食當然會儘量用最新鮮的有機食材，所以離婚後要創立事業，自然會利用本身最拿手的烹調技能，並堅持以『煮給家人吃』的理念來經營。」十年磨一劍，謝寧認為自己應用心花時間做好一件事，才會歷久不衰、成為經典。

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