

YOUR STORY

'Secret' ingredients to success

The taste of free-range and organic Voodoo Bacon products will cast a spell on you



CHEF EXTRAORDINAIRE: George Francisco sells sauces, marinades and spice rubs to complement his menu of free-range meats.

ALEASHA BLISS

GEORGE Francisco has established himself all over the world as an accomplished chef with his culinary skills and passion for creating organic and free-range designer meals.

Originally from New Orleans, George has brought the deep south to the Coast with his award-winning Voodoo Bacon and has taken the lead on organic "ready-to-heat meals" for time-poor, health-conscious customers.

When George, who calls himself an artisan butcher, attended the Noosa International Food and Wine Festival as a guest chef for several years, he fell in love with the Coast.

He soon moved here and created Voodoo Bacon in 2015.

"I went through all my products I had been famous for as a chef and picked my bacon as the ingredient I thought would be most fun," he said.

"I started out with nitrate-free Voodoo Bacon.

"I only sold it streaky, New Orleans-style, without chemicals and (with) ethically sourced pork."

Moving from the kitchen to the markets was a massive

change for George and he discovered how shy he was, as he was used to being hidden in a kitchen with a team of wait staff doing the sales while he made the delicious food.

"All of a sudden I was face-to-face with my customers and would hide in the back of the marquee and would hardly sell anything unless people came up to me," he said.

"Now I've come full circle: I'm not shy at all.

"I love talking to people and talking about my products."

After the success of Voodoo Bacon, which is predominantly sold at Kawana Farmers' Market, Belmondos Organic Market Noosaville and nationwide online, George decided to get creative again as his customers were wanting more.

He started selling sauces, marinades and spice rubs — all made by him, to complement his menu of free-range meats that include duck, chicken, beef and pork.

With the help of his wife's background in nutrition, George designed his new range of organic and free-range gourmet meals — free from preservatives and other "nasties" — that can be cooked at home.



Voodoo Bacon is available online, at the Kawana Farmers' Market and Belmondos Organic Market Noosaville.

"I was missing cooking for people, so I started selling things that I was making for my family — pasta sauces, free-range chicken and pork meatballs with the Voodoo Bacon pomodoro sauce, beef and bacon chilli con carne.

"I was doing it for my family to use up spare bits of bacon and it became so popular that I started doing it on a larger scale.

"I look forward to every Saturday to tell somebody about my new products, and I know that some customers have health hurdles that I love to help them meet by customising meals to their needs."

After talking to his customers, he realised how many people wanted to eat quality food but often struggled to have the time to source and cook healthily.

YOUR STORY



CHEF-PREPARED: Free-range chicken and pork meatballs with Voodoo Bacon pomodoro sauce is one of the organic and free-range gourmet meals available.

"Many people have different health needs and wants," he said.

"There are lots of specialised diets and I try to cater to them all. If you come and ask

me what you want, I will go and make it for you.

"Now it's like cooking in a restaurant, but people can take it home and enjoy it at home and they can be the star of

their own kitchen.

"Some people tell me they tell their family they made it – we love it when they do that."

George takes orders on Thursday, then butchers the

meat and prepares the meals on Friday, ready to sell fresh on Saturday at Kawana Farmers Markets.

The meals have been so popular that he called the line

George's Soul Kitchen and they are also now being sold out of the IGA stores all over the Coast and in some local health food shops.

"You can never go wrong if

I WAS MISSING COOKING FOR PEOPLE, SO I STARTED SELLING THINGS THAT I WAS MAKING FOR MY FAMILY – PASTA SAUCES, FREE-RANGE CHICKEN AND PORK MEATBALLS WITH THE VOODOO BACON POMODORO SAUCE, BEEF AND BACON CHILLI CON CARNE.

you use local, fresh produce that's in-season and treat it with respect. You will always come up with an amazing dish," George said.

"It's worked for me my whole career.

"Almost every ingredient that we use is from southeast Queensland.

"I have sourced one of the best chickens I have had in the world and it happens to be from the Glass House Mountains."

The complete range of certified free-range Voodoo Bacon products and George's Soul Kitchen goods, including the vegetarian and vegan options, are available on rotation at Kawana Farmers' Market stall every Saturday, between 6am and noon.