

INDULGENT passion

AS THE WEATHER GETS WARMER, IT'S NOT JUST CHILDREN WHOSE THOUGHTS TURN TO THE PLEASURES OF ICE-CREAM.

WORDS Madeleine Stuchbery
PHOTOGRAPHS Shantanu Starick
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One of the best parts of summer is undoubtedly the refreshing appeal of ice-cream, and with a high quality of dairy produce available in the Gippsland region, there is plenty of opportunity to indulge in a little sweetness this summer. Prom Coast Ice Cream, based in a quaint store in Toora, is an icy force to be reckoned with, making their own range of beautifully flavoured ice-creams, sorbets and dairy-free coconut-based Coco Creams for the lactose intolerant.

Partners Hilary Skelton and Daniel Encel started four years ago making their own ice-cream and sorbet at the Walkerville Kiosk, with the aim to bring a unique, delicious range of flavours to the Gippsland region. The new premises in Toora has views of the green undulating hills of the Gippsland region, brightly coloured bunting hangs up proudly in the window, and delicate, sky-blue paint on the walls immediately conjures up images of a summer sky and trips to the beach, despite it being an overcast day.

Hilary and Daniel welcomed us with warm smiles and a palpable enthusiasm for their product. They hand-make all the ice-cream products themselves, using as many locally sourced fruits, berries and dairy products as possible. The pair have always taken a hands-on approach with their product, originally selling and trialling their experimental flavours and recipes with their scoop ice-cream at the Walkerville Kiosk. "Aside from technical defects with our original recipes, there was never a flavour that people did not like," said Daniel. "Everybody just loved the ice-cream. It was only us who noticed that it was hard to scoop!" Reworking the recipe slightly and attempting different flavour combinations led to the birth of Prom Coast Ice Cream; a range of gluten-free ice-creams, sorbets, and dairy-free Coco Cream ice creams, safe for those with gluten and lactose intolerance.

Hilary and Daniel are eager for us to sample their product, and we're only too glad to accept. We are led down through their store to the heart of their business; the kitchen. The shining steel of the ice-cream equipment contrasts against the soft blue of the walls



“WE FOUND THAT PEOPLE WHO LOVED DAIRY AND HAD NEVER TRIED COCONUT REALLY LOVED IT...”





Hilary Skelton and Daniel Encel



gently lit by the afternoon light streaming in through the windows. It is a nice space to be in, and one where Hilary and Daniel spend a lot of time working on their ice cream.

Based on an adaptation of an American-style artisan ice-cream, Prom Coast Ice Cream is made with a simple egg-free base and fresh Gippsland milk, in a traditional small ice-cream batch freezer. As many of the ingredients as possible are sourced from the Gippsland region, for example the blueberries they use are from Foster, in an attempt to keep a relatively small carbon footprint. "By sourcing ingredients from local producers, we're really reducing our food miles," said Daniel. We sample the classic ice-creams first, trying out flavours such as chocolate and Red Skin, and Blood Orange in the sorbet range. Available in store at The Coffee Collective in Wonthaggi, the Blood Orange is a vibrant, clean flavour that zings on the tongue and has a refreshing, sherbet-like quality that would be the perfect end to a decadent meal. A notable feature of their product is the impressively minimal amount of sugar in the recipe; good news for the waistline as well as the palate. "We think that the sugar overwhelms the flavour of the ice-cream, so we have the minimal amount, just enough for it to coagulate properly," said Hilary. "The flavours come through better with less sugar, and it really is a distinguishing feature of our ice-creams."

Perhaps the most notable product that Prom Coast produce is their unique dairy-free ice-cream. With a luscious texture and smooth mouth feel, the Coco Cream ice-cream is a coconut-based frozen dessert, the perfect alternative to traditional ice-cream for the lactose intolerant. I ask how this line of ice-cream came to be. Daniel explained: "At Walkerville, we did a few experiments with dairy-free ice-cream, and we noticed that people just went nuts over it. All our ice-creams, apart from the Red Skins flavour, are gluten-free. Then we noticed the dairy-free people craving something other than just sorbet; they were looking for something rich

and creamy because they can't have it, so we started with one or two coconut-based ice-creams, and we found that people who loved dairy and had never tried coconut really loved it, because it is so rich. It was hugely popular."

The popularity of all the ice-creams and sorbets is ever-expanding, with the Prom Coast Ice Cream available for purchase at the Koonwarra Store, Dalliance in Mirboo North, Waratah Hills Winery and on the menu at The Coffee Collective, as well as being sold on premises at the Toora store. With such a plethora of flavours catering for all dietary requirements and palates, Prom Coast Ice-Cream is dishing up some cool treats this summer, so be sure to lick up every last, delicious, melting moment before it dribbles down your arm and disappears forever.

Prom Country Ice Cream
www.promcoasticecream.me

