

The 'Pies' That Bind

Spanggo Foods, Café and Pasalubong Center

A wife, though suddenly widowed in the course of growing her business, managed to make it work and serve as another icon of Capiz's rich natural and cultural heritage.



ONE PROUD ENTREPRENEUR
With confidence, Janice can say that her buko pie recipe is the best you can find in Capiz. She came up with the perfect mix to make a pie that she can be truly proud of.

Janice Zaldarriaga was startled one day by a mother with a crying child knocking at her door.

Back then, Janice was making homemade buko pies just for her family and friends. The pies were traced to her house by the mother of the crying child, who badly wanted one. Thus, even months before opening Spanggo Foods, Café and Pasalubong Center in Roxas City, Capiz, Janice knew she had a winner.

A bite into the pie releases an explosion of succulence from the young coconut meat and the amalgam of secret ingredients, making Spanggo a byword in this seafood capital in just five years in the business.

Spanggo is a portmanteau of Spanish and Ilonggo, proudly tracing its origins to the Spaniards and their influence on the rise of this indigorous delicacy. Apparently, Spanggo also hints of the Zaldarriagas' own Spanish roots and their sophisticated taste that rises to the fore at each bite.

A Serving of Quality

A stickler for quality, Janice knew that if she liked her product, her family, her friends, and the rest of the market also would, even if priced higher than the prevailing rates. But knowing that price reflects a product's worth, Janice says: "The value of your money, we give it back to you."

Janice uses only premium ingredients. "The young coconut meat that is halfway between too soft and too hard—perfect for making pies." She knows what her customers buy—the delightful experience of tasting the best. And to make savoring high-quality affordable to low-income consumers, Janice makes mini-pies and sells them in boxes of sixes and nines. It's a big hit, making her shop produce up to 500 mini-pies daily.

Pour in Passion

Using the traditional crust recipe of her husband's Lola Ita, Janice worked through trial and error to arrive at the perfect mix. She would ask family and friends for feedback repeatedly until she was certain of having attained product superiority—the "this is it" moment.

Passion pushed her to ask for a little corner in the family compound for her business. That corner has seen Spanggo Café bloom. Now Spanggo is a full-fledged pasalubong center, a restaurant, and a tourist destination.

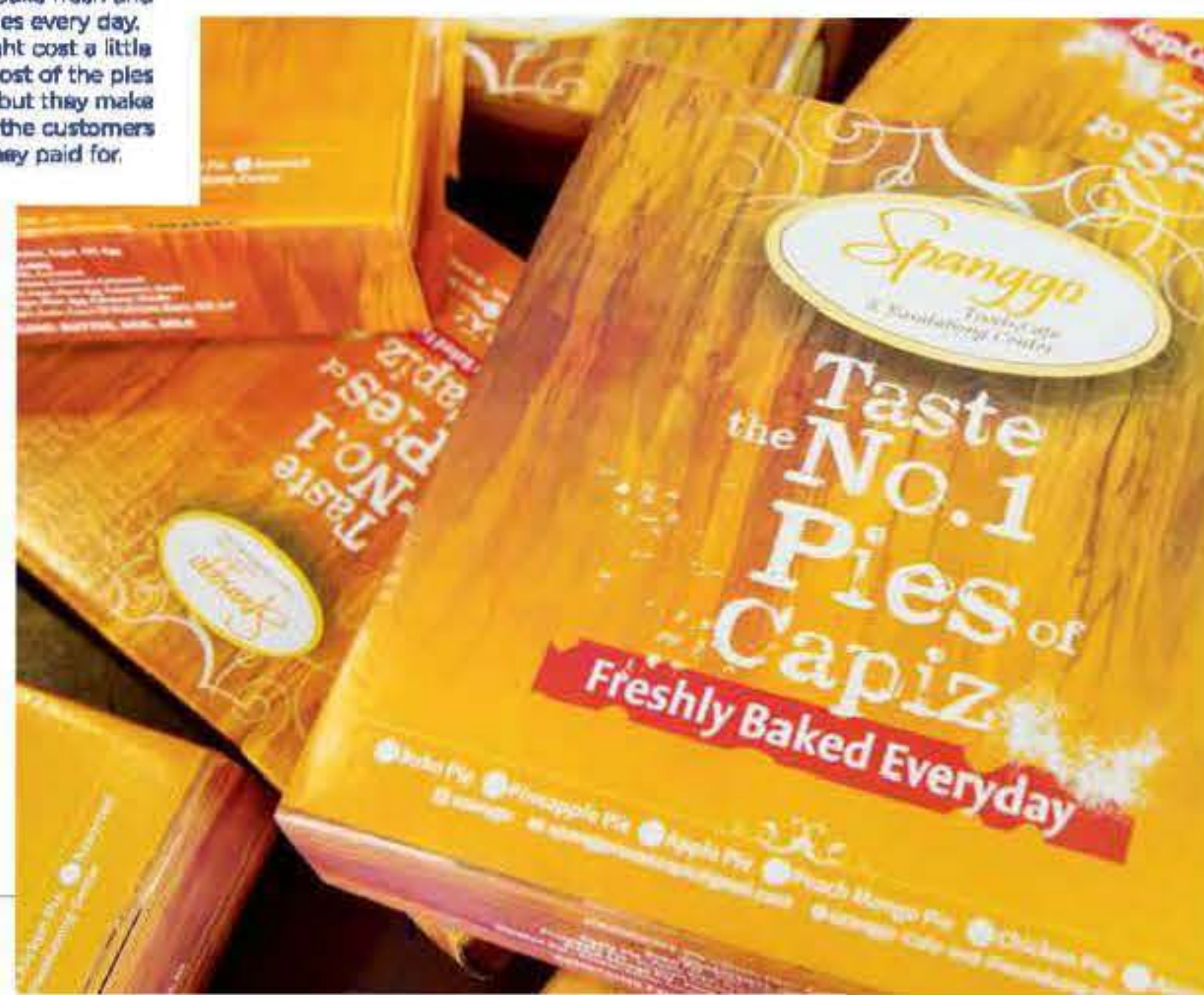
Cook Up a Vision

Janice's vision is to make her province identified, not just with seafoods, but also with other products that reflect the nature and character of the people, and Spanggo makes a perfect example of a slice of the tourists' Capiz experience.

She is about to make that experience longer-lasting through the Shared Service Facilities (SSF) project of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The SSF is geared to make Spanggo pies last for a longer time. A study on the shelf life of her product, when frozen and vacuum-packed through the SSF, showed it could last for 12 months. DTI also guided Janice in improving Spanggo's packaging with the use of food-grade and flexible materials.



BAKED FRESH EVERYDAY
Spanggo takes pride in the quality of their pies. All of their staff had undergone trainings from DTI. They make sure to bake fresh and delectable pies every day. Their pies might cost a little higher than most of the pies in the market but they make it a point that the customers get what they paid for.



Add
Perseverance
and Faith

Top it with
a Brand
that Sticks

In 2014, Janice's husband—a business confidentia, friend, financier, and father to her two toddlers and an infant—succumbed to cancer, but she plodded on.

"I had to get up. I had people working for me." She woke up to the realization that Spanggo was no longer the home-based business that it was, but one being run by employees with families, too. With her faith in God, she made the business work.

A mass communications graduate and a former marketing manager, Janice has a value proposition (Capiz' best buko pie) and a name that sticks to mind. In the Spanish colonial times, Illoilo was a Galleon trading post, and the Spanggo Foods, Café and Pasakubong Center echoes this bygone era, giving a hint of that historic heritage that mixes with the modern through the DTI's assistance in streamlining her business, professionalizing its operations, and providing training for the staff.

Now, Capiz is known not only for its oysters and mussels, but also for the Spanggo pies that bind the Spanish and Ilonggo cultures together, and so do its people.

HOW DTI HELPED

With the DTI's Shared Service Facilities (SSF) project, an improved packaging using food-grade and flexible materials, and a comprehensive study on extending the shelf life of products became possible for Spanggo's buko pies. Janice was also able to streamline the business, professionalize its operations, and provide training for the staff through attending seminars and trainings from DTI's Project Kapatid Mentor Mill program.



WISDOM BITES

Small business owners are a wellspring of wisdom culled from their experiences.

1

START SMALL
Success doesn't come overnight. It takes time, hard work, patience, and commitment.

2

LEARN FROM CUSTOMERS
Negative comments show the way to a better product.

3

LIFE ISN'T ALL ROSES
Faith in God and confidence in one's self count the most in difficult times.

4

BE NICE ALL THE TIME
Treat customers and employees nicely. They keep you in business.