

# Flying high

## Pick n Pay Family Douglasdale spreads its wings

BY LINDA WILKINS

**D**ouglasdale is part of the Northern suburbs belt in Johannesburg that has seen such massive growth in recent years and together with areas like Fourways, Lonehill, Craighaven, Jukskei Park, Paulshof and Sunninghill, is home to thousands of middle and upper income consumers. In addition, there are a multitude of business parks that blend in seamlessly with the houses, townhouses and clusters, which bring many more people to the vicinity from Monday to Friday. Ask any motorist traveling these roads about how long it takes to get around and you'll start to get an idea of the population density in these areas. However, while the motorists might be grumbling, this region presents incredible opportunities for retailers – even though the competition might be tough.



*Pick n Pay Family in Douglasdale recently underwent a revamp, which was completed by 24 January 2008.*

One of these retailers is Pick n Pay Family in Douglasdale, a store that has lived through many changes since it first opened for business twelve years ago. One of the owners, Mark Galbraith, has been here since day one and seven years ago, he was joined

by present partner Harm Jacobs. As they saw the massive potential that population growth was bringing, they realized that a store revamp had to be part of their future plans. They scheduled the builders for November 2007 with a brief to extend the store by 1 000m<sup>2</sup>, as well as to increase the size of the service departments. "The revamp took us 77 days to complete," says franchise owner Jacobs. The store was ready for action by 24 January 2008, in time for a new year of trading and the results so far, says Jacobs, have far exceeded their expectations.

### What changed?

The store, managed by store manager Chris Ndlovu, has always had an exceptionally high

*Pick n Pay's new logo and product launch last year included a promise to its customers that they would open more tills to keep queuing time to a minimum. Pick n Pay Douglasdale is firmly committed to this promise.*



sales per square metre output, but sheer customer numbers meant that the trading area had to be increased and after the revamp, this grew from 1 250m<sup>2</sup> to 2 150m<sup>2</sup>. In total, the store is 4 000m<sup>2</sup>, including the kitchens, food prep areas, offices, stock and store rooms and goods receiving. Even with the increase, however, the sales to square metre ratio is still one of the highest in the country within the Pick n Pay group.

When they were planning the revamp, Jacobs says they decided to focus specifically on their fresh food departments and so the new-look store has seen the deli, HMR (home meal replacements), bakery and butchery become larger. In addition, they have significantly increased the size of their health and beauty department.

## Clean and elegant

The revamped store is elegant and uncluttered, with enough room at the service departments for queues and passing shoppers, and aisles wide enough to cope with the busiest of shopping days. Bright



*The HMR and deli sections at Pick n Pay Douglasdale are divided into hot and chilled, making it easier for customers to know what they are buying.*

white lighting enhances the perception of extreme cleanness and Pick n Pay's new lifestyle signage and logo are visible but not intrusive.

## The revamped deli

Jacobs says they saw the trend towards convenience foods emerging clearly in the store. "People want quality and convenience,

so we've grown our deli and HMR department substantially." As part of this fresh food philosophy, the store recruited a highly experienced French chef in September last year. Bennie Ras is totally dedicated to his department and has endless enthusiasm for good food, which can be seen in the ± 34 chilled and 17 hot dishes that are on offer at the pristine counters. He is responsible



Choose To Feel Amazing

# Nature's Choice™

## Phenomenal Growth

*Only a winning brand could justify this amount of shelf space....*

Health is one of the hottest topics in the world today. Thanks to the growing understanding of the connection between diet and health, the boom in health food sales is sure to continue for decades to come.

The Nature's Choice range of unique wholefood products is already doing wonders for over 700 retailers in South Africa. Our unique wholefood products will certainly do wonders for your business.

**For more information: E-mail: [sales@natureschoice.co.za](mailto:sales@natureschoice.co.za)  
Tel: 016 362 2542 (Michelle)  
or visit our website at [www.natureschoice.co.za](http://www.natureschoice.co.za)**



for 12 employees and has taken the deli to new heights through patient and careful experimentation to find out exactly what the store's customers want. "Our customers are prepared to spend money on good quality, but that's the key – quality," he says.

The other factors that have become very important to this store's customers – as to consumers all around South Africa and internationally – are health and ingredient labeling. For this reason, all the hot and cold deli and HMR dishes and meals are 'calorie-counted' and have a full ingredient listing. This helps customers know what they are buying and eating.

Jacobs and Ras say they decided on a chilled display, where the food is taken home for heating. It uses a blast freezing technique that cools the hot food down in 90 minutes and the main advantage is that the food has a longer shelf life. However, this does present certain challenges in terms of display, says Ras, because chilled food looks different to warm food. However, their customers are becoming used to the concept and through the transfer of information from the counter staff, understand that the dishes liquefy and toppings like cheese melt when the meal is heated at home.

Wastage is not a problem because they



*The store features a large butchery that incorporates gourmet lines, which are very popular with their well-heeled customers.*

cook on demand. "Each meal takes 20 minutes to prepare, so we can stock up the display very quickly," says Ras.

The menu is changed every two weeks and new lines, which are available for sampling at the deli and HMR counters, are regularly introduced to the offer. Ras makes seasonal changes too and is presently gearing up for the switch from summer to winter meals. He also changes the offer from weekdays to weekends. "People like fairly simple, healthy food," he says, "especially during the week. They'll experiment more on weekends or when they are entertaining, though."

He says they made some mistakes in the beginning but are now confident that they

know what their customers are looking for. "We spend a lot of time on recipe development, in conjunction with Pick n Pay head office and they will often use us to try out new dishes. Pick n Pay is focusing on delivering consistency across all its stores, so once a food line has been successfully developed, they supply the same recipe to all their stores."

Meals on offer here include a summer salad range, Spanish and Italian dishes, roasts and vegetables, plus a large variety of gourmet deli lines.

The new staff that were recruited for the revamped deli have been or will be trained at the Pick n Pay Institute in Fourways. All the HMR/deli employees are multi-skilled, which means they can work either in the kitchen or serve at the counters.

## Outside catering

In addition to developing the in-store deli, Ras has introduced an outside catering division that will supply corporate and home entertaining requirements. This includes a full function planning service as well, should it be required. "We have the infrastructure already, so it makes sense to extend our deli to offer this service," says Jacobs.

## Other departments

The revamp meant the bakery and butchery also increased in size. The bakery produces breads, cakes and other sweet and savoury baked goods from scratch, while the butchery has its own butcher with plenty of advice for shoppers.

The store also features a substantial wine department that will soon be complemented by a separate, in-store Pick n Pay liquor outlet.



*Each dish at the HMR counter has an ingredient listing.*



*The fish counter is run by an outside company called Ocean Fresh.*



## Health and beauty

One of the other areas of focus for Pick n Pay Douglasdale has been health and beauty. This department consists of a full aisle, complete with its own spotlight lighting. It's a section that Jacobs wants to grow even bigger, as he believes it offers great potential.

*Right: Harm Jacobs (left) is one of the franchisees of Pick n Pay Douglasdale, while Bennie Ras (right) is the qualified French chef in charge of the HMR and deli at the store.*



## Future plans

Jacobs says their next projects - a Pick n Pay liquor store and a Pick n Pay clothing outlet - are due to commence in April this year. There will also be more parking around the back of the store, to complement the bigger offer and enhanced facilities, and to accommodate the many customers who love coming to this landmark store. ■



*Left: One of the areas of focus at Pick n Pay Douglasdale has been the health and beauty section, which is lit up with spotlights that differentiate it from the rest of the store.*

*Below: There are 16 cashiers and 16 packers at the store, including two at the kiosk.*



**The Legend POS system has all the bells and whistles you'd expect from a quality point of sale system.**

*Dealers Nationwide!*

# LEGEND POS

**Features Include:**

- \* Online Credit Card Clearing
- \* Online Airtime
- \* ATM Feature
- \* Electricity etc Payments

**This is just some of the features that come standard with Legend POS**

**Contact us :**  
**011 425 3297/3616 Ext.8**  
 Switching by Hardware by

## PICK N PAY DOUGLASDALE

### Trading hours:

8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday.

### Customers:

±3 950 per day during the week and ±5 400 on week-ends, LSM 6-10.

### Departments:

HMR, deli, bakery, butchery, fresh produce, a fish counter and wine.

### In the pipeline:

Pick n Pay clothing store and liquor outlets.

### Contribution to turnover:

Deli/HMR (80m<sup>2</sup>) – 6%

Bakery (100m<sup>2</sup>) – 5%

Butchery (140m<sup>2</sup>) – 10%