

A theatre of food at new Food Lover's Market in Centurion

By LAURA DURHAM



Offering busy customers a one-stop shop

The recently opened Food Lover's Market at Gateway Shopping Centre is ideally situated on the Old Johannesburg Road.

Situated on the Old Johannesburg Road, the recently opened Fruit & Veg City Food Lover's Market combines convenience, price and innovation to offer a perfect one-stop shopping experience.

A fresh store

The store has been booming since it opened its doors on 25 February at Gateway Shopping Centre in Centurion. "When we opened it was like a tsunami," says store manager, Frank Mourinho. Located in a bustling industrial area, store owner, Sandro Gastaldi has found a niche market with the working population of Centurion and beyond. It has only been open for three months, but it is processing 16 000 – 17 000 transactions per week, Mourinho says.

Customer convenience

The Food Lover's Market has something for everyone, all in one 2 700 m² store. It also



The freshest produce and cheapest prices keeps the Food Lover's Market ahead of the competition, says Frank Mourinho, store manager.

offers so much more than a supermarket, providing customers with a chance to nibble on some sushi at the sushi bar, or indulge in a cappuccino after their shop at the in-store Market Café.

The Food Lover's Market has been a big boost to the Gateway Shopping Centre, and the large parking area means that customers never have to worry about finding parking.

Open until 7pm on weekdays (with extended hours during the weekend), the store has become a popular shopping destination for customers on their way home from work. The hot food emporium offers customers an easy home meal solution with its large variety of dishes, including lasagne, stews and bobotie. The salad bar sees a lot of lunchtime traffic and has to be refilled three times a day to keep up with the demand.

Smart design

The store is laid out in such a way as to navigate customers through every department, enticing them with special offers and interesting smells at every turn of the trolley wheel. The till points are cleverly situated next to the Market Café, so customers can't help but be tempted to stop for a cup of coffee and tea-time treat.

Market for meat

According to Mourinho, the in-store butchery is the best-selling department,

Location:
Gateway Shopping Centre, Centurion

Store size: **2 700 m²**

Tills: **22**

Staff: **164**

Transactions per week:
16 000 – 17 000

with fresh produce in second place and dry groceries sales on the rise. The butchery is owned by Fruit & Veg City and the Duarte brothers. Anthony Duarte explains why the partnership is so successful in this store and in other Fruit & Veg Cities in the region: "It's a winning combination. It's one-stop convenience. A stand-alone butchery is not going to do the kind of volumes we do." The butchery offers pre-packed, vacuum-packed and specialised cuts for customers. "We like to go the extra mile for customers," says butchery manager, Leon Gows. The department's top sellers are whole chicken, followed by boerewors and mince.

Fresh is best

The fruit and vegetable section remains a focal point, with their many promotions, especially 'buy one get one free' deals, grabbing customers' attention as they enter the store. The success of Wacky Wednesday specials each week is further proof that customers are always on the look out for value for money.

The recent heavy rains have been slightly problematic for the store, as farmers were unable to spray their crops or go into their lands. The farmers generally deliver straight to the distribution centre (DC), co-owned by Fruit & Veg City and Gastaldi. Groceries are also delivered to the DC.

A taste for adventure

The Food Lover's Market caters for a cosmopolitan customer base (largely white, middle to upper class women) and the product range, including important Italian pastas and olive oils, reflects this. The sushi department is also very popular with its health-conscious clientele – both with ▶

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Congratulations to Sandro and his team, we are proud to be associated with Gateway Food Lover's Market!

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STOREWATCH ►

takeaways and customers sitting at the in-store sushi bar. "Customers are very adventurous, and every now and then each department has taste testers," Mourinho says. The owner likes to experiment and the store has even started making its own peanut butter and sales are doing very well.

Best price

The nearest competition is the Centurion Lifestyle Centre (also on Old Johannesburg Road), which boasts a Pick n Pay. Checkers will also soon be coming to that centre. But the Food Lover's Market successfully uses its convenience as a one-stop shop combined with the goal of always getting the cheapest price to satisfy customers and keep ahead of the competition. Interestingly, Mourinho says there has been a migration of customers from the Fruit &



The butchery, which is co-owned by Fruit & Veg City and the Duarte brothers of Rump and Ocean Meat Market, is the best-selling department in the store.



Timed overhead sprays keep the fresh produce cool, which helps the fruit and vegetables last longer.



The Market Café is cleverly situated near the tills, attracting customers to abandon their full trolleys for a moment and enjoy an afternoon cappuccino.

Veg City at Centurion Mall (also owned by Gastaldi) to the Gateway store.

Employee responsibility

Stock wastage depends on the seasons, and shrinkage is inevitable, explains Mourinho. Each department has its own manager who is accountable for all aspects of that particular department, including stock take every few days. CCTV cameras and ten security guards in the store are important measures put in place by Gastaldi to keep an eye on the happenings of the Food Lover's Market. The Gateway store has 164 employees, including management, and hosts in-store training every year.

Other perks

The in-store Freshstop offers customers an opportunity to enjoy a smoothie made on the spot, or fresh fruit selection that is served with either yoghurt or ice cream. The Short Cuts department also adds value to the store, providing time-poor customers with a produce chopping service.

From strength to strength

Gateway Fruit & Veg City Food Lover's Market certainly offers customers a winning combination of value for money, a vast range of products and excellent service. Gastaldi plans to open another store in Woodhill, Pretoria later in the year.



The hot food emporium offers a wide selection of dishes – fried fish, stews and pastas – which saves customers a lot of time and energy in preparing dinner after a long day at work.

Pizzas and paninis are popular lunchtime choices. Josephine Teffo and Cynthia Mboweni of the deli produce 140 paninis a day, and Peter Nkhuna spends his day keeping the pizza slices coming.

