



Starting-up a successful business

WITH ECOMAX BY HOBART



A good three months ago, hotel and hospitality management assistant Ana Duarte made her dream come true and opened her own restaurant "Vivarepas" serving Venezuelan dishes. A year and a half of detailed preparation was necessary to make a successful start. The secret of her success: passion and authenticity and a focus on quality products.

"The Pforzheim gastronomic scene was lacking variety and a South American restaurant, so I decided – not least because of my Venezuelan-Portuguese roots – to open such a restaurant with a relaxed, jovial flair and fresh, natural cuisine," reports the 30-year-old entrepreneur. With unwavering dedication, Ana Duarte worked for a good year and a half on her business start-up until she was finally able to open her **Vivarepas** in March 2019.

Finding a suitable location was a big challenge for the hotel and hospitality management assistant, because she had a clear vision of the requirements it had to meet: conveniently located in terms of public transport, without direct proximity to other restaurants or bistros with international cuisine, it should have bright, open guest rooms and an attractive outdoor area. "I told everyone that I was looking for premises for my restaurant and received lots of tips. The offshoot of this is that I have built up a network, and from the very beginning I have gained many friends and supporters who were excited about how the gastronomy project would turn out and who are now loyal guests," the entrepreneur says with a smile.

She had presented her business idea at the Chamber of Commerce – and brought along a few samples of her arepas, which were to form the focal point of her menu. Her contact there was enthusiastic about the business idea – and the corn flatbreads made from pre-cooked corn flour and various fillings such as pulled beef, black beans or salmon avocado. Furthermore, she immediately recognised that the specialities were also gluten-free, thus establishing a culinary concept for coeliac sufferers.

"With the concept of relaxed, modern and hearty Venezuelan gastronomy, I thought initially that I would mainly appeal to young guests. However, it has turned out that my restaurant is very well received both by students, and by families and the elderly. The guests really appreciate that the meals are freshly prepared with high-quality ingredients, and they also like the service, the hospitality and the cleanliness," says the business founder. When looking for staff, it was important to her to have Venezuelan employees who know the dishes, can provide information about the country's traditions and who can authentically convey the warm hospitality. Ana Duarte also holds regular meetings with her team to exchange ideas and see if any changes need to be made. "So for example, we expanded the menu to include vegetarian dishes and a mixed starter plate, added rice as a side dish and included high-quality wines as well as gluten-free beer and Portuguese lager, because the guests asked for it," says the business founder.



RELYING ON EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

Ana Duarte had a firm vision of what her restaurant should look like. But she sought advice from various experts regarding the technical equipment. Kitchen planner Carsten Mayer from the company Gebrüder Holzwarth, for example, was on hand with advice and practical support and helped her to create a functional, high-quality kitchen in the smallest of spaces, which also offers scope for future additional business. "The aim was to create an ergonomic, efficient kitchen that offers short distances and makes work processes as easy as possible" – were Duarte's specifications. An island solution with cooker, a self-cooking centre and two preparation lines was implemented along with a corner solution of a hood-type dishwasher from ecomax by HOBART at the kitchen entrance. The latter not only ensures clean bowls, pots and pans, but also reliably cleans plates, cutlery and glasses for guests. "We are simply delighted with the wash result, the speed and the easy, ergonomic handling of our dishwasher and happy



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Ana Duarte puts her heart and soul, passion and commitment into her work in her restaurant every day and pitches in wherever her help is needed.

that we have received a fantastic corner solution for our kitchen," says Ana Duarte, summing up. If the number of guests continues to grow steadily, the idea is to install an undercounter dishwasher for glasses only next to the hood-type dishwasher. The space for this has already been taken into account in the planning.

PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

The team of chefs is also hoping to make their work easier: up to now, they have been making the arepas by hand from the dough produced by the machine and baking them. But now, after some searching, Ana Duarte has bought a portioning machine which will form the arepas automatically in future. "There wasn't even a special machine for arepas available abroad, so we looked for and found various solutions. With this machine we are now much closer to an additional business: we always get asked whether we sell the arepas and drinks, including to

take away; this is now increasingly possible," explains the entrepreneur.

NOT JUST SURVIVING – THRIVING

Even though the restaurant opening was a success, with more guests coming every day, Ana Duarte and her team do not want to rest on their laurels. We are constantly thinking about what else can be optimised and added to. For example, the start-up founder is now thinking about adding ice cream to the menu, as there is no supplier in the area. The customers and the demand would be there, especially on the warmer days and afternoons. "If I decide to do that though, I would also like to offer a high-quality, tasty and gluten-free ice cream as well as a lactose-free variant in order to satisfy all guests," says Ana Duarte, who is also planning to offer special menu days with burritos on top of the standard menu with her traditional Venezuelan dishes or to announce additional specials on a board.

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