

Labours of love

Ever dreamed of setting up your own artisanal business? From peanut butter makers to craft beer brewers, here's a few locals making their dreams a reality in Wellington.

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Roman Jewell - Fix & Fogg

When Roman Jewell announced that he was giving up his career in law to make peanut butter, everyone thought he was... well, nuts. Both Roman and wife Andrea had successful careers as lawyers before deciding peanuts were their future. Being passionate foodies, they'd always cared about what went into their food. Concerned with the unnatural additives found in many peanut butters, in 2013 they started making their own homemade version, and it all took off from there.

Today, Roman and Andrea produce their artisan peanut butter, [Fix & Fogg](#), in a small factory in central Wellington, and supply over 100 stores in New Zealand and a handful in Australia. Their peanut butter is available in four tasty flavours: Smooth, Super Crunchy, Smoke & Fire, and the latest addition, Dark Chocolate.

>> Stop by the [Fix and Fogg](#) 'nut buttery' in Hannahs Laneway and pick up some peanut butter straight from the factory window.



Matt Kristofski, Matt Warner & Matt Stevens - ParrotDog

Like many kiwi blokes, Matt Kristofski and Matt Warner enjoy a good beer, so naturally, while they were studying towards marketing and law degrees at university, they decided to dabble in a bit of home brewing in their dingy Wellington flat.

Much to their surprise they managed to produce a 'fairly drinkable beverage', and so they thought they'd take a punt at launching it commercially in time for Beervana in 2011. Their first commercial beer, BitterBitch, became an instant hit, and picked up the Peoples Choice Award at the festival. Soon the Matts were trading in their text books for tanks, and began brewing full time as ParrotDog. Their friend Matt Stevens saw how much fun they were having so gave up his accounting career to join the growing empire.

Four years later ParrotDog has become one of Wellington's leading craft beer brands, producing up to 350,000 litres of beer a year. They've also racked up a ton of national and international awards, including being named the champion small international brewery at the Australian International Brewing Awards, and picking up the trophy for the best low-alcohol beer.

>> Swing by the [ParrotDog cellar door](#) on Vivian Street for a tasting and a chat.



Graham Joe - Gelissimo Gelato

Graham Joe loves ice cream. So much so he's made it his business. He's the owner of [Gelissimo Gelato](#), an award-winning gelateria on Wellington's waterfront.

Before turning his hand to gelato, Graham worked in IT. After two decades in the industry, Graham decided he was ready for a change. He got a job running Wellington's Harbourside Market for a year, and it was here that Graham really discovered his passion for food. So, in 2010 he bought Gelissimo and set about turning it into a successful business.

In 2011, Gelissimo won gold and silver medals for their first ever entries into the NZ Ice Cream Awards, and the awards have kept coming. Gelissimo have become known for their innovative flavours including gorgonzola gelato, Anzac biscuit gelato and most recently, a pavlova inspired glow-in-the-dark gelato, made especially for Wellington's LUX Light Festival. So why gelato? "It's the best industry to be in", raves Graham. "It's so happy and creative."

>> Taste test [Gelissimo Gelato](#) at the Odins Plaza gelateria or at the Freyberg Beach kiosk.



Lucas Putnam - La Boca Loca

Originally hailing from California, Lucas Putnam grew up eating Mexican food. In 2001, his profession as a film editor brought Lucas to Wellington to work at Weta Digital on The Lord of the Rings Trilogy. Throughout his time at Weta, Lucas never forgot his passion for quality Mexican cuisine.

Fourteen years and several films later, Lucas has realised his dream of bringing the flavours of his childhood to his adopted home. Together with his wife, he now owns and runs [La Boca Loca](#), a colourful Mexican restaurant in the Wellington suburb of Miramar (just down the road from his previous employer, Weta).

>> Dine at [La Boca Loca](#) and be sure to sample one of the many tequilas on offer, as recommended by Lucas - the Master of Tequila.



Grace Kreft - Sweet Bakery and Cakery

Grace Kreft has always had a love of baking and an entrepreneurial spirit, running stalls from outside her house from a young age. Fast forward a few years and Grace began a career as a Managed Funds and Corporate Lawyer for a Wellington firm, a far cry from her baking dreams. It didn't take long before Grace realised that law just wasn't for her: "I was much more excited about baking for team morning teas than the legal work I was doing!"

When Grace embarked on her big OE to London, she wound up working for a top bakery, and it was here she discovered her true calling. After two years away, Grace returned to New Zealand determined to set up her own baking business

Grace returned to work, but was determined to set up her own baking business. Earlier this year that dream was realised when Grace and her husband Brad opened [Sweet Bakery and Cakery](#), a charming cake and coffee shop and made-to-order cake business. Six months in, and Grace is relishing the sweet taste of success.

>> Pop into [Sweet Bakery and Cakery](#) in Karori and enjoy their decadent and lovingly hand-baked cakes and cupcakes.