

# STARTING A BUSINESS? THEY'VE GOT IT LICKED

Karis and Dom Gesua quit their old jobs two years ago, and they're set to bring gourmet real-fruit ice lollies to a festival or event near you this summer

The London couple behind Lickalix are grateful escapees from a world that had nothing to do with food. "We were both stressed and unhappy in sales and marketing jobs so, rather than moaning, we did something about it," explains Karis. They jacked in their jobs in 2013 and tried to come up with a business idea. The lightbulb moment came after Karis made ice lollies for friends one weekend – to ecstatic acclaim. The idea to turn something they enjoyed into a business was born.

Three months later, after much research, the couple decided to make their lollies from fresh, pure fruit. "Artisan ice lollies were taking off in the States and we believed the trend would spread here," says Dom.

## Disaster strikes

On the brink of the launch in March 2014, Karis and Dom arrived home one evening to find water cascading down the street and two fire engines outside. A fire next door had ruined their kitchen, office and home.

They didn't let it stop them and launched only a month later than planned. "To start a business, you have to focus on the end goal and don't let yourself get knocked down by setbacks," says Dom.

## Going for growth

The lollies, which come in funky flavours such as Raspberry Lavender, Berry Lemonade, Watermelon Mint and Grapealicious, were selling well locally but the company needed investment. After a nail-biting crowdfunding campaign over the

winter, Lickalix exceeded its target. It's all systems go for this summer. Dom says, "The first year we proved the concept. This year it's all about growth."

From its first tiny commercial kitchen under railway arches in East London, Lickalix has moved into bigger premises, making 2,500 lollies a day. The fruit no longer comes from bargain hunts at New Spitalfields Market in east London – it now comes from an organic farm. "Things still don't always work out as planned," says Karis. "When a delivery was delayed we had to revert to the market. Squeezing 500 mangoes into the car was interesting!"

## Best bits

"There's a thrill in being so close to a business – you see the hard work pay off," says Karis. Dom agrees. "You're there when things happen, whether Karis is taste-testing new flavours or someone walks away with a lolly and says to the person next to them 'Wow, this is good!'"

To hear Karis and Dom talk with such energy about Lickalix, it's hard to imagine them doing anything else. They come to life as they wax lyrical about everything from the people they employ to the wacky flavours they can't wait to road-test.

Look out for their vans this summer, in prime London spots and at festivals, where they'll be serving alcoholic 'poptails': grapefruit gin slings and strawberry mojitos. As the Lickalix slogan goes: lick, slurp and be merry. **d**

For stockists, see [lickalix.com](http://lickalix.com)



IN IT FOR THE LOLLY, FROM TOP Karis revels in running her own business; Dom checks the finish on each lolly; the Oh So Berry lolly, ready for a licking

