

“We saw a gap in the market in terms of what was available in Ireland. We think healthy and delicious should go hand in hand.”

TRACY ARMSTRONG

KO Kombucha



While living in London, Tracy Armstrong and her partner in life and business (Ronan Coughlan) discovered kombucha, a raw fermented tea. Ronan fell in love with the health drink but felt it was lacking in terms of taste, so experimented with different flavours.

After much trial and error, Ronan developed their original flavour which they began selling to friends and colleagues in London.

With the drink proving popular, the couple who have a two-year-old son (Rian) decided this was the perfect time to move back to Ireland and set up a rural business.

Tracy uses her experience in marketing and publishing from HELLO! magazine to look after the sales side of the business, while Ronan is the brewer.

“We think healthy and delicious should go hand in hand. We both have a passion for healthy delicious food and how it can make you feel, so we wanted to start our own business and put something good out into the world,” says Tracy.

They moved to Moate, Co Offaly in July

2017 and, in December, started brewing in their spare bedroom. Just six months later, KO Kombucha moved to its own commercial space in Ferbane Food Hub.

After being away for six years, the Back for Business programme provided an invaluable support network. “We were just back from London, so didn’t have a network or contacts. It helped us build our business in Ireland and offered the structure needed to make sure we were asking the right questions as a start-up. It also gave us access to mentorship and a peer group of people with a shared experience,” says Tracy.

Tracy has since been selected for Competitive Start Fund (CSF) by Enterprise Ireland, which aims to accelerate the growth of start-up companies with the potential to succeed in global markets. Through the fund, KO Kombucha will work with EI and Bord Bia in 2020 to explore international markets.

The drink which is handmade in small batches using simple, certified organic ingredients needs to be fermented for about two or three weeks.

“Our product is handmade, and we don’t manipulate it in any way; we are making real raw live kombucha and we keep our shelf life short so it’s always fresh. This results in a living drink which is lightly effervescent and serves as a low sugar alternative to high sugar soft drinks and alcohol,” explains Tracy.

KO Kombucha is brewed and bottled by hand in Co Offaly and is available in 150 outlets nationwide and via the website www.kokombucha.com.

The drink comes in three flavours – KO Original Kombucha, Blueberry and Strawberry – and each contains an array of different antioxidants, amino acids and enzymes.

Future plans include doubling the number of stockists to 300, while adding a multiple store as a client. The company is also planning to hire up to three employees, and to begin exporting while retaining production in Offaly. “We would like to continue working with independent businesses and educating people on the benefits of introducing kombucha and fermented foods to their diet.”



POSITION

Co-founder

WHAT WE DO

We are kombucha brewers making small batch, organic kombucha by hand in Co. Offaly.

CONTACT US

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