

Not just any
fish in the sea.

CHATHAM ISLAND FOOD CO

FOOD FROM THE EDGE

Category
1 Corporate Identity

Sub Category
1.2 Design and
implementation costs
under £100,000

Client
Chatham Island Food Co.

Design Consultancy
Elmwood

Date
July 14th 2013



elmwood

Executive Summary



When we met Del, he was a one-man show selling fish. Bucket in hand, he'd stride proudly from door to door, telling and selling his story.

What he needed, however, was a way of telling it on a bigger and better scale ... and that's where we came in.

[300 words]



**CHATHAM
ISLAND
FOODCO**

A seventh generation Chatham Islander and founder of the Chatham Island Food Co, Delwyn Tuanui was born with fishing in his blood. Located 800km off the coast of New Zealand in the middle of nowhere, the Chatham Islands is a tiny archipelago where 'living on the edge' is part of daily life. There are no parking fines, no mobile phones and no worries: life is shaped simply by the elements.

Del founded his business in 2011 to share his island's extraordinary produce with the world, including his elusive export – the Chatham Island Blue Cod. Found only in the Chathams' nutrient-rich waters, where cold southern and warm northern currents mix a rare carbon sink, this is no ordinary fish...

As the old saying goes, however, there are plenty of fish in the sea. So when Del approached us wanting a truly effective brand identity, there were a few challenges we needed to tackle. Firstly, where on Earth was it? And what made its Blue Cod so special? By telling the story visually and verbally, we created a compelling tale that built awareness for the place, sheer passion for the produce and new opportunities for the community. Hence, the Chatham Island Food Co. was born.

By creating an extraordinary brand for an extraordinary place, we helped to deliver in the first 4 months:

- **130% increase** in sales and **86% increase** in profit.
- **110% increase** in customer base.
- Major presence at **Australia's premier restaurants**, from Sydney's Mr Wong to Melbourne's Circa.

Project Overview



Our task:

To connect the real story of the Chatham Islands to the Food Co's greatest point of difference:

Produce like nowhere else on Earth, from nowhere else on Earth ...



Outline of brief

Del asked us to create a brand identity, language and B2B packaging for his beloved produce in order to be able to tell his story when he couldn't be there himself. Specifically, this meant launching a new range of fresh seafood products into the Australian hospitality market - everything from naming and tone of voice, to brandmark and photography. And as a niche artisan business, he needed it done on a shoestring budget.

The key objectives included:

- Build brand awareness and **establish the Chatham Island name**
- **Increase sales to 500kg per week** by the end of 2012
- **Increase customer base** by attracting new customers
- Convey the product's rare provenance, proud history and community values
- Keep packaging costs low

Description

The Chatham Islands are a tiny archipelago with a total population of 600 people, located 800km off the coast of New Zealand. Put simply, there's no place like them, which is why Del founded his niche seafood start-up in 2011 - to share his island's extraordinary produce with the world.

The rare surrounding waters provide food for phytoplankton (the lifeblood of the fish population) and a thriving marine eco-system, which is what makes its Blue Cod vastly superior. Catching it, however, is no easy task. Like taming the untameable, navigating these waters takes a natural understanding - hence why Del employs a handful of local fishermen to get the job done. It's certainly not for your average fisherman.

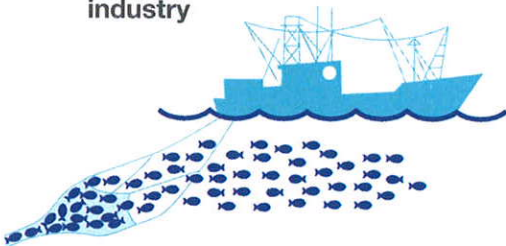
Every catch is logged by date, time and location, so that all Food Co. produce is delivered fresh from ocean to plate within just three days - these sustainable fishing processes have always been the same. But instead of turning up on restaurant doorsteps with his fish in a box, Del needed to be able to tell his tale even when he couldn't be there.

And that's where we came in ... to turn it all around for the Food Co. by creating a premium, authentic brand and story.

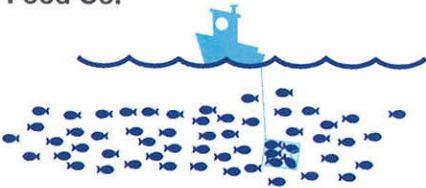
Project Overview Cont.



Big fishing industry



Small artisan Food Co.



“Premium produce from remote islands is now a reality, with salt-grass lamb from Flinders Island, Blue Cod from the Chatham Islands (NZ) and Wagyu from Robbins Island (Tas) landing on menus.”

– Jill Dupleix

Food writer, Fairfax Media

Overview of market

As a nation with the world's third largest fishing zone, Australia already imports 70% (\$2.1b) of seafood to meet current domestic demand. Of the 70% imported, 52% of it comes from three main countries: Thailand, China and Vietnam. In 2011, Australia was ranked NZ's second biggest export market, valued at NZ\$275m, with its Top 5 export companies all large-scale organisations. Hence why fighting for menu space with commercial giants remains quite the challenge for Del's artisan Food Co.

The sheer isolation of the Chatham Islands was also a major obstacle, which is why creating awareness of the place and its produce was imperative for the brand. However, it also allowed us to create a completely unique and ownable category for the 'Chatham Island Blue Cod', forming a specific and desirable market for demand and simultaneously protecting the provenance of the produce.

This trend towards provenance and hyper-local cuisine is simply everywhere on the Australian dining scene. Stemming from a sheer love of food and demand for exclusive, premium produce, successful brands are starting to define the source of their fare for ultimate premiumisation. Take David Blackmore's famed wagyu beef, for example. It appears on menus simply as 'David Blackmore Beef' - much the same as 'King Island' does. In fact, this trend is feeding right into Australian supermarkets, which are now advertising local meat sources in order to gain market share.

Sources: National Seafood Industry Alliance, Seafood for Australia. Seafood New Zealand.

Project launch date

July 2012

Size of Design Budget

\$10,000 AUD.

Project Overview Cont.



Our Big Idea:

Food from the edge.



Outline of design solution

Like the beginning of any good story, we immersed ourselves into the Chathams with a research trip, staying on the island with one of the proudest farming families. Endless photos, videos and journal scribbles later, the real essence of the Chathams unfolded to us through one all-important tradition ... storytelling.

With a demanding climate and unforgiving conditions, living on the edge is a daily reality here. Not just anybody can survive this kind of isolation. And it was this simple insight that formed our big idea for the brand, 'Food from the Edge'. For us, every element of the visual language needed to echo this sentiment in order to truly tell the story of the Chathams and the Food Co.

The landmark tree, created by blowing flecks of charcoal across paper, captures the elemental force of wind and instantly makes a connection with the raw conditions. Shaped by the elements like the Chathams themselves, the landmark pushes the boundaries by propelling typography right over the edge.



**CHATHAM
ISLAND
FOOD CO**

Project Overview Cont.

The brilliant blue colour, which hints at the stormy, unpredictable weather, also makes links to the Chathams' mighty Blue Cod. Not only is this fish an integral part of the story, it's one of the Food Co's finest selling points ... purely because it's so hard to outwit.

Photography was an important vessel for carrying this colour palette through the whole look and feel, capturing the exotic blue fish, the mysterious blue waters and the murky blue skies. Like a day in the life of the Chathams, every image conjures the gritty reality, harsh terrain and undeniable beauty of the place. Even the local's friendly characters are laid bare through emotive, close-up portraits.

But how would our story sound? In order to articulate the brand verbally, a distinctly 'Chathams' tone of voice was created for the Food Co. – raw, rugged and underlyingly romantic – to convey the harsh conditions that shape the people, the produce and their surrounds on a daily basis.



Project Overview Cont.

To emulate the Food Co's passion for sustainability, we printed business cards on 100% cotton paper and crafted a series of easy tear-off postcards as both business communication and storytelling piece. Our packing tape also allows any box to be rebranded the Food Co., and most importantly, tells a story about its origins ... 1,415 hours of sun, 12-18 degrees, wild winds up to 100km per hour.

With community and authenticity right at the heart of the story, we managed to create an extraordinary identity for an extraordinary place, with produce like nowhere else on Earth.

Now Del's travelling as far as Hong Kong, complete with the collateral needed to continue sharing his story...

[441 words]



Summary of results

Since launching in July 2012, the Chatham Island Food Co. has gone from strength to strength, almost **doubling Del's sales target** and customer base for the year.

Not only did we meet our key objectives, we **exceeded expectations** by improving staff morale and behaviour, **increasing employee recruitment** and engagement, as well as improving everyday life and economic growth for the **Chatham Island community**...

130%

Increase in sales
in the first four months

Our key objectives were:

Build brand awareness

The Chatham Island Blue Cod now appears on the menus of some of Australia's best restaurants, including **Sydney's China Doll** and **Rockpool**, and **Melbourne's Coda**, **Taxi** and **Flower Drum**, to name but a few.

86%

Increase in profit
in the first four months

Increase in sales

In the first four months alone, the new brand and packaging design led to **sales increasing by 130%**, **cash growth by 69%** and **profit by 86%**. In fact, sales in the first two months covered the original cost of the investment. Not only did the Food Co. reach 500kg per week in sales by the end of 2012, they almost doubled it, reaching **950kg per week**. **From \$19,000 sales** in June 2012 **to \$67,000** in May 2013 – the only way is up...

950kg

Produce sold
per week by end of 2012

Increase customer base

The new design has led to the Food Co's customer base increasing 110%, with the majority of all restaurants now calling out the fish on the menu as 'Chatham Island Blue Cod'. The extra media attention and word of mouth brought about via the new brand has made it much easier when trying to get sales. With the objective to obtain 50 customers by the end of 2012, the Food Co. now has 70. And as a developing business, customers' calling you is obviously the ideal result.

110%

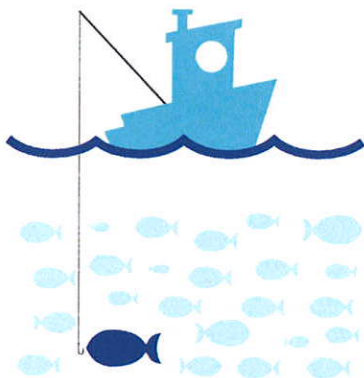
Increase in customer base

"We were finding that customers already knew about us and our Chatham Island Blue Cod. Now they ring us wanting to put 'Chatham Island Blue Cod' on their menu."

– *Gigi Cardwell*

Chief Operating Officer, Chatham Island Food Co.

Summary of results



Plenty of fish, but only one Chatham Island Blue Cod.

Convey the product's rare provenance

By giving our identity not just a design but a story, we've put the Chatham Island Blue Cod in the spotlight on more menus and made it even harder for competitors to emulate.

“Competitors are constantly trying to copy our product. However one thing we have found is a decrease in the number trying to pass it off as ‘Chatham Island’. Our brand and story is so strong, it makes it very difficult for competitors to emulate.”

– *Gigi Cardwell*

Chief Operating Officer, Chatham Island Food Co.

Keep packaging costs low

The new packaging, complete with easy tear-off postcards, packing tape that tells a story and logbooks filled in by fishermen, allows any box to be rebranded the Chatham Island Food Co. and tells customers exactly where the produce has come from – even down to the exact date and time.

Exceeding community expectations

With community right at the heart, our design is helping to create a sense of pride amongst the locals, as well as driving more money into the local economy.



“One local girl came forward and talked about the symbol of the tree, how it represents strength, longevity, resilience ... all traits required to be able to live and survive on an isolated and harsh place such as the Chatham Islands.”

– *Gigi Cardwell*

Chief Operating Officer, Chatham Island Food Co.



“Built on the back of the unique Chatham Island story, Delwyn has developed the platform to deliver the highest quality Chatham Island seafood the market demands straight to diner's tables and, in doing so, generating premium returns back to the Island based quota owners and fishers.”

– *Debbie Goomes*

Chair, Ngati Mutunga O Wharekauri (local iwi/indigenous tribe)

Summary of results



Improved staff morale and engagement

The brand's emphasis on quality has put the spotlight on fishing best practice and sustainability. Fishermen now proudly talk about best catch methods and how to create a better product.

“Working with Chatham Island Food Co is very rewarding when you know where your Blue Cod is going, arriving on someone's plate in Australia within 3 days of catching it. When you know you are getting rewarded for slurring your fish, you'll never go back to throwing it into bins with no ice.”

– Nancy Kay

11 Fishing Company, Chatham Islands

Improved recruitment

Since the launch of the new brand, the Food Co. has doubled its staff employment, with new sales reps and an Island Coordinator also imminent hires.



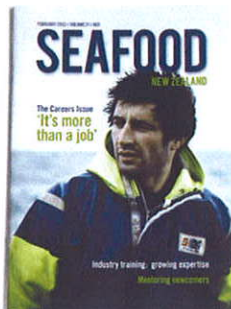
Press

“This isn’t just any fish, it’s Chatham Island Blue Cod from the pristine waters surrounding a remote outcrop 800 kilometres to the east of mainland New Zealand.”

– *The Age*

“Chatham Islands produce pristine seafood, including the sensational blue cod imported into Australia by native islander Delwyn Tuanui, of Chatham Island Food Company.”

– *The Age*



“Chatham Island Blue cod... it’s the most beautiful fish dish I’ve eaten in the past year.”

– *Herald Sun*

Any other influencing factors?

No. Del carried out no advertising, direct mail or PR campaigns. This brand identity project was the only investment Del has made for the Food Co.

Research resources

All sales figures provided by the Chatham Island Food Co. Other resources include National Seafood Industry Alliance, Seafood New Zealand, The Age and the Herald Sun newspapers.