

= Ya Kun Kaya Toast =

Ya Kun Kaya Toast (Simplified Chinese : ?????) is a Singaporean chain of mass @-@ market , retro @-@ ambience cafes selling toast products (notably kaya toast) , soft @-@ boiled eggs and coffee . Founded by Loi Ah Koon in 1944 , Ya Kun remained a small family @-@ run stall for decades , but have expanded rapidly since Loi 's youngest son headed the business in 1999 . They have over fifty outlets , mostly franchised , across six countries , and are a Singaporean cultural icon , known for their traditional brand identity and conservative , people @-@ centric corporate culture .

= = History = =

In 1926 , Loi Ah Koon (???) emigrated from Hainan to Singapore , where he worked as a coffee @-@ stall assistant , then started a stall selling coffee , crackers and toast at Telok Ayer Basin , together with two other immigrants , who later dropped out , leaving him to run the stall alone . He married while visiting relatives in Hainan and after his wife settled down with him in Singapore , she suggested cutting each slice of bread into half and combining the toast with her homemade kaya , which created their signature kaya toast . Registered in 1944 as Ya Kun Coffeestall (Ya Kun being Ah Koon in Hanyu Pinyin) , the stall gradually developed a reputation for delicious kaya toast and friendly service . The couple , their eight children and seven other families lived in a three @-@ storey shophouse across the road , where the Hong Leong Building now stands , and as the children grew up , they helped stir the kaya , run errands , charcoal @-@ grill the bread and eventually , manage the stall .

Ya Kun Coffeestall moved to Lau Pa Sat in 1972 , but high rents and renovation of Lau Pa Sat in 1984 sparked a return to the Telok Ayer Market ; nevertheless , the stall continued to attract " customers who came every day , some from as far as Jurong or Woodlands " . In 1998 , the market closed down , so the stall relocated to Far East Square and was renamed Ya Kun Kaya Toast ; the following year , Ah Koon died and his youngest son , Loi Boon Sim Adrin (???) , took over the business , determined " to keep his father 's legacy going " . Realising that Ya Kun had a lot of goodwill and potential , Adrin decided to expand the business , so the family opened a second store at Tanjong Pagar and , in 2000 , began franchising the brand . Since Ya Kun were incorporated in 2001 , launched their first overseas outlet (in Indonesia) in 2002 and expanded their menu (adding ice cream toast and the Toastwich) , they have won the 2004 and 2005 Superbrands Award , the 2005 to 2007 SIFST Product Award and the 2008 SPBA @-@ CitiBusiness Regional Brands Award .

= = Products and stores = =

Ya Kun Kaya Toast have over forty Singaporean outlets , about half of which are franchised , and over thirty overseas outlets , all franchised , across seven countries (China , Indonesia , Japan , Myanmar , South Korea , Taiwan and the Philippines) ; they plan to expand to Brunei , India , Malaysia , the Maldives , Thailand and the United Arab Emirates in future . The stores have a retro ambience , with wooden tables and stools , Chinese calligraphy of the company name , posters about their history , traditional methods of preparing food and customer service reflecting Chinese family values . Unlike their main competitors , they have a limited menu that revolves around their core product , kaya toast , with cheese , peanut butter and ice cream as alternative spreads for their thin , brown , crispy bread . To appeal to a wider demographic , Ya Kun also sell French toast and Toastwiches (their Asian alternative to sandwiches) ; set meals combine any type of toast with soft @-@ boiled eggs and a beverage , usually coffee or teh tarik .

Prices at local Ya Kun stores are slightly higher than those at kopitiams , but lower than prices of comparable products at Western coffeehouse chains operating in Singapore , while food at overseas Ya Kun outlets is relatively expensive . All outlets obtain their ingredients from the same suppliers and some ingredients , notably the kaya and coffee powder , are made at the Ya Kun factory in Bedok , using recipes that only a few of the Loi family know . The chain are " widely

regarded as an institution of good kaya toast " and " a Singaporean cultural icon " that the Singapore Tourism Board has promoted as a tourist attraction . A Ming Pao review praised the " crispy but not hard , fragrant but not burnt " toast and fresh kaya , while a Straits Times review described the toast as " evenly sliced " and of " the right texture " , the eggs as " cooked to perfection " and the teh tarik as " not too milky and not overpoweringly sweet either " .

= = Management = =

Ya Kun Kaya Toast comprises two companies , Ya Kun Singapore , which manages the Ya Kun factory and two corporate outlets , and Ya Kun International , which oversees the chain of outlets and franchising activities . Adrin has an 80 percent share of Ya Kun Singapore and his younger brother , Algie , has a 20 percent share , with other members of the Loi family actively involved in daily activities , while Ya Kun International is fully owned by Adrin Loi . Their corporate culture is conservative and people @-@ centric , with emphasis on preserving their brand identity as their chengnuo (?? , " commitment " or " promise ") to their customers , sustainable growth over actively pursuing new opportunities , nurturing family @-@ like relationships among staff (they do not fire or retrench workers) and avoiding aggressive conflict with competitors . Although Ya Kun do not publicly disclose their financial figures , a 2009 Lianhe Zaobao article estimated that the company had an annual revenue of S \$ 8 million , while a 2012 article in The Star stated they had 300 employees .

= = = Cited literature = = =

William Koh (2010) . The Top Toast : Ya Kun and the Singapore Breakfast Tradition . Cengage Learning Asia . ISBN 9814281654 .