

Cruising...

Delicious?

No – it's

Caramelicious!

When Rémi Tremsal sells a jar of soft caramel, he feels he is selling a part of himself. With deep roots in French history, soft caramel is to the French what Vegemite is to Aussies. Laura Rancie discovered just why the French find caramel to be so completely, irresistibly Caramelicious.

The first time I met the dynamic French duo behind Caramelicious back in 2011, just weeks after they had launched their new brand, I was very pregnant and hadn't eaten lunch. My afternoon was divided into very precise segments of time - 45 minutes to meet with Rémi and Breena, three minutes to waddle back to my car, then seven minutes to navigate through peak hour city traffic to my son's kindergarten.

As I said *au revoir* to Rémi and Breena, they kindly offered me four sample pots of their liquid gold. Back in the car, my tummy grumbled and I decided to have a little taste. With no spoons on hand, I self-consciously snuck a peak at the cars next to me and dipped my finger into a jar. I had a little more, and then a little more until, in just a seven-minute car ride, I had devoured four jars of vanilla, cocoa, cocoa hazelnut and salted caramel. Heaven!

Yes, Caramelicious pots of soft gooey caramel have a funny effect on people, and are highly addictive. Husband and wife team Rémi and Breena Tremsal have taken Australia by storm with their wonderful range of flavours. Which begs the question, where has caramel been all our lives?

"Salted caramel is something that goes back five generations in my family," Rémi boasts. "I was basically born in salted caramel. My father was making it at a commercial level when we were in France. Then Breena and I moved to Australia and... We realised it didn't actually exist here. Salted caramel is to the French what Vegemite is to Aussies. In France, every morning the French have it on their toast."

Finally, in mid 2011, Breena thought, "It's going really crazy there, so why not here?" She arranged a life-changing trip to "reunite" with Rémi's father on Réunion Island – halfway between France and Australia – to talk caramel.

"He recited the recipes off by heart, word by word," Rémi recalls. "Salted caramel is a part of him. At the end of it he said, 'everyone can make caramel. But we, son, have the secret ingredient. Don't think it's easy to make – it's not! *Bon courage!*'"

Caramelicious pots of soft gooey caramel... are highly addictive.

Upon returning to their home in Melbourne, Rémi tried and failed to make a perfect batch of caramel



freshly made jars of Caramel. By Jean-Pierre Ronco Freelance Photography.

“I was basically born in salted caramel” – Rémi Tremsal

numerous times. He realised that, although armed with his family’s original recipe, and the “secret” ingredient, he needed to adapt it to fit the Australian climate.

“Here, the ingredients are slightly different,” Rémi explains. “Sugar here isn’t [the same as] sugar in France. Butter is different too. The climate, the temperature, it’s all different. And I just couldn’t get it the same as my Dad’s.”

Rémi cleverly reworked the recipe to suit it to Australian conditions. “Once we had figured that out, it was so exciting,” says Breena. “I started straight away to work on the logo and a website...We wanted to get it right immediately, and launch our product before anyone else had the same idea”.

And work fast they did. The jars are available in stores Australia wide as well as online but, amazingly, everything Rémi and Breena sell is homemade. Every day, Rémi stands over a stove cooking his father’s secret recipe, while



Rémi and Breena Tremsal. By Amber Gardener.

his wife labels every single jar herself and their two young children play in the background.

Thanks to their passion, dedication and wonderful French flare, their company is a run away success. So much so, that Caramelicious is a finalist in the 2013 Food Awards in Sydney.

“If I tell you [everything I do in] one of my days, you’ll think I’m crazy,” says Rémi, “but you have to be crazy to succeed. I spend my days cooking. Any bit of

continued ►

Cuisine...



Butter in Australia isn't butter in France. By Jean-Pierre Ronco Freelance Photography.

Every day, Rémi stands over a stove cooking his father's secret recipe, while...their two young children play in the background.

time I can find during the day, I am cooking. I might do two batches a day, and each batch will take three hours.”

Cooking isn't all he does, however. Chef Rémi is actually Jockey Rémi and has been for 22 years. Not the answer I expected when I asked about his day job, which is actually a night job considering he wakes at 3.30am to be on the race course by 4.00am, day in day out.

“I actually grew up on a goat farm, making goat cheese. As a boy, sometimes I even would ride the goats,” he says cheekily. “Then, eventually, my father had to sell the farm and got a job at an equestrian school in Lyon. I was always around horses. When I was 13 my Dad's boss told him, ‘your kid can ride – wanna get him into racing?’ I had never thought of racing before that and definitely didn't want to disappoint my Dad. I was just a kid, so I said ‘okay.’”


Whilst Australians have a passion for all things



Five-year-old Aidan and baby Aymeric. Like Rémi, these kids were born in a pot of soft caramel. By Amber Gardener.

French, the same can be said in reverse – the French love Australia too. Rémi and Breena, who have lived here for nine years, think there are great things about both cultures.

“In France, we take the time to eat,” says Rémi. “There's an *apéritif*, then an *entrée*, and so on. It is an important time when everyone comes together for the same purpose and we share something together. Then there's Australia - so young with plenty to offer. We found it easy to start a business here, there are people everywhere ready to help and support. In Australia, you can make your own dream and then work for it”.

What a pleasure it is, meeting with this dynamic duo. With their beautiful French accents and passion for life and food, it is not hard to like Rémi and Breena. And anyone who works this hard for caramel is a friend of mine!  www.caramelicious.com.au