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The queen of acai & poke bowl

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Sweden



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HOW AND WHEN GZIME STARTED HER BUSINESS

In 2019 when the company started, Gzime was 27 years old and had been working in the restaurant industry since she finished high school, completing the Hotel and Restaurant Program at the age of 19. Starting Acai & Poke Bowls was not originally part of Gzime's plans. She met her partner, and it was initially her partner who was about to start up Acai & Poke Bowl just when they met. Then Gzime more or less slipped into the venture, largely due to her experience and knowledge in the restaurant area, which she had and still has.

Gzime's partner had an idea, and a vision, and there was already a logo, among other things. The name Acai & Poke Bowl comes from Brazil, as her partner is involved in a sport from Brazil and was inspired by it. The original idea was to have furniture in various colourful colours, which Gzime did not like, preferring natural materials like wood, which she suggested. Her argumentation was that it is better with pure, natural materials, which also give a calming impression on the premises. Gzime and her partner worked hard, and just before the opening, they flew to Thailand together to get further inspiration for Acai & Poke bowl, both in terms of interior inspiration and in terms of plates for the restaurant.

The original idea was for it to be a take-away restaurant. Customers would come in and shop, and then leave again, so in the beginning, there were not many indoor seating options.

HOW GZIME DEVELOPED HER BUSINESS

As Gzime was only involved from the sidelines initially, and it was her partner who already had a basic idea with Acai & Poke Bowl, Gzime felt that she could not make too many changes in the beginning. Instead, she offered tips and advice along the way based on her industry experience. From the very beginning, those who were going to start Acai & Poke Bowl were Gzime's partner and his friend. But the friend did not stay for long and phased himself out. Today, it is Gzime and her partner who own Acai & Poke Bowl.

Since its inception five years ago, the menu has evolved. They still focus on Acai Bowls and Poke Bowls, but the bases in the bowls have changed; now, they all have the same base, and the additions in each bowl are different depending on which bowl you choose. The routines in the kitchen have also evolved. The entire kitchen has been restructured, with Gzime following wheelchair measurements during the restructuring. Everything now has its place in the kitchen, making it easier to work. (Look at the well-organized kitchen in the picture at the next page)



Gzime and her partner have found their roles and routines around the company, which has also evolved since the beginning. Acai & Poke Bowls opened in 2019. This was followed by a couple of years when they were affected by the pandemic and when the outdoor seating areas increased. It was a bit worrying for a while, but then it turned out that the pandemic years became Acai & Poke Bowls' best years, probably because they initially chose to focus on take-away. Now, after the pandemic, the outdoor seating areas are still there, but they have increased the number of indoor seats.



WHAT ARE GZIME'S PLANS FOR FUTURE

Regarding the future, Gzime shares that they are considering turning Acai & Poke Bowls into a chain, not with franchisees, but possibly an interconnected series of locations. There is also a thought of starting up in another country, like Spain or Dubai. Looking ahead, Gzime sees herself working more on the administrative side from home.

Gzime would also consider becoming a consultant for other restaurant owners, to help organize and streamline operations so that the business runs more smoothly, thereby utilizing her expertise further.

WHAT ARE GZIME'S SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WILLING TO START THEIR BUSINESS

Gzime's advice to young aspiring entrepreneurs is to have a timeline. It is important to set a timeline, where should I/we be in 1 year, in 2 years, etc. If I am not where I planned to be in 5 years, then I have to rethink and straighten it out. It is important to set goals, for example, after 1 year I should have earned back the money I invested at the start-up.

To sum up, the 3 most important things for Gzime are timeline, planning, and testing.



Image source: all pictures used in this story are from Gzime's personal archive.

We wish good luck to **Gzime!**

If you are interested in learning more about Gzime's business or to get in touch with her, you can contact her by

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