

# Fresh focus for Gala Retail

With a year-on-year sales growth of 9% in Q1, and 11% in H1 of 2021, the Gala Group is generating impressive results. Here, we take a closer look at the innovative in-store concepts continuing to drive both footfall and sales

Despite the challenges that the convenience retail sector has faced since early 2020, innovation and a focus on responding to the changing consumer trends of Irish consumers has ensured that the Gala Group continues to remain at the forefront of the sector.

There are over 250 Gala Group stores in locations throughout Ireland, giving the Gala Group a grounding in communities across the country.

The Gala Group had a strong start to 2021, reporting a year-on-year sales growth of 9% in Q1, and 11% in H1 and in the past 12 months, the Gala Group has added 24 new stores to the Gala estate, with a further 15 existing Gala stores undergoing refurbishment.

The group says its commitment to creating fresh, contemporary stores, both for existing and new stores, has been at the forefront of its activities with a focus on creating attractive and modern store layouts, reflecting the innovative, forward-thinking nature of Gala Retail.

## Tailored to communities

Gala Retail stores are tailored to the communities in which they operate and because of this, no two Gala stores are the same. Gala's refreshed branding creates a vibrant and welcoming contemporary convenience store, with offerings and fresh food concepts designed to cater to the needs



**Baker's Corner enables retailers to offer quality home baked goods, fresh prepared in-store each day**



of its customer and store layouts designed to make each store's offerings stand out to consumers.

As the convenience retail sector has evolved, with fresh food offerings emerging as a key driver for consumers, Gala Retail has responded by making fresh food a central part of its offering. The Gala Group has invested heavily in the expansion of its fresh food team and in the development of its exclusive range of in-store concepts. It has more fresh food executives per retailer than any other convenience symbol group, demonstrating the pivotal role of fresh food in convenience retailing and Gala's dedication to ensuring Gala retailers have access to innovative, modern concepts that set their stores apart from competitors and deliver quality, convenient, food to go options that will draw consumers into their local Gala store.

Fresh food-to-go is not just for people on the move, with the busy lifestyles that people are leading at the minute they are also looking for high quality, convenient and fresh food-to-go options to enjoy at home. This is something that Gala has taken into account with its

exclusive range of in-store concepts.

## Baker's Corner

The first of Gala's concepts was Baker's Corner, which enables retailers to offer quality home baked goods, freshly prepared in-store each day to their customers and the concept has been instrumental in recruiting new customers to the Gala brand.

Baker's Corner is delivered in partnership with an independent Irish-owned business, reflecting Gala's focus on supporting local communities and local suppliers. Baker's Corner was soon joined by Coffee Junction, Gala's own coffee offering and a natural pairing for Baker's Corner.

## Coffee Junction

The Coffee Junction in-store Gala coffee offering has been developed exclusively for Gala retailers and is available from selected Gala stores nationwide. Coffee Junction is all about providing convenient, quality coffee for people on-the-go and the signature 'Coffee Junction' blend makes it a popular choice with thousands of Gala customers each day.



**Coffee Junction provides convenient, quality coffee for people on-the-go, featuring a signature Coffee Junction blend**

### New Street Deli

For Gala's deli offering, New Street Deli, a colourful street food inspired deli menu was created to complement and reflect the updated modern look of the rebranded deli areas in-store. New Street Deli caters to a range of customers with its innovative street food inspired menu, with offerings ranging from New Street Spice Boxes and Messy Taco Fries to on-trend Healthy Protein Salad Boxes and New Fusion Wraps, as well as the usual deli favourites including hot breakfasts, freshly made sandwiches and baguettes.

### Galato

Gala introduced its own fresh whipped ice cream and dessert station, Galato in 2019. The Galato offering comprises of a range of chilled dessert options, including ice-cream, milkshakes and desserts, with a twist, incorporating crepes, puddled doughnuts, waffles and much more into seasonal offerings including the Halloween Spooky Banana Boat, Christmas Hot Waffle & Ice Cream with Cinnamon Sprinkles; Valentine's Day mini filled donuts and a St. Patrick's Day green and gold sundae. The offering taps into the upturn in consumer demand and popularity of frozen desserts and is a great addition to Gala's expanding concept range.

### Distill

Distill is Gala's off-sales alcohol offering, which includes the finest new and old-world wines and spirits, as well as a wide selection of beers and other alcohol beverages for Gala customers to conveniently shop during their trip to a Gala store.

### Blissimo

Most recently, the Gala concept range introduced the Blissimo pizza concept which



**Gala's off-sales alcohol offering, Distill offers an excellent selection within a vibrant setting**

brings pizza on the go to its customers. Freshly made in store and sold by the pizza or individual slices, Blissimo offers Gala customers a fast, fresh and tasty option whether they're looking for a quick snack on the go or a delicious and convenient meal for all the family.

The innovation and introduction of these concepts to stores has been hugely beneficial to Gala retailers, visibly increasing sales and driving footfall and drawing new customers to stores. Here we look at two of the Gala Retail stores that have benefitted from the Gala Group's fresh, forward-thinking branding and innovation in fresh food.

## CROWES GALA, SIXMILEBRIDGE, CLARE

Crowes Gala is a family-run business based in Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare. The 3000sqft convenience store has just recently undergone a refurbishment, refreshing the store's look and layout and upgrading its concept offerings.

Coffee Junction was the first concept that Crowe's Gala introduced a number of years ago. Speaking about its impact, store owner, Flora Crowe says: "We noticed a significant increase in our sales following the introduction of Coffee Junction, through a combination of great marketing and a really great coffee in our new store. Our recently refreshed the branding has also led to a bump in sales following the store refurbishment."

The Galato ice-cream and chilled desserts offering has also been a big hit with customers of Crowes Gala. "Galato ice cream has been a big winner for us in the last two years," says Flora. "With Ireland being the highest consumer of ice cream in Europe it is a must for any good store now and a great addition to the range of concepts from Gala."



**"Galato ice cream has been a big winner for us in the last two years," says retailer Flora Crowe**



**New concepts such as the New Street Deli (shown above) at Mulrooney's Gala have boosted footfall to the store**

## MULROONEY'S GALA, NENAGH, TIPPERARY

In early 2020, the Mulrooney's Gala store in Nenagh underwent a massive renovation.

"We wanted to update the store to align it with the new contemporary Gala image," says Shane Mulrooney, who runs the store along with his father, Sean.

A key element of the store's upgrade and refurbishment was the introduction of a large New Street Deli counter, Galato ice-cream and chilled desserts station and a Coffee Junction dock from the Gala Retail concept range, all of which have elicited a great response from the customers in the local community and have delivered customer footfall during a challenging time for the retail sector.

"Footfall has increased along with our sales and profitability," says Shane. "It's a different store with a completely different feel. It's the in-store concepts and all that they have brought that has set us apart locally. The feedback we've got from customers has been brilliant." ■