

Every few months, Gala visits a standout store. This month, we visited owner Liam O'Sullivan and manager Anthony Casey of O'Sullivan's Gala in Golden, Co Tipperary



Gala Performance

Liam O'Sullivan inherited the store from his parents over 40 years ago, when he and his late wife, Pauline, took over the running of the only store in the village. Prior to taking over the family business, Liam worked for Edenvale Foods, where he was "doing a bit of everything," from distribution to working in the warehouse in Dublin. With the passing of Liam's wife five years ago, he says he was blessed to have manager Anthony Casey come on board to work alongside him. "I would be lost without him," says Liam. "He has really helped the store grow to where it is today, and I am grateful for that. He looks after everything for me and I have great trust in him."

How long has your store been with the Gala Group?

We joined the Gala Group in April 2021. Our store employs 11 staff members and is open from 7am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday. We have a wonderful team that work with us and they have been a great support to us, especially over the past 18 months. We try to cater to all the needs of the local community, including grocery, solid fuel, off-licence, Lotto, etc. We listen to our customers and we always do our best to get any products they request.

What attracted you to the Gala Retail Group?

When we first met the team from Tuffey's Wholesale in Clonlara and the Gala team, we were very happy with what they had to offer. We were looking for a change and we were very impressed by the image and branding in the stores, and with how modern they felt when we visited some of the other Gala sites. We liked

how the Tuffey Group operated a family-run business and we felt that they knew what we were looking for. When we met the Gala team, we were very impressed with their professionalism and knowledge. They have worked with us to ensure that we get the most out of our store!

How has the support of the Gala Group evolved since you joined the group?

Gala and Tuffey's have gone above and beyond to support us, from our first meeting through to the refurbishment of our store and the regular communications. Sandra Nicholson, our Gala Retail Operations Executive (ROE), and Chris Curtin, our Fresh Food Executive, have provided us with knowledge and regular onsite assistance and are always on call when you need them, while Paddy Conway from Tuffey's has also been a great support to the business. The entire team worked closely with our shop fitter, Fitall, in ensuring a seamless transition to our new store. We have found the knowledge and support that we have received from Gala invaluable and this is what makes Gala different.

What Gala concepts have you implemented and what impact have they had on your store?

We introduced four new concepts into our store - Galato, Bakers Corner, New Street Deli and Distill. Our big focus when we did the revamp was to increase our fresh food offering. With the introduction of the New Street Deli concept, we now have a new range of both hot and cold food, as well as a wide range of 'grab and go' options, and the feedback we are receiving is excellent. Alongside this, we introduced Bakers Corner, which has been our biggest win. This

was something we didn't have much of before and now we have a fresh display of homemade bread, buns, cakes, and our fresh cream range, on display every day. Our Fresh Food Executive, Chris, really helped us with the Baker's Corner offering and the benefits of this have been reflected in our sales. The Galato offering has been extremely popular, allowing us to offer a range of ice-cream, desserts and milkshakes, with Gala providing support through new recipes, ideas and special offers, to keep customers engaged throughout the year. The Distill off-licence enables us to round out our offering, making O'Sullivan's Gala a one-stop-shop for all our customers' needs.

What systems have most benefited the day to day running of your store?

One of the biggest benefits is the support from our Gala ROE, Sandra, and Fresh Food Executive, Chris, who visit the store regularly and are always at the end of the phone if we need them. The Gala GROW app for retailers is a very useful tool as there are new ideas and news from Gala every week to keep us up to date with anything we need to know as retailers.

What would you say to retailers who are considering joining the Gala Group?

Just do it! Since joining Gala we haven't looked back. We are delighted with our store and excited to see what the future holds. The partnership we have with Gala is very strong and we are always looking to the next goal/target. Gala keeps us on our toes, with new ideas and innovations on how to keep our store relevant and cater to the changing needs of our customers. ■