

The braai-loving accountant who ditched his spreadsheets to build a spice empire

Chartered Accountant, Jowayne Van Wyk, never imagined he'd trade his spreadsheets for spice blends - but a love for braai, bold flavours, and bringing people together, led to the creation of Jowa's, a proudly South African brand now stocked in 73 Checkers stores across the Western Cape.

The business was founded in 2021 in memory of his late mother, Loraine, whose kitchen in Sutherland, in the Karoo, was a hub for family and friends - and the heart of his inspiration. The name "Jowa" dates to Jowayne's rugby days representing the Springbok U19s, where teammates gave him a nickname that stuck through university.

In 2015, seeking a quicker way to enjoy a midweek "Karoo tjoppie," Jowayne bought a gas braai - kick-starting a weekly tradition that led him to start experimenting with homemade spice blends. Sharing his braai moments on Facebook quickly attracted a following, and after receiving recipe requests, he began making and distributing his own spices and sauces.

Within nine months, he had sold over 25,000 units directly to his social media audience, laying the foundation for Jowa's spices and sauces.

"My vision for Jowa's was simple: to create an authentic brand that every South African household could enjoy every day. Since then, the mission has evolved into creating not only spices and sauces, but experiences that connect people at the table," says Jowayne.

Realising the business potential - and acutely aware of the support required to scale and leave his very senior day job - Jowayne approached Checkers and in 2023 was admitted into the retailer's [SMME programme](#). This provided him with access to packaging and labelling support, marketing assistance and ongoing technical guidance for growth planning.

"Getting listed with Checkers was a turning point. It gave our brand visibility, trust, and credibility. It told our customers: we're here, and we're here to stay," he asserts.

"Our spices and sauces are made for the braai, but versatile enough for everyday cooking. They contain no fillers, no maize, no MSG, and no artificial colourants — only honest ingredients, sourced locally wherever possible to support local farmers and communities."

The range includes locally inspired sauces like BBQ Steak & Rib and Hot & Spicy Braai, alongside spice blends such as Juicy Steak & Chops, Tasty Chicken, Hot Chicken & Chips, and Fish & Seafood.

And Jowa's continues to innovate, recently launching the [Lekka Salt & Pepper](#) blend at Checkers, with more products in the pipeline.

With support from Checkers, the brand is also exploring sustainable packaging and actively working to reduce its environmental footprint - while keeping products accessible and affordable.

"The passing of my mother, just months before Jowa's launch, deeply motivated me to build something meaningful in her memory and uphold the values she instilled: love, care, and creating opportunities for people, my community. When my father, Neville Van Wyk, passed 18 months later, it only strengthened my resolve to make Jowa's a lasting legacy," he shares.

"What started as a tribute to my family has become something so much bigger, thanks to the platform Checkers has given us to grow. Their team believed in our potential and that belief helped turn our dream into something real."

Recipe: Double-Sauce Steak Skewers

Ingredients:

[Checkers Steakhouse Classic Rump steak](#), cubed

[Jowa's Chicken Spice](#)

[Jowa's Lekka Salt 'n Pepper](#)

[Jowa's BBQ Steak & Rib Sauce](#)

[Jowa's Sweet & Sticky Sauce](#)

Method:

Season cubed rump steak generously with Jowa's Chicken Spice and Lekka Salt & Pepper.

Thread onto skewers and braai until almost done.

In the final few minutes, brush with a glaze made by mixing:

- 1 part BBQ Steak & Rib Sauce
- 1 part Sweet & Sticky Sauce

Let it caramelise over the heat until the steak is juicy, smoky, and perfectly glazed.

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