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## Lukas is big in spirits

From selling Parthenon Ouzo from the back of a supermarket in Thomastown, Flox Wines and Spirits now distributes 195 beverages from 17 countries. Lukas Papargiris shares his experience of running a successful second generation family business.

### **From inception up until the setting up process, how did you start your business?**

Flox Industries as it was formally known was founded in 1969 by Theoharis Tashounidis, my father in-law and company director.

Theoharis identified a market gap and imported Greek wines and spirits for Australia's large Greek community.

From humble beginnings at the back of small supermarket in Thomastown, the famous Parthenon Ouzo was born in 1971.

I remember Theoharis and Marcelle Tashounidis together with family and friends tirelessly producing Parthenon Ouzo for the local liquor stores.

Forty years on Flox Wines & Spirits Pty Ltd

remains within the family. Now a second generation company with Jim Pilakis and myself at the helm, whilst Theoharis now semi retired remains the director and continues to have an invaluable input.

Today, Flox imports 195 beverages from 17 countries, 19% of our product range remains Greek.

We also locally produce and export.

Parthenon Ouzo is now distilled and bottled in Ouzo's rightful birth place, Greece and exported to Australia with a truly Greek flavour.



**Lukas Papargiris shares his experience of running Flox Wines and Spirits**

### **Did your Greek Australian background play a role in your business?**

Most definitely, living 4 memorable years in Thessaloniki and Athens where my father introduced and manufactured the iconic Australian mop and bucket for Europe, awarded me this second dimension to instinctively think, behave and transact "Hellenic" as required.

Being Greek Australian we are respected for our achievements in diverse fields. Calombaris, Demetriou, Donikian, Kapiniaris, Kostoglou, Kotsiras, Nicodemou, and Pandazopoulos come to mind.

My apologies to the hundreds I have failed to mention.

We are proud of each others achievements.

From our parent's humble beginnings together with our rich heritage, pride and multicultural evolution we have generated the drive to succeed.

Till this moment Australia remains the "lucky country".

### **What would you say stands out as the comparative advantage of your business over the competition?**

The word competition is multifarious and complex, therefore I attribute our success to our structure and forward planning. We have a professional dedicated team, personal integrity, business transparency, industry experience, national exposure and a global network.

### **How is business currently, especially given the tough economic times we're facing?**

Business remains healthy and we are achieving our targets. The government's fiscal policy has generated spending. We have evidence that global recovery from the financial crisis is at the elementary phase.

## BUSINESS WRAP

This is great news for Australia although in my opinion recovery will be measured as the US and a handful of EU partners shall remain inconsistent for at least 12 plus months.

### **What is your vision for the future of your business?**

We forecast steady growth. Product sourcing is an integral part of our business. The launch of an Australian product range and the expansion of our export market is our short term and achievable vision.

### **Do you have any tips for young and aspiring to be entrepreneurs?**

I'd like to share my "7 business wonders" for the young entrepreneur.

1. Identify your strengths and equally identify your weaknesses
2. Research your market and your competition meticulously, whilst not falling in Love with a "gadget" (your product or service).
3. Sell yourself with confidence, the product is secondary.
4. Network, Interaction, Clear Communication.
5. Inform your market, Educate your client base. Show your competition respect not fear.
6. Set short-term flexible achievable goals rather than long term fixed ones.
7. The consumer is not always right, however respect the right of the consumer!

***"It takes a moment in time to sell your product and service. It takes a lifetime to gain personal respect and build business integrity".*** Lukas Papargiris

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