

## THE CHOCOLATE BROWNIE COMPANY

### VICKY'S YUMMY BROWNIES SET FOR ST DAVID'S DAY LAUNCH IN ASDA

Delicious homemade Welsh chocolate brownies will be appearing on shelves at three Asda stores in South Wales in time for the St David's Day celebrations this year.

The award-winning brownies are the mouth-watering creation of entrepreneur Vicky Critcher, of The Chocolate Brownie Company, who has been baking them for years at her home at Creigiau, near Cardiff.

Now her small band of loyal customers is about to multiply many fold thanks to Asda who have agreed to sell packs of 12 bite-size white chocolate brownies in its Newport, Coryton and Gorseinon stores, where tasting promotions are being arranged.

Business has taken off since Vicky won the ASDA Local Hero Competition, beating more than 600 nominee across the UK, last summer. Victory gave her a fantastic opportunity to supply her local ASDA store and she was featured in the BBC Good Food magazine.

Vicky had no idea former neighbour Heather Bassett-Jones had nominated her for the competition until she received a phone call from Asda to say she had reached the final 10. News of her victory arrived whilst on a family holiday in Spain.

The rest has been a bit of a whirlwind. She's signed a deal with highly respected Barons Patisserie in Cardiff to manufacture the brownies to her exact recipe with no additives or preservatives, thereby guaranteeing quality and a reliable supply to customers.

Confident there's nothing to rival her brownies on the market, Vicky already has her sights set on supplying more Asda stores within Wales and across the border as well as other outlets, including restaurants, tea, coffee and gift shops. She also supplies gifts for birthdays, weddings, corporate events and dinner parties.

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Flavours include white, milk and strawberry chocolate, chocolate orange, mint choc chip, rum and raisin, white chocolate and cranberry, Cointreau and orange, Marc de Champagne and strawberry, cappuccino and hazelnut and lemon and lime. She also makes gluten and wheat free brownies for people with food intolerances.

“I started baking from home on April 1 last year after Simon Keeley, who runs The Old Post Office in St Fagans, said my brownies were fantastic and he thought I could make a business out of it,” explained Vicky, who with husband Grant has two sons, Max, 10 and Ioan, seven.

“I make them to a traditional recipe with a few modern tweaks and I use eight different flavours of chocolate. There is nothing on the market like them. The white chocolate original, which was the reason this all started, is nicknamed ‘MAMMA C’. It’s a favourite made with white chocolate chunks.

“If sales go well in the three Asda stores, then the brownies could be introduced into more Welsh stores within six months and then nationally within a year. My aim is to develop the brand and to deliver the best quality brownies on the market in a variety of flavours. I would also like to develop a new range of desserts.”

Vicky is receiving marketing support from the Welsh Assembly Government’s mentoring programme delivered by Menter a Busnes. The programme is designed to help Welsh speciality food and drink businesses develop the UK market.

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