

MAGAZINE

SPECIAL EDITION

November 2023



SELECTED DUTCH ENTREPRENEURS OF 2023

*DUTCH CULINARY
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BRAZIL.*



Celebrating the official
“Day of the Entrepreneur”

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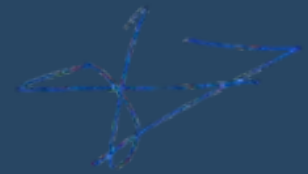
The Entrepreneurs of 2023 - with Peggy De Rop, Managing Director at Dutcham (left) and Wieneke Vullings, Dutch Consul General in Sao Paulo (right) .

Every third Friday of November is declared 'Day of the Entrepreneur' in the Netherlands. A day on which entrepreneurs are thanked for their entrepreneurship, creativity, drive for innovation and their perseverance. It is a moment when respect and importance is shown towards entrepreneurs, who are the backbone of our economy.

The Day of the Entrepreneur has been taking place since 2016 and is part of the "Global Entrepreneurship Week", a worldwide initiative to promote entrepreneurship. A campaign that is now running in more than 150 countries around the world.

This year Dutcham and the Dutch Economic Network in Brazil focused special attention to "**culinary entrepreneurship**". We selected 3 Dutch organizations that not only bring the culinary traditions of the Netherlands to Brazil, but people who excel through their drive, perseverance and courage.

Our journey begins with **Bitterballen Fabriek**, a testament to the enduring appeal of the classic Dutch snack, the bitterbal. We delve into the story of **Martin Holandese**, a bakery that has become a cornerstone of Holambra's Dutch heritage. Finally, we explore the sweet journey of **DutchWaffle**, a family venture rooted in the history of the Stroopwafel. Each of these stories is a celebration of heritage, innovation, and the power of bringing a touch of Holland to Brazil.



PEGGY DE ROP

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OPENING WORD

AFKE MULDER

DEPUTY AMBASSADOR OF THE NETHERLANDS IN BRAZIL



The Day of the Entrepreneur is a very significant day for us, marking our recognition of the entrepreneurial force that is crucial in a world full of unique challenges and opportunities. We are in an era of change and in the middle of large transitions, most notably on climate, sustainability and digitalization, as well as on food systems. I am therefore particularly **proud to see so many successful Dutch entrepreneurs around the world and here in Brazil** stand out for their innovative ideas, but also for their ability to build solid and prosperous businesses, while seriously incorporating their impact on people and the planet.

The Day of the Entrepreneur is a day to honor all those courageous individuals who take risks, seek opportunities, and transform their visions into reality, driving innovation, competitiveness, and job creation. Entrepreneurs, in general, are people **driven by the desire to make things happen**, by the desire to transform their reality, build something new and overcome challenges.

The three Dutch cases highlighted for this specific edition reflect the union between Dutch tradition and expertise, combined with the power of adaptation and continuous learning.

Entrepreneurship is not an easy task, especially when it comes to starting a business in another country, with a different culture. A recent survey conducted jointly by the Embassy and Dutcham on Dutch businesses active in Brazil indicates this: while they struggle with issues involving bureaucracy, high taxes, and complex legislation, they see Brazil as a rewarding and increasingly promising market if you persevere.

As an Embassy, we are proud to participate in this entrepreneurial ecosystem, offering support and development through several programs dedicated to the topic. **We are committed to helping Dutch businesses prosper** by developing partnerships between these two incredible countries.

It is a journey of cooperation and learning, with dedication and determination.

We feel proud to honor our entrepreneurs from different sectors and fields of activity, who are capable of transforming the reality of the market, people's daily lives and the challenges of our planet.

Abraços e pode contar conosco!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Afke Mulder'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

AFKE MULDER



INTERVIEW

KEES DALFSEN

BITTERBALLEN FABRIEK



The 'bitterbal' with mustard: a typical Dutch snack.

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"Success for me isn't a huge profit. I'm a small producer. Success is about delight in food, it's the flavor that connects all cultures."

What is the key to your success in Brazil?

Defining success is not something one-sided. It's not just about generating sales and making profits. We run a small operation and for us it is first and foremost about the fun and enjoyment we get from it. Success is about the joy of food, about how a single taste can bridge different cultures. It's about creating something that resonates with people's tastes and memories.

To run a business successfully in another country, you have to adapt to their tastes and customs; no one knows what a bitterbal or stroopwafel is in Brazil.

How do cultural aspects influence your business?

Our customers are primarily Dutch who miss the real taste of the Netherlands. Bitterballen are to the Dutch what Coxinha is to Brazilians.

But of course we don't only have Dutch customers, because the locals also started appreciating the taste of the bitterballen. There is something universal about food, regardless of differences in taste and tradition, food often brings people together.



The Certificate as "Entrepreneur of the year", recognizes entrepreneurship, craftsmanship and perseverance.

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Sustainability is a complex issue, especially in the food industry.

What makes doing business different in the Netherlands and Brazil?

Our recipe has been slightly adapted to Brazilian tastes. Brazil has a real meat culture and expects more savory bites and richer flavors. For example, the bitterballen here contain almost twice as much meat as the formula in the Netherlands or other countries in Europe. Dutch people prefer it a little creamier.

In business life, Brazilians are more open and more social compared to the Netherlands. A good personal relationship is important for doing business.

How do you deal with sustainability within your company?

Sustainability is a complex issue, especially in the food industry. We've considered making vegetarian options, but replicating the traditional flavor is a big challenge. We focus on recycling and minimizing plastic use in our packaging, which is a small but significant step towards sustainability.

About the Bitterballen Fabriek: A Taste of the Netherlands in Brazil

Founded in 1783 in an Amsterdam café, Bitterballen Fabriek began with a simple yet flavorful snack. The bitterbal, created by the café owner's wife, quickly became a staple of Dutch culture. Fast forward to 2016, the company expanded its reach to São Paulo, Brazil, inspired by a Brazilian's fondness for the unique taste of bitterballen experienced in Amsterdam.

In Brazil, Bitterballen Fabriek adapted its recipe to local tastes, incorporating "acém" – a marbled, lean beef cut, along with fresh vegetables and herbs. The making of these bitterballen is a three-day artisanal process involving slow-cooked broth, shaping, breadcrumb coating, and freezing, ensuring a product that's rich in flavor and quality.

The goal of Bitterballen Fabriek is to share the taste of the Netherlands with Dutch expats and Brazilians alike, fostering cultural connections through food. As a small-scale producer, the company prioritizes artisanal methods, avoids preservatives, and uses eco-friendly packaging. This commitment to authenticity and sustainability makes Bitterballen Fabriek not just a culinary delight but also a cultural bridge between the Netherlands and Brazil.





INTERVIEW

FRANK GERRITSEN

MARTIN HOLANDESA

How did your family start your business in Brazil?

Our journey in Brazil spans 68 years. My father, who arrived in 1955, initially worked in a bakery and confectionery in Holambra, a town mainly inhabited by Dutch immigrants who escaped the war. He brought his baking skills from the Netherlands to Brazil, adapting them to a new environment and clientele.

In 1980, my father realized his dream by establishing his own bakery, a small 12 square meter space, leveraging his formal training as a baker back home. This was the beginning of our family legacy in Brazilian Dutch baking.

I officially joined my father in 1988. After training in the Netherlands and mastering the craft of Dutch sweets and biscuits, I returned to Brazil. Marrying Kev, who had expertise in the restaurant business, marked another expansion phase. We introduced a new concept to Brazil - 'fries in a cone', which has been a hit at major events like Formula 1 and Rock in Rio.



We introduced a new concept to Brazil - 'fries in a cone', which has been a hit at major events like Formula 1 and Rock in Rio.



About Martin Holandesa

Martin Holandesa, a culinary cornerstone in Holambra, Brazil, was established in 1955 by Dutch immigrants Martin and Diny Gerritsen. Originating as a humble bakery to serve the local Dutch community, it quickly became a beloved institution for its authentic Dutch pastries and bread.

The heart of Martin Holandesa's fame is its 'speculaas', a traditional Dutch biscuit crafted from a secret family recipe passed down through generations. Martin's dedication to authentic Dutch baking traditions laid the foundation for the bakery, which his son, Frank, continues to uphold. Under Frank's stewardship, Martin Holandesa not only preserves these traditions but also embraces innovation, evident in their creation of new pastries.

Today, Martin Holandesa is more than a bakery; it's a testament to sustainable practices and a bridge between Dutch culinary heritage and Brazilian culture. Their commitment to the environment is highlighted by their support for the Martin Reforest Project, with a portion of their speculaas sales contributing to reforestation efforts. Martin Holandesa remains a symbol of quality, tradition, and environmental responsibility, offering a taste of Dutch history with every bite.



MARTIN HOLANDESA

CONFEITARIA | RESTAURANTE



Frank's father, Martin, in the bakery.

How do cultural aspects influence your business?

My Dutch heritage plays a significant role in how I conduct business. In Brazil, it's about navigating challenges with resilience and maintaining credibility despite contractual and reliability issues. Our Dutch background helps in building trust and a reliable reputation in the market.

Leading a team of 90 employees, I've learned that a good team is the backbone of any business, big or small. In Brazil, finding and maintaining a skilled workforce is challenging, but it's crucial for success. I believe in setting a positive tone for my team, starting each day with a smile and encouraging an optimistic work environment.

How do you deal with sustainability within your company?

Our restaurant is a true leader in sustainability in São Paulo. We are working with Heineken on a glass recycling initiative where customers can exchange bottles for rewards. Our partnership with Ultragaz has provided our restaurants with a composter, allowing us to efficiently recycle organic waste.

"The Martin Reforest Project project is very close to our hearts," says Frank's partner Gerard Eysink of HC2 Soluções. It offers customers a way to offset their carbon footprint by planting trees. This initiative not only allows our customers to actively participate in making a positive impact, but it fully reflects our mission as an organization.

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Leading a team of 90 employees, I've learned that a good team is the backbone of any business, big or small.



INTERVIEW

**GABRIELLE
VAN MEETEREN**

DUTCHWAFFLE

Dutch Waffle

Holanda

Stroopwafels

· 1953 ·

How do you compare doing business in Brazil and in the Netherlands?

There's a distinct contrast between Dutch and Brazilian business cultures. In Brazil, the warmth and openness of people make business interactions smoother and more personal. This contrasts with the more formal and distant approach prevalent in the Netherlands. These cultural differences have been a learning curve but also an advantage in understanding and adapting to the Brazilian market.



Gabrielle and her colleagues in front of their factory in Barueri SP.

How do you look back on the time you started your business?

The market has undergone significant changes in the past decade. Brazil has rapidly caught up, and the competitive landscape has expanded. When we first introduced stroopwafels, there were hardly any players, but now the market has grown with more producers joining in.

How do you deal with sustainability within your company?

Sustainability is a key focus for us. We've integrated the 17 Sustainable Development Goals into our operations. This isn't just about being eco-friendly; it's about setting a standard for the future. Our initiatives include waste recycling at our factory and collaborations with local projects like 'Mesa do Brasil' to support underprivileged communities.

People often underestimate the complexity of making stroopwafels. It's not just a biscuit; it's a special kind. My father-in-law used to say it's not like making a simple coconut cookie. There's an art to it, a meticulous process that requires precision and care.



About DutchWaffle: A Family Legacy of Stroopwafels

DutchWaffle, narrated by Gabriëlle Van Meeteren-Kraan, traces its origins to 1938 in The Hague, Netherlands, where her grandfather, Dirk van Meeteren, became a qualified baker. The family's bakery journey began in Moordrecht in 1953, evolving from selling simple breads to including the Dutch delicacy, stroopwafels.

After Dirk's passing in 1963, the family, led by his wife Nan, expanded the business, and by 1971, opened their first stroopwafel-dedicated bakery. This family legacy continued to flourish in Moordrecht, a village synonymous with stroopwafels near Gouda. In 2013, Gabriëlle expanded their horizons by moving to Brazil with her family, where they opened a bakery in Rio Grande do Sul. This venture was a precursor to their latest undertaking, DutchWaffle, a stroopwafel factory in Santana do Parnaíba, near São Paulo.

What are the challenges you faced in Brazil?

We are now 15 years in Brazil, and we started in the southern part of the country. When we went to the supermarket, there were only a few foreign options of cookies available. Most of them used cornstarch and we wanted something close to home.

That's when I realized Brazil needed a greater variety, something different like our stroopwafels. Now, after years of hard work, we are on the verge of introducing our stroopwafels to a major supermarket chain, a significant breakthrough for us.



We also struggled to replicate the same flavor of the stroopwafels in Brazil. It is necessary to have patience and to keep a positive mind.

There is a high level of bureaucracy in doing business in Brazil and it was hard to establish a local plant. We had to invest a considerable number of resources to install our plant in Brazil and to find customers.

We also struggled to replicate the same flavor of the stroopwafels in Brazil. It is necessary to have patience and to keep a positive mind.



CLOSING WORD

To conclude this edition of Dutcham's magazine, we would first like to thank our "Entrepreneurs of 2023" - Bitterballen Fabriek, Martin Holanda and DutchWaffle - for so much entrepreneurship and congratulate them on their many years of contribution to Dutch culinary traditions here in Brazil. From the crispy bite of a bitterbal to the sweet stroopwafel.

Brazil is not a country for beginners, it takes time, energy and passion to do business here successfully.

In this magazine, we tell the story of 3 entrepreneurs, but we have many more entrepreneurs who deserve to be put in the spotlight. Hundreds of Dutch companies do successful business in Brazil every day. We would also like to thank them for their entrepreneurship and for their contribution to Dutch business culture.

We wish all our entrepreneurs the best of luck and would like to remain available - both from Dutcham and the Dutch diplomatic network - to help in your entrepreneurial journey.



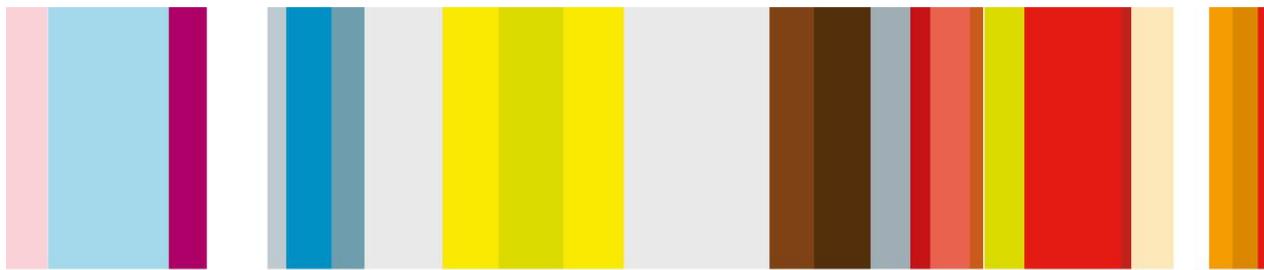
Meeting at the Consulate in São Paulo (from left to right)

Kelly Day & Kees van Dalzen (Bitterballen Fabriek) - Frank Martin Gerritsen & Gerald Eysink (Martin Holanda)

Wieneke Vullings (Consul General of the Netherlands in São Paulo)

Peggy de Rop (Managing Director Dutcham) - Gabrielle van Meeteren & Mels Kraan (Partners - Dutchwaffle)

Vasco Rodrigues (Deputy Consul of the Netherlands in São Paulo).



THANK YOU



**FRIDAY 17TH NOVEMBER:
ENTREPRENEURS' DAY**

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