

## BICYCLE



## PERFUME



## EARPHONES



## SHOWER GEL



## SAUSAGES



Cheryl Faith Wee



# Just for you

These are some of the things customers can get made according to their personal preferences

**B**espoke and made-to-order fashion or furniture may be old hat by now. But what about sausages and ice cream made to your specifications?

Shops here, including a butchery and ice-cream parlours, are offering customers made-to-order options or the chance to customise what they want from scratch, according to personal preferences.

A made-to-order or custom-made item is one for which the customer chooses from a pre-existing menu of variables to come up with something that suits his preferences. Bespoke products are made entirely from scratch, catering to their owners' every whim.

For close to a year, Ms Chen Pennefather has been ordering custom-made sausages from Huber's Butchery in Dempsey Road for her family.

Once every six weeks or so, she orders 5kg of sausages and instructs the butchery to make them from only the belly and tenderloins of Mangalica pigs. These pigs are kept on a special diet. She has the butchery season the sausages with Himalayan sea salt from her own home too.

Her husband is in his 50s and works in investment and they have a 10-year-old son. Ms Pennefather, 43, a consultant, prefers not to buy off-the-shelf sausages that might be filled with preservatives.

She says: "I seldom bought sausages in the past because I felt they were not very healthy and full of nitrates. But we love to eat such meats. Now, we can enjoy them."

Huber's Butchery started offering this

service last year. Prices start from \$26 a kilogram for pork sausages, with a minimum order of 5kg. Customers can choose from the meat available at the butchery.

Mr Thomas Kreissl, 45, general manager of Huber's Butchery & Bistro @ Dempsey, says: "Many are looking for plain pork sausages with little seasoning due to allergies in children. We also wanted to give people the opportunity to impress their guests with a unique sausage that they can call their own."

Since it opened in 2011, handcrafted ice cream cafe Creamier in Toa Payoh has been offering a bespoke service: For a minimum order of 15 litres, it can come up with a completely new flavour for you. Ingredients range from fruit puree and cream from France to white peaches sold seasonally in local supermarkets. Prices start from \$750.

The main bulk of its business is still the cafe and it does fewer than 10 custom flavours a year for wedding couples, company events and restaurants.

Creamier's head chef, Ms Audrey Wang, 39, takes up to 1½ months to come up with a new flavour. It is a trial-and-error process.

She says: "The wonderful part of

developing a new ice-cream flavour is that it is similar to creating an art piece. The ice cream base is like a white canvas for the craftsman to develop and layer the flavours, tastes and sometimes even textures."

Ms Wang has smoked peppercorns with premium tea leaves in a wok to create a rich dark chocolate peppercorn ice cream. For every hit, however, there are misses. She has also had to discard 3- to 5-litre batches of ice cream that did not taste right.

Other ice-cream cafes here such as Island Creamery, with branches in Serene Centre and Holland Village, and Salted Caramel in Upper Thomson Road, also offer such bespoke services.

Prices range from \$20 a litre for a minimum order of 5 litres at Island Creamery, to \$8 a 100g cup (minimum 100 cups) at Salted Caramel. It usually takes at least a month to come up with a new flavour.

Creative director Ignatius Ong and his management consultant wife, Mrs Cherri Ong, both 31, had a bespoke ice-cream flavour for their wedding in 2011.

For their big day, they got Creamier to create a white peach chardonnay ice cream

for about 200 guests. It cost several hundred dollars.

Mr Ong says: "We really wanted this flavour and it was our wedding, so we did not settle for anything else."

More prosaic, custom-blended skincare products such as facial scrubs and moisturisers have been around since the 2000s.

Spa Esprit at Beauty Emporium in Dempsey Road introduced a custom-blend range of shower gels, body scrubs and moisturisers in 2009.

Customers choose from about 70 essential oils such as lavender and geranium to mix into the products and the item is ready in 10 to 15 minutes. Each bottle has a handwritten label.

A 250ml bottle of shower gel blended with aromatherapy oils, for instance, starts from \$45.

The home-grown beauty company sells several hundred bottles of these products a year – mostly to repeat customers, says Spa Esprit group public relations manager Janet Lim. Ms Lim, 33, adds: "More than half of the customers of the custom-blends are repeats and people also buy them as presents for special occasions such as birthdays."



Retail expert Samuel Tan, 51, says people opt to buy things they can customise in order to distance themselves from mass consumption.

Such customers, adds Mr Tan, who is the course manager of diploma in retail management at Temasek Polytechnic, are "individualistic" and believe in "I, me and myself".

"Customisation meets their personal needs better. And they are more satisfied because they were involved in the creation of the product," he adds.

✉ [cherylw@sph.com.sg](mailto:cherylw@sph.com.sg)