

# George Antonopoulos

*When Small Shops  
are Much Bigger Operations.*

A recurring comment our Vasilis Vasilas has heard several times when gathering the stories of Sydney's Greek shops is how a small shop may actually be an extremely busy one. Yes, it may look small from the outside but this is only the facade of something a lot greater. One of Sydney's Greek 'institutions' is undoubtedly, Supreme Souvlakia Meat and Poultry Wholesalers in Belmore, or the way everyone knows it as, 'Supreme Souvlakia'. In his recent interview with Supreme's owner, George Anastopoulos, Vasilis witnessed first-hand why there is so much more to this incredibly busy shop.

Giorgos migrated to Australia in 1965; the following year, he married his fiancé, Sotiria, and, over the years they would have six children. His first jobs were in local factories but then he landed a job in Sylvester's Smallgoods in Redfern, where he gained his first experiences in the meat industry.

He then found work at Belmore Smallgoods; after this, George also worked at Olympic Delicatessen and Butchery in Bankstown. His first business opportunity is surprisingly a takeaway shop on King Georges Road, Wiley Park. With his children growing up and having the foresight of establishing a business they could work in, he leased another shop- a few doors down from the takeaway shop- and established a butcher shop, which specialised in souvlakia.

Business boomed and George set up a small factory, to produce souvlakia, at the rear of premises he owned in Belmore. In 1998, the factory was expanded to include the shop and Supreme Souvlakia has never looked back. As Vasilis found out, there is a major operation behind Supreme's shop-front window, with the Anastopoulos family owning several farms across NSW, with their own livestock! They deal with their managers and Georges' son, Philipas, transports their livestock to the local abattoirs. As Philipas humbly points out, 'This is like a giant jigsaw puzzle and we try to piece it together. There are times when all the pieces fall into place and there are other times when a couple of pieces are missing. All we can do is our best...' One interesting detail about Supreme's story is the way George used to correct customers who came into their butcher shop and asked for kebabs, 'I would ask them, "What is this kebab?" and then teach them to call them "souvlakia"'. It may sound funny but underlying this is how Greek shops have changed Australian perceptions about things, even if it is as simple as a souvlaki.

