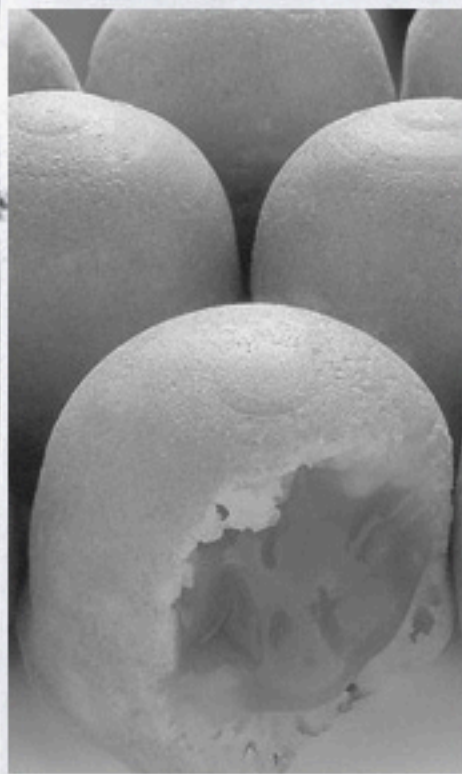


Innovative concept proves to be a success for Fei Siang



LIM

... good business

TEN years ago, a husband and wife team ventured into the business world by opening a small kiosk selling snack food items at Sungei Wang Plaza in Kuala Lumpur.

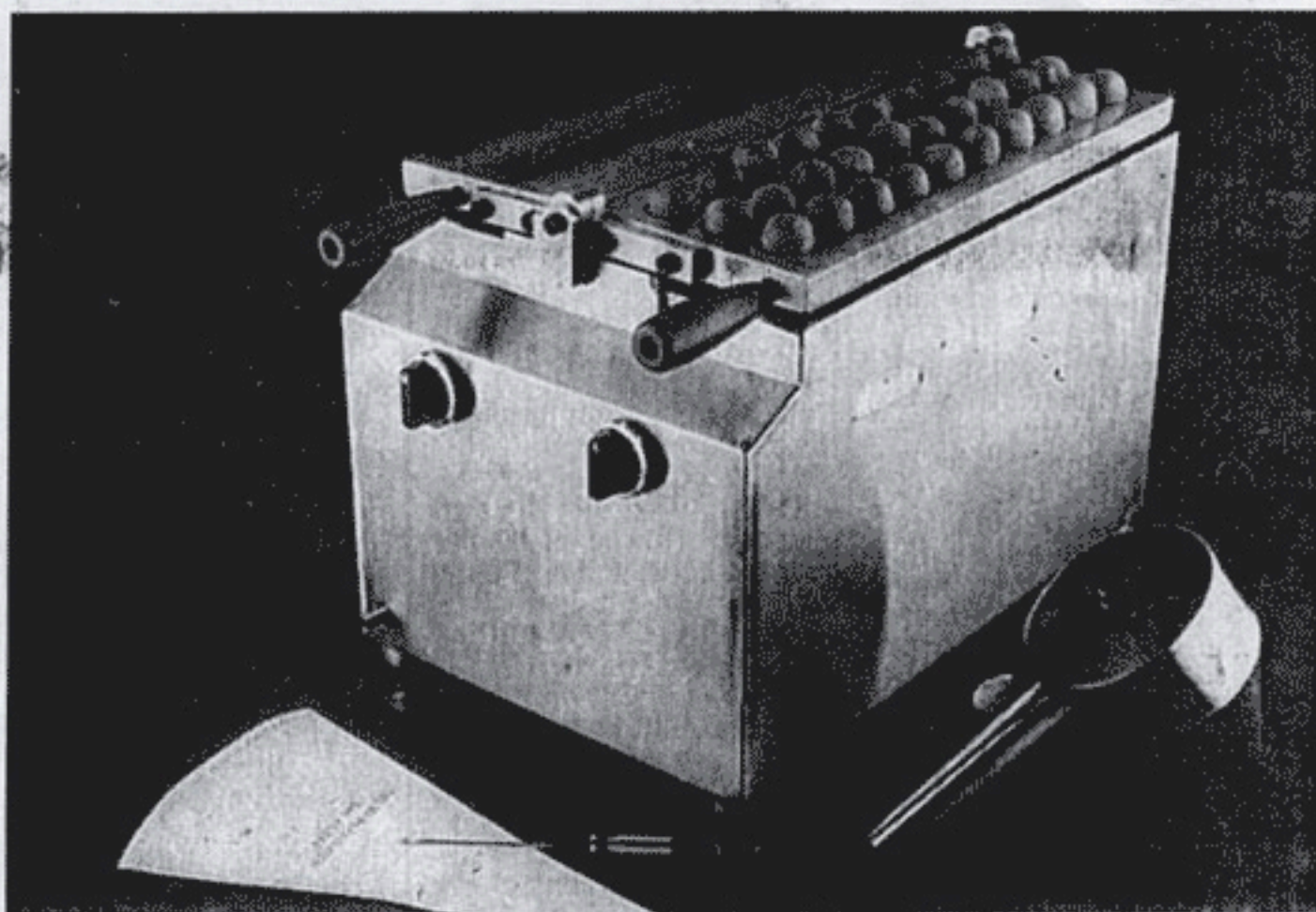
One day, they met a Japanese who introduced them to a Japanese invention — a baking machine used for making hot snacks.

By experimenting with various types of recipes, the duo managed to create a snack to suit Malaysian taste buds, incorporating kaya or coconut jam — which they named Kaya balls.

Three years later, in 1991, the couple opened a small firm called Fei Siang Trading (as it was known then) which sold the Kayaball-making machines while operating snack food kiosks in shopping complexes around the city.

Based in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, Fei Siang Sdn Bhd, as it is known today, has come a long way from its days of selling candy floss.

Today, Fei Siang owns 13 outlets in various shopping complexes and theme parks around the country selling four staple items: waffles, Sumo Corn-in-cup, Kaya-



CHURNING OUT DELICIOUS FARE ... A model of the 30-piece kayaball-making machine

balls and waffle cone ice-cream.

In addition, the company ventured into selling the concept of four-in-one snack food kiosks, where Fei Siang provides a counter and related accessories (exclusive of the snack making machines) necessary to start the snack food business.

The concept involves selling the same four snack items as Fei Siang's 13 outlets.

Its co-founder and general manager Chin Yong Fah when interviewed by the *New Straits Times* recently, said the snack food kiosks concept is catching on among Malaysians.

"Since the economic slowdown, we have begun to receive more enquiries about the concept as well as sell more snack machines, such as corn steamers, waffle and Kayaball-making machines."

The concept costs about RM20,000 to start-up, which includes a deposit of

RM8,000, counter and accessories worth RM3,000, RM2,000 in rental and about RM7,000 in equipment.

Fei Siang provides the recipes and quantities of dough needed for Kaya balls, waffles and waffle cones. It even supplies the sweet corn for their corn-in-cup, which is locally grown from seeds imported from the US.

"We help our clients by building the concept for the business but do not operate on a franchising basis nor charge franchising fees. We also introduced an installment system to enable people to own their snack food business."

Chin's wife and co-founder of Fei Siang, S.E. Lim, who is also the marketing consultant manager noted that the snack food and food industry in general is relatively well shielded from the current economic slowdown.

"People still need to eat and the snacks that we sell

are not expensive but very affordable," she said.

She declined to reveal how many "concepts" have been sold to date but said that it is a profitable business to be in.

"Depending on the location of the snack kiosk and how busy it is, on average, an operator can earn a minimum of RM200 to RM1,000 daily simply because the overheads and maintenance of the snack machines are low."

Chin alluded to overseas franchising opportunities for their snack food kiosk concept but declined to comment further.

Fei Siang's star product for the moment is the Kayaball machine (for which they are the sole agents), which is assembled locally with parts imported from Japan.

The kayaball-making machine retails at RM5,300 for a 30-piece machine, RM7,500 for a 60-piece machine and RM9,600 for a 90-piece machine.