

PETE PUTS BITE INTO BIG APPLE

Naomi Campbell has frequented the New York deli in search of her favourite drink.

As ex-pats flock to buy a taste of home

Peter provided the food for David Bowie's backstage party.



CORNISH PASTIES, Scotch eggs, pork pies or an old-fashioned British banger. If you're in New York and in the mood for one of these, there's only one place to go — Myers of Keswick, in Greenwich Village.

It's the deli that brings a real taste of Britain to the Big Apple.

Peter Myers, a former butcher from the Lake District, has been catering for the city's ever-growing ex-pat community since 1985.

"We opened on July 4 and, on that first day, I sold one pork pie," Peter said.

"The next day, I sat there again with my wife and we sold just two. She was in tears, asking me if I thought this idea of mine was going to work.

"I told her not to worry, not many

businesses increase their turnover by 100 per cent in one day!"

Peter had arrived in New York in 1972 for a two-week holiday — "The longest holiday on record!" he said.

Discovered

He started working in a bar and, within a few years, he ended up becoming the landlord.

Married to a local girl and with a baby daughter, Jennifer, a

turning point came when Peter's dad, himself a butcher, came over for a visit.

"He stayed for eight weeks," said Peter, "and, to avoid getting bored, he started making pork pies and sausage rolls. We would give them out to customers in the bar during the cocktail hour.

"I also had a conversation with someone from the British Consulate in New York and discovered that there was a British population

by Helen Newman

of around 250,000 in the area — that's New York, New Jersey and Connecticut."

It was too good an opportunity to miss. Peter sold the bar and bought a former Italian deli in the meat-packing district, resisting the temptation to call it *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Trendiest

Shelves stocked with Oxo, Bird's Custard, Walkers Crisps and Hobnobs, it's now at the centre of one of the city's trendiest areas and a must for any Brit in New York.

"We recently had one of the Gallagher brothers from Oasis in. I get them mixed up so I'm not sure if it was Liam or Noel," Peter revealed.

"We've also done various backstage parties for the likes of Elton John and David Bowie when they're playing in town."

Other stars with a yearning for a taste of home have included Naomi Campbell, who loves Ribena, Kate Moss who enjoys a Cadbury's Flake and Mick Jagger who once ordered five \$500 Christmas baskets.

And a woman who once had the late Princess Margaret to

stay was very grateful to find Peter could supply lemon barley water for her guest.

Customers come into the city from as far away as Virginia and Maine, and drive away again, their car boots groaning with goodies.

Best seller

"I always say my Cumberland sausages are the best in or out of Cumberland," said Peter, "because I use a recipe given to my grandfather when he opened a butcher's shop at Station Road, Keswick. We probably sell about 500lbs of them a week.

"At Christmas, we're always rushed off our feet with puddings and mince pies — last year we got through about 10,000."

Peter regularly travels back to Britain to place orders.

In fact, he's been over here planning for Easter and making sure he orders enough Cadbury's eggs to meet his customers' needs.

"Probably about 95 per cent of our customers are British, with the rest being Americans who might have been to Britain and have a liking for some of the foods.

"On the whole, though, the American palate is quite bland and they aren't that keen on trying anything new."

Having started by stocking only foods he liked, so nothing went to waste, Peter now stocks hundreds of lines, from Angel Delight to Maltesers.

Myers of Keswick is very much a family concern. Peter's daughter Jennifer, 25, runs the shop in his absence, and her cousin Roger has been working alongside them for the past six years, too.

