

A PINCH OF THIS, A PINCH OF THAT

by ELLA MYERS

Pinchman's brings a variety of gourmet pastries to South End

At Pinchman's Café & Artisan Bakery, the passion for food is tangible. In the flaky, buttery exterior of freshly baked croissants; the melt-in-your-mouth buttercream-frosted layered cakes; and in the delicate crêpes stuffed with creamy eggs and tender vegetables.

Sudbury's newest cafe officially opened its doors in June on Long Lake Rd., and in its first few months it's already gained a reputation for high quality pastries, good coffee, and a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

"We wanted to introduce new things to Sudbury, we knew we wanted baked goods and fresh sandwiches, we just needed that theatre," said Marc Grottoli, one of the owners.

Pinchman's operates out of the former Fabricland space but it has been transformed.

A communal, live-edge walnut table, long benches, and local tiling and accents are lit by compelling, exposed bulbs and the natural light streaming in from a large window at the front.

Grottoli's wife, Nancy-Jo Ramsay, is the other owner behind Pinchman's, but the culinary couple isn't new to the food industry. In 2004, they opened Ripe, a popular Italian eatery just down the street.



Grottoli and Ramsay were both born and raised in Sudbury, and Grottoli took culinary management at George Brown College. He brings extensive experience and an intense knowledge of food trends to his work at Ripe and Pinchman's.

What's in the name?

"The 'Pinchman', so to speak, is the baker...he pinches the bread dough to seal it, and he uses a pinch of this, a dash of that," according to Grottoli.

And at Pinchman's, Allan McMullan is the "pinchman."

A trained chef, McMullan worked as a graphic designer for 18 years before returning to the kitchen.

Finding himself out of work, a friend referred him to Pinchman's when they were first hiring.

"I thought, 'that's ridiculous, I haven't cooked in 20 years,'" said McMullan.

He brought a home-baked croissant to the interview. It's probably the croissant that got him the job.

"That's the thing with croissants," said Grottoli. "It defines your skill as a baker."

While McMullan spends a lot of the day cutting croissants or pastries, he certainly doesn't cut any corners.

He's spent hours developing a reliably shaped and flavoured croissant, and a butter tart that's not too runny, but not too firm.

McMullan shares Grottoli's almost obsessive knowledge of food, a knowledge that elevates their product

from home baking to patisserie-worthy fare.

They frequently drop references to influential bakeries that inspire them, from Tartine Bakery in San Francisco to the slightly closer Art-Is-In Bakery in Ottawa, and the small but locally famous Dooher's Bakery in Campbellford.

Grottoli's and McMullan's adventurous natures mean they're always trying out something new at Pinchman's with the help of the passionate staff.

The menu has the standard cookies and sandwiches, but there are also delights such as gluten-free banana bread, and empanadas stuffed with chicken and seasonal vegetables. Several veg-

an options are available and many of the menu items can be veganized. For example, a buckwheat crêpe can be substituted for the traditional egg-based crêpe at no loss of flavour.

"We've been tweaking the menu since day one," said McMullan. "We're always trying new things."

So if you think you've tried everything they have to offer, you may want to go back and see what the passionate epicures behind the scenes have been working on lately.



Owners Nancy-Jo Ramsay and Marc Grottoli with Allan McMullan.

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