



Slice

THE SPRING ISSUE

The Bakeries Behind NZ's Best Custard Squares &
Doughnuts • Getting Christmas Ready
Coffee Producer Spotlight & New Products



NEW ZEALAND'S OFFICIAL
BAKING INDUSTRY
MAGAZINE

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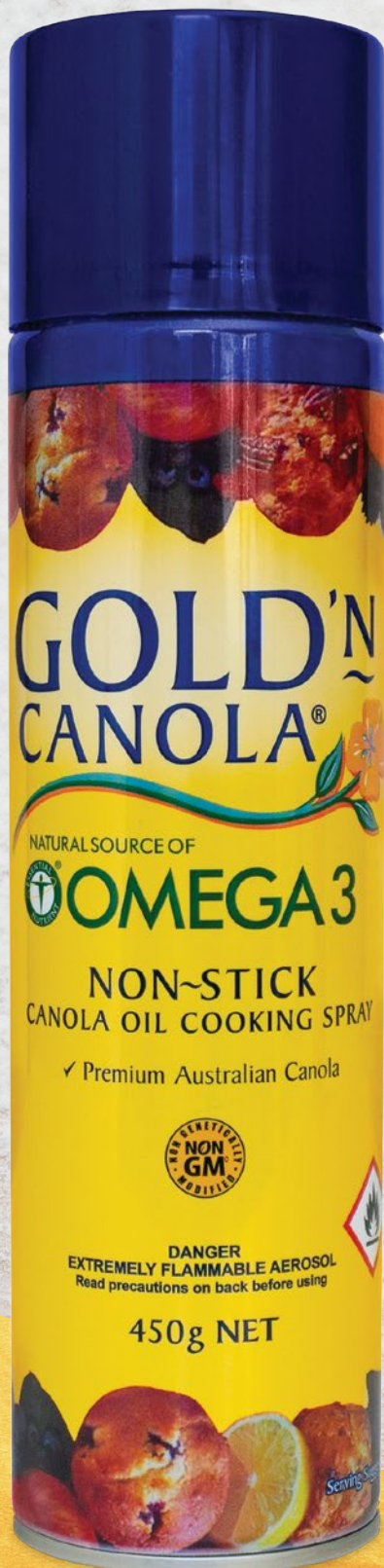


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FRONT COVER: Featuring U-Bake Bakery's award-winning Decked Out Doughnut, and the joint winners of The Great Square Off Custard Square Championship: Volare's custard square (left) & Piccolo Morso's custard square (right). Read the full story: p.8
Image credit: The Creatives

THIS PAGE: Image supplied by Volare.



WELCOME TO *Slice*

We're excited to bring you an issue of *Slice* that's packed with inspiration, innovation, and the undeniable passion that fuels New Zealand's baking industry.

This edition, we've put the spotlight on the remarkable talent that emerged on top at this year's baking competitions – the **Decked Out Doughnut Championship** and **The Great Square Off Custard Square Championship**. We had the pleasure of speaking with the winners, including the exceptional teams from Volare, Piccolo Morso, and U-Bake Bakery. Their stories of creativity, dedication, and triumph are sure to inspire and delight.

We also journeyed down south to Bellbird Bakery, where French-inspired artisan baking is celebrated with every loaf and pastry. Their commitment to craft and quality is a true testament to the artistry of our industry.

And if you need a little pick-me-up, our Love At First Sip feature takes you into the world of Karamu Coffee, where the perfect brew meets a passion for people and planet.

This issue is a celebration of all that makes the New Zealand baking industry great – creativity, dedication, shared love for the craft and a little dash of Kiwi flair. We hope it fuels your passion as we head towards our longer days, warmer weather and our final issue of the year—can you believe it's almost here?

Happy reading, and keep baking with heart.

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*We're proud to serve up another great issue of *Slice*. These are some of the talented minds behind it.*



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editor@bakingnz.co.nz



Designed & edited by:
the creatives
www.thecreatives.co.nz

PRESIDENTS REPORT

A word from Bernie

It's encouraging to see that interest rates are on their way down. This brings a sense of relief to many in our industry, but it's also a reminder that we must remain agile and continue thinking outside the square in how we approach our business.

For example, in my own bakery, we produce a significant amount of pastry, which inevitably leads to rework—what we often refer to as “scrap” or “off-cuts.” As bakers, we know there's only so much of this product you can reintegrate into new pastry dough if you still want to maintain the quality of the perfect puff pastry. This challenge has pushed my team and I to innovate and explore new products that can be created from these off-cuts. Once we identify a promising product, our next step is to find the right market for it. This kind of creative problem-solving is crucial in keeping our industry vibrant and competitive.

On another note, immigration changes continue to impact some of our businesses. The evolving regulations are costly and frustrating, and it often feels like our hands are tied. It appears this is a cost recovery exercise on the government's part, given the extensive paperwork and constant rule changes. While this situation is challenging, it's vital we stay informed and adapt as best we can.

With summer on the horizon, there's hope that more people will be out and about, spending in our bakeries. This season presents an opportunity for us all to boost sales and showcase the best of what New Zealand's baking industry has to offer.

I want to extend a hearty congratulations to our recent competition winners. I've spoken with many of you about how your businesses have benefited, and it's clear that participating in these competitions can significantly lift sales and morale. If you haven't yet taken part, I encourage you to join in and have some fun while putting your skills to the test.

Lastly, our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for the 16th of October in Auckland – keep an eye on the Baking New Zealand website for more details. I strongly encourage you to attend, have your say, and consider stepping up to join the executive team. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Let's continue to support one another and keep our industry thriving.

Bernie Sugrue
Baking New Zealand President



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The ingredients

In The Mix: News 6

Baking New Zealand Competition Winners:

- *U-Bake Bakery*: Sharing A Timaru Treasure With The Nation 10
- *Volare*: Local Ingredients, National Recognition 14
- *Piccolo Morso*: From Apprentice To Owner To Award-Winner 16

Business Bread & Butter: Get Your Bakery Christmas Ready 19

Bakery Spotlight: Bellbird Bakery 26

Home Grown NZ: Karamu Coffee 34

Apprentice Spotlight 44

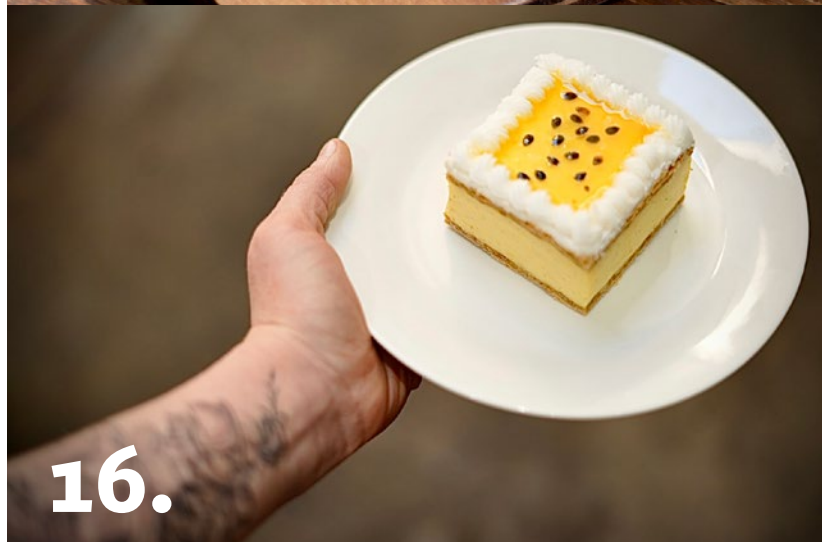
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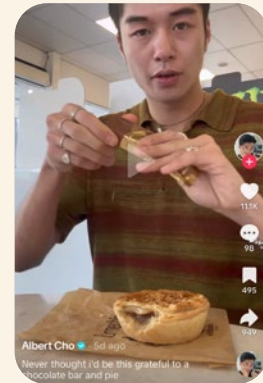
14.



16.



43.



IN THE MIX

The latest news in the baking world

VIRAL OR VILE

Five-years ago Albert Cho put a peanut slab in a pie and New Zealanders weren't sure what to make of it. It picked up traction across news outlets thanks to its decisive nature – and now he's posted a tribute on TikTok, eating the same pairing, which is gaining views and comments encouraging other outlandish combinations. Iconic New Zealand chef Al Brown said it works, but what do you think?



EMAIL US AT
EDITOR@BAKINGNZ.CO.NZ
TO SHARE YOUR STORY

ARLYN THOMPSON AND NZ BAKELS NATIONAL SALES MANAGER TONY MARSHALL

RANGIORA BAKERY CLAIMS ITS FIRST SUPREME PIE AWARD

The South Island has claimed its first ever Bakels NZ Supreme Pie Award and the second only Supreme female baker to scoop up the top award.

North Canterbury baker, Arlyn Thompson from Rangiora Bakery has achieved what many South Island bakers have been dreaming of in the 26 years of the competition. She is bringing home the biggest award in the baking industry. She achieved it with her Gourmet Meat category entry - Slow Cooked Sumatra Style Beef.

In the Supreme judging round there were many impressed expressions on the judges' faces, and this was clearly a tight final until the last pie, the Gourmet Meat entry, went through for tasting.

"So beautiful to eat," summed up as celebrity chef judge Sid Sahrawat as he finished his sample. "The flavours are so well balanced and the pastry and tender meat are a perfect comfort combination. On a cold winter's night, that's the pie you want to eat."

Zoya Sahrawat, the youth celebrity judge, simply raised her eyebrows and smiled as she savoured the last pie taste.

But little did they know that their scoring points would result in arguably the biggest result this competition has ever had – a first Supreme win for the South Island.

NZ Bakels managing director Brent Kersel says this year a lot more bakers gave the Gourmet Meat category a go with entry numbers making it the third largest category to be judged.

"Right from the very first round of the Gourmet Meat judging, there were some really stand-out pies coming through with exceptional pastry making it a challenge to score on and then an abundance of flavour innovation. We had smoked trevally with peas, carrots, beans and corn; Mexican venison; beef brisket with beer, cheese and jalapeno; spicy prawn; beef moussaka and even an old-fashioned mutton pie. So much variety and we know pie fans want that variety from time to time. But when it comes to steak and cheese, and mince and cheese, they really are our 'iconic' pies, and being the two top entry categories shows how they are still the staple of bakeries, especially when the pastry has beautiful layering and a rich, moist and well-balanced filling. For me, you can't beat a mince and cheese pie."

Brent says each year there seems to be a pie that causes a stir in the judging kitchen. This year the 'Winter Pudding' Café Boutique pie – a perfect cube of sweet short pastry encasing a sticky date pudding, took the honour of the most talked about before claiming the Gold award in the Café Boutique category. Baked by Kerry Wellman of Leeves at Portstone in Woolston, Christchurch, it took out the second South Island Gold award, while Jason Danielson of Kaipai Bakery in Wanaka grabbed the third Gold with his Commercial/Wholesale mince and cheese entry.

"Year on year, this competition is getting harder to win and with it our reputation as a pie nation with the best places in the world for pies, the credit goes back to our hard-working, dedicated bakers. We congratulate every one of them who have won an award, and to those that are yet to win an award, keep going. You just never know what the future holds," says Brent.

GOOD FOOD SAFETY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Whether they're dining in or taking away, customers trust that the food they're eating has been prepared by businesses that are getting food safety right. To help get the most important areas of food safety right, New Zealand Food Safety have launched refreshed educational resources with food safety tips and information focusing on small changes that can make a big difference.

GO TO
www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/food-safety-toolkit
FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONSUMERS SEEKING OUT SMALLER, EVERYDAY TREATS

Innova Market Insights show that almost 2-in-5 consumers globally are upping their expenditure on food and drink products around the globe. Chocolate, cake, pastries and sweet goods, and desserts and ice cream are the top categories consumers choose when indulging. Flavour and texture are the most important attributes that consumers say make a product indulgent.

FINE FOOD NEW ZEALAND 2025: BOOKINGS OPEN!

Bookings are now open for Fine Food New Zealand 2025, the nation's largest trade event for food service, hospitality, and food retail. Over 60 per cent of space is already booked. Don't miss your chance to showcase your products to 7,000+ trade delegates. Secure your spot now for this premier industry event.

GO TO FINEFOODNZ.CO.NZ FOR MORE INFORMATION

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GET YOUR ENTRY IN

MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN THE NEXT BAKING NEW ZEALAND COMPETITION. CHECK OUT THE DETAILS ON THEIR WEBSITE BAKINGNZ.CO.NZ

SAVE THE DATE!



BAKING NEWS

- **Mental Health Awareness Week**
 - 23 September
 - **School Holidays:**
 - Saturday 28 September to Sunday 13 October
 - **Chocolate & Coffee Festival**
 - 28 September
 - 29 September
 - **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**
 - 01 October
 - **International Coffee Day**
 - 01 October
 - **2024 New Zealand Food Awards**
 - 10 October: Gala dinner and winners announced
 - **World Food Day**
 - 16 October
 - **World Bread Day**
 - 16 October
- **Baking New Zealand Christmas Competition**
 - Final drop off: 7am-12pm, 16th October
 - **Baking New Zealand AGM**
 - 16 October
 - Go to bakingnz.co.nz for more information
- **Labour Day**
 - 28 October
 - **Halloween**
 - 31 October
 - **World Vegan Day**
 - 01 November
 - **Diwali - Festival of Lights**
 - 03 November
 - **World Diabetes Day**
 - 14 November
 - **World Children's Day**
 - 20 November

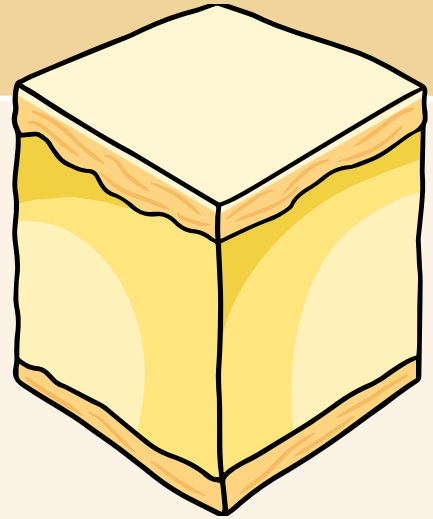


SAY HELLO TO OUR NEWEST BAKING NZ MEMBERS

- **Selwyn Bakery**
Serey Chum, Lincoln
- **Jimmy's Pies**
Bernard Kirkpatrick, Roxburgh
- **Just Bread**
Janine Doenitz, Tauranga
- **Wild Crème Limited**
Krishna Rajan, Auckland



The Great
SQUARE OFF
CUSTARD SQUARE
CHAMPIONSHIP



Piccolo Morso Bakery

📷 @piccolomorsobakery

📍 573 Devon Street East,
Fitzroy, New Plymouth



Volare

📷 @volarebread

📍 Hamilton, Cambridge,
Greenhill, Grey Street, Te
Awamutu



Wen & Yen

📷 @wenandyen

📍 6/32 Constellation Drive
Rosedale, North Shore



U-Bake Bakery

📷 @ubake.bakery

📍 188 Hilton Highway,
Washdyke, Timaru



Make sure you're in
the next Baking New
Zealand competition.
Check out the details
on their website
bakingnz.co.nz



Decked out
DOUGHNUT
CHAMPIONSHIP



U-Bake Bakery

📷 @ubake.bakery

📍 188 Hilton Highway,
Washdyke, Timaru



Wen & Yen

📷 @wenandyen

📍 6/32 Constellation Drive
Rosedale, North Shore



Piccolo Morso Bakery

📷 @piccolomorsobakery

📍 573 Devon Street East,
Fitzroy, New Plymouth

BAKING NEW ZEALAND COMPETITION

Winners

Slice sat down with the talented bakeries that took out the top spots in Baking New Zealand's latest competitions – **Decked Out Doughnut Championship** and **The Great Square Off Custard Square Championship**. These creations didn't just win over the judges, they sparked a media frenzy and had people lining up out the door. In this special series, we take you behind the scenes of each gold-winning bakery to uncover how the victory impacted their business.



Sharing A Timaru Treasure With The Nation

From sleepless nights to sweet success Slice spoke to Simon Bruce about the rise of U-Bake Bakery and what goes into crafting New Zealand's best doughnuts.

WORDS Nick Walker



U-Bake Bakery

🏆 1st Decked Out Doughnut Championship 2024

📍 188 Hilton Highway, Washdyke, Timaru



PICTURED: Simon Bruce with his award-winning 1st place doughnut & 3rd place custard square

In the early days of running U-Bake in Timaru, Simon Bruce remembers sneaking home after working all night. He didn't want to upset his wife Deborah by telling her he hadn't slept, so he'd make sure he was home just before her morning alarm went off, and he'd lie down beside his daughter's cot.

"She'd get up and come looking for me, and I'd pretend to be snoring so she'd think I'd dozed off when I got home," he says.

It didn't happen every night, but it also wasn't uncommon.

"I didn't get a lot of sleep in those days. I remember one time I got about eight hours sleep the whole week. I used to look after the kids during the day while my wife worked, then I'd go to work at night.

"We had a goal and we could see better things in the future. Maybe we could have done things differently, but we're here now. We've been going for 26 years and we've had some nice rewards along the way."

Simon's very quick to praise Deborah, and not just because her work gave the family a stable income while he got U-Bake through the first few years. He says her support and understanding is one of the keys to the entire lifetime of the business.

"Every business goes through hard times. It's like wine - you need to give it time to mature and come good."

U-Bake was primarily a wholesale business for the first 12 years, but Simon says he switched to being an over-the-counter bakery after various customers racked up around \$30,000 in unpaid invoices.

"I stuck it out and had no money for years, but just kept going. I'm pretty stubborn - I didn't want U-Bake to get the better of me. Maybe we should have done something differently. Am I an idiot? I don't know."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Simon liked the idea of having customers pay for their food on the spot. It turned out to be exactly what the business needed, although there was still the question of what food to provide.

"The night before we opened the new business, I thought, 'What am I going to make?' I had no idea," he says.

He decided to stick to comfort food. Nothing flashy; traditional takes on things like pies, sandwiches and slices. It worked.

"We got a following for nice pies, which were basically just meat and gravy, and our sandwiches, which were also pretty basic sandwiches done well. Every week we'd add something else and it just slowly grew like that." Even now, one of U-Bake's most popular products is its cheese roll. Simon says it doesn't look like much, but it's good comfort food.

U-Bake steadily became bigger and bigger, until it outgrew the shop about three years ago. Simon had the premises redesigned, got some new cabinets, a bigger pie warmer and some new lighting, and made it more modern and appealing.

Once again, it worked.

"Our sales increased more than 30% pretty much straight away - I couldn't believe it," he says.

"We went from being a small shop that you could fit six people in at a time, to having the space for 30. It cost a fair bit to do, and I didn't think it was going to work as well as it did.

"It's almost like a meeting point now. We make more food and we have more variety - we're healthy at the moment. It's a nice feeling as opposed to a few years ago seeing your card decline because someone hasn't paid their invoice."

"I WASN'T MEANT TO BE A BOSS"

Simon reckons he's too casual to be in charge of people. He doesn't like confrontation and hates being grumpy.

"I'd rather just be a dude," he offers.

"I might jump up in the air every now and then, but apart from that I just love having a good old laugh. We do have rules but as long as the products get done properly that's pretty much all I'm interested in."

Simon prefers to encourage staff, rather than try to run a tight ship.

"You just eliminate mistakes - you keep the shop tidy, you keep things from getting squashed, and you make sure the food always looks good. You don't have to be grumpy to do that, you just do it in a controlled way and it's all cool."

His approach comes through in the vibe in the kitchen.

"One of our bakers will sing at the top of her voice at night, and it's such a nice feeling when you hear someone be so happy and joyous. It makes you feel good too."

“

“WE WERE CRAZY BUSY THAT FIRST DAY THE NEWS CAME OUT, WHICH LED TO A BUSY NIGHT BECAUSE WE’D BASICALLY SOLD OUT OF EVERYTHING. IT CARRIED ON FOR A FEW DAYS LIKE THAT.

“PEOPLE DIDN’T JUST COME FOR DOUGHNUTS TOO, THEY’D GET A PIE OR A DRINK OR SOMETHING ELSE WITH IT. YOU CAN’T JUST HAVE THAT ONE THING ON SHOW, YOU WANT TO HAVE THE WOW FACTOR WITH EVERYTHING.”

– Simon Bruce, owner of U-Bake in Timaru



PICTURED: U-Bake Bakery's award-winning 1st place doughnut

It's clear Simon genuinely cares for his staff, and that comes through in how he supports and empowers them. As an example, he recalls working with a relatively new baker one day when they needed some new slices made.

"I said, 'There's the table, there's the ingredients, come up with whatever you can come up with. If it doesn't sell, we'll try it again the next day and if it still doesn't sell we'll have another look at it.'"

Simon's comfortable giving staff free rein because they're overwhelmingly passionate, and will often do their own research into new products they want to make.

"Not everything works but you can always tweak it. The look on someone's face when they make something and it sells out, that's priceless."

The success of his approach has been evident this year, with U-Bake's Lianna MacFarlane placing second in the NZ Certificate in Trade Baking Apprentice Pie Maker Award.

Lianna typically specialises in breads and doughnuts, and the competition was actually the first time she'd ever made pies from start to finish.

She also had a leading hand in U-Bake's custard square, which placed third in July's Great Square Off Custard Square Competition. Simon's not one to take any credit, but you suspect he deserves at least some of it.

The custard square competition was run alongside the Decked Out Doughnut Competition, where U-Bake's entry was judged best in the country.

Simon says one of the best things about winning was sharing the news with baker Janine Rutland, who was in charge of their entry.

"It was a piece of art. Simple, but done well. She's got so much flair, she's absolutely amazing. When you win something like that it's such a nice feeling, and all kudos goes to her."

THE WINNING EFFECT

Simon thought he was ready for the influx of customers winning the national doughnut would bring. He'd seen queues out the door when U-Bake won New Zealand's best hot cross bun in 2018, and wanted to be better prepared for it this time.

"We knew we were going to be busy, we just didn't know how busy. It's fair to say we underestimated it," he says.

Fuelled by appearances in the local newspaper and the television, people came from all over town (and beyond) to see what the fuss was about.

"We were crazy busy that first day the news came out, which led to a busy night because we'd basically sold out of everything. It carried on for a few days like that.

"People didn't just come for doughnuts too, they'd get a pie or a drink or something else with it. You can't just have that one thing on show, you want to have the wow factor with everything."

U-Bake actually featured in the Timaru Herald two days in a row when the photographer from the initial story came in for a doughnut himself the morning after.

"He asked me why it was so busy and I said 'Because you put me in the paper!'" Simon says.

"It's a small town and it's not often someone in Timaru wins something like this. People love being on a journey with you, they like to support local people and they definitely came out and supported us."

The effect on the business has been huge, with one of the busiest few weeks in recent memory. With many people watching their spending recently, and many bakeries feeling the effect, it's been a timely boost.

"ALL THESE PEOPLE COME IN WANTING TO SPEND THEIR MONEY, WHICH THEY WEREN'T DOING BEFORE. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE IT; IT MEANS WORKING LONGER HOURS BUT EVERYONE'S EXCITED TO BE THERE BECAUSE THERE'S A BIT OF A BUZZ AROUND THE PLACE."

Simon says the effect is just as significant for his staff - and not just because they get the euphoria of winning.

"It sharpens up your product, and gets you to think about how you can make it as good as it can be.

"When you're halfway through the year, you might be feeling a bit lacklustre, but it gets you to try really hard and get it to 100%. You want to win, but it also gets things back on track."

As someone keen to keep standards high, but not so keen to be enforcing the rules all the time, it's perhaps no wonder Simon likes competitions.

And no wonder he's already looking ahead to Christmas competitions at the end of the year.



LOCAL INGREDIENTS, NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The passion and precision behind Volare and their famous custard square

WORDS Kyra Corrigan

Volare

🏆 1st Equal The Great Square Off Custard Square Championship 2024

📍 Hamilton, Cambridge, Greenhill, Grey Street, Te Awamutu



Volare's custard square is more than just a pastry, it's a labour of love that has captured the hearts and taste buds of many. Recently crowned as a joint winner in Baking NZ's The Great Square Off Custard Square Championship, this treat showcases expert baking and a commitment to quality.

Creating this award-winning square is a painstaking process. "It takes three days from start to finish," explains marketing manager, Holly Phillips. "We begin with delicate layers of all butter puff pastry, which are allowed extended rests to develop shortness and flakiness. We caramelise the sheets with even more butter and sugar to get the greatest depth of flavour. The custard, made with real New Zealand butter, cream and premium vanilla beans, is then layered between the pastry, creating a decadent, creamy centre. The final touch is a layer of soft lemon icing and freeze-dried raspberry."

This attention to detail sets the custard square apart. The choice of raspberry over the more traditional passionfruit isn't just about aesthetics; it's a thoughtful decision to balance the flavours. "The raspberries have a subtle tartness that complements the sweet lemon icing and cuts through the rich custard," Holly adds.

Volare's custard square has not only attracted new customers but also reignited enthusiasm for this Kiwi classic. "Our custard squares have always been popular—it's one of our cabinet staples. We knew they were already well-loved by our customers, so we didn't need to create something new for the competition."

Since winning the award, demand for the custard square has skyrocketed. "We've been selling out every day, which is awesome to see that awareness and exposure spreading," Holly says. An unexpected highlight was the popular New Zealand comedy show 7 Days featuring Volare's custard square as a prize.

"The biggest challenge has been keeping up with demand," Holly notes. Their commitment to producing a quality product means there is no cutting corners on their three days process.

THE RISE OF VOLARE BREAD

In the heart of the Waikato region, Volare stands as a testament to the perfect blend of tradition and innovation. Established in 2009 by high school friends Ryan, a fifth-generation baker, and Ed, an engineer, this bakery has grown from humble beginnings into a beloved local gem with five thriving stores.

From opening day, the bakery has focused on delivering high-quality, traditional baked goods. Ryan's passion for sourdough was the starting point, with loaves sold at local farmers markets. Over the years, their offerings expanded, and so did their presence across the Waikato region, with retail stores now in Hamilton, Cambridge, and Te Awamutu.

A COMMITMENT TO LOCAL

Volare isn't just about great products; it's about community. "Ed and Ryan are really passionate about the local food scene," Holly shares.

The bakery sees it as an integral part of their values to shine a light on the great food industry in the Waikato region. "We've really doubled down on this in recent years. We realised how important it is to support local and the community."

This commitment is reflected in their careful selection of ingredients, many sourced directly from local growers and producers they once had stalls next to at the markets. The bakery uses 100% New Zealand butter, eggs from the Kaimai ranges, Waikato-grown fruit, such as Kanes Strawberries and Monavale Blueberries, and as much New Zealand flour as they can get their hands on.

THE VOLARE STANDARD

Balancing tradition with innovation is a constant conversation at Volare. "We're big on traditional techniques, but we also like to give our customers something new to try," Holly says. Each month, they introduce a new retail product, often inspired by seasonal ingredients or emerging trends. These limited-time offerings keep things fresh for both customers and the Volare team.

However, when it comes to deciding what makes it onto Volare's permanent menu, the process is more rigorous. Any new product must meet what the team calls the 'Volare Standard.' This means using only the highest quality ingredients and ensuring that the product can be produced consistently at a high standard. "I think that's why our customers love us—because we're reliable," says Holly. "We may not be the trendiest, sexiest bakery, but our customers know they'll get a good loaf of bread or a quality pastry, and we're going to use the best local ingredients, wherever we can," she adds.

GROWTH & INNOVATION

Wholesale remains a significant part of their business, with Volare's products delivered to cafés and restaurants across the North Island. "We've been working with some amazing cafés and restaurants for many years, supplying them with high quality and unique products for their cabinets, kitchens, or catering events."

Volare ensures their goods arrive fresh, with their own delivery drivers covering the Waikato and Auckland regions. For customers outside these areas, they partner with Service Foods to reach even further across the North Island.

Looking ahead, Volare is preparing for growth. A new, larger bakery just down the street is under construction, set to open within the next year. Additionally, they've just opened a new store in Hamilton East and revamped their Cambridge location.



FROM APPRENTICE TO OWNER TO AWARD-WINNER

Julia Kaur-Randhawa's Piccolo Morso journey and the "insane" craze for her custard squares

WORDS Nick Walker



Piccolo Morso Bakery

📍 1st Equal The Great Square Off Custard Square Championship 2024

📍 573 Devon Street East, Fitzroy, New Plymouth

Julia Kaur-Randhawa is the kind of baker that will rearrange her whole bakehouse at 10pm at night, in the middle of the busiest period her bakery has ever seen. Twice.

The Piccolo Morso owner had an “insane” July, after taking out the joint top prize at Baking NZ’s Great Square Off Custard Square Championship.

They’ve gone from selling 2-3 slabs a week of their custard square before the competition, to up to 10 slabs a day in the aftermath. On last count, they’d sold more than 10,000 squares.

Julia can’t quite believe it.

“There was one night, it was after midnight and I was about to start a fourth round of custard squares. I just started laughing. The amount of custard we were making didn’t seem real - over 100kgs per night - and it just felt like a dream.”

Julia had to call in favours from some old baking friends to come and help prepare not only custard squares, but all the other items in the bakery too. They were working crazy hours and barely keeping up.

“I baked what I thought would be a good couple of days worth of pies, and they all went in a day,” she says. “We’re making at least 720 pies in a day, and usually 408 pies would be a decent day.”

Nevertheless, when the urge struck her to get the bakehouse rearranged, Julia put the tools down and started what was, in her mind, a long overdue reshuffling of the space.

“There’s a photo of me sitting on top of a big mixer, putting up a cord for another machine. We’d been meaning to do it for months, and just got in the mood, so we started pulling it all apart when we were supposed to be making pies.”

“Having the equipment in the right order made production flow better. We did stitch ourselves up a bit because we weren’t used to things being where they were, but they should have been there in the first place!”

THE OWNERSHIP WHIRLWIND

When Julia and her husband Kamal Singh were looking for a place to settle in 2021, she thought of New Plymouth and Piccolo Morso. She’d worked in a few different places, and did part of her apprenticeship there a few years prior. It stood out as a good option.

“We rang my old boss to ask if she’d consider selling, and three weeks later we owned it. It wasn’t on the market, but for whatever reason she was keen, so we moved up from the South Island with our three month old baby and all of a sudden had 18 staff and a seven day a week business.”

Julia and Kamal quickly moved into a rental a few doors down. Julia would work nights, and being so close meant

Kamal could call her to come home to feed their son Arian when he woke up.

They would try to take turns at the bakery but often Arian would be there too. Now they say they’re lucky to have Kamal’s mum to help with him.

But the true learning curve was in how they rejuvenated the business.

They renovated the premises - something that’s continually evolving - hired a manager, and have specialised their bakehouse staff into sections.

One of the other big changes was to invest time and money in developing their brand.

“There wasn’t much of a story behind it so we decided to build one,” Julia says.

They started making gelato and established an Italian ambience (Piccolo Morso translates to Little Bite in Italian).

“Now, we have the pink and blue colouring, which is starting to feel like us. We have our mural on the wall outside and are investing in our community.”

BEING LOCAL

Piccolo Morso isn’t the only bakery in the suburb of Fitzroy, but that hasn’t held back its popularity.

Kamal and Julia make a real effort to be part of the community.

They give their leftovers to charities, support local schools, community nurses and Gabby’s Starlit HOPE - a charity supporting families through hospital treatments. And, they have lined up to start working with Big Brothers Big Sisters Taranaki.

They do free fluffies, no questions asked, and they’re creating an “everything you may need” space to make it easier for families to visit with young kids.

It’s a revealing approach that helps to explain the surge in popularity from their custard square title. Julia says it helps that they’re in a small city, but that’s only part of it.

“There’s a real pride among our customers,” Julia observes.

“We’ve had so many amazing comments, people are so excited that we’ve been recognised.

“We need the community and we want to give back. By coming in here to spend their money, someone can see the wider benefits, even if they’re not directly able to do something themselves.”





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INCREASE PROFITABILITY IN YOUR BAKERY **BY AUTOMATING PIE FLIPPING**

Semi-Automatic Depanner SMP004

Don't let the challenges of manual pie depanning hold your bakery business back any longer. Invest in the Pieline Depanner and experience the transformative benefits it can bring to your commercial pie production.

As any commercial pie maker knows, depanning/flipping pies is one of the most labour-intensive jobs in the bakery. It usually requires two people and there is high waste due to damage through the flipping process. It also puts a lot of stress on staff if they are manually depanning for long periods of time.

The Pieline Systems Depanner/Flipper solves all these issues and has been developed over many years trial and error by the engineers at The Goodtime Pie Co, a leading pie manufacturer in New Zealand.

The staff love it saying "it makes flipping pies a breeze". It is easier, quicker and safer. And it makes a big difference to profitability". That's a win/win for everyone.

Some of the other benefits of using the Depanner are:

- ✓ **Productivity Increase:** One person can transfer 24 pies from an oven rack to Depanner to the Cooling Rack in less than 20 seconds.
- ✓ **Reduced Staff:** Only one person required. One person is generally only 15% slower than two people.
- ✓ **Reduced Waste:** Damage to pies is cut by up to 80%, sometimes as much as 95% according to some bakeries that have been using the Depanner.



- ✓ **Excellent Return on Investment:** Some customers have found the ROI can be as quick as 18 weeks. A ROI calculator is available so our customers can work out their specific payback.
- ✓ **Improves Operator Safety:** Lessens OOS issues by removing the physical stress caused during manually flipping a loaded Pie Pallet by hand.

The team at Pieline believes it is important to support customers who purchase Pieline Systems equipment. So, when you purchase our Depanner we provide a comprehensive support package to ensure you get the maximum benefit. These include a Training Video, Operators Manual and a Maintenance, and Installation Manual.

INVESTING IN A PIELINE DEPANNER MAKES FLIPPING GOOD SENSE

For pie makers interested in the Depanner you can check out the website www.pieline.co.nz or email info@pieline.co.nz



**INSIGHTS
PROVIDED BY**

Hailey Benton

*Marketing and ecommerce
expert with 10+ years
industry experience.*

GET YOUR BAKERY CHRISTMAS-READY

Christmas is just around the corner, and for businesses, it's the most wonderful—and busiest—time of the year. The summer holiday season brings a surge in demand for treats, gifts, days-off work, catering gigs and more. The secret to thriving during this period? Preparation.

1. **START EARLY, STAY AHEAD**

For business owners, the countdown to Christmas begins long before December. Begin promoting your Christmas products and services early to build anticipation. Social media, email newsletters, and in-store displays can all play a crucial role in getting customers through the door and driving sales online. Offer pre-orders for popular items and consider bundling products as gift baskets or boxes. If you don't already have an online store, look into implementing a website eCommerce solution, like Shopify, to make marketing and selling a breeze.

2. **TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING**

Teaming up with a local organisation over Christmas is a feel-good move that spreads the holiday cheer far and wide. It's a great way to show your community spirit and make a real difference, while also connecting with your customers. Whether you're donating a portion of your sales, hosting a fundraiser or partnering with a local charity, it's a win-win that leaves everyone with a warm, fuzzy feeling — and isn't that what the season's all about?

3. **INVITE THE PARTY**

It's time to get ready for the festive party season! Many businesses start planning their annual bashes as early as September, so if you offer event catering, now's the time to make sure you're top of mind. Promote your party catering services through email, social media, and print marketing, and make it easy for clients to reach out by offering multiple contact options, like email, phone, or online orders. Don't forget to highlight your offerings with in-store collateral — think eye-catching posters, flyers, or table tents that grab attention and remind customers you're the go-to for holiday catering!

4. **CHRISTMAS WRAPPED UP**

The holiday season is the perfect time to roll out limited-edition products, Christmas-themed treats, festive gift boxes or gift vouchers. Get creative with unique items that make thoughtful and memorable gifts — go the extra mile by using branded Christmas cards and paper, this will increase your brand

awareness and make purchasing a gift from you a no-brainer. It's literally already wrapped! Why not partner with local businesses to create curated gift baskets or boxes? Not only does this broaden your marketing reach, but it also strengthens community ties and adds unique value to your offerings.

5. **SECURE STAFF**

Secure extra staff well in advance for the busy season to avoid being understaffed when it matters most, especially with New Zealand's public holidays. With key dates like Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day falling within this period, early preparation ensures you have enough hands on deck to maintain smooth operations and deliver top-notch service during the holiday rush.

6. **ONTO IT WITH INFO**

With the craziness of the season and the holiday blur where people often lose track of the days, it's crucial to keep your trading hours updated and visible across all platforms. Make sure your website, Google My Business listing, social media accounts, and in-store signage clearly reflect your holiday hours and closures.

7. **GET FESTIVE**

Embrace the festive spirit with Christmas decorations and custom signage that align with your brand and complement your space's aesthetic. Let your values inspire you to create a unique, standout holiday display — for example, if sustainability is a focus of your business, bypass mass-produced options and choose handmade or recycled decorations.

By planning ahead, embracing festive touches, and staying connected with your customers, you'll not only survive the busiest time of the year with ease but also create memorable experiences that last well beyond December. So, get into the holiday groove, align your efforts with what makes your business unique, and make this Christmas one to remember for your business and your customers alike.

Here's to a merry and profitable holiday season! 🍷

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT:

Slice shines the light on up-and-coming, new and trending products to help your New Zealand bakery thrive. Let's check out these baking industry business boosters...

HAVE A
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TO BE FEATURED



VEGAN FETA

Feta but better. This vegan cheese picked up the top award at the fourth Vegan Society of Aotearoa Vegan Cheese Awards. *The Greek* is a delicious feta from **One Love Planet**.

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FLAVOUR BOOST

Try the new **Barker's Professional Turkish Delight Specialty Filling!** A soft, glossy, versatile filling suitable for multiple bakery applications, including donuts, muffins and cakes.

0800 BARKER



PERFECT PICKLES

Bones Pickles are a hand picked, cut and processed pickled cucumber product grown and produced in Canterbury by 5th Street Pantry.

Find out more at:
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NEW PETTINICE

Bakels new *Pettinice Reduced Sugar* fondant presents a smooth finish and excellent pliability. Its easy to work with – easy to knead and roll. Egg free, Gluten free all with 40% less sugar.

0800 BAKELS



FOR THE FRIDGE

Planta is New Zealand's first Sparkling Yerba Mate. It's loaded with antioxidants, minerals, vitamins and is naturally caffeinated – it's no wonder Yerba Mate's reputation as a superfood is growing internationally.

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KIMCHI KETCHUP

Apostle Hot Sauce have blended the distinctly delicious flavours of kimchi with a perfectly balanced tomato ketchup. This savoury, sweet and subtly spicy sauce gives a tangy, umami bite.

Wholesale enquiries:
apostlehotsauce.co.nz



CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE

Bakels Chocolate Croquant Truffle with crunchy bits of hazelnut is a silky smooth product that has a wide variety of uses – you can drizzle, dip, use as a filling, pipe, whip, melt and use for coating and decorating.

0800 BAKELS

Donut Delights



Lemon/Lime Zest

Whip'n Ice (Bakels Code: 4275-41): 1 unit
Lemon /Lime zest (~ 4pcs): 40g

1. Grate lemon or lime zest and place zest into a plastic container.
2. Pour the liquid Whip'n Ice on top and seal with lid.
3. Shake well and leave for at least 12 hrs into refrigerator.
4. Remove the lemon/lime zest by using a sieve.
5. Whip the product with medium speed to soft peak.

Salted Coffee Beans

Whip'n Ice (Bakels Code: 4275-41): 1 unit
Coffee Beans: 80g
Salt 2g

1. Crush the coffee beans and place coffee beans and salt into plastic container.
2. Pour the liquid Whip'n Ice on top and seal with lid.
3. Shake well and leave for at least 12 hrs into refrigerator.
4. Remove the coffee grind by using a sieve.
5. Whip the product with medium speed to soft peak.

Unlimited filling options with

Whip'n Ice



New!

Double refined 100%
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Golden Fried Donuts

Peanut Butter Filling

Whip'n Ice (Bakels Code: 4275-41): 1 unit
Smooth Peanut Butter: 80g

1. Pour 25% of the Whip'n Ice into the bowl.
2. Blend with peanut butter until dissolved.
3. Add the remaining Whip'n Ice and whip to soft peak.

TIPS

1. Due to the high fat content of both ingredients, the whipping time might be slightly longer.
2. If you want to add more peanut butter we suggest to dilute it with a bit of liquid Whip'n Ice and fold it into whipped icing.

Biscoff Filling

Whip'n Ice (Bakels Code: 4275-41): 1 unit
Biscoff paste: 50g

1. Pour 25% of the Whip'n Ice into the bowl.
2. Blend with Biscoff paste until dissolved.
3. Add the remaining Whip'n Ice and whip to soft peak.

TIPS

1. Due to the high fat content of both ingredients, the whipping time might be slightly longer.
2. If you want to add more biscoff paste we suggest to dilute it with a bit of liquid Whip'n Ice and fold it into whipped icing.

BAKING CULTURE INTO KIWI CRUSTS

BELLBIRD BAKERY

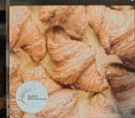
WORDS Nick Walker

Tue - Sun
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OPEN

The best croissants
in the South Island,
right here at
Bellbird Bakery





Has anyone ever stopped to think about how croissants became a staple Kiwi Christmas brunch?

It's a tradition in many families, but how did that happen? How did a baked delicacy from a country on the complete opposite side of the world, with no cultural link to New Zealand, embed itself so strongly into probably the one day of the year most influenced by tradition?

There may well be a good reason, and it probably has something to do with the fact they're just so damn delicious.

Whatever it is, it's certainly a case study in how Kiwis can, and have, adopted overseas cooking as a cornerstone of our lives.

For Bellbird founder Jeremy MacCormack, the Christmas croissant is a symbol for what he hopes to achieve. Bellbird has a bold ambition to change food culture in New Zealand, and Jeremy cites the croissant as an example of how that's possible.

"It replaces the food-for-fuel, commodity-based food culture, with something that has more of a story behind it," he says.

"Food was never a big part of my life growing up, it was more just, 'What's for dinner?' But we can make it much more of an experience by offering something that becomes more of a part of people's lives. It could be a routine morning pastry or food for a picnic, or croissants at Christmas; that kind of thing."

DON'T CALL IT A FRENCH BAKERY

Bellbird is an artisan, French-inspired Christchurch bakery. The key word there is "inspired" - Jeremy says



IMAGES SUPPLIED BY BELLBIRD-BAKED GOODS



it's the starting point for his products, but it also gives him the freedom to buck tradition and make what he wants.

"There's a certain prestige that comes with the idea of French baking, but I'm wary of casually leaning on the French identity too much. It's definitely a source of our products' history, but it's not the core of the identity of the business.

"It's like making ramen in New Zealand. You can use the techniques and take the inspiration from Japanese ramen, and be authentic to that, but use New Zealand products to make it distinct."

Because, while there's a lot to like about French baking, that doesn't mean it's the be-all and end-all. Although Jeremy puts it a bit more diplomatically.

"The food culture in France is so strong, but that weight of tradition can put the brakes on innovation. So it's a faux pas to put the wrong toppings on your crepe; French people will often judge you for what you put on yours.

"The value of being in New Zealand is we can be informed by those traditions, but we don't have to be held to them so strictly."

And with that, Jeremy has cleverly dodged any accusations of bastardising French culture with his innovations. In particular, while the Bellbird Crookie (a cross between a croissant and a cookie) might be one of their most popular products at the moment, it's not hard to imagine it being deeply offensive to the French (in a joking-not joking kinda way).

"People in France really value their opinions about food - it's a virtue. If you ask someone about food and they don't have an opinion, it would be strange. That's their love for food on display, and they'll tell you if they don't like something. In New Zealand, it's more common for people to just not say anything."

"The good thing about that is it's a reflection of how the French care about what they eat. For us, people could easily buy cheaper bread or croissants, so if they didn't have that discernment then we wouldn't exist. We actually want to encourage it in some ways."

Which brings us back to where Bellbird fits into food culture in New Zealand. Jeremy says he's like many people in that he loves tucking into an old fashioned meat pie, but he also appreciates the authentic, premium products when they're available.

Bellbird isn't about being everything to everyone all the time, it's about creating a level of awareness and appreciation for those more premium options, and giving people the choice.

STARTING

Jeremy started Bellbird in 2010. He'd come home after stints cooking in Melbourne, London and San Francisco (in yet another mini scandal, he's never cooked professionally in France), and found a lack of any real food culture.

New Zealand just wasn't on the same level as those big cities overseas.

"I was away for the best part of two and a half years, and it didn't seem like Christchurch had changed at all. That's the nature of travelling; you go places and see people treating food in a different way, and you come back and it's the same as it's always been."

There were some bakers trying to keep pace with the rest of the world, including Vics Bakehouse, where Jeremy also worked, but they were few and far between.

When he wasn't working at Vics, Jeremy would rent out a kitchen space and bake pastries for the Riccarton Farmers Market. His Friday nights consisted of baking until 3am, getting things ready and squeezing in a couple of hours' sleep before being at the market at the crack of dawn, rain or shine.

And he did that for a year. Who said life isn't glamorous when you're starting a business?

GROWING

They say there's opportunity in chaos, and the aftermath of the 2011 Christchurch earthquake changed the landscape somewhat for local businesses.

"Some of the bigger bakeries were closed for a time, and I was lucky that a month or so beforehand I'd bought my own bread ovens," Jeremy says.

"I could make more stuff and sell them at the markets, which became really popular as an outdoor space for people to be around other people. People were cleaning silt on the streets and there was a big sense of community spirit, which made it an ideal nursery for small businesses at the market."

In a remarkably oversimplified version of events, that's pretty much the story of how things grew. That, and good baking. In Bellbird's world, if you make something good, the people will come.

They moved into The Tannery a couple of years later - joining an upmarket collection of retailers and hospitality businesses that popped up post-quakes. There's now a permanent shop at the Riverside Market in central Christchurch, a wholesale business, an online store and a dedicated team that looks after two weekend farmers' markets.

They have more baked goods than you can shake a stick at - from breads and baguettes to pastries and sandwiches...and heaps of other stuff too.

"I think it's working," he says. And, customers would agree.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a bit of an 'it' thing, but it can be hard (and expensive) to achieve.

At Bellbird, it's the culmination of little things. Most staff bike to work - even on those freezing, early Christchurch winter mornings. They've had a loyalty card for customers that bike to them too, and they recycle their packaging as much as they can.

Jeremy says, strictly speaking, Bellbird isn't certified organic, but he uses organic products often.

"We make this calculus in our products between being local, organic, and non-exploitative in terms of the environment. We're trying to get the best ingredients we can."

For example, Bellbird started out with an organic flour supplier in Australia, but switched to Farmers Mill in Timaru because Jeremy felt it allowed them to have a better connection.

If blood is thicker than water, then is local flour better than organic flour? Turns out for many people, it is.

"We had to make the case to our customers that we were going from organic bread to locally produced bread, and a lot of people stuck with us through that."

Sustainability also includes looking after staff. They have weekly yoga classes, rotate shifts so people don't get stuck on early morning starts for long periods, and generally prioritise employee wellbeing where they can.

"In a business like ours where the owner has done the job of the employees and knows what it's like, you can't not have empathy for them, so we do what we can to support them," Jeremy says.

CONNECTING

Bellbird might be about old-school cooking, but the way the business has grown a following is as modern as it gets.

The idea of having an internal marketing team might sound a bit alien for many bakeries, but the proof is in the pastries.

Bellbird's website is slick, and its Instagram feed is full of high quality product photos, professional job ads, detailed staff profiles and quirky, fun videos. His partner, Alice, runs their marketing and branding.

"There's massive value in it," Jeremy says.

"We'd be leaving something on the table if we didn't have the marketing side. It's the shop window - it's not a replacement for dealing face to face with people, but it's a reflection of the fact that many people communicate online now."

Jeremy's found online is a great way to share their commitment to sustainability, and tell people about how they run the business.

They've also had great engagement with baking classes - which, admittedly, they haven't run many of recently.

It might sound counterintuitive to give away trade secrets and teach people how to bake the exact same products you want them to buy from you, but Jeremy insists it's a winning idea.

"Actually, it's the opposite. People that care about how we bake the bread care about the business, and when they see the energy it takes to bake all our products, they appreciate it that much more. They're not going to do it everyday, and they can also see that what we're charging for bread isn't too bad for the effort that goes into it.

"It's another way to build relationships with people. They get to know us, and we get to know them, and that can only be a good thing."




“

WE HAD TO MAKE THE CASE TO OUR CUSTOMERS THAT WE WERE GOING FROM ORGANIC BREAD TO LOCALLY PRODUCED BREAD, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE STUCK WITH US THROUGH THAT.

– Bellbird founder Jeremy MacCormack

Where can I find Bellbird Baked Goods?

 @bellbirdbakery

 Find them at The Tannery and Riverside Market, Christchurch

To learn more about Bellbird Baked Goods, including wholesale opportunities check out their website:

www.bellbirdbakedgoods.co.nz



Make more dough with automated ordering & logistics

www.upstock.app/bakers



"Upstock is one of those things that once you try it you wonder what life was like without it, less admin, less stress and new customers just come to you!"

ALAMIR BAKERY Hassan Dia
Alamir Bakery



"Before Upstock, everything was manual. Docket books, email chains, notes on papers from phone calls. A lot of moving parts and we would just lose visibility on orders. We would literally have boxes of bagels go missing. Upstock allowed us to simplify our processes. It's like having an extra staff member"



Mike Lawrence
Best Ugly Bagels



"Managing clients and pricing with Upstock has truly made my life easier. The ability to promote our products inside the Newsfeed has been a great feature as well. Do yourself a favour and make the move to Upstock."



Pedro Marcelino
Nata Bakery



"We immediately saw Upstock is the future of ordering. It reduced manual invoicing while increasing our customer base and our reach to customers outside our local region."

Dough Bakery Tim Tracey
Dough Bakery



"Upstock has been a game-changer, freeing up countless hours, expanding our customer base and growing our business. We couldn't be happier."



Hayley Molloy
Molly Woppy



"It was never really my job to do this side of the business. But now that it's so streamlined I actually really enjoy doing it. It's just so easy."

the CAKER Jordan Rondel
The Caker



TEAM BEHIND XERO TRANSFORMS FOOD & BEVERAGE

As Best Ugly Bagels was expanding, they struggled to cope with the logistics of getting their Montreal-style bagels between their kitchens and retail outlets across Wellington and Auckland, along with all their wholesale and supermarket customers. It was causing problems both internally, and with customers — it was getting ugly.

Mike Lawrence, Brand Manager at Best Ugly, says in the past they used docket books and email to manage orders, causing increasing problems keeping track of wholesale orders and deliveries. Writing off missing orders was costing the business time and money.

Then they discovered an app called Upstock, created for foodservice buyers and suppliers, that changed everything.

Mike explains, “Before Upstock, everything was manual. Docket books, email chains, notes on papers from phone calls. A lot of moving parts and we would just lose visibility of orders. We would literally have boxes of bagels go missing.”

“Upstock allowed us to simplify our processes. It’s like having an extra staff member.”

Upstock is the latest tech startup by the team who created Xero. Philip Fierlinger co-founded Xero where he was Head of Design. He made Xero famous by creating “Beautiful Accounting Software” which completely transformed the accounting industry.

With Upstock, Philip teamed up with Duncan Ritchie, also from Xero, to transform the foodservice industry.



Best Ugly Bagels says with Upstock “it’s like having an extra staff member.”



The Caker founder Jordan Rondel, celebrity chef & world famous model, says “It was never really my job to do this side of the business. But now that it’s so streamlined I actually really enjoy doing it. It’s just so easy.”

Upstock is an app that automates everything for foodservice suppliers: sales, ordering, payments, production and deliveries. It uses AI to instantly convert emails, PDF files, even handwritten scribbles into digital orders. It connects to Woolworths and Foodstuffs to automatically process supermarket orders, instantly creating invoices, packing slips, and production reports with no effort.

As Hassan Dia co-owner of Alamir Bakery describes it, “Upstock is one of those things that once you try it you wonder what life was like without it, less admin, less stress and new customers just come to you!”

It’s truly remarkable when a celebrity chef and world famous model is glowing about an app that automates supply chain logistics. Jordan Rondel, star of the Great Kiwi Bake Off and founder of The Caker, ran a bakery in Auckland that expanded into selling make-at-home cake kits available at specialty stores and supermarkets.

“It was never really my job to do this side of the business. But now that it’s so streamlined I actually really enjoy doing it. It’s just so easy.”

“The details of all our stockists were a mishmash. We had a spreadsheet, but it was hard to update. Just knowing when and what stockists ordered, that was a real mess too.”

“Now with Upstock, it’s all in one place, so it’s awesome.”

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Love At First Sip

Nestled in the heart of New Zealand's coffee scene, Karamu Coffee stands out not just for its exceptional brews but for its passion-driven origins and commitment to organic, ethically traded coffee. Slice had the pleasure of sitting down with Christine Hodge, the brand representative—and self-titled “caffeine dealer”—to learn more about the story behind Karamu Coffee.

WORDS Kyra Corrigan

Before the sun rises, as the ovens fire up and the first dough is rolled out, there's one essential element that keeps bakers and café owners going: a perfect cup of coffee.

It was former café owner Mike Pullin's search for the perfect organic brew that led him to become Wellington's local roaster of ethically sourced, organic coffee beans. What started as a personal quest for quality quickly grew into Karamu Coffee, a brand that now fuels the mornings of countless coffee lovers across New Zealand.

ORGANIC ORIGINS

Karamu Coffee's journey began in 2007, in the picturesque seaside town of Days Bay, Eastbourne. Mike, Karamu Coffee's founder, owned a bustling café but struggled to find an organic coffee that hit the spot. Determined to serve the perfect cup, Mike took matters into his own hands. Partnering with his good friend Brandon Bodden, owner of Hive Café, the pair began roasting their own coffee in the little blue shed on Point Howard Wharf and quickly

gained momentum. As customers fell in love with his brews, word spread, and soon other cafés were inquiring about their beans.

"It was just for our own purposes initially," Christine shares. "But customers started asking where they could buy the beans, and then cafés started asking. So, we started growing naturally from there."

BONDING OVER BEANS

Christine's introduction to Karamu Coffee happened about ten years ago when she owned her own café. Like many, she fell in love—except not just with the coffee, but with Mike as well. "I loved the coffee so much, I started dating the owner!" Christine laughs. "It's a bit of a love story, we bonded over really good coffee."

With a strong passion for organic ingredients, Christine was thrilled with the rich, dark chocolate finish of Karamu Coffee's beans and began serving them at her café. "My coffee sales skyrocketed after I switched to Karamu Coffee. The coffee was just that good," she shares. "I used to sell second cups



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“

**WE BELIEVE IN A BETTER
WORLD GOING FORWARD.
ORGANIC IS THE WAY OF
THE FUTURE - HEALTHIER
FOR THE PLANET AND FOR
PEOPLE.**

*Christine Hodge brand representative and self-titled
“caffeine dealer” for Karamu Coffee*



because it was so good. It's the best coffee I've ever tasted, and I'm 100% behind it."

BREWING A FAIR FUTURE

At the heart of Karamu Coffee's ethos is a deep commitment to sustainable practices, organic and ethically sourced coffee beans. Mike, who selects the green beans, works closely with suppliers who share those same values. "We believe in a better world going forward," Christine says. "Organic is the way of the future—healthier for the planet and for people."

By sourcing beans from across the globe—including Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Brazil, Ethiopia, and Tanzania—Karamu Coffee aligns with companies who not only provide exceptional quality but also fair treatment of the farmers. Although keeping a fair price point for customers can be challenging, the company is dedicated to maintaining ethical standards, making sure that those who grow the beans are compensated fairly and not exploited. As demand for organic and ethically sourced coffee continues to rise, Karamu Coffee stays true to its commitment to quality and ethics.

PERFECTING THE ROAST

Karamu Coffee's roasting process is conscientious. Mike and head roaster Liam Kerr stick to small-batch roasting, around 30 kilos at a time, to maintain control and consistency. "It's all done manually," Christine explains. "We prefer to be hands-on rather than relying on high-tech, automated processes. It's our way of keeping the craft in the coffee."

"We roast to a medium-dark profile, which gives that rich, dark chocolate finish we love," she adds. Each batch is carefully crafted, with the team adjusting to the natural variations in bean profiles from year to year. "We stick to flavour profiles rather than a fixed recipe. Flavour profiles of a particular coffee may vary season to season due to the climate and growing conditions etc, so we adapt to bring out the best in every batch."

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL GRIND

For bakeries and cafés looking to offer their customers something special, Karamu Coffee provides more than just beans. "We believe in face-to-face connections," Christine says. "We visit the businesses, understand their needs, and help them set up, right down to the plumbing and electrical work for their coffee station."

This personal touch, combined with their deep understanding of the challenges small businesses face, sets Karamu Coffee apart. "We've all run our own cafés and restaurants, so we know how hard it is. We're here to make it easier for them."

Christine also emphasises the importance of supporting local businesses. "We're locally owned,



and wherever possible, we love to align with other New Zealand businesses."

Now far removed from their humble beginnings on the Point Howard Wharf, the team has settled into their forever home in Gracefield, Lower Hutt. "We're not open to the public, but we love to invite people into our space," Christine says. "It's a cosy place, with couches and plenty of coffee."

For those looking for an invite, Christine encourages them to get in touch.



Where can I find Karamu Coffee

For bakeries and cafés interested in bringing Karamu Coffee to their customers, Christine or Mike are just an email away.

christine@karamucoffee.co.nz
mike@karamucoffee.co.nz



Bakels NZ Supreme Pie Awards

FULL LIST OF WINNERS

Place	Baker	Bakery
Supreme Award	Ms Arlyn Thompson	Rangiora Bakery

Bacon & Egg		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Cheth Bun	Eurobake Espresso Ltd
Silver Award	Mrs Theara Keo	Taste Bakery and Roast
Bronze Award	Mr Seila Ly	Hillcrest Bakery & Cafe
Highly Commended	Mr Tola Chhunleng	Freemans Bakery and Cafe
5th	Mr Sean Vo	Levain Artisan Bakery
6th	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
7th	Mr Tongmin Li	Hillpark Bakery Manurewa
8th	Mrs Tina Yi	Mairangi Bay Bakery
9th	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay
10th	Mr Sok Heang Nguon	Taste Cafe and Bakery Avondale

Mince & Gravy		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Ms Arlyn Thompson	Rangiora Bakery
Silver Award	Mr Soem Top	Dinsdale Bakery
Bronze Award	Mrs Tina Yi	Mairangi Bay Bakery
Highly Commended	Mr Jason Hay	Richoux Patisserie Ellerslie
5th	Mr Kaing Sok	My Bakery Cafe
6th	Mr Cheth Bun	Eurobake Espresso Ltd
7th	Mrs Vicheka Se	Green Bay Bakery
8th	Mrs Theara Keo	Taste Bakery and Roast
9th	Mr Jason Danielson	Kaipai Bakery
10th	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay

Mince & Cheese		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mrs Theara Keo	Taste Bakery and Roast
Silver Award	Mr Kaing Sok	My Bakery Cafe
Bronze Award	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay
Highly Commended	Mr Sok Heang Nguon	Taste Cafe and Bakery Avondale
5th	Mr Jason Hay	Richoux Patisserie Ellerslie
6th	Mr Jason Danielson	Kaipai Bakery
7th	Mr Mab Chheur	Angkor Wat Kiwi Bakery and Cafe
8th	Mr Chamnan Ly	Piefee
9th	Mr Sheng Pheng Rong	Panorama Bakery and Cafe
10th	Mr Seila Ly	Hillcrest Bakery & Cafe

Potato Top		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Kaing Sok	My Bakery Cafe
Silver Award	Mr Bun Heng Wong	Julia Bakery
Bronze Award	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
Highly Commended	Mr Samraksmei So	Rosedale Bakery & Cafe
5th	Mr Michael Gray	Nada Bakery
6th	Mr Jacksea Tang	Pennylanes Bakery
7th	Mr Victor Sin	Rays Pies and Fries
8th	Mr Jason Hay	Richoux Patisserie Ellerslie
9th	Mr Bunnarith Sao	Dairy Flat Bakery Ltd
10th	Mr Buntha Meng	Wild Grain Bakery

Steak & Gravy		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
Silver Award	Mr Kaing Sok	My Bakery Cafe
Bronze Award	Mr Jason Kupe	The Butchers Pie
Highly Commended	Mr Buntha Meng	Wild Grain Bakery
5th	Mr Jacksea Tang	Pennylanes Bakery
6th	Mr Bun Heng Wong	Julia Bakery
7th	Mr Raksa Nonn	Angkor Wat Marewa
8th	Mr Lee hout Ung	Le Royal Bakery
9th	Mr Savanchamnap (Nap) Ly	Target Bakehouse & Cafe
10th	Mr Ny Chan	Ronnie's Cafe Matamata

Steak & Cheese		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Tola Chhunleng	Freemans Bakery and Cafe
Silver Award	Mrs Tina Yi	Mairangi Bay Bakery
Bronze Award	Mr Shane Kearns	The Baker Tirau
Highly Commended	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay
5th	Mr Mab Chheur	Angkor Wat Kiwi Bakery and Cafe
6th	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
7th	Mr Cheth Bun	Eurobake Espresso Ltd
8th	Mr Sok Heang Nguon	Taste Cafe and Bakery Avondale
9th	Mr Seila Ly	Hillcrest Bakery & Cafe
10th	Mr Samraksmey So	Rosedale Bakery & Cafe

Steak & Cheese		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Ms Kerry Wellman	Leeves at Portstone
Silver Award	Miss Peggy Zhang	Kitchen Republic
Bronze Award	Ms Bridget Mcnaught	Relish Rangitikei
Highly Commended	Mr Anthony Pearson	Kerikeri Bakehouse
5th	Mr Benjamin Ng	Bakes and Cakes Talk
6th	Ms Jessica Loftus	Hello Pickle
7th	Mr Fiona Carnegie	Robert Harris Cafe Matamata
8th	Mrs Debbie Knocker	The Corner Kitchen
9th	Mr Kai Mong	Sweet Painted Lady Cafe
10th	Mrs Kim Forsythe	Baked with Love

Commercial/Wholesale		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Jason Danielson	Kaipai Bakery
Silver Award	Mr Martyn Mayston	Bake Shack
Bronze Award	Mr Kerry Orchard	Gourmet Foods Ltd
Highly Commended	Mr Tom Grooten	Dad's Pies
5th	Mr Bosun Paki	Luv A Pie Foods Ltd
6th	Mr David Plunkett	Couplands Bakeries Ltd
7th	Mr Paul Barber	The Goodtime Pie Co Group
8th	Mr Tim Milina	Oxford Pies
9th	Mrs Alena Robertson	Maketu Pies
10th	Mrs Kate Smith	Jimmy's Pies

Chicken & Vegetables		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Buntha Meng	Wild Grain Bakery
Silver Award	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay
Bronze Award	Mr Chamnan Ly	Piefee
Highly Commended	Mr Kaing Sok	My Bakery Cafe
5th	Mr Callum Innes	The Pieoneer
6th	Mr Sheng Pheng Rong	Panorama Bakery and Cafe
7th	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
8th	Mr Sean Vo	Levain Artisan Bakery
9th	Mrs Tina Yi	Mairangi Bay Bakery
10th	Mr Chanvirak Sor	Clevedon Bakery Papakura

Gourmet Meat		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Ms Arlyn Thompson	Rangiora Bakery
Silver Award	Mr Jason Hay	Richoux Patisserie Ellerslie
Bronze Award	Mr Srieng Choheu	Fresh Bun Cafe
Highly Commended	Mr Murray Gray	Matuara Mutton Pies
5th	Mr Bunnarith Sao	Dairy Flat Bakery Ltd
6th	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay
7th	Mr Buntha Meng	Wild Grain Bakery
8th	Mr Rasmey Ra	Paihia Bakery
9th	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
10th	Mr Cheth Bun	Eurobake Espresso Ltd

Vegetarian		
Place	Baker	Bakery
Gold Award	Mr Patrick Lam	Patrick's Pie Group Limited
Silver Award	Mr Songheng Sor	High Bakery & Cafe
Bronze Award	Mrs Avina Tran	Paetiki Bakery
Highly Commended	Mr Kaing Sok	My Bakery Cafe
5th	Mrs Sopheap Long	Euro Patisserie Torbay
6th	Mr Sean Vo	Levain Artisan Bakery
7th	Mr Jason Hay	Richoux Patisserie Ellerslie
8th	Mr Cheth Bun	Eurobake Espresso Ltd
9th	Mr Buntha Meng	Wild Grain Bakery
10th	Mr Lee Hout Ung	Le Royal Bakery



Vegetarian Gold Patrick Lam
Patrick's Pie Group Ltd



Gourmet Meat Gold Arlyn Thompson
Artisan by Rangiora Bakery



Potato Top Gold Mr Kaing Sok My
Bakery Cafe



Steak and Gravy Gold Patrick Lam
Patrick's Pie Group Ltd



Apprentice Pie Maker Beau Corrie
Euro Patisserie.



Commercial Wholesale Gold Mr Jason Danielson
Kaipai



Supreme Award –
Arlyn Thompson
Artisan by
Rangiora Bakery



Bacon and Egg
Gold Mr Cheth
Bun Eurobake
Espresso Ltd



Café Boutique
Gold Ms Kerry
Wellman Leevies
of Portstone



Chicken and
Vegetable Gold
Mr Buntha Meng
Wild Grain Bakery



Mince and
Cheese Gold Mrs
Theara Keo Taste
Bakery and Roast

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Ingredients

Group 1:

Mauri Muffin Mix	10kg
Fresh Eggs	3.5kg
Water - variable	2.25L

Group 2:

Vegetable Oil	2.8L
---------------	------

Method

1. Place Group 1 ingredients into a mixing bowl fitted with a paddle attachment.
2. Mix on first speed for 1 minute. Scrape down.
3. Mix on second speed for 4 minutes. Scrape down.
4. Slowly add Vegetable Oil to combine.
5. Make into different varieties and drop into muffin cups at desired weight.
6. Bake at 180°C until baked.

Note: Temperature may vary depending on oven.





GUIDING APPRENTICES TO BECOME TOMORROW'S BAKING MASTERS

Fresh off their triumph at the Bakels Pie Awards, where they clinched the coveted Supreme Award, Rangiora Bakery is proving that their success isn't just about crafting award-winning pies—it's about cultivating the next generation of baking talent. We delve into how this iconic bakery is mentoring their apprentices, sharing the secrets of their craft, and shaping the future of New Zealand's baking industry.

SUE BROCHERIE

Production Supervisor at Rangiora Bakery

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM?

I was the first person to complete all three strands—that makes me feel quite famous! I started six years ago with my cake apprenticeship, which took three years. Then I added the pastry strand, followed by the bread strand.

HOW ARE YOU SUPPORTING THE CURRENT APPRENTICES AT RANGIORA BAKERY?

I feel privileged to give them guidance and reassurance, and I suppose it is being a mentor. It's fabulous to see others do what I have done. I find it really rewarding and when you see them buzzing after they have done a block course and I know exactly how that feels – it's such a sense of accomplishment and I feel so much pride.

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING WITH CRAEG?

He has that natural bread talent. Some people have to work at it – I have to strive to get where I want to go and learn, and he just has a way that is so natural and effortless.

HOW HAS HIS BAKING IMPROVED?

His overall confidence has come leaps and bounds, and he is doing lots more of the Danish pastries, and he is enjoying that because he is seeing the end result and how good they look - these big beautiful pastries with all their layers. We could do with more Craeg's, he's very product proud. He doesn't half-arse anything, he'll do it properly and the best he can.

WHAT'S YOUR FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE TO NEW APPRENTICES?

Enjoy it. That's it. You're going to learn a lot but don't overthink it. Enjoy it and embrace it. It is such an awesome opportunity to do something like this, working and learning at the same time. We're in an environment where it's real. It's what you're going to experience every day. And you'll see what you can actually do. I'm really excited we have two new apprentices as well and anything I can do to help, I just love seeing their progress. It's really special.

CREAG FRASER

Apprentice Baker at Rangiora Bakery

WHAT SKILLS HAVE YOU FOUND MOST CHALLENGING TO MASTER SO FAR?

Knowing where you can save time without compromising the quality of your products.

HOW HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF BAKING EVOLVED SINCE STARTING YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

You really get to know the science behind it all. Whether it's controlling the temperature or how different ingredients impact the dough.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING TO BAKE, AND WHY?

I can't decide between sourdough or croissant. The ear you get on a sourdough loaf is cool, but croissants taste really good too.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE MISTAKES OR SETBACKS IN THE BAKERY?

Well, if it's really bad all you can do is bin it and try again. I don't let it bother me.

WHAT'S THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED FROM YOUR MENTOR OR FELLOW BAKERS?

It can get pretty busy and you have to keep tabs on a lot of things, so I think patience was really important. You have to work around the dough.

HOW DO YOU STAY CREATIVE AND INSPIRED WHILE FOLLOWING PRECISE RECIPES?

We sometimes try to use either different shapes and sizes of dough or different topping to keep things interesting.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING BAKING PROJECT YOU'VE UNDERTAKEN SO FAR?

I got to try "Melon Pan" [*a classic Japanese sweet bread covered in a thin and crisp cookie crust*] when I went to Japan last year and have had mixed results with my attempts so far. No complaints about the flavour but I think my presentation needs a bit of work.





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