



Upper Crust

Grosse Pointe Park's Cornwall Bakery is (finally) open, producing European breads, croissants, tortes, muffins, pies, and more

BY MOLLY ABRAHAM //

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CJ BENNINGER

Cornwall Bakery opened on Kercheval Avenue in Grosse Pointe Park at the end of September — and if that doesn't sound like much of a news flash, you need to know the back story.

The neighborhood had been waiting for more than a year for a promised bakery to materialize in the high-ceilinged space. The previous occupant, Bona Fide Bakery, had been just days away from debuting in 2013 when the plug was pulled, and the proprietor and the building's owners suddenly parted company.

The handsome space with the French blue doors and big front roll-up windows stood vacant until Freeman Gunnell III came to the rescue. The 20-year kitchen veteran was well qualified to fire up the huge Pavailler oven to produce an array of crusty European breads. And he not only opened the long-awaited bakery, but he also relocated with his wife and two children to the neighborhood from Royal Oak, where he had been with Holiday Market for 10 years.

Cornwall is not just a name plucked out of the air. It is from Gunnell's British heritage — one that goes back many generations, he says.

The path to running his own bakery began when he was just 16 and a student at De La Salle High in Warren. He got a job as a dishwasher at Da Edoardo. In his spare moments he enjoyed watching the cooks and soon began helping out, taking over little tasks like chopping parsley, steadily moving up to salads and desserts. When he went to Michigan State University in 1985, he got into the hotel/restaurant management program but after two years transferred to Central Michigan to finish a degree in the business program, always with the idea of owning his own business some day.

While waiting to see if he could get into culinary school, Gunnell got a job at the Rattlesnake Club, where he first got interested in bread making. During that time, he was lucky enough to be accepted into Madeleine Kamman's School for American Chefs in the Napa Valley because of his work with chef-proprietor Jimmy Schmidt. He recalls Schmidt saying, "You don't need the CIA. You need Madeleine Kamman."

It was just a two-week program, but it was intensive, with just him and two other aspiring chefs working directly with



the legendary French woman, who had been Schmidt's mentor. (When Gunnell got married in 1998, Kamman sent him an original, edited copy of her cookbook as a wedding gift.)

He went on to get more formal training at Schoolcraft College where he got a two-year culinary degree that he says "filled in the gaps." He and his wife moved to Chicago where he honed his skills at the Whole Foods Bake House before returning to Michigan. The past 10 years have been spent baking at Holiday Market, while always hoping to have his own spot. To find a well-equipped bakery that was nearly complete was a dream come true.

The menu includes more than just the crusty loaves of sourdough and multigrain breads displayed in wooden wine racks. He and his crew of eight also produce croissants, tortes, muffins, and pies, and there are always a few decorated cakes in the glassed-in case, and coffee from Mighty Good Coffee in Ann Arbor for those who stop by. He plans to expand the menu to include breakfast and lunch dishes. But the most important thing is the bakery is open! ■

15215 Kercheval Ave., Grosse Pointe Park; 313-264-1938. Open 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon., 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Tues.-Fri., 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat., 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Sun.



↓ BITES

News and notes about the metro Detroit food scene from **Molly Abraham** and the *Hour* staff.

DRINK UP, DETROIT

Shades of Prohibition, only in this case it's perfectly legal: Detroit City Distillery at 2462 Riopelle St. in the Eastern Market, where gin, whiskey, vodka, and other spirits are made and dispensed in a dimly lit, brick-walled room with lots of "Joe-sent-me" vintage appeal. Detroit City Distillery took over a former meat-packing space, brought in a gorgeous old wood backbar, and makes all of its own ingredients as well as the liquor itself. Chuck Gellasch is the head bartender as well as a principal in the company ...

NOT HOUR, OUR

Another local distillery, Our/Detroit, is run by Sara Aldridge and Kate Bordine at 2545 Bagley Ave. in a renovated building. Our/Vodka is made with a recipe provided by French company Pernod Ricard. Each city producing the vodka uses as many locally sourced ingredients as possible, adding its individual character to the liquor. Local artists designed the furniture in the tasting room. JeanneMarie Morrish is in charge of the distillery operation for the all-female crew ...

TURKISH TIMES 22

Turkish fare is a rarity here, the ancient cuisine upheld by Ayse Uras, whose Ann Arbor restaurant, Ayse's Café on Plymouth Road, has just gone into its 22nd year serving Sultan's moussaka and borek ...

WICKED PACKAGES

The Rattlesnake Club has Dec. 12 and 19 tickets to *Wicked* at the Fisher Theatre, and will offer them paired with four-course dinners. On the 20th, the package will feature a DSO holiday performance at Orchestra Hall ...

MEET THE NEW BOSS

Dr. Michael McCall will become the new director of The School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University on Jan. 1.