

Makin' bread

At Branford's G Cafe Bakery

By Lisa Reisman

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ON A SHELF BETWEEN THE PUMPERNICKEL CIABATTA and the sourdough in G Cafe Bakery on Main Street across from the Branford Green sits a dense cylindrical loaf of German rye bread called Volkornbrot.

This is no ordinary bread.

Rich in fiber, high in protein, low in fat, it's so hearty and filling that just one slice can fuel you through the morning. That one slice, packed with nutritious grains and seeds, also supplies iron, calcium, potassium, and zinc, as well as a variety of B vitamins. Oh, and it's tasty too, unapologetically rich and chewy, with a malty, sourdough tang.

Call it fitness bread; health bread; weight-loss bread. You can even call it wonder bread, with a lower-case "w" that is. Such is its renown that people throughout the country order it online.

It's all part of the mission of Andrea Corazzini and his wife Kiara Matos, owners of G (short for German) Cafe Bakery to show the Shoreline, as Corazzini put it on a recent afternoon at the cafe, "what bread can be."

Corazzini, who hails from Abruzzi in Italy, first walked into a German bakery Caracas, Venezuela in 2000. At the time, he was involved in the textile business.

He looked at the sheer variety of breads — there are 300 types in all. He sank his teeth into a crusty slice. It was "bursting with freshness and health," said the wiry 47-year-old, his animated features softened by a dreamy look in his eye. Just then, he began to understand how German bread is the one food most missed by Germans living abroad.

Soon he and Kiara, a native of Venezuela, were running that same bak-



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Andrea Corazzini shows off some of the rich and chewy breads baked at G Cafe in Branford.

Bread: Enticing aromas at Branford's G Cafe Bakery

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ery while he traveled to Frankfurt and Dusseldorf to meet bakers and watch them work. Then, 10 years later, came the realization that Venezuela was too politically unstable to raise a family. His arrival in New Haven — Kiara had attended Albertus Magnus when she was 17 — followed.

In 2010, Whole G, or Whole German Breads, LLC, a wholesale bread-making factory, opened on Hamilton Street, with a staff of five, workdays beginning at 3 a.m., and Andrea and Kiara's two kids, then 3 and 5, sleeping in the office.

Arguably, a gleaming bakery fitted out with the latest digital German ovens, mixers, and other equipment might have been enough to satisfy Corazzini's passion to spread the gospel of German baking. Likewise, the rising popularity of Whole G's breads for its organic ingredients throughout specialty markets and restaurants in New Haven and Fairfield Counties could have sufficed.

It didn't. "Always," Corazzini said, the smell of baking bread wafting languidly through the comfortable, sleek seat-



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or poached eggs on, yes, Volkornbrot.

"The idea is to give the bakery a kind of roundness," said Corazzini, as soft jazz music filtered through the mellow space. "You can come in with a friend for a casual lunch while looking out the window and watching the world go by, then maybe a cappuccino, a dessert, all

Cappuccino at G Cafe.

ing area, "we had a retail idea in mind. Always we wanted a face."

Since it opened in September 2013, G Cafe's philosophy has been simple and meticulously followed. Bake from scratch. No preservatives. No trans-fats. Emphasis on quality and freshness. Any bread not sold at closing time donated to a soup kitchen. Start again fresh the next morning.

"Bread is not just a business," said Corazzini, the February sun glancing off a rainbow of porcelain mugs made by Kiara, an accomplished potter. "It's

a service to the community. When I bake bread, I am always thinking about the one who will consume it, the consumer, about making sure that what I am making is both healthy and nourishing."

And when he supervises his assistants in making pastries like almond croissants or turnovers, he tells them, "not too much sugar."

It's in keeping with that attention to his "consumers" that, while freshly baked bread remains the staple, G Cafe offers an array of sandwiches, salads, and soups, as well as vegetarian options and a breakfast menu that ranges from house-made granola to smoked salmon



Cookies on the counter, yum. Left, an assortment of pastries, fresh out of the oven. Everything is baked from scratch.

that should be part of the experience."

At which point someone entered the cafe and pointed at one of the loaves nestling on a shelf "I love seeing people come in for the bread," Corazzini said, his face lighting up as he headed toward the counter. "Seeing our bread become part of their lives. I feel that our purpose is being served."

G Cafe Bakery is located at 1008 Main St. next to Myers Flower Shop across from the Branford Green. 203-208-0930. gcafe@wholeg.com Facebook: G Cafe Bakery wholeg.com

