

# Pastries & Pizza: New Ventures for Old Pros

New businesses with ovens as their driving force, & other commonalities

**T**hese two new businesses have a lot in common. First, they represent new ventures for owners who have worked in the restaurant business for a long time. Second, the owners set up their new venture in space that they specifically waited to get from building owners they know, and third, the owners both declined to give me much personal information or let me photograph them, the first -- and may I say last - time that has ever happened to me in ten years of writing this magazine.

One of the things that readers say they like most about our magazine is the personal information that is included about the business owners. "After reading your article I feel like I know the owner when I first step into a new store," a reader once said to me. Also, one of the reasons people move to smaller towns is to get to know your neighbors: to buy from and sell to people that you know and trust. So if this article reads a little differently than most, I apologize.

First, I chatted with Gainor Riker, proprietor of the new Houlton Bakery across from the Chamber Depot in St. Helens. Gainor was born in Philadelphia and moved here with her family at age ten. She grew up around hospitality. "My mother was a chef and my father was a physician," she said. "We entertained a lot at home. My idea of business is to pre-serve the art of hospitality."

Gainor offers daily-fresh-

baked breads, cookies, round cakes and more. She will not offer, nor bake, sheet cakes. "I will not dumb-down my bakery," she said. "Sheet cakes are something you buy at a grocery store. I can educate my clients that you can serve just as many guests with a round cake as you can a sheet cake." She will also not bake donuts, something she says many patrons expect to find at a bakery. "We do bake our own maple bars twice a week," she added. "It is identifiable as a donut and is the best way to judge the quality of a bakery. Ours are so good I actually like them without the maple topping because they have a nice texture."

"Our main goal is to serve lunch and have hand crafted items, such as home-baked foccacia bread or smoked chicken salad. We also have vegetarian offerings. When we first opened I had few places to sit. Now I have added tables and need even more seating. I had not expected the overwhelming response to lunch."

She does not open early in the morning, although she is there by 5am baking for the day. If a patron wants an early morning order, they are welcome to call the day before and make special arrangements. "That way I can devote my time to baking and not have to worry about customers at the counter that need to be helped."

The second business is The Pizza Place in Manzanita. It is located above the Malt Shop right at the intersection of Highway 101. The philosophy of the business, printed right on

the menu, reads a little like, "Welcome to Texas: Now Go Home." The owner, who refuses to allow me to use his name, states it this way. "We are a hand-selected company of social mis-fits...." Reads the menu, "...This covenant of unexceptional under-achievers have pooled together fragments of their collective culinary knowledge to produce what may soon be considered the BEST PIZZA on the coast...." They offer pizzas, and pretty much only pizzas so as not to step on the toes of their fellow-building-mates, which may be ordered via telephone for pickup or through The Malt Shop downstairs. They offer the traditional sizes of small, medium and large with names like Garden Harvest, The Pepper Mill and South of the Border, or you can create your own. They even have jumped on the current bandwagon to offer a low-carb variety. They roll their own dough and create their own sauce, and ask everyone to simply leave them alone to bake. **LCB**

### The Houlton Bakery

Contact: Gainor Riker, proprietor  
Address: 2155 Columbia Boulevard  
St. Helens, Oregon 97051  
Telephone: 503-3366-2648  
Fax: 503-366-3898  
Hours: 9a 5p Monday - Friday  
10a - 5p Saturday, Closed Sunday

### The Pizza Place

725 Manzanita Avenue  
Manzanita, Oregon 97130  
Telephone: 503-368-3991  
Hours: Pick-up 4p - 10p  
Delivery with \$2 svc chg, 5p - 9:30p