

DRAWING STRENGTH



THE RISE OF THE DIGITAL CARTOON

TUES. MAY 14, 7 P.M.
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3:00 pm

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Kaboni Savage
Jury to resume mulling
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4:00 pm

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Gluten-free bakery hopes tastiness will attract broad customer base

May 8, 2013

By Bonnie Schultz for NewsWorks

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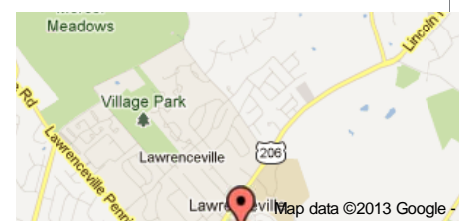


1/3

Consumer demand for gluten-free products is beginning to hit Main Street America.

On main street (Rt. 206) in Lawrenceville, N.J. which sits between Trenton and Princeton, Wildflower, a gluten-free bakery and cafe, is scheduled to open on May 11.

Marylyn Besner, the owner of Wildflower, said her bakery will likely appeal to everyone. She plans to offer challah,



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baguette and pumpernickel breads and pastries such as frangipane tartlette and even sweet buckwheat crepes.

It's a niche that's growing, according to Louise Kramer, Communications Director for the Specialty Food Association based in New York City. Kramer said many stores are adding gluten-free sections to their shelves because of the prevalence of celiac disease. "Educated people also find the gluten-free diet appealing," said Kramer, "as it adds a healthy aura to foods."

Besner is following her own instinct on how to succeed. When Besner was enrolled in a restaurant management course at the French Culinary Institute in New York, for her final assignment she drafted a business plan for a gluten-free bakery.

The feedback from instructors was that she should locate away from main street and instead try to sell her bakery items directly to restaurants and hotels. Besner said they didn't think she could generate enough traffic. "I wanted to have a bakery café where people could come in and have lunch."

Besner said she's confident of her business model because in addition to the store-front, she will also try to sell to caterers, restaurants and hotels.

"I look at it as a business opportunity because it fulfills a need," said Besner, "People who are gluten free have a hard time finding birthday cake or sandwich bread. However, a gluten-free café isn't too specialized for people who aren't gluten free because it's really good food."

A ceramics artist, Besner got her start cooking professionally behind the deli counter of Princeton's Whole Earth Center. After that, she joined forces with friend Piroška Toth to form Moonlight Bakers, a baking company that focused on Toth's grandmother's recipe for strudel and included Dean & DeLuca as one of their clients.

"Owning a café was always in the back of my mind. I feel really confident about the people working here, with my cooks from The Bread Bakers Guild of America and the Natural Gourmet Institute, and the rest of my staff is local. It feels like everything is falling into place."

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It's in NJ. — JD 2013-05-09 13:28

Yo, you might want to mention Lawrenceville is in NJ. Just sayin' :-)

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@JD — Alan Tu 2013-05-09 13:32

Thank you for noticing this. I've added in N.J.

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