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FOOD > COOKING

One of Dallas' best bread geniuses announces plans for a new storefront bakery

Matt Bresnan currently sells all sorts of sweet and savory pastries at the Saint Michael's Farmers Market, but he'll be opening a storefront soon.



A strawberry basil Danish with pistachios -- cooked by Matt Bresnan, head chef at Food Company -- is seen in the Nonna restaurant in Highland Park in Dallas on Monday, July 1, 2019. (Lynda M. Gonzalez / Staff Photographer)

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TOP FOOD STORIES



By Tina Danzel|Special Contributor
7:00 AM on Jul 5, 2019

Bresnan Bread and Pastry, a new artisan baking company, sells some of the best baked goods in Dallas. Offerings include full-flavored sourdough breads — like fennel-raisin and chile-cheese loaves — seeded multigrain bread, lacquered pastries like buttery kouign amann, and savory pastries, such as goat cheese-wild mushroom danish with kale pesto.

The company sells its baked goods two to three Saturdays a month at the [Saint Michael's Farmers Market](#), but a permanent retail space is in the works.

Bresnan Bread and Pastry will open a storefront bakery in partnership with [Nonna restaurant](#) and Food Company, the catering business that shares a kitchen and close ties with Nonna. The business is the brainchild of Matt Bresnan, executive chef at Food Company. Consulting on the project is Julian Barsotti, chef-owner of Nonna, [Fachini](#), [Carbone's](#) and [Sprezza](#) restaurants. Construction of the bakery, which will be adjacent to Nonna, is expected to begin soon, with an opening date in late fall.



Matt Bresnan, head chef at Food Company, arranges baked goods in the Nonna kitchen in Highland Park in Dallas. (Lynda M. Gonzalez / Staff Photographer)

Bresnan says he got serious about baking three years ago, after reading *Tartine Bread* by Chad Robertson of Tartine Bakery in San Francisco.

"From that moment forward I was cultivating and maintaining a sourdough starter," Bresnan says. Eager to learn more, he took courses at the San Francisco Baking Institute in 2017 and 2018. By the end of last summer, Bresnan had perfected a wide range of baked goods and began selling them at the Saint Michael's Farmers Market.

Word of Bresnan's baked goods spread quickly. This season, most of his product has been selling out before the market closes. Insiders have a way around that — by subscribing to Bresnan's emails (bresnanbread@gmail.com) — where customers can preorder baked goods. Sale dates are also announced in the emails, as well as on Instagram.



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Matt Bresnan, head chef at Food Company, removes two loaves of bread in the Nonna kitchen. (Lynda M. Gonzalez / Staff Photographer)

Bresnan says his country sour loaf is the "basic house loaf," made with a starter that he cultivates and ferments. Its dough is also the foundation for other breads made with more ingredients than the basic flour, water, sea salt and starter.

"Making my sourdough bread is a three-day process, involving a couple of feedings of the starter," he says. Technically, on Day 2, the fermented dough could be successfully baked, Bresnan says, but he rests it one more night to "retard" the dough. "This slows down the fermentation and increases the flavor," he says. "It also further breaks down the gluten, which makes the flour more digestible." Bresnan has heard from a few gluten-sensitive customers that they can tolerate eating his bread.





A ham and Gruyere croissant, an asparagus and tomato Danish with roasted garlic-pecorino bechamel, and a roasted mushroom and goat cheese Danish with kale pesto — all cooked by Matt Bresnan. (Lynda M. Gonzalez / Staff Photographer)

Bresnan says he uses as much whole grain as possible without sacrificing his ideal flavor and texture profile: 40% whole grain for his seeded multigrain bread, and 20% for his country sour and chile-cheese breads. "I source all my whole grains from Barton Springs Mill, out of Austin," he says.

Bresnan makes the bread by himself, in the kitchen that Food Company and Nonna share. On Friday nights before a sale, he forgoes sleep, baking from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. His wife, Jenna, helps manage the business. It's a tight operation, but he'll have more support by year's end, when Bresnan Bread and Pastry opens its doors. It will be a counter-service bakery and café, featuring breads, pastries, pies, quiche and coffee, as well as other breakfast and lunch offerings.

Bresnan Bread and Pastry will be at Saint Michael's Farmers Market, 8011 Douglas Ave. at Colgate Road, on July 6 and July 20. Follow what's available on Instagram [@bresnan_bread_and_pastry](https://www.instagram.com/bresnan_bread_and_pastry).

Tina Danze is a Dallas freelance writer.





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