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## Artisanal bakery rises in Moraga

By Sora O'Doherty



Rise Bakehouse owner Tom Kelly Photo Sora O'Doherty

Taking a leap of faith, Tom Kelly has quit his corporate job in financial services and started a bread business out of his home in Moraga. But Kelly looked before he leaped, for two years taking classes at the San Francisco Baking Institute on bread and viennoiserie (baked goods containing yeast). The school offers classes for students who wish to bake professionally. After two years, Kelly was ready to go out on his own.

His business is Rise Bakehouse, and Kelly is baking from his licensed kitchen in Moraga. Currently he is selling his breads both to a café in San Francisco, and via a subscription delivery service. Loaves are also available to pick up at Neighbors Café in San Francisco.

Right now, it looks like Kelly's leap is paying off, because his subscription list is already full, according to his website.

Rise Bakehouse is, according to Kelly, "dedicated to providing slow fermentation, organic, handmade sourdough breads to our local community." Moraga

residents can now have fresh bread delivered to the door, and pickup locations for other Lamorinda residents will be coming soon.

Kelly currently does all his baking from his house in Moraga, which he had licensed last year, and he has an agreement with Canyon Club to do his baking in their kitchen when the new facility opens. While planning to move into a commercial kitchen, Kelly looks to open his own bake house in Lamorinda. His innovative approach involves customers going to his website and signing up to have bread delivered Tuesdays or Fridays by subscription. Subscribers can choose whether they want to receive specific breads or a rotating selection.

Kelly's bread is not inexpensive; a subscription will run \$8 to \$9 per week, depending on the bread selected. But Kelly explains that the organic flour he buys from Central Milling in Petaluma is healthier, and more expensive by about 50 percent. "Better flour has more healthy assets," he explained, and in addition, naturally leavened loaves, such as he bakes, are more easily digestible because the gluten gets broken down during the long rising.

Kelly is currently baking five different types of bread, all based on sourdough: sourdough batard - organic flour, water and salt; kalamata olive sourdough batard - with olives straight from Greece and rosemary from his garden; whole wheat sourdough batard - 100 percent whole wheat organic flour, water and salt; and cranberry walnut sourdough batard - 100 percent whole wheat organic flour organic walnuts, cranberries and raisins. He also bakes a child-friendly sandwich bread, also known as sourdough pain de mie. Subscribers can choose from loaves with 100 percent white flour, 100 percent whole wheat flour, or half and half.

Kelly's wife, Liz, a writer, also gave up her own small business in San Francisco when they decided to move to the East Bay and is starting something new as the couple also raises their two school-age children.

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