

Tactical conquest

HUDSON BREAD WAS FOUNDED 15 YEARS AGO IN NORTH BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF CAPTURING THE BAKED GOODS MARKET IN NEW YORK. NOW COMPANY OWNER MARIUSZ KOLODZIEJ IS THINKING ABOUT OPENING SATELLITES IN OTHER US CITIES



++ figure 1
Large “freeforms” called ciabattas are scaled manually and placed on peel boards

+ The history of Hudson Bread is a heartwarming story about an immigrant who became a successful self-made man. It is also the story about a systematic and therefore successful company development. Either way, the key person is Mariusz Kolodziej. Following his law and administration studies at the naval academy in his homeland Poland, he emigrated to New York at the age of 24 and earned his starting capital in the real estate business. “At the naval academy, I learnt to plan strategically and also, I learnt personnel management and how to delegate tasks and I also discovered that it is important to do the things that you do really well.”

After his fundamental needs were fulfilled, namely a roof over his head, the young entrepreneur turned to another basic need, food, and here specifically bread. Kolodziej analyzed the market in New York and decided in favor of a specialty European-style bakery adapted to the requirements of the American food service companies with their indulgent sandwich culture and aimed at the taste profile of New York consumers. He eventually moved Hudson Bread to North Bergen on the fringe of New York City and employed Ray Million and Wolfgang Scharinger, two experienced bakers from both sides of the ocean. For three years

++ figure 2
Sourdough Country Loaves (4.5 kg per piece) are very popular as sliced bread for restaurants

now Million and Scharinger have worked on restructuring all production and operation!

On average 15 tons of dough are turned into a broad range of product offerings. From several European-style round bread loaves, into baguettes, panini, focaccias, a wealth of rolls in different flavors and sizes and of course brioche-sandwich-buns. A few products are also offered in organic quality but this is only a minor share. The list of customers includes hotels, delis, restaurants and other specialty food shops. They all expect quality and service, some want originality and creativity in product development and they are willing to pay for it. A staff of four field agents takes care of their needs.

Ready mixes are a no-no for Ray Million. Everything is made with different wheat and rye pre-ferments and sourdough. In general, pre-ferment is refrigerated for one day for ongoing gentle fermentation which provokes the development of different aroma precursors and flavors.

In any case, slow fermentation is one key stage in the production at Hudson Bread. 100% of the products are produced and stored at a Miwe retarding unit.

The dough is made during the day shift and put into the cooling chambers. It is then baked the next afternoon





++ figure 3
For distribution the products are packed in cardboard boxes or Kraft paper bags

++ figure 6
Proofing retarder by Miwe

++ figure 4
Mariusz Kolodziej, owner of Hudson bakery

++ figure 7
A variety of different rolls in various weight categories

++ figure 5
View from the pre-ferment station to the dough make-up line

++ figure 8
left: Ray Million, right: Wolfgang Scharinger

starting with the first batches at 1 pm. The baked goods are destined for customers in remote cities such as Philadelphia or Atlantic City. The baking of products for the next day starts at 10pm and will continue until the following day. The customers in New York, who account for about 85% of all sales, are supplied two to three times a day. Orders for the next day are officially accepted until 5.30 pm. However, Million tries to include late calls into the baking list as well. The fulfilling of special requests is an obvious service at Hudson Bread. Product and quality of service go together, despite the large and varied product range with 36 different types of rolls ranging from multi-grain rolls in miniature size to onion brioche, and a multi-faceted bread range including 580 g baguettes with raisins and nuts and 280 g pumpernickel ficelle which has only the color in common with the German Pumpernickel.

The bakery is technically state-of-the-art but not fully automated. This is due to the broad product range, according to Wolfgang Scharinger. "We do a lot of manual make-up", he adds. Almost half of the 100 employees work in production. The staff works on two shifts, 10 hours each, except for the oven which is operated in three shifts, almost around the clock.

More than 20 raw materials are automatically metered via hb-technik dosing units as are the pre-ferments and sourdoughs and the liquid components water, oil, milk, yeast and eggs. It is only honey, malt and ice cubes that are added manually. The dough is produced in two DW 240 twin twist mixers by König. An Artisan SFI stress-free dough sheeting line produces baguettes, rolls and breads while an Industrie Rex makes round rolls. A Classic Rex produces mini rolls

with a weight of 20 g. They are then combined to clusters and offered as a cocktail assortment.

The incorporation of a Rheon dough sheet line completes the remaining division of Hudson Bread items such as boules, loaves, freeforms and focaccias which are made-up manually. Four Miwe proofing retarders hold the dough at 7°C until they have reached almost the right proof for baking. Four stone deck ovens by Bongart and five Revent rack ovens take over the baking part. All products are then packed in shipping bags and cardboard boxes.

In this way, the delivery trucks do not have to collect any baskets or return products.

Hudson Bread is well established on the baked goods market in New York. This is why Mariusz Kolodziej is considering the next tactical step, a multiplication via satellites into other large cities within the US. +++

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