

A hype encircles the world

IN THE SUMMER OF 2013 LONG QUEUES FORMED IN FRONT OF DOMINIQUE ANSEL'S BAKERY IN NEW YORK. ANSEL HAD INVENTED THE "CRONUT". BUT WHY DID THIS CALORIE BOMB BECOME SO FAMOUS? WHAT WAS THE TRIUMPH'S ROUTE AROUND THE WORLD?



Marketing is the magic spell in the baking industry. Bringing a new product to the public's attention needs a cleverly devised advertising system. In most cases this involves high costs and much effort. That did not happen in the case of the "Cronut", a ring of croissant and donut filled with lemon crème. Baker Dominique Ansel took to heart the natural human desire "to own something that no one or only a few possess". Allegedly because manufacturing the ring is said to be very laborious, so he can only produce a limited number. Thus there are only around 380 of them every day, and each customer receives a maximum of two. Even "celebrities" like Hollywood stars and supermodels have no special entitlements. This seems to greatly please the customers, who offer some of the pastries on the black market after buying them.

But before it could get that far, New Yorkers had to hear about the creation first of all. For this Ansel had apparently simply written a contribution in the New York restaurant blog "Grub Street" the day before the launch. Ansel, who is French by birth, wrote: "This pastry will change your life." Because Ansel had already made a name for himself as a pastry-cook in the "Daniel" restaurant run by chef Daniel Boulud, many people read this entry and came to sample the "hybrid pastry". That was how the marketing took off on its own. The blog entry was commented and the testers told their friends. Twitter and Facebook helped to reach many people in a short time. The cronut devotees group quickly multiplied. The hype did not escape the media's notice, so they all carried reports about the Soho bakery and the "cwaahh-nut" (French pronunciation).

The "Cronut Craze", as the hype is also called in New York, was uncontrollable. Other bakeries in the USA and the whole world also wanted to jump on the bandwagon and take a share of the sales cake. For example the cronut has also been discovered in the neighboring country of Canada. Epic

Burgers and Waffles, Toronto, put a warm burger between two cronut halves. This unusual creation is called a Maple Bacon Jam Cronut Burger, which the company lovingly describes it as "heart-stopping". The calorie bombs have also become a success hit in Asia. One example is the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong bakery, which simply calls its creation a "croissant-doughnut". This is because the name "Cronut" is legally protected, so every company should choose a different name to avoid disputes. After being baked, the croissant-donut is rolled in white sugar, then filled with vanilla crème or chocolate ganache. An American company, Dunkin Donuts, has also jumped on the bandwagon in South Korea. Their sweet is sold in the towns of Seoul, Gangnam, Jamsil and Myeongdong under the name "New York Pie Donut". The delicacy can also be bought in Manila in the Philippines. On the fifth continent, Australia, Jenny's Gourmet Bakery in Adelaide offers its variant, which is filled with "vanilla bean custard" and decorated with "rose icing". It's a smaller variant of Dominique Ansel's original, so it should make do with fewer calories. How many? That will probably remain a secret.

Many are keen on the round rings in Europe as well. In Austria The backaldrin International The Kornspitz Company, GmbH, Asten, has also launched on the market a cronut for baking-off. Backaldrin advertises that their Bougel has no limitations, and there are also recipe suggestions that the customer can obtain from the baking adviser. There are many variants in Germany. The mixture for these remains the same, and only the names and fillings change from one bakery to another. The Roland Förch GmbH bakery in Erlenbach-Binswagen was one of the first to jump on the bandwagon. This bakery produces 500 of its nougat-filled Doncrons every day. The Erlenbach business receives orders from as far away as Düsseldorf and Hamburg. The Martin Braun Backmittel und Essenzen KG, Hannover, markets its own variant under the name "Crosynuts", which the customer only needs to



complete by adding yeast, water and shortening. Finally the Crossnut is cooked in hot fat. The Lantmännern Unibake Germany GmbH & Co. KG, Verden, offers its variant without the donut dough but with a vanilla filling. Its recipe: the croissant is manufactured traditionally via a 12-hour process and baked, then the filling is added. The residents of Herne have also been able to buy these curly pastries since early August 2013. The calorie bombs, which have been named Cross-Nuts, are obtainable in Heinz-Eugen Stöwe's bakery and confectioner's for EUR 2.45 each. Ann-Katrin Stöwe, the daughter of the owner Heinz-Eugen Stöwe, had the idea. She wanted to try to imitate the New York pastry. However, there are still no black markets for Cross-Nuts. Stöwe said smilingly "Of course the demand where we are is not yet quite so extreme. We're still in Herne-Horsthausen, not in New York."

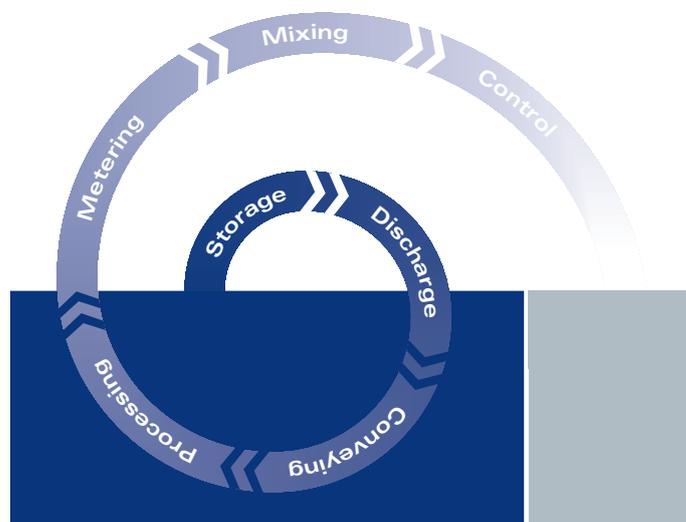
Of course there are also several variants in the United Kingdom. These include the "Dosant" from the Duck & Waffle bakery, London. It costs between GBP 3.70 and GBP 4.50 (around EUR 4.28–5.21). Astons Bread, London, has brought a "Crodo" onto the market, and Coco Maya's version is sold in the Wild & Wood Coffee bakery for around GBP 4.50 (around EUR 5.39). In addition to the "Crodough" at Rinkoff Bakeries, London, the "Greggsnut" is available at Greggs plc, Newcastle upon Tyne, for GBP 1 (EUR 1.19), where consumers can choose between two types – "Summer Berry & Crème" or "Caramel and Pecan". Customers cannot overlook the cronut in Spain either. The Amadeo Leonart bakery-patisserie in Sant Celoni offers its variant with icing sugar or a chocolate glaze.

The hype over the ring has slowly come to an end recently. However, Dominique Ansel has already taken care of that and is considering something new. True to the motto: What succeeds once can succeed twice. Since September 2013 he has offered the "Magic Soufflé". This has a core of creamy liquid chocolate which is baked in a tender buttery brioche. Ordinary soufflés need a baking and preparation time of around 20 minutes. Ansel did not want to impose this on his customers, and said "I wanted to make possible the soufflé-to-go." The new variety costs around EUR 5.30. Whether the soufflé will also go round the world, remains to be seen. In the meantime interested customers can sample their way through the world of the cronut. +++

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