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**BAKER**

**B**rasserie Bread Company head baker Brian Grogan works as a stuntman in his spare time. He is the first to admit it's an unusual mix, but says the stunt work provides a good release for his boundless energy. This enables him to concentrate his energies at work on producing high-quality breads while brainstorming new ideas.

**What is the best bread recipe you have created at the Brasserie Bread Company?**

I'd have to say the spelt wholemeal loaf. It started as a mistake and now it's our second-biggest seller. But last week I started experimenting with a loaf made with rosemary, potato and a hint of nigella and I think that's going to be a good one.

**You say working here is the best baking job you're ever had. What sets this bakery apart?**

Everybody is so passionate here about what they do. I've never seen a bakery like it growth-wise in the time I've been here. And in terms of dealing with the type of bread that we do here, I don't think there's anything else like it on the market for quality and flavours. That's our main objective, to produce the best sourdough in Sydney. We won in that category at the Royal Easter Show for the third time this year.

**Your career began 21 years ago in your home country, Ireland. Why did you choose this path?**

I started as a baker when I was 18. Where I lived in Ireland there was a large bread-making factory that I would always walk past going to school in the morning. You'd get this amazing smell and I remember thinking that I didn't want to go to school; I wanted to go in there. I talked to my teachers and they told me what I needed to do. So I started making bread. I used to like cooking at home as well, so being able to go to work and use the big ovens was great. I came to Australia in 1990 and the bakery where I was working in Edgecliff offered to sponsor me. Working at Brasserie Bread is a totally different experience. I was only ever brought up on white bread — it's all I ever knew — and when I started here I knew nothing about making sourdough bread. I have had to educate myself and I'm still always learning.



Bread of heaven . . . baker Brian Grogan using his loaf at work.

Picture: BOB BARKER

# An early riser earns a crust

**You also work as a stuntman — that's clearly not a run-of-the-mill, part-time job. How did you become involved in this industry?**

I had worked at the bakery in Edgecliff for seven years when I started that and I was looking for something different. Because I was working nights, it gave me my days free and I had a few friends who were working in the stunt industry. I started doing a few jobs here and there and it went from there. It's an opportunity I would never have had in Ireland. I'm a bit of an adrenalin junkie. In the bakery it can be mentally straining sometimes because there's so much on the go and you're always thinking of new ideas, so if I can go off and do a bit of stunt work it just releases that tension and I find I'm all fresh again. I've worked on films and TV,

including *All Saints*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Superman Returns* and *Stealth*.

**Do you ever worry you're going to hurt yourself and not be able to do the baking?**

No, not really. I'm not a daredevil, I'm a stuntman. I'm very careful in what I do — we do risk assessments and rehearsals.

**About those early mornings — is it always a struggle to drag yourself out of bed to work?**

The early mornings have never been a problem for me. I love it because you're the only one on the street, it's like it's my street. I did a lot of running when I was younger so I was always up at the crack of dawn. It's nice and quiet — you get some thinking time to yourself and you don't have to sit in traffic.

AIMEE BROWN