

2005 Sydney Royal Fine Food Show

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THINKING FLOUR

Brasserie Bread baker Michael Klausen discusses finding inspiration and time for artisan ideas and products.

By Michael Klausen

When I worked as a chef I would always put a lot of pressure on my suppliers to inform me about new and interesting product coming on to the market. I would then support them by using the product on our menu and talking to the media about it if I had a change. I really got a lot of inspiration and was very creative from this curiosity, and I would therefore have new products.

In the bread baking business it is very different, there is never any 'new stuff' in the quality bread ingredients that are being talked about or pushed forward by suppliers.

So here I am feeling very creative and looking for inspiration. I started looking at overseas flour, old milling techniques and speaking to millers and bakery suppliers. I quickly found it was up to me to inspire myself and learn more about what is happening overseas.

Why aren't flour suppliers more engaged in understanding the need of artisan bakers and more active to promote some of their great products? I really believe it takes all the people in the chain to have artisan bread growing - the farmer that chooses to farm organic wheat, the miller that only want to work with high-quality products, the baker that is focused making high-quality artisan bread and the consumer that really cares about what they eat.

So my job is to find great bread products and create recipes for great healthy bread that is processed in a slow artisan way, to get the best flavour and health benefits out of the flour for the consumers.

The flour I have worked with lately is stone ground organic wholemeal and high extraction organic wheat flour. The stone ground wholemeal is light brown in colour and smells a little bit like hazelnuts and fresh wheat. It is quite fine and very hard to work with 100 per cent.

The high extraction flour is milled using about 85 per cent of the wheat kernel. High extraction flour is higher in ash and fibre than normal white flour, but not as high as wholemeal.

After many different variations of dough mixing and fermentation and months of test baking, I came up with a very simple but at the same time very complex flavour from the flours.

By mixing a soaker of the two flours and later making a dough with the soaker and organic sourdough starter and a very slow fermentation, I made a beautiful loaf, pictured below.

There is amazing health benefits by making whole meal in the artisan way, first of all the flour is organic and second and most important is that the sourdough process makes the vitamins and minerals absorbable by humans. Under normal fast-bread production the wholemeal provides great fibre, but that is it. It takes the sourdough slow fermentation process to make the vitamins and minerals absorbable by humans. At the moment I am working with quinoa flour, barley flour and oat flour.

So if you want to get inspired, call your suppliers and let them know that you want more from them. ■



Above: A slow fermented Brasserie Bread loaf mixed with a soaker of two flours.

Left: Brasserie Bread owners Michael Klausen and David James

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