



PHOTO COURTESY OF NAEGELIN'S BAKERY



NAEGELIN'S BAKERY: OLDEST BAKERY IN TEXAS

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY: JAMIE LEIGH MILLER

Google “best apple strudel in Texas” and one of the first search results to pop up is Naegelin’s Bakery in New Braunfels. With its warm, gooey filling inside and flaky dough on the outside, Naegelin’s nailed it when it comes to apple strudel. But this delightful treat is not the bakery’s only claim to fame.

Naegelin’s is the oldest, continuously-running bakery in the state of Texas. Since 1868, this family-owned business has been serving up breads and pastries to neighbors and high-profile foodies and travel junkies like Samantha Brown, who featured it on the Texas Hill Country episode of her television show “Samantha Brown’s Places to Love.” Located in the historic area of the Texas town of New Braunfels sits a 150-year-old building. The flooring is almost all original, and the owners try to keep the structure as authentic as possible. The building is even equipped with a small patio and drive-through window. Yes, this bakery has a drive-through, but all the real magic happens inside.

THE NAEGELINS & THE GRANZINS

Starting at 4 a.m., the employees pile in to start their day of mixing, baking, and decorating. There are smiley face cookies with brightly colored frosting, doughnuts, cupcakes, pies, breads, strudels, kolaches, and bear claws to be made. The store opens bright and early at 6:30 in the morning, so everything is especially fresh and ready to go.

“We used to get here at 3:00 in the morning when my dad had it. I’ve been here 38 years,” said Ross Granzin, owner of Naegelin’s Bakery. “I started here when I was sixteen years old.”

Back in the 1980s, a man approached Granzin’s father and told him about a business owner wanting to sell his bakery in New Braunfels. Everyone in the Naegelin family was going off on their own paths, pursuing their own dreams and no one was left to run the bakery. The owner was searching for the perfect family to operate his place, and he found just that in the Granzin family.

“So what we did in San Antonio was we sold our house and put a down payment on this place. Then we lived upstairs for probably about a year-and-a-half, me and my two other brothers and my sister,” Granzin said.

According to Granzin, when his family first took over, the town had about 26,000 people. Now with over 70,000 citizens and nation-wide notoriety, the bakery’s online orders and the number of loyal customers continues to multiply.

Mr. Naegelin never wanted the name changed. And the Granzins never touched it. For a place known all over the United States, why would they? “We sell strudels online, all over,” Granzin said.

MIXING UP THE MAGIC

As for that delicious strudel recipe, it is a Naegelin’s Bakery original dating back over 150 years. “When they first came here, [Mr. Naegelin] just really had a bread recipe. White bread first, and then a pumpernickel,” Granzin said. Eventually, they started selling pastries.



“[It was] all his own stuff. Don’t know where he got it from. To this day I’m not sure. It’s so crazy having all the original recipes when he first started,” he said. When customers taste the strudel, they get so much more than filling and dough. They get a taste of history with the bakery’s authentic family recipes.

Naegelin’s Bakery still uses local ingredients from San Antonio and Houston. They do not use preservatives, yielding straight-up good, old-fashioned bakery items. Most of their products last only about three days if properly stored, but that is just the price you pay for authentic pastries.

While the bakery might not have a booth at local events in New Braunfels such as the Comal County Fair, Wurstfest, or Wassailfest, rest assured they will always have their doors open. Maybe it is the smell of pastries and freshly baked bread, or simply the impossibility of passing up a trip to Naegelin’s Bakery, but according to Granzin, he opens the doors and the guests just come in.

“We just open the doors and here they come,” he said.

While Naegelin’s notoriety has helped to keep them baking almost nonstop the entire year, the Christmas holiday season is still their busiest time with the best sellers being gingerbread men, stollen (a German fruit bread), and of course, apple strudel.

But what is it exactly that makes Naegelin’s apple strudel the best around? The dough. “Our strudel is moist. It’s not dried out. And our dough is phenomenal. That’s what makes the whole thing is the dough. You gotta have good dough. And the filling helps too,” Granzin said.

He stresses the importance of dough like the importance of a bun. “When you taste a hamburger, you taste the bread first. So you gotta have something good in the bread. That sets your whole hamburger. Not a good bun? Then it’s just alright,” he said.

The locals must agree with him because Naegelin’s sells buns too. In fact, they supply many of the local restaurants with hamburger buns.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

In 2000, Granzin’s father decided to retire, and he took over the family bakery making sure Mr. Naegelin’s dream never dies. “We are one of the last full-time line bakeries left. We make it every day,” he said. Granzin takes pride in being able to say that.

His daughter Paige and son Parker help him every day to ensure the business is successful, making this bakery so much more than just pastries. It is a truly family-run business honoring a 150-year-old legacy.

The employees are friendly and never rush customers, as the options can be overwhelming. The Granzin family is there every day making sure they stay true to Mr. Naegelin’s dream of a real, continuously family-run bakery. The pastries are fresh, the ingredients are local, and the building is a fragment of history. The entire experience, from the first “hello” to the very last taste of toothsome bakery goodness, is a slice of the past, frozen in time, paying homage to a simpler generation. But if you must just say you came for the apple strudel, the Granzins and everyone at Naegelin’s Bakery will welcome you with open arms and happily serve you a slice from their famous 150-year-old recipe.

ORDERS & STORE VISITS

Naegelin’s pastries make great gifts for co-workers, friends, and family. Large order cookie trays and special occasion cakes are available as well. Orders can be completed online as a guest, or those that wish can create an account for loyal customers. Almost any item can be shipped with two-day shipping in order to provide a fresh and delectable pastry experience. Naegelin’s ships an array of bakery items including breads, kolaches, doughnuts, pies, cupcakes, and cookies. They also bake custom wedding cakes and sell local honeys and bagged coffee.

The ultimate convenience is provided at their drive-through, or guests can purchase pastries inside. Enjoy the full Naegelin’s experience and dine on the bakery’s small patio. And of course, do not forget to try the coffee!

