



SPOTLIGHT ON... CASCADE BAKING COMPANY

AT A GLANCE

Cascade Baking Company
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THE BASICS

Cascade Baking Company features European-style artisan breads as well as traditional pan-baked breads. They use local, sustainable grains and fruit and nuts.

HOW THEY GO ABOVE AND BEYOND

Oven heat:

By investing in a well-insulated oven, the Edwards save thousands of dollars a year in their heating bill. Their 3-foot-thick brick oven only needs a two-hour per-day heating with a natural gas pipe.

Buy used instead of new:

They save money and resources by looking for used bakery equipment. A recently purchased mixer saved them about \$30,000.

Use soapnuts for laundry:

At 5-cents per load, the Edwards have saved hundreds of dollars in laundry detergent costs.



All day, freshly baked bread can be smelled blocks from the doors of Cascade Baking Company.

What you can't tell from the smell is that the bread—along with the rest of Cascade Baking's operation—is environmentally friendly.

All of the fruit, honey or nuts for scones and pastries is from local farms, much of it from Salem-based Minto Island Growers.

All of the grain used at Cascade Baking Company is from Shepherd's Grain, a Food Alliance-certified cooperative with 33 farmers who use sustainable agriculture practices such as no-till, direct seeding and crop rotation. Cascade Baking's owners Debra and Stephen Edwards can even track where each of the 50-pound bags of grain in their bakery came from. All of the farmers are located in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.



Debra and Stephen save money each month with their super-insulated oven.



"We know all of our farmers directly," Debra said. "I can take you to every farmer who grows us wheat." By using Shepherd's Grain, owners Debra and Stephen Edwards ensure they are using wheat that is sustainably grown but also appropriately priced for farmers. Shepherd's Grain sets a price for the year so farmers and buyers are not subject to the wild ups-and-downs of grain prices. While Shepherd's Grain wheat is often slightly more expensive than wheat purchased on the commodities market, a wheat shortage two years ago due to bad weather meant Shepherd's Grain's set price was far lower than the commodities prices.

"It was a no-brainer to choose Shepherd's Grain," Debra said. "We like their principles, we like their process and we like their wheat. We want to support local, sustainable agriculture."

All of that wheat bakes up into about 180 loaves a day—an all-day baking

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affair that could run an enormous energy bill in a regular oven.

Instead, owners Debra and Stephen Edwards built a radiant heat oven with 3-foot thick walls. It took 16 tons of bricks and mortar, but only requires two hours of natural gas heating a day—at a cost of about \$150 a month. A long natural gas pipe placed in the oven's entrance heats the oven to 500 degrees in the wee hours of the morning. That's when the baguettes bake. As the temperature drops throughout the day, ciabattas, ryes, whole wheats and sourdoughs are rotated through the oven.

For the expensive bakery equipment, Debra and Stephen turn to used or refurbished tools—a less expensive and more environmentally friendly option. A year ago, the Edwards needed to replace their 1936 Hobart mixer—a \$40,000 expense if purchased new. By scouring the Internet and restaurant equipment stores, Debra found a 1980s-model mixer for \$10,000. Since the old Hobart mixer lasted more than 70 years, the Edwards have reason to believe their new-to-them mixer has another 50 years of use!

It's not only a financial benefit for the Edwards to purchase used

equipment. Some of the older designs are sturdier than the new ones, Debra says. The used transit racks are thicker and better for carrying pounds of baked bread. And the new ones cost \$2,000 each compared to \$200 for used racks.

A wooden workbench suitable for mixing and kneading dough is another used purchase. It is 2-inches of maple wood—a beautiful surface that also is adaptable to its users: the height of the legs can be adjusted.

The Edwards have also saved a bundle and protected area streams through their choice of laundry soap. In a bakery, rags and aprons collect dough and flour quicker than a bowlful of yeast makes bread rise. Six loads a week were costing the Edwards hundreds of dollars in detergent a year. So Debra found soapnuts, grown from trees in Asia. When the small brown nuts are agitated in water, they make soap.



A used mixer cost a quarter of a new one!

Five soapnuts, placed in a small laundry bag, wash five loads of laundry. The Edwards now spend 5-cents per load of laundry. Plus, there are no residues left on fabrics, no fragrance, no environmental hazards in the drained wash water, and the materials are super clean.

EarthWISE Certification
Cascade Baking was originally EarthWISE certified in October of 2008, the first bakery to do so. They were also one of the first adopters of food waste composting in Marion County.



WANT TO DO THIS AT YOUR BUSINESS?

Marion County's EarthWISE program can help. Visit mcEarthwise.net, call 503.365.3188 or email Earthwise@co.marion.or.us