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Center Story #7

Don't 'Loaf Around'! Try Some Great Bread at Pasabocas Colombian Bakery

In this article, Diane sits down with Kevin and Amanda Salgado to learn more about the popular Pasabocas Colombia Bakery, located in the E Building in Unit 8.

How did the bakery get its name?

What is its tie to Brasa Roja Restaurant, another very successful eatery that also resides in the E Building?

What's the busiest day of the week for this place that's filled with delicious treats?

In Chicago, young Kevin Salgado worked at the Brasa Roja Restaurant. The focus was delicious Colombian dishes, created by owner Benjamin Gacharna.

While Kevin was there, his boss (who was born in Colombia), had an idea to open a bakery so he sent Kevin to Colombia for a month to learn how to bake breads.

Kevin did learn and started to bake on his own from time to time, keeping the profits, but no full-time bakery was ever opened in Chicago. Around this same time, incidentally, while in the Windy City, Kevin met Gacharna's daughter, Amanda...and sparks flew.

When Gacharna and his family moved to Las Vegas in 2018, they opened a Brasa Roja Restaurant in Commercial Center where both Amanda and Kevin then worked. Love continued to bloom and the couple were married in 2021.

Kevin and Amanda, both still in their mid-20s, then decided to open their own bakery when a unit became available in the E Building – the same one that houses Gacharna's restaurant, Brasa Roja.

The new bakery was named Pasabocas Colombian Bakery after one of the items offered there, a snack-sized bread that is very popular.

Kevin says that he works seven days a week and is one of two cooks along with four front people who run the bakery. Amanda handles a good deal of the administrative and human resources work.

The bakery is open every day from 8 AM to 6 PM and the number of customers has gradually grown every year of the bakery's three years in operation. "We normally make our breads in the morning and then keep track. If we are running out of one bread, we make that bread again," Kevin explained.

The bakery offers some 12 different breads or rolls. In addition, eggs are available for breakfast and Amanda's Colombian grandmother's recipe for tamales is available, too. These are the only non-bread items made for customers— no hamburgers, etc.

Incidentally, Kevin's father-in-law's restaurants, all called Brasa Roja, are in Chicago (three restaurants) and Las Vegas (one restaurant). Kevin says that his customers from California and Arizona tell him that he should open bakeries in those states, too, but thus far Commercial Center remains his one location.

However, the couple is looking forward to future expansion, but in a different direction, as Amanda is pregnant with their first child. She has been commuting back and forth to Chicago where her doctors and many family members are located.

The Pasabocas Colombian Bakery prints all its signs in Spanish to identify products. Customers who don't speak Spanish (like this reporter) just point. A cute illustration on one wall was suggested by Amanda and its English translation is "Coffee and Gossip". So yes, along with delicious breads (and maybe tamales!), one can sit at a table at Pasabocas Colombian Bakery with a friend and...well, you know!

By the way, if you're planning a visit, note that the bakery's busiest day is Sunday.

By: Diane Taylor