

BLUE BAKER ADDS LOCAL COLOR TO AUSTIN

There is nothing like the warm, delicious smell of freshly baked artisan bread or pastries to get the stomach growling and the mouth watering. This reaction has been all too familiar to residents and visitors to the Bryan/College Station area since 2001 when Blue Baker first opened its doors on Dominik Drive in College Station. The multifaceted bakery, sandwich shop and café has continued gaining the hearts and appetites of the Brazos Valley, opening a second store on University Drive in 2007 and new this year, the marketplace innovation of hot, fresh cookies delivered to your door.

This month Dave Fox, founder of Blue Baker, has just opened the newest location in Austin at the Arboretum, a far cry from their local following. With new markets for the bakery to serve, Fox is excited about the restaurant's move to the live music capital of the world.

"We know there is a lot of work in front of us," Fox says. "We are not nervous, but more anxious to get going."

Fox also points out that since the job of choosing the location is done, the new focus will be on serving Austinites and marketing in the new city. The first step, according to Fox, is connecting with people who live in Austin who already know the Blue Baker brand.

"We are trying to find ways to connect initially with people who may have lived here [College Station] in the last ten years and might know us," Fox says. "That revolves a lot around the A&M community and how to touch base with them."

That marketing strategy will be employed during the first three to six months of the store opening, Fox says, and once a base is established there will be a shift in focus. After the initial six months, Blue Baker will look for other ways to reach the Austin community.

"We are trying to find some groups to partner with that are analogous to what we are doing here. We are working with local publications to advertise our opening and are finding resources in Austin that work similarly and have more of a local, small-business focus," Fox says.

Fox also believes the uniqueness of the menu – artisan breads, sandwiches, salads and pizzas plus a full line of bakery fare – will help draw customers by peaking their curiosity about what Blue Baker is all about. One of the big drivers is the fact that everything in the artisan bakery is made from scratch.

"The fact that we are an artisan scratch bakery is becoming more and more unique," Fox says. "In most bakeries, almost nothing is made from scratch anymore; instead products arrive frozen and are simply thawed before serving, often made with flavor enhancers and chemical additives to speed the process; or they are mixed using prepackaged bags. That's the complete opposite of who we are as craft bakers."

The Blue Baker brand rests on the foundation of delivering a fresh and made-from-scratch product to its consumers without the use of flavor enhancers, dough conditioners, or other types of chemical additives. The bakery is also one of the few remaining that actually bakes products in the stores – you can even watch their bakers in action. With Fox pushing the Blue Baker tradition into a new market outside the Brazos Valley, a whole new audience will discover the meaning of "Blue On You, It's on Us" along with the diverse menu of everything from hand-crafted breads to soup to stone-oven pizza. It's safe to say that the residents of Austin will not have a hard time finding something in bold, blue print to excite their taste buds.

Blue Baker fans can follow the opening of the new Austin Blue Baker, 10000 Research Boulevard in the Arboretum, at BlueBaker.com and Facebook. [i](#)

