



SEARCH

Tongue twisters

Fresh from Bavaria, the Guglhupf Bakery introduces a new taste to the Bull City.

By RAH BICKLEY , STAFF WRITER

DURHAM -- Six mornings a week, people drive five, 10, even 20 miles out of their way to buy bread at Guglhupf Bakery. They navigate the gaping pothole at the entrance to the nondescript brick building on Chapel Hill Boulevard and slip inside, where loaves of bread are piled behind the counter.

They hungrily eye the rectangular multigrain loaves, furrowed down the middle and generously sprinkled with sunflower, pumpkin, sesame and flax seeds and oatmeal flakes. The muesli bread -- shot through with almonds, raisins and bits of fruit -- is practically a meal in itself. A glass case holds sugar-drizzled pastries, some filled with hazelnut and marzipan, others topped with slices of kiwi and peach.

Eagerly, impatiently, they pick out their morning croissants, a baguette or a handful of chewy German pretzels. Beyond the cash register, they see the baker kneading dough and lifting trays of rolls out of the oven with a big wooden paddle.

The hand-painted floor and the long-limbed puppet that dangles near the door welcome customers. But even more than the decor, something in the steamy air gives visitors both

energy and comfort. The customers clutching their paper bags are leaving with more than lumps of cooked dough. Soul food is what it is, straight from the heart of southern Germany, where the idea for Guglhupf was born.

From Bavaria to the Bull City

Co-owners Claudia Cooper and Hartmut Jahn, both German natives, were still in Munich when they decided to start the bakery.

They both hated their corporate jobs in the city. So they started collecting kitchen equipment and advertised for a baker. They chose Durham from a list of U.S. sites and quit their jobs.

They named their bakery-to-be Guglhupf (pronounced GOO-gul-hupf), after a German cake invented in the Middle Ages. The story goes



Staff Photo by Mel Nathanson

Invented in the Middle Ages, guglhupf is filled with fruit and nuts and dusted with sugar.

that the cake was first baked in the 1200s or 1300s by a Capuchin monk who shaped it like the hood (gugl) he wore. The cake pleased him so much that it caused him to jump (hupf) for joy.

Cooper and Jahn have created a little island of Bavarian culture, from the stacks of antique cake molds to the staff's afternoon snacks of warm buttered pretzels. German natives living in the Triangle love it. So do the Americans. On the day it opened last November, it became an instant institution.

"All the neighbors -- even those who have nothing to do with Germany -- are going nuts," says Jan-Dieter Spalink, as he stands in line at the bakery.

Spalink comes every morning for rolls or bread, and sometimes returns in the afternoon to fetch his office staff a teatime snack. He despises store-bought American bread, he says, and views Guglhupf as a starving man might view a banquet table.

"Their professional standard is phenomenal," he says.

The food is as good or better than anything he's tasted in Germany, adds Spalink, who visits Germany every couple of months.

Marketing consultant Janet Grady, heading out with a baguette and three croissants, says the bakery has made her French fiance stop talking about leaving Durham.

"He says, 'I have a baker who opens at regular hours, the way he should, even at 7:30 in the morning,' " she says. " 'We can stay. We'll expand the house,' he says."

A taste molded in Europe

What's distinctive about Guglhupf is its authentic German and French bread -- the chewy, robust stuff that Europeans eat for breakfast and throughout the day.



Staff Photo by Mel Nathanson

Loaves take shape at the hands of Christophe Gaumet.

Guglhupf uses no preservatives, and less yeast than in store-bought bread.

All its breads have a sourdough base, which imparts a slight tang and makes the bread chewy rather than crumbly.

Cut off a slice, press your nose against it and inhale. Each type of bread has a "nose" or a

bouquet, like wine.

And, despite the fact that they are not wrapped in plastic, the loaves stay fresh for days.

"What a real bakery does is bake bread [that's] sold the same day it's made, and made with completely natural ingredients," Cooper says.

The bread is all made by baker Christophe Gaumet, who speaks with

a decidedly French accent. The sandy-haired 31-year-old grew up in Baden-Baden on the French-German border and spent more than six years in Germany's rigorous, state-regulated apprentice program.

Cooper, a vivacious 29-year-old who was born in Germany to an American father and a German mother, also apprenticed in Germany as a pastry chef for two years.

She decorates the pastries and generally runs the business, switching between German and fluent, unaccented English.

Jahn, 37, a mechanical engineer with a heavy German accent and a quick smile, deals with the machinery and other aspects of the business -- if the mixer goes haywire or the oven loses its steam, he gets to fix it.

The kitchen equipment is imported from Europe, including the 9-foot steel steam injection oven and a machine that shapes dough into skinny rolls for making pretzels.

They have a 1950s-era machine that molds special Christmas cookies, high-speed mixers for bread dough and another mixer for doughs like rye bread that must be mixed more gently for a longer time.

Many of the bakery's antique and ornately shaped cake molds were passed down through Cooper's German relatives, and others came from Jahn's prowls around European flea markets.

One copper Guglhupf cake mold came from Cooper's great-great aunt who lived in Dusseldorf. Another cast-iron Guglhupf mold came from a German flea market, as did two small copper molds for what Cooper calls "baby Gugls."

Cooper and Gaumet arrive at the bakery about 2 a.m. every morning to start the day's baking. They open the doors at 7:30 a.m. on every day but Sunday, when they open at 8:30 a.m., and Monday, when they're closed. Gaumet works an exhausting 12-hour day, then leaves around 2 p.m. Cooper stays until about 8 p.m. to close up and conduct business.

Jumping over hurdles

Cooper and Jahn wanted to come to the United States because they thought real European pastries would appeal to Americans' taste for gourmet foods.

So they booted up their computer and searched the Internet for a place that had an educated, growing population and mild weather.

Cooper, who spent her teenage years around Washington, D.C., and attended Hood College in Maryland, wanted to be near her parents' home in West Virginia.

In the end, what made them choose Durham over Charlotte, Savannah, Charleston and other places that fit their profile was dressage, a precision horseback riding sport popular in Germany that Cooper competes in. Raleigh, Southern Pines and other North Carolina cities are on the dressage circuit.

And, practically speaking, dressage is an "an international scene," she says, attracting the same people who would shop at a European bakery.

The intricate maneuvering of dressage probably seems simple to Cooper and Jahn compared to the obstacle course they ran in establishing their bakery here.

Thinking back on the path they have traveled since October 1997,

when Cooper first came alone to Durham, Jahn smiled.

"Little did we know," he said, hinting at what awaited them.

After Jahn joined Cooper in Durham in January 1998, it would be another 10 months before they could open up shop.

The first problem was a crucial one: location, location, location. No shopping center would have them, because the grocery stores that anchor them usually dictate in their leases that bakeries, butcher shops and other competing establishments may not come in.

"For a while it was hard to grasp. Why dictate what the consumers want?" Cooper says.

Then, local banks refused to loan them money. They were afraid the two might return to Europe whenever they felt like leaving their debts behind, she says.

When they finally found the site between Foster's Market and Pizza Hut on Chapel Hill Boulevard, they learned that their kitchen equipment dealer in Europe had sold their machines to someone else, even as their shipping container waited at the dock.

Then the city of Durham refused to grant a permit for their building. Accustomed to thinking of bakeries as huge wholesale operations requiring big, rumbling delivery trucks, officials at first insisted that the tiny, three-person shop belonged in an industrial park.

But the Guglhupf trio -- Cooper and Jahn were joined by their baker Gaumet in October -- finally triumphed over bureaucracy, bankers and the tyranny of chain stores. Using their muscles, wits and cash, they turned the little basement-level space, formerly an office, into a kitchen and retail area.

Cooper, an electrical engineering major, fashioned the tin ceiling above the counter with shears and a sheet of tin from Home Depot. Jahn installed the machines and built the patio area.

Gaumet experimented with breads, seeds and doughs, navigating the unfamiliar maze of American ingredients and measurements.

They found someone to work the cash register on weekends.

Allowing for American tastes

Still they worried.

Would the pastries be sweet enough for American customers, with their taste for jelly-filled doughnuts and NutraSweet-laced sodas? Would people like the breads? Would they trust anything that didn't come wrapped in plastic?

Now, two months later, those worries have been replaced with others -- keeping up with demand, for example.

The start-up phase is behind them, and Cooper, Jahn and Gaumet are settling into the routine of running the bakery.

A second baker, hand-picked by Gaumet from Germany's most recent class of bakery apprenticeship graduates, is scheduled to join the staff this week.

Gaumet has also begun training a recent UNC graduate as a baker.

Meanwhile, Guglhupf has acquired several regular customers, including Triangle Day School math teacher Ginny Darnell and her purple-coated dog Jamie.

On any given day, you may also see Duke physician Burkhard

Mackensen, architect Turan Duda and UNC employee Andy Barron, all eagerly waiting in line for their daily supply of the staff of life.

Running a bakery is grueling work, but the Guglhupf crew wouldn't trade it for the corporate jobs they left behind.

Cooper gestures down at her stained white apron and checked pants, breaking into a jubilant smile.

Her brown eyes sparkle.

"I finally did what I wanted to do," she says.

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RECIPES

Guglhupf (Alsatian Coffee Cake)

1 cup golden raisins

1/4 cup kirsch or brandy

2 1/2 cups lukewarm milk, divided

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, plus more for greasing molds, softened, divided

5 teaspoons dry yeast

5 1/2 cups flour, plus more as needed

1/2 cup whole blanched almonds

3/4 cup, plus 2 tablespoons sugar

4 teaspoons salt

2 large eggs

Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

In a small bowl, soak raisins in kirsch; set aside while the dough is being prepared.

In a saucepan, gently heat 1/4 cup milk with 1/4 cup butter over low heat until lukewarm. Transfer to a mixing bowl and sprinkle on yeast, then stir in 1 cup flour until almost completely incorporated. Cover the bowl loosely with plastic wrap and let rise in a draft-free place until the mixture almost doubles in volume, about 1 hour.

Generously butter two 2-quart guglhupf or Bundt pans. Press almonds into the grooves at the bottom (crown) of each, so they stay in place.

In a large mixing bowl or an electric mixer with a dough hook attachment, combine 2 1/4 cups milk, 3/4 cup butter and 4 1/2 cups flour with the sugar, salt and eggs. Mix thoroughly until blended. Add starter, and mix until blended. Knead by hand on a lightly floured surface, or with an electric mixer at medium-high speed for about 10 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and supple feeling, soft and very

slightly sticky. As you knead, add a little more flour or milk if necessary to adjust the consistency.

Drain raisins, reserving liquid, and knead them into the dough by hand in the bowl until well-distributed. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rise to 1 1/2 times its volume, 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees, with the rack one-third of the way up from the bottom. Divide the dough in 2 equal pieces. Gather each one into a ball, make a 1-inch hole in the middle of the dough with your thumb, and fit the dough into the mold, arranging it evenly. The mold should be about 3/4 full. Cover loosely and let the dough rise for 5 to 10 minutes.

Bake until guglhupfs are golden brown and sound hollow when tapped, about 45 minutes. If guglhupf begins to brown too quickly, cover with foil halfway through baking.

Cool in the pans for a few minutes on a wire rack, then unmold guglhupfs and cool thoroughly. Drizzle the leftover kirsch into the center of the cakes and dust liberally with confectioners' sugar. Cover well with plastic wrap or put in a plastic bag to store.

Note: In Alsace, the guglhupf is never served on the same day it is baked. It is made the night before, or even 2 days ahead, so it can "age" to a light, dry texture. Dust again with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

Makes 16 servings.

Per serving:	fats: 14 grams (33% of calories)	calories: 382 cholesterol: 56 milligrams	carbohydrate: 55 grams protein: 8 grams	sodium: 627 milligrams
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Chocolate-Mousse Cake

Crust:

1 cup (4 ounces) toasted hazelnuts or pecans

1 cup graham cracker crumbs

2 tablespoons sugar

1/4 cup butter, melted

Filling:

2 (8-ounce) packages (16 squares) semisweet chocolate, cut up

1 cup whipping cream

6 eggs

3/4 cup sugar

1/3 cup flour

Unsweetened whipped cream

Whole hazelnuts or pecans

Grease a 9-inch springform pan.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Crust: In blender container or food processor bowl, coarsely grind nuts. Combine nuts, graham cracker crumbs and sugar. Stir in melted margarine. Press onto bottom and 1 1/2 inches up sides of pan.

Filling: In a saucepan, combine chocolate and whipping cream; stir over low heat until chocolate is melted. Remove from heat. Transfer mixture to extra large mixing bowl.

In a large bowl, beat eggs with an electric mixer on low speed until well-mixed. Add sugar and flour; beat on high speed about 5 minutes, until thick and lemon-colored. Stir about 1/4 of the egg mixture into chocolate mixture to lighten. Fold remaining egg mixture into chocolate. Turn into prepared pan.

Bake about 55 minutes or until puffed on the outer half of top. Center will be slightly soft. Cool for 20 minutes. Remove pan sides. Cool for at least 4 hours. Cover and chill for up to 24 hours.

To serve, let cake come to room temperature. Garnish with whipped cream and whole nuts. Refrigerate leftovers but return to room temperature before serving.

Makes 20 servings.

Per serving:	fats: 20 grams (56% of calories)	calories: 323 cholesterol: 90 milligrams	carbohydrate: 33 grams protein: 3 grams	sodium: 101 milligrams
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