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MANHATTAN'S LARGEST CIRCULATION
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BAKED GOODS

Tribeca Treats

Owner: Rachel Thebault
94 Reade St.
(212) 571-0500
www.tribecatreats.com

Making the transition from banking to baking is no easy feat, especially when it comes to perfecting the recipe for Rachel Thebault's chocolate marshmallow cream sandwich cookie.

As owner of specialty bakery TriBeCa Treats, the 31-year-old admittedly spends days stirring up the right combination of flavors and ingredients. "It's difficult finding what works and what doesn't," she said. "I want to stick to the basics, but at the same time incorporate flavors that you won't find everyday."

While Thebault always had a passion for baking — she cites the Easy-Bake oven as an early inspiration — she, instead, launched a career in investment banking after college to "satisfy the numbers side" of her. Meanwhile, she continued her culinary pursuits on the side, organizing dinner parties and catering small events for friends and family. It wasn't long before her gusto for

Equipment

Starting a professional bakery requires professional equipment. But large-size ovens don't come cheap. Take a look at the pricelist for some of these models:

1. Single oven

- Standard sheet pans: Four 18" x 26" pans
- Bread: 20 loaves
- Pies: 24 9-inch pies

Price: \$6,399

2. Double oven

- Standard sheet pans: Fourteen 18" x 26" pans
- Bread pans: 70 loaves
- Pies: 84 9-inch pies

Price: \$10,369

3. Quadruple oven

- Standard sheet pans: Twenty-eight 18" x 26" pans
- Bread pans: 140 loaves
- Pies: 168 9-inch pies

Price: \$17,999

Source: Benchmark Bakers Inc.

ENTREPRENEUR SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES

By Farnoosh Torabi with Tim Chan; Photos by Bill Lyons

ganache took over and Thebault enrolled in the Institute for Culinary Education and pursued baking full-time.

That said, Thebault hasn't lost sense of the bottom line and credits her banking background with helping her stay on top of business. "I'm very analytical about this business," she said. While Thebault can create as many as 20 different cake flavors, not all of them will be available at the same time. It helps products stay fresh, she explains, and drives frequent repeat business. Plus, she adds, "It allows everyone to have a favorite flavor."

Tribeca Treats caters to a more sophisticated clientele. "We make desserts done stylishly at an upscale level," she said. "It's for people who don't want to spend an arm and a leg on a cake but are willing to pay for something more special." A medium sized cake, for example, runs \$50.

But business wasn't always sweet. When Thebault first started the business, she worked out of tiny communal kitchens or, on occasion, her own apartment. When she began looking for a store, she found that nothing fit her price range. "I wrote down what I could afford

to pay in rent," she recalled, "but everything was either too small or not suitable." A year ago, she finally found her dream location at 94 Reade Str., though it was hardly love at first sight.

"The store was an electrical supply store for 17 years," Thebault said. "I had to completely redo it to make it suitable for a bakery."

She estimated it cost "in the six figures" to make her dream a reality. Most of the money went toward construction costs and the purchase of equipment. Five to 10 percent went to inventory costs and the rest were dedicated to legal fees and insurance. That left little room for advertising, but Thebault said she's generated most business through word of mouth.

While sales have been consistent and supportive of the overhead so far, Thebault knows there's a lot of work to reach her goals of building a bakery empire. She plans to officially open her store for business in January. Currently, her products are only sold online at Tribecatreats.com. She's also been experimenting with new flavors, namely a pink peppercorn truffle and a caramel sea salts confection.

What's Baking in NYC

These schools offer lessons in baking, among other culinary education.

French Culinary Institute

62 Broadway
(212) 219-8890
www.FrenchCulinary.com

The New School, Culinary Arts

30 West 26th St.
12th floor
(212) 229-5600
www.nyu.newschool.edu/culinary

Il Chiostrò

241 W. 97th St.
(800) 990-3506
www.ilchiostrò.com

Grandma's Secrets

640 West 138th St.
(212) 862-8117
www.grandmassecrets.com

