

February 20, 2008 **Southbridge Evening News**
Chef sees Pastry Studio as recipe for success
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SOUTHBRIDGE — A new bakery inside the arts and entertainment complex at 12 Crane St., provides a feast for the eyes and the taste buds alike.

The 12 Crane Pastry Studio, which first unveiled its culinary concoctions yesterday, strives to capture the same artistic mindset that suffuses every square inch of the renovated industrial building — where murals, sculptures and creative architecture set the scene.

Danielle "Dee" Brideau, the head pastry chef at the new bakery, sees her mission as creating "edible pieces of art" for public enjoyment.

A graduate of the "Restaurant School" at Walnut Hill College in Philadelphia, where she earned a degree in pastry arts, Brideau has put her education into practice at the nearby Publick House and the Sturbridge Baking Co., in addition to several establishments in the Philadelphia area.

Not until now, however, has she stepped into the starring role and designed her own creations.

While on a break between jobs, Brideau stumbled upon the 12 Crane Web site, which had a section heralding the bakery's upcoming arrival, although the position of head pastry chef remained vacant.

Immediately after interviewing for the position with Gabriel McCarthy, the local developer responsible for transforming the former dog food cannery and cold storage warehouse, Brideau was invited to put her culinary skills to the test.

On the spot, Brideau whipped up a batch of fresh bread and a trio of delectable desserts — chocolate mousse with caramelized bananas, pistachio brown butter tart with raspberries, and a vanilla crème pastry with fresh fruit.

Passing this impromptu exam with flying colors, she was handed the keys to the 12 Crane Pastry Studio enterprise. The bakery also employs three chef's assistants.



Matt Reynolds photo
Head pastry chef Danielle
Brideau reaches for a loaf of
bread during the 12 Crane Pastry
Studio's opening Tuesday. (*click
for larger version*)

Each day, at about 4 a.m., Brideau will arrive at the bakery to start mixing the dough and firing up the ovens. Three hours later, when customers arrive, the shelves need to be stocked with breakfast pastries, including croissants and danishes.

The Pastry Studio also stocks an array of fresh breads, cookies, muffins, cupcakes, pies and other pastries. Just about every delicious morsel is made from scratch, Brideau said.

The coming months, she said, will hopefully witness an excursion into the world of wedding and other celebratory cakes, and the business may add another dimension by trying its hand at catering.

"We're starting small, but it's going to grow big, and basically the sky's the limit," Brideau said.

Situated on the banks of the Quinebaug River, the 12 Crane complex features a variety of opportunities for fine dining and entertainment.

An old-world Irish Pub, the Dark Horse Tavern, opened for business in September, coupled with the introduction of its more upscale companion, the Hop Vine Café. These eateries joined the Sevengaits art studio and gallery, which opened the summer before.

Once the renovation is complete, the building will also include a cigar shop, a brewery and the Cannery Hall, a live entertainment venue.

With so many cultural and culinary happenings merging together in one place, Brideau believes the 12 Crane complex offers a perfect recipe for the bakery's success.

"It brings in a lot of different varieties of people," she said.

Yesterday, the Pastry Studio's first day in business, customers helped themselves to free samples, as Brideau stressed herself out over making a good first impression.

"It's been slow," Brideau said of the foot traffic thus far, "but everyone who has come in has left with a smile."

The 12 Crane Pastry Studio is open seven days each week, from 7 a.m. through 6 p.m. Business hours may be extended on certain holidays or during evenings when the art gallery is hosting an exhibit.