

good living

Where there's a knead

A baker with a small but loyal following is about to get a bigger slice, writes **Helen Greenwood**.

On a Saturday morning, you'll find Brian Horgan selling bread from the verandah of his semi.

Just a couple of dozen loaves are on an old-fashioned porch, waiting for the locals who pad down the street in their trackie-daks and thongs. They rub the sleep from their eyes as they pile a walnut and raisin loaf or a white sourdough or some Tuscan panini on the morning's paper.

Horgan does his weekly loaf-off as a friendly gesture, not a money-earner. His open-air bread shop is a left-over from more than a year ago when he tried to lease a shop up the road to sell his wares.

Unable to do so, he hit on the idea of putting a hand-written sandwich board outside his house, inviting people into his front garden. The nearby shopkeepers gave him their blessing and the locals loved it.

At the time, the New Zealand-born Horgan was making bread in his kitchen, teetering between failure. "I nailed it quickly," he says, "but I didn't work out how to make a dramatic loaf periodically. A lot of disasters eventually I got it."

Horgan was helped by the form of former guru, Greg Brown.

He and Brown had met in 1999 when Horgan set up Bread Smart, which he still owns, distributing speciality breads in Sydney. They discussed going into a bakery, partnership for several years until Brown's ill-health made it impossible. So Horgan decided to go it alone.

A mate, Max Demir, who used to have the Great Turkish Bite in Rosebery, offered to lease Horgan space in his cavernous bakery that specialises in banana bread and muffins on a massive scale.

'When I think of good bread, I think of Italy...' Brian Horgan

Thanks to Demir's offer, Horgan stepped up his own, much smaller operation. He began selling his



Upper crust... (clockwise from left) baguettes; companion loaves; Brian Horgan at one of his stockists, Bitton Cafe; raisin loaf. Photo: Marco Del Grande

Grain Organic Bakery is still a boutique business, producing no more than 1500 loaves a week, using only organic produce as Horgan says. "We make it clear on the packaging that it's not certified, yet. We use organic seeds and grains from Grain Milling which is certified by the BSA. Getting our

paper bag by the end of the year. The be-ribboned bread is all sourdough. There are baguettes and loaves, from plain white through to soy and linseed, seven grains, olive, walnut and raisin, and barley and rye. The Tuscan panini are classic, paddle-shaped buns and there is a waiting list for

such as the barley and rye, are a lighter version of the genre.

"When I think of good bread, I think of Italy," Horgan says. "I've been surrounded by Italians all my working career and I cook mostly Italian food at home. I think of Italian bread as food-friendly."

Available at: Bitton Cafe, Alexandria; David Jones, city and Bondi Junction; The Norton Street Grocer; De'Lish, Lindfield; Gourmet Grocer, Balmain and Strawberry Thief, Bowral. Contact: Unit 46, 566 Gardeners Road, Alexandria, 0416 062 765.

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