



Deborah Morelli, operations manager of Great Buns Bakery in Las Vegas, N.V., was in construction management for almost 20 years. That line of work provided her with the knowledge to effectively manage costs, labor productivity and to move an organization in the right direction for continued growth and success. Working as a manager for the majority of those years gave her the ability to manage, lead and take the Great Buns team in a new direction.

Morelli grew up as a cook and baker, and she has joined her family to help grow the family business and keep Great Buns Bakery going for many generations to come.

Q: The company moved to East Tropicana in 1988 and overcame a devastating fire in 2007. Can you talk about the thought process behind moving to Las Vegas and how the company overcame that fire?

A: After selling our McDonald's Bakery located in Buffalo, N.Y. in 1974, my Great Uncle Augie Madonia came to visit Las Vegas often and fell in love with the people and the city. After a few years, Tony Sr. moved to Las Vegas to help his father, Uncle Augie, start the family business here opening in 1982. We quickly outgrew our West Charleston Boulevard location allowing us to expand and find the perfect location on East Tropicana in 1988.

After our fire in 2007, we had to make a decision—do we re-build or do we retire? We had a blank sheet of paper to begin our new journey and after rallying together, we decided to rebuild a more purposeful and higher functioning bakery. With our product lines flowing in an efficient systematic route and more manageable work environment, it was a great decision.

Q: How many square feet is the current bakery, and can you talk about what makes your bread so "Great?"

A: Great Buns Bakery is more than 25,000 square feet of commercial bakery, offices and retail store. We sell to a majority of the hotels and casinos, on and off the strip, as well as Las Vegas' local restaurants, nationally recognized restaurant chains, pubs, pizza places and submarine shops.

Great Buns Bakery has a unique product line that continues to grow with our customers' wants and needs, offering the most diversified product line in the Las Vegas Valley from soft rolls and restaurant breads to hard core artisan products.

We have many breads, rolls and pastries that our wholesale and retail customers only come to our bakery for, and that truly makes us proud and humbles us at the same time.



Q: The honey cornbread muffins are a highlight in the video for bakemag.com's series "Discovering America's Bakeries." What other products including honey do you make?

A: Currently all of our corn products, some breads, sandwich and dinner rolls are made with honey and we are always working on new recipes to be able to inject honey.

Q: What do you like about working with honey?

A: I truly enjoy the flavor that honey provides. It is an all-natural sweetener that with the right amount added, provides a taste like none other.

The other amazing thing about honey is that it is a mold inhibitor. This allows products to have great flavor without the added preservatives that some bakeries may use to increase the shelf life of their products.

Q: Any future plans for honey-infused products?

A: We are always looking at ways to use natural flavors within our products. As we are constantly working on new recipes, you can look for more honey-infused products in our line soon.

Q: If you could choose any product in your facility to take home with you to share with your family, what would it be?

A: Do I have to pick only one? Our sourdough bread is produced from our 30-year-old mother dough and is simply amazing. You will find a two-lb. loaf on my kitchen counter every day of the week. Of course, that is right next to our everything bagels that my family simply says they “can’t live without” and our black and white cookies that should be “another food group,” my 14-year-old son says.