



COMPANY HISTORY

Grand Central Bakery has been satisfying Northwest food lovers since 1989. *The secret in their recipe for success?* An unstinting commitment to deliciousness in every loaf of artisan bread, each hand-made pastry and all of the soups, salads and made-to-order sandwiches. From cozy bakery cafes and friendly bakers to the artisan bread on which the company built its reputation, Grand Central has been cooking up delicious dining experiences for more than 35 years.

A Bread Revolution: The Grand Central Story

Like everything at Grand Central Bakery, this business was built from scratch. In 1972, Gwenth Bassetti opened a soup and sandwich shop in Seattle's Grand Central Building with two close friends. Dubbed The Bakery, it was the 70's personified, featuring soups and sandwiches of imported European meats and cheeses between slices of the same homemade, whole-grain bread Gwen baked weekly for her family. The café exemplified the era's love of hearty, homemade foods and quickly became a Seattle landmark.

After a hiatus in Eastern Washington raising kids, shallots and sheep, Bassetti returned to Seattle in June 1989 to re-join The Bakery. Inspired by Carol Field's seminal baking book, *The Italian Baker*, and the memory of rustic loaves she'd eaten in Europe, Gwen had a hunch that Seattle was ready for good bread. She imported an Italian bread oven, hired Leslie Mackie (who went on to found Macrina Bakery and Cafe) as head-baker and rechristened the business Grand Central Bakery. It wasn't long before they were turning out Seattle's first crusty, hand-formed loaves, fifty at a time. In November of the first year, The Seattle Times headlined an article, "Run, Don't Loaf, to the Grand Central Bakery!" Popular food editor John Hinterberger praised Grand Central's Italian-style Como loaf and lines formed the very next day. Gwen was even forced to create "Bread Ration" cards for her beloved loaves!

Knowing that Portlanders shared the same insatiable appetite for good bread, Gwen sent her son, Ben Davis, down to Portland where he re-modeled an old nursery building in Portland's Hawthorne District to open the city's first Grand Central Bakery location in 1993. Later joined by Gwen's daughter, Piper Davis, who inspired the team to offer a wider variety of scratch pastries, fresh sandwiches and hand-made soups, Grand Central now includes an assortment of neighborhood cafes in Seattle and Portland. Locally owned by Ben, his sister, Piper and close friends Bob Kerr, Claire Randall, Gillian Allen-White & Gabrielle Moorhead, Grand Central continues to capture the hearts - and appetites - of Northwest food lovers.

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