

MEET THE MAKER

Locally born and Bred

FOR this month's chapter of Meet The Maker, Southerly Magazine spoke to Bred Co's Sam Dawson and Rhiannon Moon.

Southerly Magazine: How did you come by the name Bred Co?

Sam Dawson: It was hard. There were weeks of discussion.

SM: Who won?

SD: Our graphic designer. He gave us a list of things he came up with. They were all really good.

SM: Sam, what is your background in baking?

SD: I'm a chef. I've been doing that since I was 14. I started at Rustlers years ago. Then I travelled around Australia a bit. I met Rhi in Perth and we came down here and had a baby boy, Henry. But as far as baking goes, we just taught ourselves how to do it. Being a chef helps with scaling things up. Most of what we learned was from books by guys like Ken Forkish, Chad Robertson from Tartine Bakery in San Francisco and Trevor Wilson.

SM: Rhiannon, what about you?

Rhiannon Moon: I've always been in hospitality, more front-of-house. We met in a kitchen when I had started an apprenticeship. I do functions down at the Albany Entertainment Centre as well.

SM: What was the catalyst for even considering this venture?

RM: It was cold in Albany when we moved down here and we just started baking bread at home. There was always too much, so we gave it to friends. They said we should sell it.

SM: I assume it wasn't basic bread machine-type bread.

RM: It was basic wholemeal sourdough. We made our own starter. It was just something new and different to do at home. Then we wondered if we could do it commercially and get it to the markets.

SD: Rhi was the driving force behind the enterprise side of it.

SM: When did this all start happening?

RM: We were both working at Lime 303. I was out front and Sam was in the kitchen. I approached them to see if we could bake one night a week there on Friday nights for the Farmers Markets on Saturday.

SM: How long did you stick with the one night, one day plan?

RM: About 8 months. And then we were getting busier and a few outlets and restaurants started wanting wholesale stuff. We could see some potential.

SD: And that's because there's no other bread like this in Albany. There's a couple of bakeries in Perth doing proper "wild" sourdough well.

SM: How did you start the full-time commercial bakery?

RM: We bought an oven down here and had it in storage for a while. Then we put our names down for a spot here at the Business Centre. Then a space came up and everything fell into place.

SM: How long have you been here at the Business Centre?

RM: We've been here since October 2017. We opened a shopfront here a year ago but we've just stopped that to concentrate on wholesale.

SD: We had been saying no to a lot of wholesale customers because we didn't want to compete with ourselves. So now our bread can be found at places like the Markets, AVEG, Nourish Organics, Denmark Health Shop and the Grocery Store in Mt Barker.

SM: So, very early in the piece you decided it had to be bread with a difference?

SD: Yes, it had to be bread we wanted



■ Sam Dawson and Rhiannon Moon are the faces behind the flourishing local enterprise, Bred Co.

to eat – high hydration, cooked dark, not too sour. It should be called naturally leavened bread. If you mix by hand, you have to do high hydration doughs – wet and slack – because you have to build structure in the dough by folding it and basically creating a network of gluten. If it's a low hydration dough, you have to knead it for a long

time. You can't make 50 loaves of bread by hand. It's really tough. That said, we used to do croissants and baguettes by hand, and they're a lot lower in hydration.

SM: How many different products do you make?

RM: We have about 12 different



types of bread and about 15 different pastries.

SM: How many loaves per week are you up to?

RM: About 700, and then the pastries as well.

SM: What's the grand plan for the

future now that you are wholesale-only?

SD: We don't want to make the most bread in town, just the best bread.

RM: We will eventually have to move out of here to another unit because this facility is a business incubator.

SM: Does the "menu" change?

SD: Every week we do a special bread or two. We play around with some different adjuncts. This week we're doing a pine-smoked, sprouted wheat bread. We're getting local wheat, sprouting it and smoking it with pine needles. It's not as complex as it sounds. It's fun for us.

RM: It was inspired by a Christmas tree.

SM: Is there a flagship product?

RM: We get our wheat from Kondinin and mill it ourselves for our wholemeal. That was our starter, and I always come back to that.

SM: Baking seems to have a lot of similarities to brewing when it comes to the experimental side.

SD: We do one for Liberté which has amazake in it, which is a sweet fermented porridge and like a precursor to sake. We put that into a baguette for them with some black sesame.

SM: Explain to me what a "mother" is.

RM: A mother is the starter, or levain, that we use every week. We add that to everything. Our mother is 28 years old this year.

SD: Everywhere in the world there are lots of different bacteria and yeast. You have to create the right environment for the right bacteria in the yeast. That is basically what a mother is. Just flour and water and everything else you need is present on your hands, on the flour and in the air. In the right environment it will grow and multiply and be too acidic for anything dangerous to live in there. Every day you feed it so it still has the food to grow.

RM: We were kindly gifted ours. Part of it has been all around the world. When we were gifted it, we used it hoping that we would be able to keep using our own, but it is a really good mother and makes really good bread. We were very lucky to be given it. It came from a concert cellist who often visits Albany. He bought our bread and got talking to me and then brought the mother back.

SM: How long did it take to know you were onto something good?

RM: The first bake.

SD: I didn't tell Rhi. I just snuck it in.

RM: You could tell straight away. We've got another person who buys our bread every week and is very critical - complimentary but critical - and he asked what was different about the bread. He said it was the best bread we'd ever made.

SM: How much of your bread do you eat?

SD: A lot. I usually take the special bread home, just to know what it's like so we can tell people about it. Otherwise, the wholemeal. **S**



■ Bred Co's all-important 28-year-old "mother" (above) forms the basis of all of the company's range of products.

