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April 7th, 2011  
**Pains et Saveurs**

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**Missing the old bag**

Melora Koepke

*In the absence of "trashy" traditional French baguettes, St-Bruno's Pains et Saveurs comes to the rescue*

Though Montreal's a great place for cheese and meat, what good is it if there's no bread to spread them on? Unlike many people who've been thrilled with the "artisanal"-style baguettes from Mamie Clafoutis, I've been hankering for a regular, French, white baguette - like the one you can get at the corner bakery in Paris, piping hot and so fresh that you can bend it in half without breakage (and as they're now considered a "trashy" food, they're not that easy to come by in Paris anymore, either).

There are particular qualities to look for in a baguette like this: the crumb, the crunch when you crush it, the dough that you can roll into a chewy, moist ball. The one at Patisserie de Gascogne used to be good, but it's gone downhill. The best one I've found lately is the one at Au Pain Doré, because it's simple, and when you get it fresh, the crunch almost - and I mean almost - replicates a French baguette. I got word that Pains et Saveurs, a bakery in St-Bruno, has taken on the task of consulting with French bakers to improve their stock the old-fashioned way, and a deliveryman showed up with a basket of treats including a selection of pastries, sandwiches (they also have a prêt-à-manger section) and, most importantly, a maple sugar pie.



Pains et Saveurs: St-Bruno's bread blessings

photo: Melora Koepke

It was the pie that got our attention: simple crème beurre salé with maple, it sat on a shortbread crust adorned with fat walnuts. Not overly sweet and with little added sugar, it showcased the maple perfectly. It was simply the best maple dessert I've ever tasted, in a town full of 'em.

But where was the bread? My curiosity had the best of me. To get to the source, it was clearly worth a trip to St-Bruno. And possibly I had it in my head that I'd return with another maple pie.

As it turned out, Pains et Saveurs was barely a 10-minute drive off the island. Formerly known as L'Autre Pain, it has been St-Bruno's neighbourhood bakery for 15 years. Owner/head baker Frank Barberio enlisted a MOF (meilleur ouvrier de France) to spend a week in the bakery consulting on his process. Barberio's communion with the baker resulted in certain changes. Now, all the butter for the croissants and pastries is high-butterfat butter straight from Belgium, and comes in sheets (a freezerful of sheets of butter, that's a hell of a thing to see). The result is a croissant and a chocolate with a crust that approximates the best French pastry.

Interestingly, the French bakers worked with the locals to develop recipes that showcased local flour from Moulin des Soulanges, with whom Barberio had been working for years to develop a wheat grind that would be suitable for his breads.

Barberio showed me around his bakery, and although they aren't the only bakery to use local grain - Première Moisson does too - Barberio makes two baguettes, one with regular Robin Hood flour, and another with local flour, which is more expensive and higher in protein. The result? The best in town, slightly outside of town.

**Pains et Saveurs**

2130 De Boucherville Blvd., St-Bruno-de-Montarville

(450) 441-4155

Maple pie: \$14.95

[www.painsetsaveurs.ca](http://www.painsetsaveurs.ca)

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