



Fresh from the oven:
bread from master baker
Klaus Oberprantacher's
bakery in Seis.

—INTERVIEW

That's what good bread's made of

Oberprantacher Bakery, Seis.

Klaus Oberprantacher's bakery makes bread and baked goods for local residents and hotels alike. The expert baker explains why a local product requires far more than good ingredients alone – and what could spell the end of his craft.


From our farms.
For our tables.



Klaus Oberprantacher's bakery supplies locals and hotels in Seis. For his *Hoamatleabele* loaf, he uses only local grain, which he mills himself into whole-meal flour, as well as raw milk butter from a nearby farm.



Nowadays, bread is often a given at the table, a food we don't pay much attention to, but in the past it was often a meal in itself. Has its significance changed?

To some degree, yes. For many consumers, bread has become a staple, something only suitable for cleaning the plate. There's actually far more to it than most people realise. A well-made sourdough loaf keeps your gut flora in good shape, which in turn affects hormones, the thyroid, and the brain. I'm trying to pass this knowledge on, with baking classes, for example. It's important to me to convey what it means to make bread, and the effort that goes into it. Once you've understood that, you might look at what's on the table in a different light.

With the *Hoamatleabele*, you've aimed to turn this idea into a tangible product: lo-

cally grown grain, your own mill, and raw milk butter from the local area.

Yes, exactly. It was clear to me right from the start; if I was already using local grain, that would be the only one I'd use. I don't mix it with ordinary flour; it's far too valuable for that. I grind the grain I get from a farmer in Kastelruth into wholemeal flour using my mill. After all, wholemeal flour contains the highest amount of the grain. And then there's raw milk butter from a local farm. Both come at a cost, and that's reflected in the final product.

What makes it so difficult to sell a product such as the *Hoamatleabele*?

For one thing, there is a story behind the product, which also justifies the price. Simply put, there's often not enough time in the shop to be able to tell these stories. That's



one of the difficulties. The name “*Hoamatleabele*” is purposefully a local dialect term, but not even all German speakers understand on first glance what that actually means – “small, local loaf”. And then there’s the issue of the labels – anyone wanting to eat healthily while on holiday will look out right away for organic labels. However, I can’t offer organically certified bread as I would have to convert the entire business to do so, meaning I would then no longer be able to supply the hospitality industry at a competitive price. Another important point is that you have to enjoy eating wholemeal bread like the *Hoamatleabele*. It has a bite, a strong flavour, it’s hearty, and that’s not to everyone’s taste.

Your bakery is located on the edge of the village, while your shop is in the centre of Seis. But the prime location and the fact that Seis is a popular holiday resort do not necessarily make things any easier for the *Hoamatleabele*. Why is that the case?

As a baker, you need plenty of footfall. And only some of the people who pass by are willing to try a wholesome diet and do without other things in order to be able to afford high-quality food such as *Hoamatleabele*. With our bakery, we’re also bridging two worlds: when the weather’s bad, visitors head down to the towns in the valley, but when the weather’s fine, they’re up on the Seiser

Alm plateau. For that reason alone, we never manage to attract the high volume of walk-in customers we need to make a local premium bakery viable.

You’ve been supplying the hospitality industry for a long time. Despite this, the *Hoamatleabele* never really caught on there. Why is that?

In the hospitality industry too, price is one of the main criteria when a purchase is made. Many people still buy their breakfast bread from local bakeries – that’s all going fine.

—It’s important to me to get across what it means to make bread, and the effort that goes into it.

But for dinner and three-course meals, people are increasingly turning to anonymous, cheap and readily available ready-to-bake products, where the actual place of production is generally impossible to trace. These frozen goods are often transported over very long distances which means they need to contain various stabilisers and preservatives. I’ve adapted to the market here as well, and to catering concepts from the hotel industry,

and I also offer my mini pastries, produced in Seis, as ready-to-bake products. Using high-quality ingredients and with very short – and therefore sustainable – transport routes. One challenge will be to keep on developing and marketing the *Hoamatleabele* in a smaller format and as a bake-off version.

Neither the challenges with the *Hoamatleabele* nor the rise of frozen foods have dampened your enthusiasm for baking.

What is it that drives you?

I enjoy my work more than ever before. And if things carry on as they always have been, that's alright too. However, I don't know where things are heading – geopolitically or economically. When supply chains are disrupted and businesses become aware that local producers with short supply chains can produce more sustainably, this could present an opportunity. I'm thinking of the various sustainability certificates that some hotels and hospitality businesses are striving to achieve. Operating sustainably also means relying on local producers and small-scale economic cycles. I'm not sure whether calls for this will be heeded. What I do know is that I'm making the *Hoamatleabele* out of a sense of idealism. The same's true of the baking classes – they're going down well, I enjoy doing them, and I feel that I'm passing on something that goes beyond just bread. *Hoamatleabele* Our local loaf is also a major part of that.

What you can learn from Oberprantacher Bakery

Visibility counts. If you serve high-quality local bread, make sure to highlight it – not tucked away on the last page of the menu, but where guests can see it and really notice it.

Expertise creates value. Anyone who understands how much work and quality goes into a loaf of bread is more likely to both appreciate it and to pay a fair price for it.

Always consider regionality. Local ingredients alone are not enough – it is only through processing, presentation and communication that a cohesive end product is created.



Behind each of these portraits is the **alma** network. The food that ends up on plates in the Seiser Alm region of the Dolomites doesn't happen by chance - it's the result of a close collaboration between farmers and restaurateurs. They discuss quantities, adjust logistics, and decide together what can be grown and how it makes its way from the farm to the table. This creates a local economic cycle in which supply and demand come together - underpinned by trust and reliability.

alma is neither a label nor a campaign, but a network that makes this collaboration visible: specific and closely tied to the daily lives of the people who work and do business here.

—seiseralm.it/alma