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A taste of Paris in Boise

Baker from Israel brings authentic European pastries to the Treasure Valley Moshit Mizrachi-Gabbitas of Boise gave up a career in the semiconductor industry to start a bakery.

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Almost everything about Moshit Mizrachi-Gabbitas is exotic - her name, her accent, and especially her pastries.

Their ingredients come from as far away as Belgium. Their colors and textures entice. Their flavors

Sorry, you'll have to experience those for yourself.

"Once you try them, you can't go back," she said. "They're just different.

"I was shocked when I moved here. There weren't any bakeries like I was used to. I want to change that. I want to bring a little bit of Paris to Boise."

That she would be in Boise at all, let alone running an artisan boutique bakery, defies the odds. Mizrachi-Gabbitas, 37, grew up in Israel. Her first name, pronounced Mo-SHEET, is the feminine of Moses. She was supposed to have been an English teacher.

"My degree is in English linguistics and education, but I didn't really want to be a teacher," she said. "I always knew I'd do something else."

Something else temporarily turned out to be semiconductors and a job working in Israel for Boise-based SCP Global Technologies. The company also employed her future husband, who lived here and occasionally traveled to Israel. When they got married, Boise became home.

Their wedding day was fateful in more ways than one. In Israel her love of baking had taken her to one of her country's top culinary schools, where her teacher was an honors graduate of the famous Le Cordon Bleu Paris. Mizrachi-Gabbitas hired a caterer for her wedding but made the pastries herself. The caterer was so impressed he offered to sell them if she ever opened a bakery.

The result: Janjou Patisserie, named for her late mother.

The caterer, Porterhouse Market owner Dave Faulk, was "wowed when I saw what she made for her wedding. I was glad she was doing her own because she obviously knew what she was doing. After seeing what she could do, I'd have been embarrassed to bring something."

Faulk has stocked Janjou confections in his store at 600 S. Rivershore Lane in Eagle for about a year. They're also sold at the Boise Co-op, 888 W. Fort St., Boise.

"They're all hand-made and different than you can get anywhere else around here," Faulk said. "She puts

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Baker Moshit Mizrachi-Gabbitas adds cocoa to a recipe for chocolate cake she was experimenting with in her home kitchen in January. Mizrachi-Gabbitas gave up a career in the semiconductor industry in Israel to move here with her husband, who is from Boise, and start a boutique bakery. When Mizrachi-Gabbitas bakes items to sell, she does so in a commercial kitchen.

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a lot of love and finesse into them as well as great ingredients. We get in trouble with some of our customers if we run out of them."

Mizrachi-Gabbitas uses real butter, almond flour or paste, pure vanilla extract or vanilla beans, and no preservatives or artificial flavors. Her cakes and tarts vary with the seasons because she uses only fresh fruits.

She hopes to have a storefront shop and sell directly to the public when the economy improves. But for now, it's a one-woman bakery operated out of a commercial kitchen.

"What I'm selling now is about 10 percent of what I'd like to do. For example, I'm only on the shelf at the co-op and not in the display case, so all I have there are cookies and breads. I'd like to do more; it's just the economy."

She's easily capable of doing more - as in cakes, coffee cakes, cheese cakes, pies, tarts (strawberry, mixed berry, lemon cream, pear or passion fruit), chocolates, quiches, mousses, petits four

"Baking is a kind of therapy for me," she said. "I love the accuracy of it - the times, temperatures and quantities, the precision of it. It's science."

And esthetics.

"When it opens, I want my bakery to partly be a cafe," she said. "Not as much food as, say, Le Cafe de Paris, but some soups, some wine and mostly baked goods. I think Boise's ready. People are opening their eyes to different things.

"Imagine a display case filled with surprising colors and textures that will drive you crazy and you won't know what to choose. And when you cut inside the pastries, it will be another surprise. Things you don't see here now."

You can order some of them, however, at www.janjou.com.

The woman responsible is as surprised as anyone that her patisserie found a home in Idaho.

"Sometimes life leads you places you never thought it would."

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