

# Bringing the family business into the 21st century

The aroma of baking pepperoni bread and freshly made tomato pie are unmistakable as you enter the door to Marchiano's Bakery.

On some days, the entire Marchiano family is scuttling busily behind the counter, answering phones, preparing orders and helping customers. Most of the time, however, it's just Daneen, who was only 21 years old when she took over her father's bakery in Manayunk.

"I thought I was helping him for a few months," said Daneen, who was in college in Florida at the time. "The plan was to help him for the summer, but I ended up staying."

Although Daneen's plan wasn't always to run the family business, her father's heart attack in 2003 compelled her to take the reins of the business he built out of his mother's basement in her small row home in Manayunk.

Now 26 and a University College student at Saint Joseph's, Daneen both runs Marchiano's Bakery full-time and takes a full course load as a food marketing major. "I'm burning the candle at both ends, but I'm a good student," she confirmed.

For two years she ran the business with little or no help from anyone, as her parents permanently relocated to Florida but commute back and forth to Philadelphia regularly.

"It's been an uphill battle," Daneen admitted. "I was thrown into the mix head first."

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When Daneen realized she would be running the business long-term, she decided to head back to school and finish her degree. Her father suggested she attend Saint Joseph's for food marketing so she could eventually further the bakery's interests. "My dad told me that he knew the business had a lot of potential," recalled Daneen. "He said it



*Daneen and Frank Marchiano*

was about time he started to hand the business over to me little by little."

He was right. Though she had minimal prior experience in business management, Daneen's hard work has expanded Marchiano's Bakery to the point where it is literally outgrowing its walls. In fact, the bakery was so bombarded this past holiday season that they had to stop taking orders on Dec. 15.

The entire operation is based out of a three-story row home on Umbria Street. Baking takes place on all three levels, but with the business's rapid growth, there is not enough room to accommodate all of its orders.

To solve this problem, Daneen and her father plan to look for an off-site manufacturing facility to bake the inventory while still maintaining the storefront shop in Manayunk.

"Ideally, I would like to have all of the baking done in an off-site facility, so

that we can produce our products in much greater quantities," she said.

Daneen won't take all of the credit for the success of the business. "My father grew his bakery by creating personal relationships with his clients," Daneen said. "He orients himself around customer service. This is what keeps people coming back year after year."

While Daneen thinks the service is what makes Marchiano's so popular, the critics agree that the food is top-notch, as well. Its tomato pie won *Philadelphia Magazine's* Best of Philly™ 2006 and *Main Line Today Magazine's* "Best of Main Line Critics Choice 2007" awards.

Yet despite Marchiano's accolades and rapid growth, several aspects of its operations are dated and need an upgrade. Currently, the bakery only accepts cash and all of the bookwork and ordering is done by hand. Revenue is based mostly on repeat business, and they

*(continued on page 10)*

## Family Business, continued from page 8

rely on word-of-mouth as the primary source of advertising.

“It was a big deal when my dad let us get a computer in the office a few years ago,” Daneen joked. “Even then, it didn’t have the Internet or Microsoft Word.”

“My father has done a wonderful job building the business with my mom, but it’s still an old-world bakery,” she explained. “We need to make some changes.”

Daneen, who will graduate this spring, is taking what she has learned in the classroom and applying it directly to her family business in order to bring it up-to-date in a technology-based world.

Through Daneen’s food marketing classes, she has learned how to update the business and ensure success. In her Consumer Behavior class, instructed by Nancy Childs, Ph.D., professor of food marketing, Daneen audited the bakery to see what practices could be improved.

“It was interesting because I’ve never sat on the other side of the counter and watched my customers,” she explained. “It helped me become more aware of what the bakery needs.”

On her to-do list are tasks such as creating an e-mail list and customer database, recording customer demographics and branding a slogan for the bakery to increase recognition.

Local radio stations such as WIP Sports Radio often order food in exchange for free airtime, so Daneen plans to use this to her advantage. “I’m working on a consistent message that people recognize and associate with our bakery to deliver on the radio or TV,” she said.

What is Daneen’s goal by graduation? “I am reviewing our current business strategies and hoping to present new, more effective solutions to my father so that we have something to work from,” she said. “I have learned so much through my economics class about supply and demand, and I think our business has the potential to be operating above the curve.”

With the independent study Daneen is taking this spring under the guidance of Richard George, Ph.D., professor of food marketing, she hopes her plan will come to fruition. The class will allow her to devote time specifically



*Daneen behind the bakery counter stocked with Marchianos top-selling stromboli.*

toward reviewing and updating her business strategies.

“My dad wants to further the business, but I just don’t think he can do it himself because he’s too emotional about it,” said Daneen. “So that’s where I come into the picture.”