

Backhaus Hehl, Müschenbach, Germany

In the restaurant industry open kitchens are well-known. In the baking trade too, 'open baking' is becoming increasingly popular. "We want to bring the craft of baking closer to the customer," explains Martin Hehl. In his Café Back, baking is done right before the eyes of the customers. The open baking concept takes down the wall between the customer and production. "We include the customer in what we do," says the master baker from Müschenbach, in Westerwald, Germany.

The newest outlet has just been opened only a few kilometres from the main company building, in Altenkirchen. "The location is outstanding for a restaurant-style concept," Martin Hehl points out. The outlet is a large bakery-café with more than 140 seats. It includes a large area for baking, finishing and preparing sweet and savoury treats for guests in the café. The two ovens from MIWE are certainly a main attraction. A Wenz 1919 with two oven chambers, as well as a MIWE condo in black with four oven chambers form the focal point of the open kitchen area.

The location of the Café Back alone creates customer awareness, since it is directly in the centre of the town at the Bundesstraße. Generous use of glass creates transparency inside and outside. Special offers such as a breakfast buffet, offered daily for 9.95 EUR, spur revenues. On Sundays the buffet is expanded and offered for 12.95 EUR. In the afternoons there is coffee and tea and a cake buffet for 5.95 EUR.

Close to the customers

Product replenishment is also done directly in view of the customers. Preparation tables and even a large slicing machine for ham and cold meats are also integrated into the café concept, just like the two baking ovens from MIWE. The Hehl family made a very conscious decision to use deck ovens. "The baking result is simply different than with convection ovens," explains Martin Hehl. For rolls, for example, the baking surface is simply better. Deck ovens have been used mainly in all outlets since 2002, since the Hehl family has decided that the craft side of baking can be better transmitted to customers with them. →



View of the "Show baking room".



Putting dough pieces for rolls on the loading device.



Putting rolls in the MIWE condo.

Oven equipment:

MIWE condo 4.0608, proofing cabinet with 5 tray supports
Wenz 1919 with two 60 x 80 cm oven chambers

The two ovens are in top form in the Café Back. The MIWE condo and the Wenz 1919 together with a back wall made of brick form the 'stage' for the open baking concept. Or perhaps we should say "show baking" instead! No matter how it is expressed, it is very popular with customers. Customers in the shop area or guests in the café are always taking a look at the oven area. "Here they can directly experience the craftsmanship that goes into our baked products," says outlet manager Melanie Griesinger.

However, this is more than just show, the bakery also produces baked products of the highest quality. A wide range of products are baked here, from buns and bread to pizza and quiche. "We want to offer handcrafted freshness and quality," sums up Martin Hehl.

This, however, also requires suitable oven equipment. Visually the ovens certainly fit. Both ovens are integrated into a wall made of white bricks. Over each of the ovens protrude two large copper fume hoods. Between the ovens there is a half-circle shaped niche, in which bread, cake and various baking utensils have been lovingly decorated and put on display.

An attention-getter in black

Above all, all eyes are drawn to the two ovens in black. The Wenz 1919 is an oven that will fulfil any customer's imagi-

nation of a good, traditional baking oven. Professionals will recognize the original oven face of an old German wood-fired baking oven. Cast-iron doors which include the old-fashioned pulley mechanism are a real visual attraction. By the way, the mechanism is fully operable and allows the oven door to be easily opened and closed.

Behind the nostalgic facade however, the most modern equipment is hidden. The Wenz 1919 uses the proven technology of the MIWE condo, in use in thousands of bakeries. This however cannot be seen. The rustic oven facade including a woodbox in the lower area certainly makes you think differently. Even the operator panel with MIWE FP8 fixed program control is hidden from the customer's sight. With its long cable it can be located in a place that doesn't disturb the look of the oven. At the Hehl bakery it has been installed on the oven side that is not directly in view of the customers.

By taking a look at the operator panel however, it is easy to draw conclusions about the technical details of the Wenz 1919. Both baking chambers in the rustic oven, which by the way is available with up to three chambers, can be controlled individually. Upper and lower heat can also be set separately. Each chamber has thick walls and is insulated for energy-savings, which also prevent unwanted heat transmission into the other baking chambers.

Baker Cornelia Müller is responsible for baking in the view of customers. She does so with a passion and has found her dream job. "It's really good fun," she says, and is very

happy about her working conditions and the direct contact with customers. "They ask us questions sometimes, or give us compliments when it was especially delicious."

Real baking, always

Müller is at the shop at five in the morning every day. Over 90 per cent of the rolls for this location are baked in-store. The second oven is used for this primarily. The MIWE condo has four 60 x 80 cm baking chambers. Trays are rarely used in this oven, however. "We bake directly on the oven surface, because it's better that way," Cornelia Müller says, confirming what her boss said.

The first batches of dough pieces are delivered in the morning already proofed, so that the first rolls of the day can be made as quickly as possible. All others are proofed in the outlet itself. For this Cornelia Müller uses the proofing cabinet with capacity for five trays underneath the condo. 30 rolls each are then placed on a loading device and put into the baking chamber of the condo.

"Operating the baking oven is simple," says Cornelia Müller, showing her experience with it. Baking programs are saved in the program control system. Up to 30 programs can be saved. The most important eight programs can be selected directly and each of the programs can be divided in up to five baking phases. Customers can also see products as they are being baked. The oven doors, made of a special safety glass, create transparency; while powerful halogen lamps supply the right lighting in the baking chamber.

In addition to rolls, Cornelia Müller bakes primarily croissants in the MIWE condo – but on trays, of course. With its separately controllable upper and lower heat, the oven can be exactly adjusted to the requirements of particular baked products. Cornelia Müller: "the oven bakes evenly everywhere. Steam is available quickly and in sufficient quantities."

The best oven technology

The first is made possible by high-performance heating with electric heating elements made of stainless steel. These are mounted in the sidewalls sealed off from steam, and directly in the baking chamber. The steam device is powered independently with its own heating. This ensures that there is no decrease in heating in the baking chamber when steam is necessary.

With all MIWE condo and Wenz 1919 ovens, baking is done on a stone surface – for top quality. This means, according to the DLG (German Agricultural Society), that bread made in these ovens can be sold as stone oven bread – which the Hehl bakery makes use of for baking in the Wenz 1919. "This is our bread oven," Müller points out. Bread is delivered to Café Back half-baked, or also as cooled dough pieces in proofing baskets.

They go a further step backward for plaited loaves or cookies. For these products only the dough is delivered from the bakehouse. Cornelia Müller weighs the strands for plaited wheat loaves and bakes them. Cookie dough is also prepared directly in view of the customers. "This way, there is movement in front of and at the oven the entire day," says outlet manager Griesinger, explaining the advantage. "The perceived and the actual freshness of the product contributes as well."

This is an argument that is especially relevant for warm snacks and meals. The Wenz 1919 is put to use here too. At lunch time, pizzas and casseroles are pushed again and again into both baking chambers of the Wenz 1919. "Pizza only takes a few minutes," Müller explains. "If the customers want to, they can watch while we put toppings on a pizza and bake it."

In addition to a series of standard products, in the snack area there is also a product of the month. The Meisterbrezel is such a snack, for example: a pretzel with cabbage salad, cheese and dried meat, baked in the Wenz 1919. →



Baking bread in the Wenz 1919.



Bread in the Wenz 1919.



Toppings are put on snacks in view of the customers.

A good example of how tradition and innovation can be combined together – with the Meisterbrezel just as with the baking ovens from MIWE.

A brief overview of: Backhaus Hehl GmbH

Owner: Martin Hehl
Hauptstraße 1
57629 Müschenbach

Branch outlets: 11

Employees

Production: 25, of whom 3 are apprentices

Sales: 75, of whom 12 are apprentices

Shipping department/logistics: 5

Administration: 5

Sample prices:

Rolls 0.29 EUR

Rye-and-wheat bread 1.000 g 2.80 EUR

Special breads 750 g 2.70 - 3.10 EUR

Danish-style pastries 1.20 EUR