

Bakery Wellmann, Osnabrück, Germany

“Excellent hard rolls are why customers choose us”, says Natalie Külkens, getting straight to the point. Over the past 25 years, she and her husband Johannes have turned Bakery Wellmann into one of the Osnabrück region’s top businesses with 27 branch outlets. Without a doubt, product quality is the key reason for this successful growth. MIWE is proud to play a part in their success by providing cutting-edge in-store baking ovens.

In-store baking ovens are just what Wellmann needs, since the company specialises in hard rolls. The current owner is just as devoted to tradition and innovation as his grandfather, the original Wellmann who spawned the company’s philosophy of premium quality and customer satisfaction. The bakery has been selling fresh hard rolls and keeping Sunday hours since the 1930s.

In today’s world, bakeries are expected to be open on Sundays and freshness is defined completely differently. “We bake about 90 percent of our hard rolls in our branch outlets”, says Natalie Külkens. She is in charge of sales, while her husband mainly takes care of production and

development of new locations. As a master pastry chef, she knows what she’s talking about, especially since she has many years of experience working behind the counter.

The current retail sales team does much more than just help customers and sell products. Their job also involves preparing snacks and small meals and baking products in the in-store baking ovens. Wellmann uses MIWE aero e+ convection baking ovens, and for branches that sell a lot of snacks, the company uses “backcombis”, a combination of the MIWE aero and a MIWE condo deck baking oven. These combined ovens are mainly used for crispy-baked snack products.

Two MIWE aero e+ are now in use at a new branch in the town of Hagen outside Osnabrück. Bakery Wellmann already had an outlet in Hagen next to a grocery store. “But we wanted expand our coffee shop, so we chose a new location in the town”, says Natalie Külkens. Whereas the old location had just three bar tables, the new bakery and coffee shop is larger so guests can feel right at home. Natalie Külkens isn’t worried about the fact that there are two other bakeries nearby with branch outlets and even a coffee shop. “We’re standing up to the competition and →



Natalie Külkens (left) inspects the quality of hard rolls fresh out of the in-store baking oven.



Two baking stations are used to bake fresh products throughout the day. The smaller ovens are used when things slow down in the afternoon.



The bakery has ample workspace for prep work. The cooling cell is directly accessible from the baking area.

letting our customers decide.” The decision is a no-brainer for many customers: There’s hardly a break in the steady flow of customers during our visit. Many of these customers are also sitting down in the adjoining café.

The large menu here includes many breakfast options, an array of hot and cold snacks and even soups, not to mention all the different coffee drinks and beverage options. “We are still a bakery and pastry shop first and foremost”, says Natalie Kulkens, explaining her strategy for staying successful in this market. We can tell this just by looking at the bakery’s shelves, which are stocked with a huge selection of different bread.

The strategy of baking an array of premium products also applies to the company’s in-store baking. The two in-store baking ovens occupy a prominent position behind the counter. The interiors of the ovens are directly visible from one of the entrances to the bakery. A stylish vintage exhaust hood with the Wellman logo above the oven captures the company’s mix of traditional and modern style. It fits the store concept perfectly: Wood and old photos of the family business communicate tradition, while the gleaming stainless steel faces of the ovens and coffee machine communicate modern design.

The two MIWE aero e+ ovens are installed in one enclosure, a very clever and practical solution. The enclosure is covered with retro-looking tiles. A side door provides access to the area behind the oven. The in-store baking ovens can also be pulled out at any time. This looks tidy and is very practical in terms of the ovens’ heat emissions. It’s worth mentioning that the latest generation of the MIWE aero also

earned its energy efficiency label because the ovens are well insulated and emit minimal heat as a result.

Splits rolls are delivered to branch outlets in a cooled state. “For these products, we use a combined cooling system consisting of a refrigeration system with a deep freezer in the rear”, says Natalie Kulkens, explaining their technology. While the split rolls wait to go into the in-store baking oven, half-baked dough for baguettes, croissants and pretzel rolls is stored in the deep freezer behind the split rolls. The branch outlets are resupplied three times a day, including a fresh supply of rolls for cooling cells.

There is a proofing cabinet under each MIWE aero e+ for final proofing of baked goods. The first proofing cabinet has sixteen 60 x 40 cm trays or boards. The second one accommodates eight trays or boards. “We love to highlight the freshness of our products”, says Natalie Kulkens. A workbench is strategically positioned between the oven and the counter area so that customers can see exactly what the team is busy making. The e+ can be purchased with a door that opens inward or outward, depending on space requirements and work flows.

Everyone on the sales team is involved in baking. “It helps that the oven is very intuitive and easy to operate”, says Ms. Kulkens. She opted for the FP 12 Fixed Program Control. The twelve most important baking programs can be directly selected via pictograms. A total of 100 baking programs can be stored. Natalie Kulkens: “We simply transfer the programs from a USB thumb drive and adjust them on the oven, if necessary. And that’s all!”

The employee at the oven simply presses a button and the baking program starts instantly. The program can be subdivided into a maximum of five baking steps. The first phase usually involves applying steam. The amount of water can be freely selected, which ensures optimal results, even when the pressure fluctuates. The baking chamber features a built-in cascade steam device that generates powerful steam. The device can be easily removed through the front of the baking chamber for easy cleaning and maintenance.

The fan is not operational during the steam input phase. Later baking stages mainly involve controlling the temperature based on the particular product. Another important factor is fan speed, which can be varied to influence the final results. If the oven is not needed for a period of time, it can automatically drop to a predefined standby temperature and be instantly ready for baking when needed again.

One of the MIWE aero e+ ovens features two decks to allow for more flexibility and smaller batches. This oven consists of two stacked convection decks that can be individually controlled. "We turn off the big oven and use these ovens in the afternoon or when we want to bake smaller batches", says a sales team member, explaining their procedure.

"But we always leave the light on in the big oven so customers know we're just about to start baking again", she says, alluding to the company's emphasis on freshness. The team actually keeps baking right up until just before closing time. "We keep a constant supply of freshly baked split rolls", add Natalie Kùlkens, explaining her policy.

Wellmann also sells products that are less common for in-store bakeries. „For example, we bake muffins because they smell so good,“ says Ms. Kùlkens with a smile. Of course it would be more efficient to bake muffins in a production oven, and product quality might not even suffer very much as a result. But the reasons for this strategy become clear for anyone who experiences the heavenly smell of muffins baking at Wellman's. And taste-wise, their moist muffins are in a class of their own.

It's no surprise, given their commitment to quality. Another important factor in the baking industry is hygiene in and around baking ovens. Breadcrumbs and bits of pastry, which are the main culprits, collect in a crumb trap under the oven door. Also, the water drain in the baking chamber is large enough to prevent clogging with crumbs.

MIWE offers the cleaning control self-cleaning system for aero in-store baking ovens. "But they're also easy to clean by hand", says one of the employees. Here too, MIWE designers were on the ball as always. For example, tray supports are easy to remove from the proofing cabinet and the baking chamber. Furthermore, no mildew-prone silicone gaskets are used in the proofing cabinet. Natalie Kùlkens: "In-store baking is designed to whet peoples' appetites. That's exactly what we do here, thanks to perfect in-store baking systems!" →



The ovens feature an intuitive control system that is easy to operate.



Besides split rolls, the bakery carries a large selection of special rolls.



This Wellmann branch outlet looks modern and inviting, both inside and out.



The display case and shelves of bread show off the array of products that the experts in the bakehouse and behind the counter are capable of baking.

A brief overview of Karl Wellmann GmbH

Karl Wellmann GmbH
 Managing Directors: Johannes Kùlkens
 49076 Osnabrùck, Germany

Branch outlets: 27

Employees:

Production: 45, of which 7 are apprentices

Sales: 195, of which 18 are apprentices

Shipping department/logistics: 8

Administration: 5

Sample prices:

Hard roll 0.29 Euro

Mixed flour bread 750 g 2.80 Euro

Special breads 750 g 3.20 – 3.50 Euro

Seeded rolls 0.45 – 0.50 Euro