

Lovingly Artisan (Baker), Kendal, Cumbria: Entry form

Winners of Baker of the Year, North England Region and Retailer of the Year 2024.

<https://lovinglyartisan.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/lovinglyartisan/>

<https://www.instagram.com/lovinglyartisan/>



Entry form:

Please tell us what initiatives you have implemented over the last 12 months to develop and grow your store / business:

Lovingly Artisan invested a significant amount in a new state of the art wood pellet powered oven in August 2021. Their new Polin oven, installed by Brook Food Processing Equipment, has given the northwest based family-run bakery an increased 50% capacity for bread-making to meet ever increasing customer demand. Alongside meeting the demand for Loving Artisan's bread, we also wanted to look at reducing our overall environmental impact and examine how best to fuel a new oven to achieve a substantial reduction in energy usage.

After some pretty stringent testing Aidan and Dean decided to opt for a wood pellet burner fuelled steam tube oven, with four decks, giving the team a 10.6m² baking surface capacity to work with. The Polin steam tube style oven is a sophisticated piece of kit, it's fully controllable and produces a final product that is vastly different from that of a bread baked in a conventional electric or gas fired oven. Another added bonus is that a wood pellet oven is classified as 'zero emission' because the pellets being burnt are made from compressed sawdust, a by-product from forestry operations. Which means they only release the same amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by wood into the atmosphere that would be released during the normal decomposition cycle. Resulting in an impact on the environment equal to zero, unlike fossil fuels, which are currently used to produce most of the electricity used by conventional ovens.

In May 2023 Lovingly Artisan introduced the 'Bread Truck' which has made regular appearances at local farmers markets. The 'Bread Truck' was inspired by tales of Aidan Monks and his grandad delivering freshly bread together from a bread van, which trailed across the Lake District, from his grandad's bakery in Ambleside. As well as providing people with the opportunity to purchase freshly baked Lovingly Artisan breads and pastries, the 'Bread Truck' also doubles up as a mini-mobile shop, selling a range of carefully selected artisan made produce and handy kitchenalia, and it's also kitted out to serve up freshly brewed barista style coffees too.

Retailers are encouraged to add testimonials as part of their answer from staff to support their entry:

Dean Fletcher - Bakery

Being a baker at Lovingly Artisan has many benefits, challenges, and rewards. Benefits being the ability to work with the best ingredients. From the butter for our croissants, which comes from France to the best heritage grains from Northumbria, and the fact that we use organic ingredients where possible, with aim of making our bread as healthy and as environmentally sustainable as possible.

Challenges all stem from one thing the climate, whether that's the weather before harvesting the grain which affects the crops or the increase or drop in temperature outside impacting the internal temperature of the bakery. It's ever changing almost on daily basis making it a very challenging but also a highly satisfying place to be.

The rewards speak for themselves, there's nothing better than looking out the bakery window and seeing a queue of customers waiting to purchase our delicious handmade bread, something that we get up in the middle of the night to produce. It's also very rewarding to work with such incredibly passionate people like Catherine and Aidan, they really go above and beyond to make working at Lovingly Artisan an enjoyable experience.

Jessica Relph - Retail

Working for Lovingly Artisan is amazing. The in-depth training you receive fully prepares you for your work life with the company. It's a fast-paced environment and completely rewarding. Your strengths are valued at Lovingly Artisan and there's a clear professional development pathway in place for each and every member of the team.

Maddie Resende - Retail

I feel honoured working for Lovingly Artisan. Not only do they create delicious and nutritious organic sourdoughs, but they are also the most knowledgeable people you'll ever meet. That really shines through in everything they do and how they treat each and every member of the team.

What is your average basket spend?

£11-15

Judges comments:

Innovative business methods, knowledgeable and passionate staff, fantastic turnover. Strong brand identity on website, fabulous subscription boxes online and high following on Instagram. Love the bread truck concept. Great entry.

This excellent bakery has innovation with its new wood chip oven which has increased turnover because of this they have a good carbon footprint. I like their bread van.mobile shop idea going to Farmers Markets. Lovely to see crusty loaves of bread on display in their shop.

Wow, you can see this is a great business, very strong turnover and fantastic grow forecast of 20%, clearly fuelled by not only their brilliant products, but the significant investment in their processing facility and equipment. Added bonus of the wood pellet zero emissions, but more importantly the control it gives them over their products. Pushing their boundaries with their new food truck which will push sales further and increase the reach of their product and brand. A stand out entry.

The images show a beautiful bakery creating a lovely product. The details of the oven and the improved baking sound very impressive. The team obviously enjoy working for the company and it sounds that they invest a lot in them.

