

# Organic baker advertises technology

Norway's biggest organic artisan baker advertises that it uses vacuum cooling.

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+ The married couple Katrine and Jon-Frede Engdahl together with Jon's sister Jorunn Engdahl founded Kolonihagen in 2004. They wanted to work for "a better life", which includes organic foods just as much as species-appropriate life for animals and a good, meaningful life for farmers. Bio plus is the name Jon-Frede Engdahl gives to the philosophy of the company which he still manages, even though the three founders sold it two years ago to Rema 1000, one of the country's biggest food retailers.

Kolonihagen consists of a total of five lines of business whose activities are interwoven: a bakery, restaurant, brewery and a delivery service for what are called "green boxes" in Germany but are available from Kolonihagen in various formats depending on whether there is more fruit, more vegetables,

more luxury foods or more baked products

– everything organic of course. Line

No. 5 is rather more unusual.

In this division of the company, Kolonihagen develops products for the food retail, from raw materials and

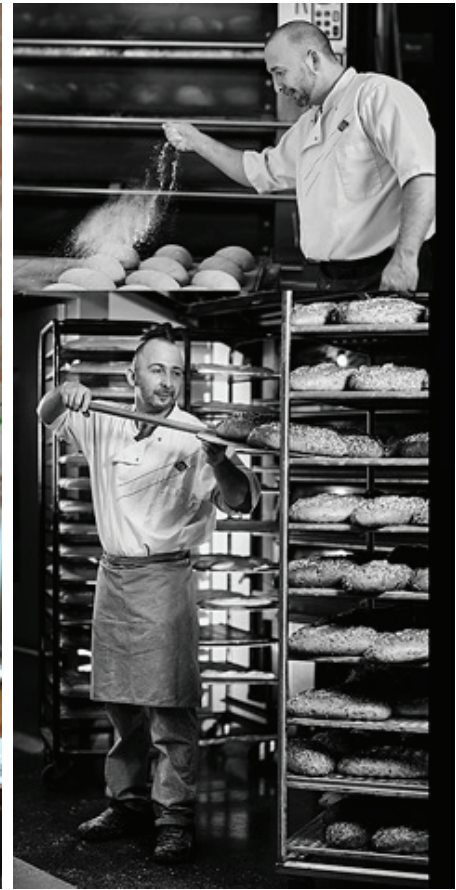
processes to packaging. Measured in terms of sales, No. 5 is the biggest part of the company, followed by the manufacture of baked products.

Kolonihagen's bakery employs 15 staff and is thus Norway's biggest organic artisan bakery. There are a few other organic bakers in the country, but they limit themselves to producing baked goods, are smaller, and not many of them also sell their bread through the retail.

Kolonihagen markets its baked products through forty selected food retailers in Oslo. The remainder goes to caterers, restaurants and canteen operators, and into "green boxes".

The bakery commissioned a vacuum cooler from Cetravac AG in Switzerland nearly three months ago. The reason for it was quite pragmatic. Production volume had risen constantly over the course of time, and customers suddenly began to complain about the deteriorated quality, although nothing had changed in the raw materials, the recipe or the manufacturing process. The bakers investigated the issue thoroughly and discovered a really simple cause. The increased production volume had not only lengthened production time, but had also increased the temperature in the bakery, because the breads were allowed to cool down in the bakery. The higher temperature not only made the cooling process longer, but also caused the breads to dry out slightly, which was what the customers were complaining about.





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++ Jon-Frede Engdahl

The fact that there is a search for a technical solution is one thing, but immediately communicating it vis-à-vis customers as well is quite another. In fact, it's even a matter of course for Jon-Frede Engdahl: "In Kolonihagen, we believe transparent communication to customers is important. Therefore we also spoke openly about the problem and explained that we wanted to try out a new technology. What ecological production means to us is not manufacturing foods as was done a century ago. On the contrary, for us ecological production also means being open-minded in relation to improvements and

new technologies. We have kept our customers constantly in the loop about investments and their benefits ever since the first breads that passed through the vacuum chamber went onto the market. The benefit for customers is a more succulent bread with a longer shelf life, while the benefit to us and the environment is the energy saving, and the benefit for the bakers is the lower temperature in the production premises."

Communication with customers runs through all channels. First of all, customers were informed through social media. Then stickers carrying the message "New baking method. Vacuum technology for more succulent bread" were distributed, and finally Kolonihagen reduced the price of its bread for two weeks to allow customers to test it and to win back customers who had stayed away due to the excessively dry bread. A film is currently being made, designed to explain the technology in an understandable way, after which there will be information cam-

paigns for specific target groups and a big advertising campaign at the start of the school year in August. According to Jon-Frede Engdahl, customer feedback so far has been extremely positive and the sales of bread are increasing week by week. +++



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