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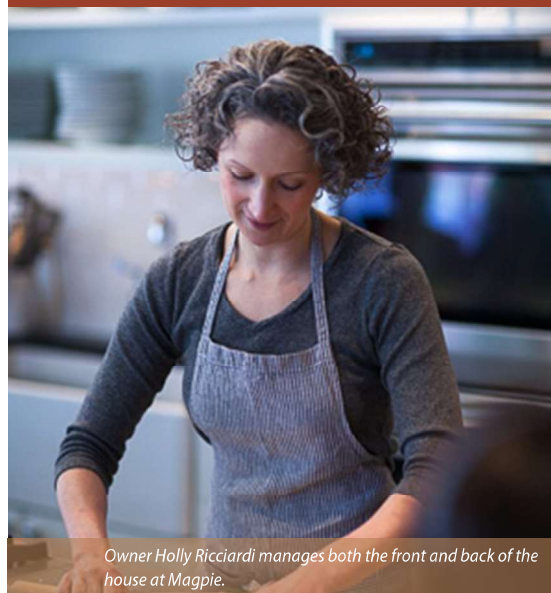
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Pie Pie Birdie

Magpie Bakery Does Vintage in Vogue

By Jennifer Vishnevsky



Owner Holly Ricciardi manages both the front and back of the house at Magpie.

Philadelphia's dining scene is full of well-known chefs that have turned the city into a foodie's paradise. Nestled among the city's hot spots is Magpie Artisan Pie Bakery & Boutique, which specializes in sweet and savory pies.

A new direction

Holly Ricciardi and her husband Greg co-founded 20nine, an award-winning brand development agency. After a 20-year career as a graphic designer, Ricciardi was ready for a change.

"I liked the creativity aspect of graphic design, but the higher you get, the less you get to do that," she says. "I was really missing the creativity."

With her husband's support, Ricciardi took some time off.

"I normally bake a lot," she says.

"It's peaceful, and I would bring food in to work all the time. So I thought, why not go to school for baking?"

She started studying at The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Philadelphia and decided to bring her passion for baking to the forefront.

"I wanted to learn new things," she says. "Because baking is so hands-on, you're the one that is creating it. There's a concept and a flavor profile. I felt like the light had been turned back on."

Developing the dream

Ricciardi noticed that the graphic designer inside her starting thinking about branding and placement. Although there were cupcake, ice cream, and gelato businesses in the area, there was no pie shop.

"Pie is really good," she says. "It's comforting. But you buy it in a grocery store. No one is making pie from scratch."

Next, she started testing out different flavor profiles.

"Lime and basil sounds kind of crazy, but people think it's life changing," she says. "We work by hand, from scratch, and showcase what's best in season."

Ricciardi found a location on Philadelphia's historic South Street and opened a pie shop in September 2012. She knew that she didn't want people to just come in and get

pie like they were in a bakery. So, she made sure to create a space that has the feel of "mom's house."

"It's still kind of hip and modern, but there are elements of comfort," she says. "I also didn't want people to feel like they had to buy a whole pie. So you can come in and buy a single slice. The shop needed to be that way."

Ricciardi also got her creative juices flowing when she decided to come up with the name and logo.

"The bird magpie is known for gathering things and putting them into a nest," she says. "Obviously, the word pie is also in the world magpie. I also think of a pie crust basically as an empty nest. So I'm gathering and putting things into



The shop is quaint, comfortable, and inviting – a vintage masterpiece made hip, just like the pies themselves.

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the nest that I like.”

As far as the menu, the inspiration is based on the season.

“I do a lot of research,” she says. “I sit and try to think of the texture and the structure; what would people like? I’m constantly putting things together. Sometimes the flavor is off or the structure is off. It’s a trial and error.”

Blast from the past

In the summer, sweet pies are more popular. In the winter, there’s a 50/50 split between savory and sweet. Ricciardi herself is a fruit pie kind of girl.

“My favorite is the sour cherry,” she says. “I was raised on it. When you eat something, it takes you back.”

Magpie’s signature is a butterscotch bourbon, which traces back to Ricciardi’s great grandmother. In her family, there was always a pie on the table.

Beyond traditional pies, Ricciardi introduced something which you have to see to believe – Pie Fries.

“Being raised by a very frugal German mother, you waste nothing,” she says. “So she’d re-roll

[the scrap dough]. The pie couldn’t be cut into until the next day, so she would bake them off while we were waiting for the pies to cool.”

At Magpie, Ricciardi cuts up the French-fry sized strips and serves them with dipping sauces.

An original spin

The innovation doesn’t end there: Magpie also coined pie milkshakes. Ricciardi uses ice cream from Bassetts Ice Cream, a fifth-generation family business and Philadelphia tradition. Ice cream plus milk plus a full slice of any of the pies are blended together to make a winning treat.

Last winter, the shop started doing mini trios with a theme of flavors. For example, Ricciardi focused on highlighting vanilla with three special pies one weekend, then did the same with meringue the next.

“It did very well,” she says. “People would come in and ask us what our trio was for the weekend.”

Encouraged by the success of the trios, Ricciardi introduced a Pie of the Month, where the restaurant chooses a pie that is appropriate for the time of the year.



Magpie's one-of-a-kind pie milkshakes are causing quite a stir!

And what of her old career in graphic design? Over a year after Magpie’s grand opening, Ricciardi says she is comfortable leaving her husband to handle the old business.

“I definitely find myself looking at pie more than anything,” she says. “I think this is my final calling.”



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Lemon Gingersnap Pie

Recipe courtesy of Magpie Artisan Pie Boutique

Makes enough for 9”

Gingersnap Crust



55 g	yolks
397 g	sweetened condensed milk
1/2 tsp	fresh ginger, grated
1/2 tsp	ground ginger
1/2 tsp	vanilla extract
113 g	fresh lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

In a bowl, whisk yolks until lightly and fluffy. Beat in sweetened condensed milk. Whisk in fresh ginger, ground ginger, vanilla. Whisk lemon juice,

Pour the custard into the prepared crust and bake for 10 - 12 minutes, or until set. Transfer to a rack and let cool completely. Chill over night.

141 g	graham cracker crum
55 g	dark brown sugar
2 tsp	cinnamon
2 tsp	ground ginger
1/4 tsp	doves
1/8 tsp	black pepper, finely ground
70 g	butter, melted
2 tsp	water

Combined dry ingredients in a bowl. Add melted butter and water, mix until crumbs hold their shape when squeezed adding more water as needed.