



By: Ashley Gurney

“ I’m not exactly an Einstein, so I compensate by being more focused...”

Peter Munk

Multigrain Observations

G’day to all.

Recently I attended the Wollongong Bread Show. A great day was had by all with some of the best examples of novelty cakes I have seen anywhere!

Whilst there were many wonderful examples of our trade in most classes, I thought it important to bring to everyone’s attention some very important observations brought forward by some fellow judges, a long time friend and industry stalwart Peter Sharkey, from Master Catering Services, regarding bread quality. On the day, Peter pencilled along with judge Colin Esplin from Cereform.

The reason the following comments struck a cord with me was that they began with similar comments I have heard before – then Peter took some time to walk through some exciting yet simple possibilities to improve in this case – multigrain bread. I have reread Peter’s comments several times and as I couldn’t have said it any better I thought it best to give Peter the accolades his thoughts deserve, and simply quote his comments to you all.

The following extract is from Peter’s email to me.

What we noted was:

1. Blandness in the flavour of the bread.
2. Grain levels and general appearance of all loaves entered, which was about 20 entries – were almost identical.
3. Many loaves displayed evidence of too much release agent, or canola oil in the bottom crust.
4. Many loaves showed marks from unclean cooling wires.

Peter noted, as I am sure you will too, that points 3 & 4 are simple attention to detail. The following remarks were made on points 1 and 2:

Lots of us use premixes in our bakery or kitchen. We all know the advantages & disadvantages by now. Even grain blends can be bought as a premix, and there’s absolutely no problem with that. But has anyone ever thought about the method in making a good multigrain or seed loaf?

A very good way to introduce flavour to any type of food is roasting. By flashing the seeds or grains in the oven for five minutes you will change the flavour of the bread,

and for the better. Think about it – Indian chefs always dry roast their curry leaves and spices prior to cooking. Coffee, which is a seed, would taste terrible if it weren’t roasted before being ground. Peanuts. Any Queenslander will tell you there’s a difference in flavour between boiled and roasted peanuts. And any good patisserie will always dry roast his/her slithered almonds, hazelnuts or walnuts, before using, in or, on a cake.

Try roasting the grains before you add them to the dough. I think you’ll be surprised at the difference.

Another way to improve the flavour in the bread is the type of oil used. An Italian Ciabatta will always taste better with the addition of virgin olive oil, so why not add a small amount, sesame oil to your grain dough? It’s easy to obtain, it has a beautiful smell and it will improve the baked aroma immensely. Don’t use sesame at 100% though; it has a very low smoke point, and the flavour may be overpowering.

Get some grain and seed into your multigrain loaf. The Aussie pallet has changed, and for the better. We are far more adventurous than we were even 20 years ago. Try some different flavours, add some wattle, some poppy or, and add some pumpkin seed if you want to – dare to be different!

Peter’s comments are using his wealth of knowledge, they are from current experience, they are relevant, practical and “on the money”. An additional comment for Colin also noted that “no one is willing to be different!” This is very true yet it is an important observation that those bakeries who do dare to be different whilst maintaining a quality level and relevance to their market segment are extremely successful!

Take some “words from the wise” read Peter’s and Colin’s observations and take a look at your multigrain...and then your wholemeal...and then? Following on from this were some great comments on fruit loaves...but that is a whole new article to focus on!

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