

Founder of Persnickety Crane Cafe Sweetens The Deal With Opening Of Serene Bee Bakery

Jen Holden December 20, 2022



Photo of Cecilia Corujo (l) and Keri Harness (r) courtesy of Serene Bee Bakery.

YORK—Persnickety Crane Cafe, located within the Village Shops shopping plaza between McCormick Paints and Westview Financial Services in York County, celebrated its third anniversary on Tuesday, December 13. Owner Cecilia Corujo is upping the ante and opening a second business, Serene Bee Bakery, within the cafe on Wednesday, December 28.

During an 11-year stint in the military, Corujo had the opportunity to travel around Europe, South America, and Asia while trying an eclectic array of exceptionally crafted pastries.

“Some of what we’ll be offering at Serene Bee Bakery are recipes that have been carried down for generations and some of them will be pastries I tasted in other countries,” said Corujo.

Serene Bee Bakery’s menu will offer cakes and pies, cookies, cupcakes, muffins, breads, crepes, scones, and more.

The entrepreneur said she’s using the same first-person strategy she utilized when starting Persnickety Crane Cafe.

“When I came up with the recipes for the coffee, I decided I wanted the cappuccino here to be like the cappuccino in Naples,” said Corujo. “I want the London Fog that you can order here to be just like the one I had in London. I know what they’re supposed to taste like and won’t settle for anything less.”

During her travels overseas, Corujo had the opportunity of sampling a green tea dessert in Tokyo, as well as Paczki (polish jelly donuts), and crepes in Paris. As a youngster, she studied baking under her grandmother, who grew up in the 1930s.

“I also spent ten years in Hawaii and became addicted to macadamia nut cranberry cookies that will be on our menu,” said Corujo.

Corujo has appointed retired U.S. Navy Master Chief Mike Harness as head baker. He and his wife Keri Harness have owned and operated 828 Bakes Bakery, also in York County, for the past decade. The couple moved to the area from San Diego in 2016 and brought their cookie and cake baking business with them. Keri Harness will be filling the position of customer support specialist for Serene Bee Bakery and has worked at

Persnickety Crane Cafe in the past.

Though Mike Harness, a talented woodworker, had built a few tables and other structures for the cafe, Corujo said the two of them struck up a conversation about the future at a team-building event the Harnesses were hosting at their home.

“We were at a pool party, and Mike and I started chatting over hot dogs,” said Corujo. “He was recently retired and talked about how the next thing he wanted to concentrate on was baking. I said, ‘that’s really interesting, because I

want to open a bakery.' I started to synthesize that this could really be a great relationship. While I had recipes, I didn't have somebody with a passion for baking who wanted to do that day in and day out until Mike and I spoke about the vision for the bakery."

Corujo said she plans to move Serene Bee Bakery to its own storefront after it gains momentum within the community.

"Right now, Serene Bee Bakery is a subsidiary that's nestled up under Persnickety, but I want to brand it as its own entity because I'd like to move it a couple doors down or maybe across the street once people become accustomed to the pastries," she said.

Serene Bee Bakery will offer two group events per month, with the first being held at 2pm Saturday, January 21, 2023. Entitled Sip & Decorate, participants will learn the art of cookie decorating during a workshop with a professional baker.

The hands-on workshop will explore the ins and outs of designing springtime sugar cookies and offer 1.5 hours of instruction. The cost is \$25 and includes a beverage of choice.

Serene Bee Bakery is located at 209 Village Ave., Suite C, in Yorktown. Orders may be placed by calling 757-940-9797- Persnickety Crane Cafe is open from 7:30am to 5pm Monday to Sunday and may be reached at 757-775-2975. For more information about the bakery, visit its website or Instagram page.