



Gildas' Lake Street Bakery

GILDAS BERROU
THRIVES IN BOYNE
CITY, WITH AUTHENTIC
FRENCH PASTRIES AND
STRONG COMMUNITY
SUPPORT

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,
Storyville Social, as part of the
Michigan Main Street Story
Series

When we first opened Gildas' Lake Street Bakery in March of 2016, people gave us about six months to live. We don't do typical American products because I'm not American, and that probably made it harder for us to get started and get people in the door. One of my regulars actually told me that in six months I would start making donuts, like they used to have here. I said I would close before I'd do that. Now, every time he comes in, he says he's sorry. He was so sure, and I proved him wrong.

I'm from Quimper in Brittany, on the west coast of France. It's a beautiful, green, and rainy area just below England and Ireland. It's a bit like Michigan—surrounded by water, but in this case, it's ocean water.

My wife is from northern

Michigan and she was studying in France when I met her through mutual friends in 1997. When I first came to the U.S., I went to Chicago. Then she took me 'up north' to visit her family and I fell in love with it. We lived here for a while, moved back to France for about 10 years and had two kids over there, then moved back here in 2012.

I have wanted to be a baker since I was about 10 years old, so I went to trade school in my hometown. I did two years of apprenticeship there and then I joined a group of chefs called the Compagnons and traveled through France for four years with them to continue my training. I worked under a lot of really good pastry chefs and bakers throughout France and the training was really, really hard.

I've learned many, many different ways to make croissants. Every bakery has a trick, you know? So when we opened, I did those the way I knew how to make them and that was it.

What I love about Boyne City is, it's like, 'you build it and they'll come'. You say, 'This is what we're going to do in town today' and they show up. Rich, poor, blue collar, white collar, whatever, they're going to come. The people here are very supportive. If you make a good product, if your prices are reasonable and if you treat your locals right, they'll support you.



No matter what you do in town, people are going to try it. The first time I was blown away by this was during an event called 'Earlier Than the Bird'. It's the Saturday after Thanksgiving where all the businesses open up earlier, people come in and shop in their jammies and there are discounts—here, if you wear your jammies, you get a free coffee. It's usually the ugliest jammies they can find...and people just do it!

—Gildas Berrou, Owner of Gildas' Lake Street Bakery, Boyne City



"WHAT I LOVE ABOUT BOYNE CITY IS, IT'S LIKE, 'YOU BUILD IT AND THEY'LL COME'. YOU SAY, 'THIS IS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO IN TOWN TODAY' AND THEY SHOW UP. RICH, POOR, BLUE COLLAR, WHITE COLLAR, WHATEVER, THEY'RE GOING TO COME. THE PEOPLE HERE ARE VERY SUPPORTIVE."



Michigan Main Street Story Series



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION