

Butterbang by Bike: The best croissant you'll ever have on this side of the Atlantic



If you've ever visited France, the thought of a croissant conjures pure heavenly bliss: a crispy, buttery and oh-so-flaky delight. You also know that you're hard-pressed to find an equivalent in New England,

and the thought of a Dunkin breakfast croissant throws you into a cataclysmic state of despair. But I have good news: **Brian Leosz** is creating Parisian-worthy experiences with his business, **Butterbang Croissants**. From the Classic original, to a sweet Choco Almond, to the savory “Dainty Pig” (prosciutto, gouda and rosemary), all his creations will help you recall those heavenly feelings right here in RI.

When I asked Leosz if he would consider moving to France, he responded without hesitation: “YES.” I like this about him (because that’s how I feel about Greece), and it’s no surprise that he’s returned overseas several times in the last few years — including last May, when he brought his parents to Paris for their anniversary and constructed a “croissant crawl” for them. This — for the record — is my idea of a grand romantic gesture.



Leosz launched Butterbang Croissants while he was living in Colorado. He had left his job in New England and trekked across the country, then after months of job hunting, consented to pursue an idea he'd been churning around for a few years: a bicycle cart selling freshly made croissants. "I figured it was as good a time as any," he said.

I ought to mention that Leosz left a job in New England in *marketing*, not in pastry. Leosz is a self-taught baker. "I always had a sweet tooth as a kid, but my mom didn't want me going to the candy store

every day (understandably). I remember visiting my aunt's house and watching her bake. I was intrigued that you could *bake* the sweets that you wanted to eat," he said.



He began experimenting with his mom's *Fannie Farmer Cookbook*. "I taught myself basic things, like cookies and brownies, and then progressed to baklava and cakes. It was a hobby that stuck with me throughout adulthood."

Leosz was successful in Colorado wholesaling his croissants to cafes, but he came to a crossroads: Was Denver the place he wanted to be long-term? "My whole network was still in New England — my family and childhood friends — and it just didn't feel like the timing was right," he said. "But I believed I would come back to the business again."

He moved to Boston, and for the next decade he worked for a company called, ironically, Cake, that was — even more ironically — an online service to help people organize their end-of-life preferences. "I had a great team, and I loved my job; it felt like meaningful work. But every day I was forced to think about death ... which can't help but lead you to consider your own mortality."



Cake highlighted the obvious, but overlooked truth: time is not guaranteed. “I felt like if you have dreams, why not act on them now, while you’re able to?” So, for the second time, he decided to lean into his passion, this time in the small city of Providence.

Working from a production kitchen in Olneyville, Leosz debuted via bicycle at Brown University in October 2019. “I knew I wanted to start out in retail rather than wholesale because I missed interacting with customers. I’m fueled by knowing if people are enjoying what I produce.”

Plus, a bicycle is a cheap way to break into retail, and it's free marketing; it's hard to miss him pedaling a 600-pound bike rig around town.

During the colder winter months, you'll still find him bicycling (he is a New Englander, after all), as well as popping up at **PVDonuts** and his own space in Olneyville, where he now hosts a Saturday morning Croissant Counter. (Be sure to check [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) for an updated schedule.) You're likely to find a special croissant or two, inspired by his travels or the holidays, including Valentine's Day.

"I have in mind to create something of a 'blackened heart,'" he says, which makes me like him even more.

Contrary to *my* method of blackening a croissant — burning it — Leosz is experimenting with activated charcoal. However, if it doesn't meet his standards of croissant quality, he will go a different route. Either way, "it will be a tongue-in-cheek" play on the Valentine theme.

And since we're on the topic of Valentine's Day, let's talk about matchmaking: Leosz *is* in the market ... for a business partner. "It'd be nice to have that camaraderie with someone who's also in the business, who gets it, who's really invested. My friends can only listen to so much," he jokes. Ideal qualities he's looking for in a business mate include a pastry background and attentiveness to details, especially aesthetics. And because I'm the one writing this advertisement, I'd like to add someone who is thoughtful and kind, and has a passion for travel, as these are all qualities you would share with Leosz.

Despite the Blackened Heart idea, Leosz doesn't seem cynical. "I'm not anti-Valentine's Day," he explains, "but I do think people get lazy in celebrating. Do something creative, like make your partner a nice dinner, or go on a scavenger hunt."

Or, perhaps, a croissant crawl. A stop at Butterbang Croissants is one way to guarantee you'll be treating someone you care about — or yourself — with love.

Croissant counter, 8:30am-12:30pm at 11 Aleppo St., Unit 7 (downstairs), @butterbangcroissants, Facebook.com/ButterbangCroissants