

Downtown's BIGA To Launch Wood Fired Bakery & Pastry Program

November 5, 2016



BIGA, which opened in the beginning of the year on the corner of 6th & Broadway in the historic, 1920s-era Samuel Fox Lofts building in downtown San Diego, has announced that it has hired two rock star chefs to assist in the operation of the restaurant's new wood burning bakery and pastry program, set to launch on Tuesday, November 8.

Named after an age-old fermentation process used for Italian breads and pizza dough, BIGA is the brainchild of Chef/Owner Tae Dickey, who started his restaurant with a commitment to using only local and made-from-scratch ingredients, including house made mozzarella, heirloom tomatoes from local farms for sauce, traditionally made Italian dough, and even whole hogs from the area broken down for use in homemade sausage and the popular weekly porchetta special. Dickey recently brought two experienced chefs on board to help launch San Diego's only wood fired hearth oven bakery.



Chef Craig and his creations!

Chef Craig Schum is a baker, pastry chef, and certified sommelier, originally from New York. He has experience in the kitchens at Per Se, Eleven Madison Park, Jean-Georges, Momofuku Ko, Levain Bakery, ScratchBread, and Iris Cafe. After moving to San Diego, he was the head bread baker at Sugar & Scribe Bakery in La Jolla, and when he's not in the kitchen Craig is a surfer, jazz musician, and freelance journalist/editor. Chef Aisha Baker is a pastry chef who graduated from Georgetown University in 2013 and studied at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, obtaining her Diplôme de Pâtisserie. After returning to the states, Aisha relocated to San Diego where she worked as a pastry chef at the Addison in Del Mar. Both Chefs Craig & Aisha are now churning alongside Chef Tae in BIGA's kitchen.

"We knew that San Diego needed and deserved a bread that stuck to tradition and had a strong connection to the old world way of baking breads and pastries," explained Dickey. "Amazing pastries that will tantalize your senses with different combinations of local ingredients, textures, and flavors. Using the knowledge of classic desserts and putting a new spin on them while keeping them approachable, we will start out with 6 to 7 different shapes and styles of bread with varying flavors from locally sourced farms."

Starting on Tuesday, November 8, BIGA will begin selling a variety of breads and pastries for take out and to be used in various recipes and dishes. Adding to their menu of Neapolitan pies made from their 200-year-old "mother dough," BIGA's two 5000-pound, wood-fired ovens will now be in constant use to perfect a harmonious balance of bakery items, including old-world style heritage breads and pastries.

"We have access to all of the local organic produce from the farms that San Diego provides us on a daily basis and we wanted to fully utilize it," continued Dickey. "We knew we had the tools to produce an amazing loaf of bread but it was just a matter of combining the right combinations of our 200 year old biga, pure organic flours, the right temperatures, and Juliet (one of our Italian Wood burning ovens), would produce some magical loaves of bread. It took Craig a solid 3 weeks of testing, tweaking, and fine tuning to unlock the secrets that our ingredients would give us."

Biga is located at 950 Sixth Avenue (Suite C) in downtown San Diego and is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily starting at 7am. In addition to Italian-inspired dishes, they also feature artisanal gelato and a coffee bar fueled with locally roasted beans for their state-of-the-art Italian espresso machine. For more information, visit bigasandiego.com.