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## SHOP GIRL: At Pastries of Denmark, a Fourth-Generation Baker Holds True to Danish Tradition

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There was never a discussion of what the teenaged Kristian Vesth would be. The great-grandson of a baker, living above the family bakery in a small town in Denmark, would naturally enter a baking apprenticeship with his father. After passing his journeyman baking test, he took advanced pastry chef training and landed a job in a Copenhagen hotel.

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A job offer from commercial bakery Campbell-Taggart (now Earthgrains) brought him to the company's St. Louis research and development department. But a few years in the laboratory-like environment made him yearn to get his hands back in dough and pastry cream. So in the late '80s, he opened Pastries of Denmark in Creve Coeur with a selection of breads, pastries and cakes as well as a small menu of sandwiches and salads.

Chef Vesth knew from the start that he had to set his lunch menu apart, and that's where he had an ace in the hole: artisan breads, made fresh daily, entirely from scratch. In fact, everything sold in the bakery and café follows his philosophy of providing freshly made, high-quality products at reasonable prices.

The café menu and the physical space and have expanded over the years (the café seats 54), and customers have their pick of wines, espresso drinks, soups, salads, sandwiches, and a tempting selection of breads, cakes, and fancy pastries.

*Check back every Monday in October to learn about my picks, selected with the help of chef Vesth, and what makes them special.*

Pastries of Denmark, 12613 Olive Blvd., Creve Coeur, 314.469.7879, [pastriesofdenmark.com](http://pastriesofdenmark.com)