

~ PROGRESSIVE BAKER ~

# update



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ADVANCING THE ART OF SCRATCH BAKING

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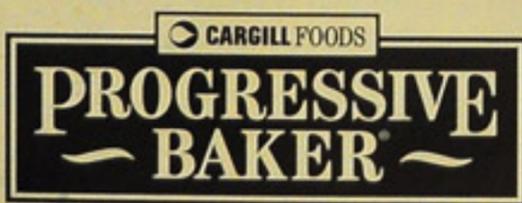
*Lovebirds Café & Bakery has won the heart of southern California's historic Alhambra neighborhood by romancing patrons with seductive, gourmet pastries and passionate customer service.*

**B**efore Iranian immigrants Jahanshah (l) and Jahansooz Jomehri (r) opened their doors in 1984, their mother imagined a romantic ambiance for the shop her two sons were

# For the Love of Baking

creating. She came up with the name "Lovebirds" for the business, which was originally conceived as a trendy combination juice bar and ice cream parlor.

She pictured a cozy gathering place with heart-shaped wrought iron chairs where honeymooners could come to enjoy an ice cream cone together.



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## FEATURED BAKER

They never got the heart-shaped chairs, and the original ice cream parlor concept eventually gave way to a more lucrative bakery café. But the name stuck, and so did the welcoming atmosphere that Mrs. Jomehri envisioned.

Today, the upscale Alhambra café, located 12 miles east of Los Angeles in the historic old-Pasadena area, has built a reputation as a hip, hangout—a hot-spot known for its great food and comfortable character. It serves signature California-style sandwiches, and an impressive line of scratch-baked gourmet French and American pastries to as many as 600 customers a day, and runs a strong catering business that accounts for almost a third of its sales. People come to Lovebirds not just to eat, but also to relax and socialize. Even Hollywood celebrities and local politicians frequently stop by for a taste of its local charm.

### *Searching for an identity*

Lovebirds' evolution from ice cream parlor to bakery café didn't happen overnight. It took several years and a lot of trial and error as the Jomehri brothers struggled to build an identity that would give them a unique niche in the competitive California market. Educated as a chemist, Jahanshah Jomehri admits he knew little about running a business at first. He learned many lessons the hard way, but pressed on, focusing on advice he got from his good friend and



Lovebirds Café & Bakery stands out by giving customers “anything they ask for.” Great gourmet pastries and a friendly, personable atmosphere have made it a popular gathering place, but the store also does a strong take-out and catering business.

accountant. “He was always telling us to look at what we’ve got and look for ways to improve it,” Jomehri said.

Without always realizing it, Jomehri seemed to have an uncanny knack for anticipating trends. Lovebirds was one of the first stores in California to offer frozen yogurt, and it marketed nutritional fruit drinks with power-packed names before most Californians even knew what they were. Jomehri saw the demand for low fat, health foods, and incorporated European-style breads into his sandwich menu before the artisan trend took off, too.

### *The right chemistry for baking*

It was four years, though, before Lovebirds began baking on premise—a huge change in direction that Jomehri plunged into with little knowledge of what he was getting into. “We were having trouble with the driver who delivered our sandwich bread,” he recalls. “At the time, our volume was so small, no one else would deliver to us. It was a bad situation, but we thought we’d have to put up with this nasty driver because the idea of baking bread ourselves was just unbelievable to us. Then one day I got fed up and told the driver, ‘That’s it. This is the last day you deliver bread to us. From now on, we’ll make our own bread.’”

He bought a used oven, and set his sights on learning how to bake. “That was a big jump for us. The added equipment was a huge investment, but it was the best thing we could do for our business. It was very exciting. We were baking from the store, and the aroma was fantastic. It nearly doubled our business, and people were finally getting to know us. We were starting to get famous!”



*“People come to Lovebirds not just to eat, but also to relax and socialize. Even Hollywood celebrities and local politicians frequently stop by for a taste of its local charm.”*

## FEATURED BAKER

Jomehri caught on fast, attending every bakery tradeshow he could, and reading countless baking publications to increase his knowledge and elevate the quality of his baked goods. Expanding the product line to include pastries was a logical next step for a man whose chemistry background helped him to easily grasp the principles of scratch baking. "I understand the chemical aspects of what happens in the baking process, which gives me a better concept of how and why things are done in certain ways."

In his chemistry labs, Jomehri learned to apply mixing methods that achieve the most results with the least effort. As a result, he sometimes uses different mixing methods than formulas call for. For example, to create a softer cinnamon roll dough when using high gluten flour that develops rapidly, Jomehri incorporates the butter into the dry ingredients first, then adds the water to keep mixing time to a minimum.

Well over half of Lovebirds' pastries and breads are made from its own signature formulas, and high quality ingredients are crucial. When Progressive Baker® flour became available on the West Coast through Honeyville Grain, Lovebirds began converting almost all its pastry and bread formulas to the Progressive Baker® brand.

### *A passion for serving customers*

Beyond excellent quality, what sets Lovebirds apart is its total dedication to the customer. "We understand that the people who walk in our door have worked hard for their money, and we make sure to always give them a product that is worth the price they pay."

Lovebirds nurtures its relationship with customers by constantly trying to accommodate their needs. "We are 100 percent dedicated to our customers.

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## TRACKING TRENDS

# Old is New

Eating trends are heading back to the basics, as aging baby boomers increasingly crave the comforting foods they remember from their childhood. The holiday season is a prime time for selling pastries, pies and desserts that bring back nostalgic memories of family food traditions.

Progressive scratch bakers, with their focus on high-quality taste and appearance, are in a great position to profit from the growing appetite for home-style flavor. Take advantage of the trend by offering unique, new renditions on familiar classics—like rustic old-world pastries, soothing chocolate cakes, satisfying soda breads, and flaky, fruit-filled tarts.

"I'm crazy about old recipes," says featured baker, Jahanshah Jomehri, Lovebirds Café & Bakery. "Many of our pastries are based on formulas that we've adapted from old cookbooks."

Today's nouveau look on nostalgia, though, goes beyond simply rehashing an old favorite. Consumers in the new millennium want baked goods that remind them of days gone by, but are

updated to fit today's tastes. They respond to familiar tastes presented with modern flourish—sensational baked goods made from the best ingredients in simple presentations that let the flavor shine through.

Lovebirds offers a unique update on apple pie with its signature rustic Apple Tart Tatin, featuring caramelized apples atop puff pastry made from Progressive Baker® Pastry Flour. "People go nuts over it," Jomehri says. Other top-selling Lovebirds classics include walnut chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies, based on Jomehri's own formulations. For health conscious customers, he makes a delicious sugar-free oatmeal raisin cookie, too.

More than any other baking segment, scratch bakers have the capabilities and expertise to create new variations on back-to-basic baked goods. So dig out the old cookbooks, and get creative! —



Check out our web site for formulas that fit current food trends...

[www.progressivebaker.com](http://www.progressivebaker.com)

## FEATURED BAKER

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If they want something we don't already carry, we'll make it special for them."

For example, when a local optometrist and frequent customer asked for a wheat bread with walnuts and raisins, Jomehri went to work to develop the right flavor profile. "Every time we adjusted the formula, we had our customer taste it. He'd say, add more honey, or don't put in so many walnuts. We kept trying until we got it right. After about six weeks, we had a nice, heavy wonderful bread." It's now part of the Lovebirds repertoire, fittingly called "Dr. Snyder's Bread."

Jomehri believes the appeal of scratch baked goods is more than a passing trend, because consumers will continue to see value in the high quality standards that progressive bakers uphold. "If you train people to come to you for a particular taste that they can't get anywhere else, they'll come back for it." He plans to open a second store and add more vegetarian sandwiches to his menu.

He takes pride in his bakery's reputation as a local gathering place.

In fact, Jomehri knows of at least four couples who either met or spent their first date at the café and later tied the matrimonial knot! From the looks of things, the love affair between this gourmet bakery and its customers shows no signs of letting up. —



For profiles and practices of other progressive bakers, visit our web site...  
[www.progressivebaker.com](http://www.progressivebaker.com)

## BE PREPARED FOR Y2K

Enter the new millennium with a full back room. Progressive Baker® recommends you extend your ingredient coverage to 7 days, in case temporary Y2K problems disrupt your normal supply chain.



## Lovebirds Holiday Traditions

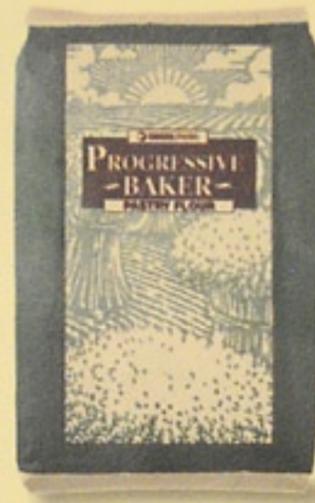
### Products patrons bake at home

Lovebirds Café & Bakery closes on major holidays—but it has a cool solution for warming patrons' holiday tables. Customers who want to make fresh Lovebirds baked goods a part of their holiday celebrations can come in beforehand to buy made-from-scratch croissants, breads, cookie doughs and muffin batters in unbaked, frozen form. The products are preformed and individually portioned, and include instructions for thawing, proofing and baking them at home. "This way, when we're not open, our customers can still have a product that is baked fresh and tastes the way they want it to," says owner, Jahanshah Jomehri.

### Fruitcake goes natural

A popular item Jomehri says he sells "a ton of" during the holidays is a fabulous Fruit and Nut Cake. Before you gasp at the thought of fruitcake, understand that Lovebirds' gourmet update is a far cry from the rum-soaked, doorstep varieties that typically pop up at holiday time. "Usually you run when you hear the word fruitcake," Jomehri said. "I think ours might be the only one on earth that actually gets eaten!" How does he know? "People come in to buy it as a gift, but they take it home and end up eating it themselves and have to come back to order another one to give away."

Lovebirds' all-natural version is a nice, heavy loaf, based on a formula Jomehri got from a friend. It's made with whole-wheat flour and unsulfured fruit, and sweetened with juice concentrate. It contains no sugar, honey, molasses or preservatives—and none of those candied artificial fruits. "We don't try to make flags of any particular country with our fruitcake," Jomehri joked. Instead, it's filled with moist prunes, dates, raisins and walnuts and real butter, "so once you put a piece on your tongue, you really relate to that fruitcake." —



## FEATURED FLOUR

## Progressive Baker® Pastry & All-Purpose Flours

Lovebirds Café & Bakery uses Progressive Baker® Pastry Flour to make its popular almond, cream cheese, and fruit-filled croissants, as well as other best-selling pastries, including eclairs and strawberry charlottes. "It's easy to work with, and we like the clean, clear packaging," Jahanshah Jomehri says.

Progressive Baker® Pastry Flour is an all-purpose soft wheat flour that delivers excellent performance in a variety of pastry applications. Use it for piecrusts, cookies, cream puffs, eclairs, brownies, cake donuts and muffins.

Lovebirds also uses Progressive Baker® All-Purpose Flour for cookies, muffins, quick breads, and its special biscotti. Progressive Baker® Bread Flour is used to make yeast breads. "It has enough gluten for a nice firm bread, but not too much," Jomehri said. —



For more information on Progressive Baker® flours and bakery ingredients, go to...  
[www.progressivebaker.com](http://www.progressivebaker.com)