

Business: A Force for Good

“The Kringle Capital of The World”, is the nickname of my hometown. Ever since I was little I loved baking, especially baking with my grandpa who worked in a bakery. And I remember the first time my grandpa brought me to a bakery, it was the O & H Danish Bakery in Mount Pleasant. It was a magical experience to be in a bakery with such a rich Danish history and delicious delicacies, one of which is now Wisconsin's state dessert that people would kill to get; the kringle. Kringle is a Northern European pastry notable for its oval shape, delicate, flakey layers, and the filling of either nuts, fruit, cheese, or custard.

Kringle is a true embodiment of Danish heritage and culinary traditions. This much-loved treat has been the Pride of Racine for around 70 years and has earned the title of Wisconsin's state pastry which is a great honor that contributes to Wisconsin's identity. Although O & H Danish Bakery is well known for its variety of kringles, they also sell an array of other Danish pastries. Such as Danish coffee cakes, crown cakes, layer cakes, bread puddings, and Scandinavian bread, as well as “Ohlaf's Treasure”. Many people love O & H Bakery mainly because of their outstanding Danish pastries, which were crafted with love and care.

However, before the pastries there was tradition, dating back to the 1940s. It all started with Christian Olesen who immigrated from Denmark to Racine and started a family business featuring Danish delicacies. Olesen found life in Denmark challenging and moved to America with his family in the hope of a better future for his kids. After learning the baking trade for 25 years Olesen opened his bakery in May 1949 and named it O & H Bakery, which was later purchased by his son Raymond in 1963 and is currently owned by his son Eric since the late 1980s. This bakery plays the critical role of preserving and promoting the family's Danish

origins and culture through their traditional dishes. As reflected in their products you can tell how much the Olesen family wished to share their Danish heritage with the community. The bakery also makes numerous efforts to help keep the Danish culture alive and thriving in Racine by participating in cultural events like the Danish festival.

Speaking of making efforts to engage with the community, O & H Bakery also is involved in various local events aimed at serving those who are less fortunate. O & H Bakery fosters a sense of unity and togetherness that I think all bakeries should have . O & H Bakery is committed to taking the initiative to help those in need, whether it is through donations to local charities or just participation in events, they constantly showcase dedication to the people of Racine. O & H Bakery also always hosts events for veterans on Veterans Day, this year they are giving out 150 kringles for free to members of the service from November 9 to November 11. This shows that O & H deeply cares about veterans and knows of their importance to the country.

Eric Oelsen once said; “there is nothing quite as comforting as a slice of delicious Kringle and a cup of coffee”. And he’s absolutely right, the delight of a Danish pastry combined with the warm caress of a delicious cup of coffee, can create a sense of belonging, contentment, and joy. O & H Danish Bakery provides a warm and inviting atmosphere that enables customers to flock to their business and encourages people to come together. And I know for a fact that this is true because it has happened between my parents and some of their closest friends. This bakery is also the perfect place with the right ambiance for social gatherings and building connections with the community.

Overall, O & H Danish Bakery is more than a place to buy and enjoy the famous kringle. It’s a foundation of the community, a preserver of Danish culture, and a light of unity. Each product is crafted with deep care and respect towards Danish culture. And serve as a vital

reminder of the rich heritage Christopher Oelsen and his family have brought to America in Racine. Mainly this bakery stands for its community, tradition, and the concept of enjoying the good things in life.

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