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Croissants, Anyone? Sandwiches? Salads? Don't Forget the Coffee

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Food:

By Marsden Epworth



Chef Bruce Young hard at work at the new Hathaway Young bakery, café and food store in Millerton. Photo by Marsden Epworth

The sign reads: "Drip Coffee, Self Service, Grab and Go," as though this were one of those gritty little neighborhood spots where people rush in and out with coffee and a desiccated turkey sandwich wrapped in cellophane and hustle back to work. Of course, chef Bruce Young says, that's exactly what the brand new Hathaway Young bakery, café and specialty foods store on South Center Street in Millerton is aiming for — except for the desiccated turkey part.

The space, a vision of glass and mirrors and shining stainless steel, is set up with coolers for salads and sandwiches, bakery shelves loaded with croissants, brownies, baguettes, cakes and pies, counters for soups and hot entrees and small goodies such as spanakopita (Greek spinach pie) and sausage rolls. Just pick what you want, head for the cashier and you are out the door.

Young, the executive chef of HY, the name on the window, and his business partner Pete Hathaway are spending the morning tending to that last-minute stuff: Hathaway with books and papers, Young in the café's spare, bright kitchen preparing a vat of red sauce flavored with ground lamb, rosemary, orange peel and cinnamon.

"There's no table service here," Young tells me, though there are a few tables inside and a few more in a beautiful little side garden so that people can eat in the shop if they want to. "It's not a restaurant," he adds. "It's a bakery," he says emphatically.

Yes, a bakery where you can pick up a tomato and watercress sandwich with hummus on a whole grain chunk of ciabatta (delicious — I had one), a chocolate chip cookie, a gluten-free brownie or a hormone-free chicken salad, and a grocery section loaded with good things like Camembert cheese, prosciutto, smoked salmon, glass jars of Italian tuna in olive oil, Tiptree Victorian Plum Jam and pricey, but special, Marcona almond butter.

In a large grocery-store style cooler, there are ready-made treats such as Young's beautiful pink vodka sauce, kale ravioli, and for the toddler leaning on the icy glass, the Original Klondike Ice Cream Bar.

Then there's Bernadette Cillo's vegan cheesecake that tastes rich and creamy as a cheesecake should, Young tells me.

Young is chopping onions back in the kitchen in the methodical way of chefs, cutting off each end, slicing from top to bottom, peeling off the skin and cutting each half into uniform dice. You can see he is reviewing a list of jobs in his head.

Young, a one-time professional jazz musician (he played saxophone) who worked in a French restaurant in Liverpool some time ago, considers himself a self-taught chef. He reads cookbooks for the fun of it and particularly likes "The Joy of Cooking," and any of Ina Garten's, Jacques Pépin's and Julia Child's books. He simply takes a recipe and, as he says, "deconstructs it," makes it his own.

The Hathaway Young café grew out of Hathaway Young catering and event planning, so now all that is centered here, which

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accounts for the variety of foods, and the pressure, too. But Young is thriving on it all, it looks like.

“Fun is not the word for it, working six- to 16-hour days,” Young says. “But I love what I do.”

Hathaway Young Specialty Foods, Bakery and Café is at 56 South Center St. across from the North East Community Center. It is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 8 a.m to 3 p.m. For information, go to www.hathawayyoung.com or call 518-592-1818.

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