

## Profiteroles, Pralines and Pastries – The Products of a Passion

*Bea the Baker, LLC* (known as Bea Cleveland to friends and neighbors in the Floyd community), has become her own business in the area. Her products receive the recommendation of more than just a few consumers. Her baked goods are sought after from the cases of local merchants, and it's a delight to find the freshest liveries on certain days of each week.

In her own words, Bea tells about the process which brought about the products, and how, ultimately, her dream of a home-based business came true:

*"My family and I "found" Floyd about 3 years ago. My husband is an avid motorcyclist who loved traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the two of us wanted to live in a place that was slower- paced, had open space, was small enough so you could get to know folks, and where gardening wasn't a thing of the past."*

*"Once we decided the type of place we wanted to move to, I began to do online research of Southwest Virginia. While on a gardening website, I had asked some people if they knew anything about the region, and the answer I got was: "we are from Floyd County and wouldn't live anywhere else"."*

*"I did extensive research about Floyd and we couldn't believe such a place existed! We visited so my husband could interview at a couple of places in Radford. He got a job, we found land to build upon, and sold our house in a week! We made our journey here to Floyd, leaving behind all of our friends, family...and the ocean. Although we were on our own, Floyd felt more like home since our very first visit than Massachusetts did throughout all of our years there."*

*"We found the people to be one of the amazing things about Floyd...from the first people we met here - Janice, Debbie, Monty, and Chris at Farmers Supply, Daniel at Finders Keepers and Rob Neukirch (former owner of Oddfella's Cantina)... to the many friends we've made since."*

*"After being here about a year and half, I filled in as a baker at Oddfella's and thoroughly loved using my baking skills and learning to bake in a restaurant kitchen. Rob (Neukirch) guided me through my many questions, encouraged me, and was not only a great boss, but a great friend as well. Rob named me "Bea the Baker", and the name has been with me since."*

*"Having always wanted a small business, and needing to make my own hours, I decided to take a big step and start a baking business. Baking is something I have been very passionate about for 18 years. I've baked everything from bread, bagels, cookies, cakes, etc... The support and encouragement of my husband Kurt, our boys Nate and Aaron, and several close friends throughout this process have made my dream become a reality."*

*"By attending Virginia Small Business seminars held locally, I learned who to contact in order to find out the guidelines and laws for getting my kitchen state certified, and I was able to get the business side of things started. After lots and lots of paperwork and an inspection, I was set to go!"*

*"Two local business owners, Margie Ryan (of Over the Moon Café) and Rose McCutchan (of Blackwater Loft), gave me the opportunity to provide them with things for their bakery cases and thus, start my business. Margie heard from a friend that she needed to sample some of my products and carry them. She had me start filling her entire baking case from then on and we've been working closely to come up with tempting new treats all the time. Upon hearing about me getting my kitchen certified, Blackwater Loft immediately started carrying my products also, and they frequently add new ones, too. Recently, Jackie Crenshaw at The Country Store has started stocking my products. These businesses keep me very busy, each with unique offerings from my bakery. Since these owners felt so strongly about supporting local small business in Floyd, we all have succeeded and I'm able to make a living at what I love to do."*

*"From that point, I haven't slowed down a bit: There are bakery cases to fill with my specialty-baked goods like Peppermint Brownies, Profiteroles, Pralines, Pastries, Muffins and lots of cookies! I'm also constantly developing new products and holiday specialties. Between baking, delivering, and researching/testing/developing new product, I am always busy. But, even on the longest day, I can still smile and say I love what I do."*

*"We've been here in Floyd for almost three years, and my family and I "wouldn't live anywhere else"! Even the ocean we were used to can't compare to the solitude of the mountains, the beauty of the rivers, the site of cattle grazing and the people of Floyd County. We feel truly blessed to be here."*

*-Email Bea @ [beathebakerllc@swva.net](mailto:beathebakerllc@swva.net)*

