

Swiss Bakery

Whitehorse (rural)

Started: 1998

Contact: Urs and Rebecca Schrimmer

Owned by husband and wife, the Swiss Bakery has no storefront. Baking of breads and pastries is done from the couple's home and delivered throughout town—to restaurants and private homes—in a van. Much like an ice cream truck, the Swiss Bakery travels regular routes and music is piped out of the van in residential neighbourhoods to attract customers of all ages.

Getting started: Owner Urs Schrimmer was a pastry baker when he lived in Switzerland. The Schrimmers believed there was room for another baker in Whitehorse particularly for reasonably priced pastries and breads. However the banks were not as confident in the business idea so the owners have had to finance everything on their own. They built the bakery in their basement, with all necessary approvals.



Key to success: Providing quality products on time and at a reasonable price is considered fundamental to the success of this business. Quality includes providing a good looking product and being consistent. Once potential customers look in the van, sales are typically inevitable. Having the bakery at home, with no rent needed for a storefront, has also meant that overhead costs can be kept low, allowing for the baked goods to be priced very competitively.

Lessons learned: Lack of financing from the banks meant a slow start, with everything initially being made by hand. However, the owners are now glad they do not have to deal with the demands or schedules of a bank and starting small made it easier to ensure consistent quality and prompt delivery of the baked goods. One of the biggest difficulties has been getting supplies from local food wholesalers. The bakery now orders some specialty products directly from southern suppliers.

Future of business: Future plans include steady growth but no major expansion. The Swiss Bakery hopes to increase its sales to restaurants and maybe also to hospital or government offices.