

Left, Kerry Vincent shares her thoughts on Schubert's signature Moravian Sugar Cake. Right, digital renderings of the shop before and after the Food Network remodel.

## Food Network pays a visit to 'The Sweetest Spot in Nazareth'

by DANIELLE S. TEPPER  
Special to the Home News

As the story tells it, the quaint borough of Nazareth, Pa. was founded in 1740 by Moravian settlers for the price of a single rose. Kerry Vincent perhaps focused on this little chunk of history when she suggested adding crystallized sugar roses to Schubert's Bakery's famous Moravian Sugar Cake; a decision that has had Steve Riccelli's loyal customers in an uproar since Wednesday, April 2, when Schubert's was featured on an episode of Food Network's "Save My Bakery."

Kitchens a bit before working in the computer business for 16 years. When he was ready for something new, he and his wife A.J. took the floundering bakery off Ernest Schubert's hands in 2008.

"No disrespect to Mr. Schubert, this was his passion for many years, but he was getting old, his health was going, and he was burned out," explained Riccelli. "I think I came in at the right time."

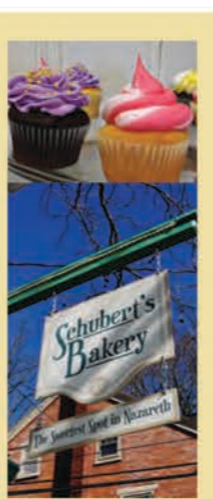
Riccelli had looked at the business as more of an investment opportunity, he said, and found himself trying to rebuild the customer base that had once been regulars but had perhaps lost faith in the little shop.

"Part of our goal was to reach out as far as we could to get back old business," said Riccelli. "It took us a while to get that core customer base back because they walked away. Our forte is the Moravian Sugar Cake, but it wasn't getting the attention it deserved."

Enter Kerry Vincent, world-renowned sugar artist and Food Network Challenge judge, not exactly known for her soft touch.

"She's somewhat of an eccentric for sure," Riccelli said. "She really likes to hear herself talk."

**Schubert's Bakery is:**  
Stephen Riccelli, Owner  
Lisa Herman, Manager  
Lori "Sparky" Moyer, Customer Service  
Greg Earle, Shop Assistant  
49 N. Broad St.  
Nazareth, PA 18064  
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to sink a battleship."

Riccelli, a self-proclaimed creature of habit, didn't take kindly to having his niche product criticized. "It didn't even cross my mind for a millisecond that they were going to make any changes to it," he said. "We had put so much work into bringing it back to life and making it lighter and fluffier, not by changing the recipe, but the process of making it."

"Without a doubt, the cakes that Kerry creates are beautiful," Riccelli said in the episode, but he added later, "We're not in the cake business. We make birth-

day cakes, special occasion cakes, small wedding cakes, but it's not our livelihood, it's not what we do."

Vincent, as a sugar artist, is all about presentation. "People don't buy unless it's pleasing to the eye," she said during the episode. She showed the Schubert's staff how to use fondant (or "big girls' play dough," as she called it) and sugar pearls to dress up Riccelli's standard sugar cookie in order to hike the price up to \$4 a pop.

"A sugar cookie is not going to make or break this bakery," Riccelli countered.

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KERRY VINCENT, host of Food Network's "Save My Bakery," descends on Nazareth's Schubert's Bakery. The episode aired Wednesday, April 2 at 8 p.m.

### Schubert's Bakery on Food Network

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(The special of the day on April 3? Schubert's standard 40 cent sugar cookies.) "I don't think she associated that she was in small town America," said Riccelli. Vincent's three main critiques of the menu were

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the decorating skills, the sugar-laden sugar cake, and the sugar cookies. Before too many customers start to worry, Riccelli says they haven't taken a single suggestion into consideration and intends to keep it that way.

"We have a product that is untouchable and we're not going to change it and she knew that," Riccelli explained. "We knew before they came that we needed to work on decorating. Are we going to do a lot with fondant? No. Are we working on the possibility? Yeah. The icing that she tasted may not have been mixed the way it should've been because we were banging stuff out so fast."

He continued, "She had to find things to pick on. It's her nature; it's the way the show's designed. I don't mind getting picked on a little bit, but none of this has changed."

While Riccelli resisted change to his baked goods, he has all good things to say about the final renovation, which includes bright white walls, photos of old town Nazareth, and a small bar seating area.

"We had no clue what they were doing out here beyond, every now and then, a construction worker would come through and the curtain would shift and we would see a color," Ric-

celli said. A designer paid them a visit prior to production to find out what they'd like, so they had a slight say in the matter, Riccelli said, but not really.

"The last thing that I expressed was, 'I want to step back in time.' I would like to see something with a motif that takes people back to an old-fashioned time period," explained Riccelli. "That was it, we walked away from it and this is what we ended up with. We made a pact not to cheat and peek, so when they unveiled it in the show, that was truly the first time we were seeing it. It was a good surprise."

Perhaps the best surprise of the entire ordeal is hearing the positive feedback from customers old and new. Riccelli says he has heard from people all over the country who grew up in Nazareth or have family in town, reaffirming their love for Schubert's products.

On the sunny Thursday morning of April 3, smiling faces came through the door one right after the other, crying, "We saw you on TV last night!" An older couple from Stroudsburg stopped in shortly after 10 a.m. simply because they figured they'd take the drive to check it out.

Riccelli's future plans are to "just keep plugging away," he says. "I'm slow for change and I think consis-

tency is important. We take a lot of pride in our work; before the makeover, after the makeover, six years ago, six years from now. Everything we do. We enjoy the customers and the friendships and little chats. It's not so much about money; we're doing fine. It's more about making people happy."

Riccelli added, "To be criticized on a national level is an attention builder, but we are what we are and I wouldn't change it for the world."

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Colonial Regional

#### Retail Theft

Walmart Security reported that they had a man and woman in custody for retail theft on April 4. Terrell Sorey, 20, and Stephanie Lix, 20, both of 1518 Lehigh St., Easton, were seen in the Lower Nazareth Township store with a shopping cart which contained a garbage can. Inside the can was \$322 worth of merchandise. The pair attempted to exit by the grocery section and were taken into custody by Walmart Security. Colonial Regional Police charged Sorey and Ms. Lix with retail theft and criminal conspiracy. They were arraigned by District Judge Grifo.

Ms. Lix's bail was set at \$5,000 unsecured and she was released. Sorey's bail was set at \$10,000 unsecured. He was committed to Northampton County Prison under a detainer from the Adult Probation Department. All the merchandise was recovered.

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