



# WHAT'S IN STORE

A sourdough obsession led this dentist to open **Emmer and Ash**, a neighbourhood bakery in Harbord Village.

**L**OVE STORIES THAT begin and end," explains Dr. Philip Haddad, owner and head baker at Emmer and Ash bakery on Harbord Street. "Emmer is one of my favourite grains and one of the first grains discovered by humans — that was my beginning. And Ash was what I envisioned all my bakers doing at the end of the day, sweeping all the ash off the floor."

Now somewhere in the middle of his baking story, Haddad, a full-time dentist by trade, became "obsessed" with sourdough a few years ago. "People would say, 'you should sell this,' so I started contacting all my bread and bakery heroes and was really lucky to quietly travel and work with some of the best in the world. I came back here and found the spot for Emmer that I bought with my business partner. Three years in the making, it opened in May," he says.

It took some elbow grease transforming the Harbord heritage building into today's open, light-filled bakery (and covered patio)

with the kind of neighbourhood feel you'd expect from a spot that's been there for decades. Ash, the upstairs bar and dine-in restaurant, is still a work in progress.

But the success and popularity of Emmer seemed to rise like a loaf overnight with breadheads lining up to get their hands on a precious double-baked pistachio croissant before they sell out (usually within the first 30 minutes of the day). "It's been just thrilling and overwhelming," says Haddad, who was determined to create a space not only beloved by patrons, but also by the people who work there. Bakers with their flour-dusted aprons can be seen rolling dough and shaping loaves behind Emmer's front counter, not hidden away working until the wee hours of the morning.

"We took a different approach," Haddad explains. "I've heard horror stories of the food industry and I wanted the staff to feel safe and like they were front and centre, not employees that we have working overnight. This is about them." **f**

## THE UPPER CRUST



### Bake it better

"It's important for me that bakers and pastry chefs spend time with their families and are paid living wages. Because we use premium ingredients and pay our staff well, this means our products cost a bit more. A croissant or loaf of bread that takes 36 hours to produce is not a cheap product."



### Seeing green

"The hardest thing to get is the pistachio croissant, which is a double-baked croissant filled with a Sicilian pistachio paste and it's also covered with them. It is green on green on green — people thought I was crazy. Now people fight for it and some have been angry when there's none left."



### Is butter a carb?

"The Bacon Buddy is inspired by the iconic English breakfast. It's got loads of smoked bacon and HP Sauce. It's not a diet food, but it's delicious. My favourite is the patty melt, a smash burger patty on our marbled rye sourdough with Thousand Island dressing, caramelized onions and Swiss cheese."