

A taste of the good life

Crawford's Village Bakery & Distinctive Foods

BY DEBORAH QUAILE
THE COMPASS

They started by growing corn and tomatoes, opening a small store, and later adding apples, apple paraphernalia and apple pies. The family even grew roses commercially, with a one acre greenhouse, selling mostly to flower shops.

"My father started the business 32 years ago in 1967, and was the idea man. Mom has a very active role behind the scenes, and my sisters and I grew up with it, working after school, weekends, and through university. My two younger sisters are currently doing other things but are never away for long," Kelly Crawford says with a smile.

But over time, what surprised the Crawfords was that their pies sold the best. As they began baking more, the venture evolved and the family found that home made baked goods were what drew the crowds. About 25 years ago, the Crawford family enterprise found their niche by concentrating on food.

"Some things have come and gone, but our business has continued to evolve," she continues. "Our main direction is the food we make."

"Our foods don't have preservatives; we make them to be enjoyed now. And a lot are 'entertaining related'; that's what people want and know us for. The old traditional foods take longer to make, and most of them are not life's necessities,

although our bread is! If a customer was going to someone's house and needed a hostess gift, they could find something special here.

"There are lots of staff

it's important because it becomes an experience and not just a purchasing outing. They know our food is prepared fresh. Someone may be able to find what they need on the shelves, but they prefer to have a hot jar of chili sauce or peach jam that they've just seen being made. Everything, like our pie pastry, is made by hand and baked daily."

In the Atrium Café, bright and cheerful with its white trellises and cascades of ivy, diners can savour Crawford's soups - right now with autumn flavours such as butternut squash or pumpkin apple - quiche, salads, steaming pot pies, and sandwiches made with their own fresh breads. Desserts are just as tempting, with their own pies or squares as a fitting finale.

The restaurant is open for tea and lunch, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., on weekends until Christmas, and is closed between Christmas and Easter.

Not only does Crawford's sell edible items, but housewares and unique kitchen accessories, pottery by Jan Koven, chocolates by Debora, Kitchen Connoisseur creations, cards, giftware and books - many regarding their relative, author Lucy Maud Montgomery.

"When Maud lived in the [Presbyterian] manse, she brought my grandmother up from the island," Kelly recounts. "My grandmother

met Murray Laird, fell in love and stayed."

Murray was from an old established Norval family. Peter Laird, Kelly's great-great-great grandfather came to Canada from Vermont with his mother in 1823.

"He was born there but the family was originally from Scotland. Loyalist troubles were beginning and they wanted to remain with people who were like-minded, so they came north and settled on this farm (where the business is situated) and the farm across the road. It was originally 160 acres. They cleared the land and eventually had a large family. The Lairds were farmers but also carpenters; my great grandfather and his brothers helped build the Presbyterian church in Norval, and other barns and farmhouses in the area. So the family has always been here."

Marion Webb was Montgomery's cousin, and Kelly's grandmother. She'd been given L.M.'s old recipe book, and eventually Kelly and her mother Elaine used it as the basis for creating *Aunt Maud's Recipe Book*, first published in 1996. The volume includes such comforting sections as *Old Friends Come to the Table*, *Down Home Favourites*, and *Afternoon Tea at the Manse*. The book is well written, graced by many photos and a wealth of information about the author.

"The second printing of *Aunt Maud's Recipe Book* will be available for the Montgomery Christmas weekend, which is Saturday, November 27," Kelly adds.

Crawford's is located at 2809 Hwy. 7 West, Norval. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., except December 25, 26 and January 1 to 6. Call 905-451-0347 or 1-800-668-7437 for more information.

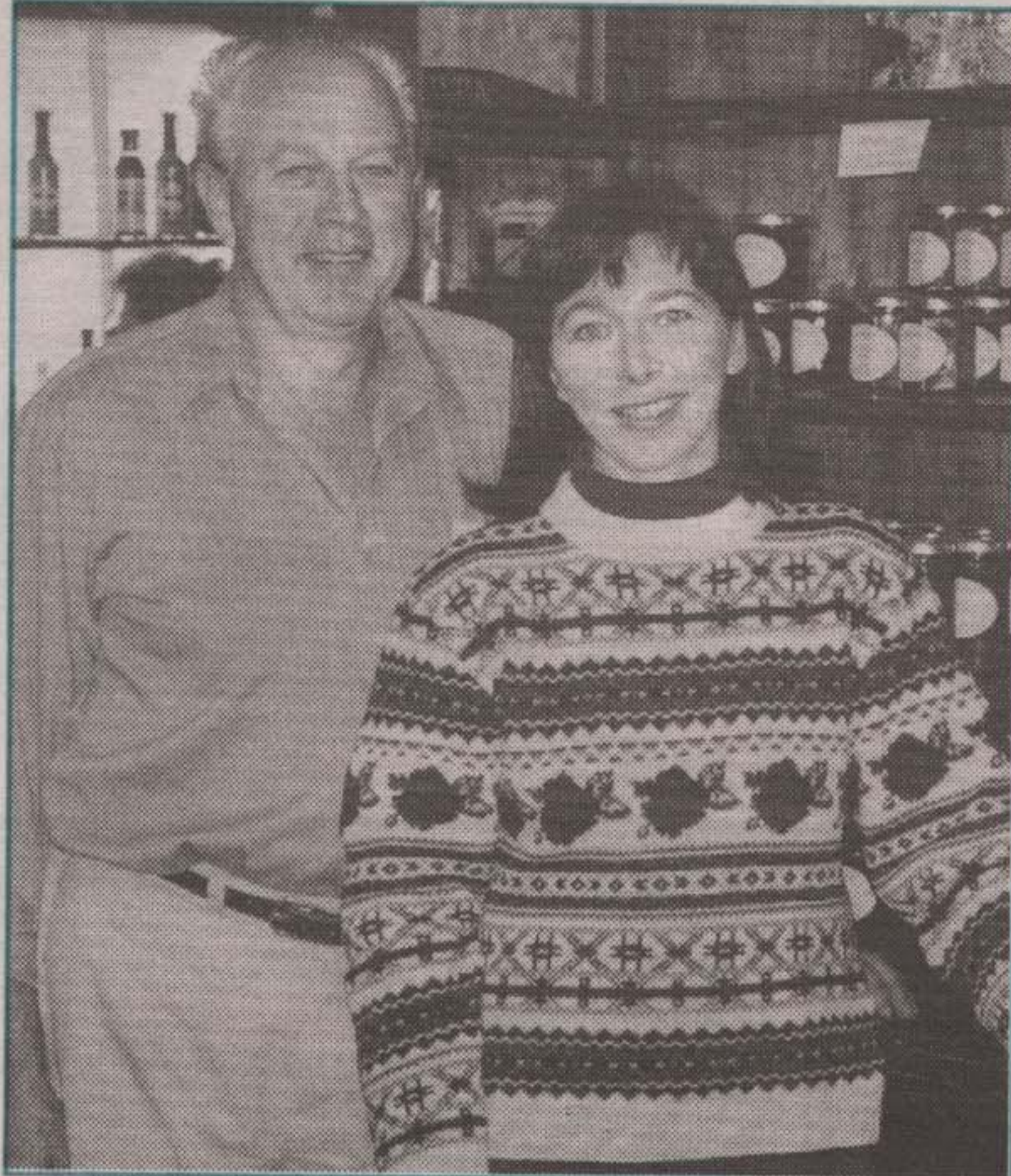


PHOTO BY DEBORAH QUAILE

A FAMILY ENTERPRISE: Bob Crawford and daughter Kelly are justifiably proud of their selection of home made preserves, which are made in large kettles. They try to make the jams and jellies on weekends when visitors can overlook the process.

who've been with us for quite a while and who carry a great deal of the load. We couldn't do without them. Altogether, there are about 20 people during the peak seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas."

The Crawfords believe that their customers like to be part of the whole food experience, and that's why their oven is in full view, so children and adults can watch bread coming fresh and fragrant from the oven, or trays of cookies slid in to bake.

"Even the kitchen in the restaurant isn't entirely closed," Kelly adds. "I think



PHOTO BY DEBORAH QUAILE

FRESHLY BAKED: Delicious food is what's given Crawford's an outstanding reputation. People who need something unique but don't have the time or inclination to bake for themselves love to pick up fresh baked desserts. Betty Daniels, one of Crawford's special staff, takes a tray of hot apple pies out of the oven.

Christmas at Crawford's

We're busy as elves! Mrs. Crawford is making batch upon batch of Light and Dark Fruit Cake, with lots of raisins, almonds, cherries, butter and rum, of course. Kelly is wrapping gorgeous Gift Baskets, full to overflowing with good things to eat from Crawford's. Betty is baking snappy Gingerbread, glorious buttery Shortbread, dainty Christmas Fancy Cookies and hearty, chocolate packed Specials, all of which we'll arrange on Cookie Trays or in Cookie Boxes. Karen is simmering tangy cranberries, juicy oranges, crunchy pecans and lots of ruby port to make our famous Cranberry Orange Pecan Relish with Ruby Port. It's the best for turkey! Debora is dipping fine Belgian Chocolate Truffles, and creating magical toy trains, sleighs, and Christmas trees out of chocolate too. Mr. Crawford will lend a hand mixing our fabulous Plum Pudding, and we've buttery Brandy Sauce to go with it. There's beautiful Christmas Napkins and dripless Candles for your holiday table, and tasty Stocking Stuffer Ideas for Christmas morning. We're all set to make your Christmas entertaining and gift giving a joy!

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2809 Hwy 7 W., Norval 905-451-0347 1-800-668-7437 Open Daily 9-6