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An Arab and a Jew, Mixing Flour and Water in Costa Rica

At the Little Bakery @ Corner of the Sky, a Jordanian-born agent and an Israeli filmmaker build a family-owned venture grounded in craft, faith and the quiet pursuit of peace.



Gyan Shahaf Peled (left) and Michael Flutie at The Little Bakery @ Corner of the Sky in San Juanillo, Costa Rica. The family-owned artisan bakery opened 40 days ago and has quickly developed a devoted local following.

SAN JUANILLO, Costa Rica — On most mornings at The Little Bakery @ Corner of the Sky, the work begins quietly: sourdough folded by hand, trays of cookies portioned for the day, and a small pot of cardamom-scented Arabic coffee warming slowly over an open flame — the kind of unhurried ritual that, here, often begins simply with flour and water.

What draws attention here is not only the bread, which regulars say sells out quickly, but the partnership behind it.

The bakery was founded by **Gyan Shahaf Peled**, an Israeli-born filmmaker, and **Michael Flutie**, a Jordan-born entrepreneur who built much of his career in New York's fashion and entertainment industry.

Mr. Flutie began his career working with the late John Casablancas at the elite modeling agency Elite Model Management, where he helped represent a generation of defining supermodels, including Cindy Crawford, Stephanie Seymour and Naomi Campbell. He later founded Company Management, establishing a presence across fashion, television and digital media.

Their meeting came through a mutual friend, **Irena Bartolec**, whose introduction led to an early conversation — and soon after, a shared recognition around craft, discipline and timing.

Mr. Flutie said he was initially drawn to Mr. Peled's sourdough bread — deeply fermented, structured and quietly confident in its craft.

"I loved the bread," he said. "That's what brought me in the first place."

The cookie came as a surprise.

Mr. Flutie first encountered Mr. Peled's baking while searching for sourdough bread. What he discovered instead was the cookie.

"I've tasted cookies all over the world," Mr. Flutie said. "The moment I tried Gyan's, I knew his skill level was extraordinary."

The cookie — now known simply as the **BITE** — is a thick sweet chocolate cookie, firm at the edges and soft at the center, folded with pieces of Swiss chocolate that melt into the dough.

At the Little Bakery, the BITE has quickly become a signature.

"Every time someone walks in and asks for a BITE and a Victoria," Mr. Flutie said, "I feel pure joy."

Together, the two men decided to partner and open the bakery themselves. They did so slowly and without fanfare.

Today, The Little Bakery @ Corner of the Sky operates from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday — hours that reflect both the rhythms of sourdough and the founders' deliberately human pace.

"We are building a bakery," Mr. Flutie said. "But it is also our home."

Yes, they sell bread and make coffee. But just as often, they are hosting friends, welcoming locals and greeting travelers who have heard — usually by word of mouth — that something quietly special is happening here.

"Our passion," he said, "is to give our patrons what we ourselves hope to find when we go out for a coffee and a slice of banana chocolate bread."

The project is already beginning to expand. In the coming months, the bakery plans to introduce a simple lunch service and open what the founders call **The Lobby @ Corner of the Sky** — a hospitality-driven community space designed for gathering rather than rushing.

Mr. Flutie describes it as "a hotel lobby without the rooms." Visitors will be able to meet friends, work remotely, look at art, play backgammon and order from a limited, carefully edited menu — an environment conceived with the rhythms of the modern digital nomad in mind.

In a country with no standing army and a long-standing reputation for peaceful living, the founders see the space as something more than a café.

"A place to gather," Mr. Flutie said quietly. "A place to breathe. And, always, a place to break bread."