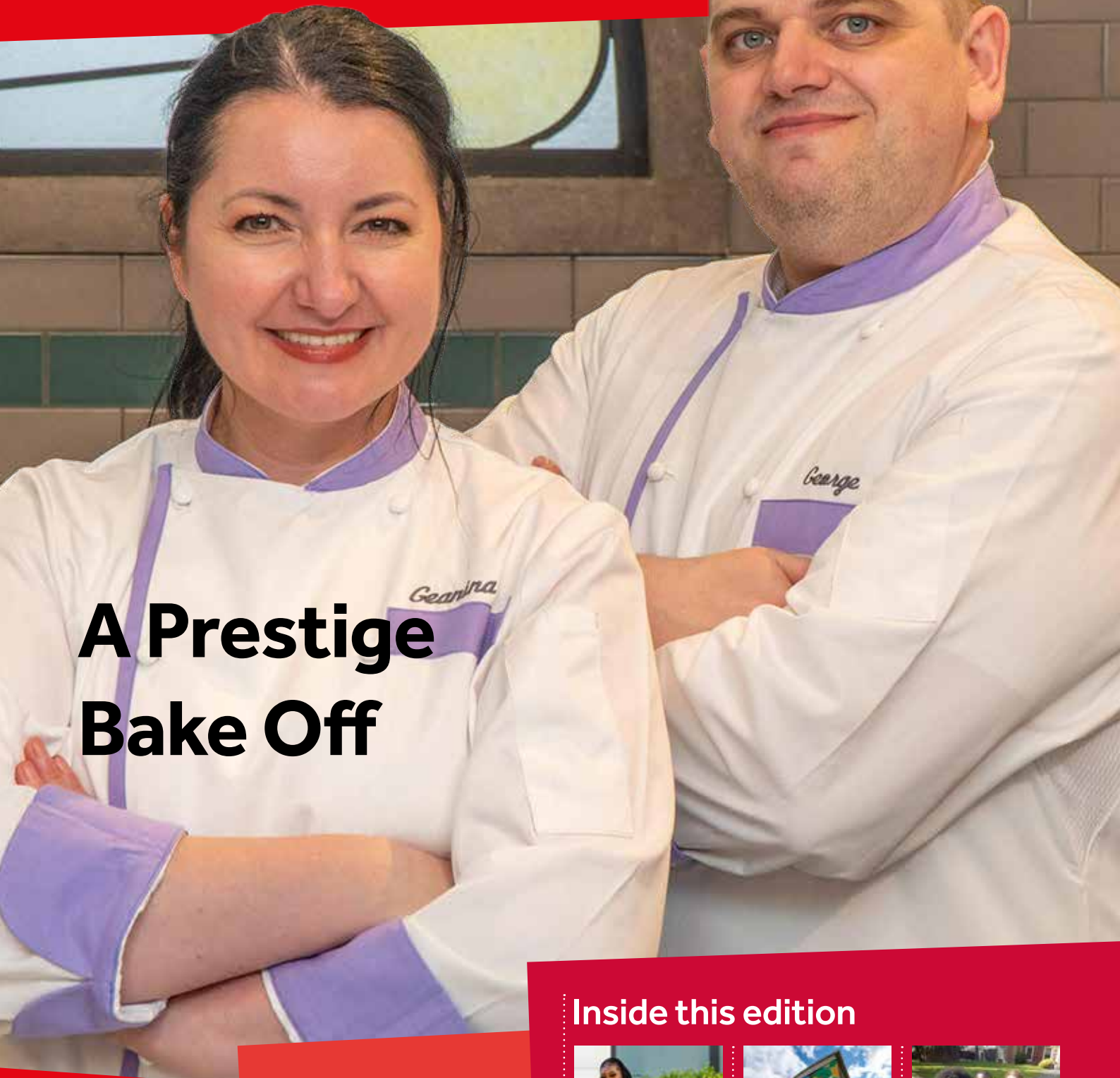


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October - November 2021



A Prestige Bake Off

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Prestige Patisserie: Bake Off semi-finalists

Husband and wife team and owners of Tottenham-based, Prestige Patisserie, George and Geanina Ursache recently featured on the popular British television baking competition, *Bake Off: The Professionals 2021*. The couple, who have been married for 19 years, baked their way to the semi-finals after creating a chocolate feature that left the renowned judges wanting more.

When asked about their motivation for going on to *Bake Off*, Geanina explained, "We wanted to be challenged to be honest, we wanted to be brave." George highlighted that the pair desired to expand their skills. "We wanted to see our value, sometimes you lose yourself in work and everything, so we were like let's do it!"

Interestingly, the couple confirmed that they were in fact scouted by an assistant producer on Instagram and applied within 15 minutes of the deadline. "We didn't expect what came after, and 15 minutes after that, someone called us."

They described the process on the show as an "exciting challenge." "We woke up at 4am

or 5am in the morning, working until 8pm in the night! We never had so many nerves before in our lives, but it was nerves, and it was excitement. It was a process of learning. It was the joy to meet other people and to meet the judges, who are iconic, of course, for every single pastry chef in London."

Their considerable hard work paid off as the pair made their way to the semi-finals. Describing their emotions when hearing the news, Geanina exclaimed, "We couldn't believe it! We were so, so happy, so excited. We didn't have any words to explain our feelings in that moment."

The impact that *Bake Off* has had on Prestige Patisserie has

been substantial. "[Customers] are coming from everywhere lately, Devon, Lincoln, everywhere. So many people, every single nation coming to see us." The couple were particularly excited when they learned that the Romanian Embassy had reposted Prestige on Facebook resulting in Romanian families travelling across the UK to visit the bakery.

Geanina, who has been baking since she was a young girl in Romania described growing up with four brothers at home and baking with her mother and grandmother. "Everything was made from scratch and at Christmas and Easter, the house always smelled like a celebration because of the baking." She continued, noting, "I've always been passionate about baking. I remember when I was very little, and I grew up in the countryside with my grandmother. When the mud was soft, I used to roll baguettes out of mud and pretend to sell them. My grandmother, she used to offer me candies in

exchange for the baguettes, so it was probably something that I was meant to do in my life." At 16 years old, Geanina qualified as a pastry chef after receiving her Diploma in Confectionary.

Romania was also where the couple met and married before moving to London in 2009. George, a qualified chemist, described their journey in the UK. "My first job, it was in Tottenham, at a bakery called Flourish Craft Bakery". Geanina, who followed George a month later, and who could not speak a word of English at the time, became their head pastry chef. Some years later, the couple began their own entrepreneurial journey with Prestige Patisserie.

Prestige Patisserie, an independent artisan bakery and winner of four Great Taste Awards, has made significant progress since it started five years ago. From a stall in Holcombe Market during the week and weekends at the Tottenham Green Market, to a flourishing bakery garden in Seven Sisters, south Tottenham.

The couple, who have lived in Tottenham for 11 years, credit their success to the support received from the community, expressing "We didn't choose Tottenham, Tottenham chose us."

"To be honest, all of our friends that live in different boroughs, have always said we are lucky to live in Tottenham, because the community there is so warm and welcoming and so different." Geanina explained. "You don't need to go anywhere else. In Tottenham we have breweries, we have pubs, restaurants, cheese makers, you have everything, and we know each other like a family."

What's next for Prestige Patisserie? The pair confirmed a book describing their journey is on the horizon. "One of our biggest goals, even before Bake Off was to write a book, that's the biggest dream we have right now." The couple also plan on hosting classes and incorporating some of their new Bake Off skills into a series of dining experiences for customers.



If you missed George and Geanina on *Bake Off: The Professionals*, you can catch all episodes on the Channel 4 on Demand website. Prestige Patisserie Bakery Garden is less than a 10-minute walk from Seven Sisters Station. You can also follow Prestige Patisserie on their official website www.prestigepatisserie.com and Instagram: [@prestigepatiss](https://www.instagram.com/prestigepatiss)