

NORTH

The French pastry from Italy that's flying off the shelves

Richard Pearce, Preston Leader

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Alfred Abbatangelo's guilt-free croissants have developed a cult following.

Meet the dairy-free, no added sugar vegan pastry taking over Melbourne. And as far as taste goes, the creator says “the proof is in the pudding”.

Classica International owner Alfred Abbatangelo is on a personal mission to improve lifestyles and diets with healthier foods, and spent four years perfecting the recipe for his Vegan Spelt Sourdough Croissants.

Unable to find a producer for the spelt-based product in Australia, he outsourced the production to Italy and now imports thousands every month.

Mr Abbatangelo said he hadn't received a single piece of negative feedback in the two years he'd been selling them, and every cafe that had taken on his product removed the original from their stores.

“We had no idea it was going to be this successful,” he said.

“Everybody can't believe how good it tastes. Some French tourists bought them and said it was better than what they buy back home.”



The croissant recipe took more than four years to perfect.

The Reservoir business sells a range of dairy-free and gluten-free products, and will release a new range at Australia's first Free From Show and Allergy Show on July 12 to 14.

Classica International will unveil its hazelnut chocolate spread, which uses no palm oil, sugar or dairy products, and their vegan, gluten-free and sugar-free drinking chocolate.

"They're really going to rock the boat," Mr Abbatangelo said.

Mr Abbatangelo also hopes to add Danish pastries to his product line soon.

"We're all about enriching people with healthier choices," he said.

"There's a swell of people changing, moving over to something different and healthier."

The croissants are currently available at select cafes around Melbourne and Mr Abbatangelo aims to sell them direct to customers in the coming months.

For more information visit the [Classica International website](#).