



*Giuseppe Dell'Anno*

## **Mastering the Art and Science of Panettone and Packaging**

By Pam Davis, Staff Writer

Though he's still the new guy after only five months on the job, many of Giuseppe Dell'Anno's colleagues feel like they already know him—really well.

For ten weeks this fall he was a fixture on U.K. television as a contestant on the popular [The Great British Bake Off](#) (in the U.S., the show is called *The Great British Baking Show* and streams on Netflix). After mostly mastering his way through 30 bakes, including a focaccia, an Amarena cherry cake, and tiramisu slices, [Dell'Anno won the competition](#) and went home with the coveted glass cake stand trophy.



*Before joining Sealed Air, Giuseppe Dell'Anno competed on and won The Great British Bake Off television competition and was awarded a trophy cake stand.*

Since the baking show finale aired, Dell'Anno has been flooded with requests for appearances and interviews, all while continuing to work fulltime at Sealed Air. "I'm trying to keep a cool head about this but there is the cynical part of me that says *fuoco di paglia* (in Italian), which means fire from straw. It's a big flame but will die out very quickly," he said. (We're not so sure about that, right Giuseppe fans?)

### Recipe for Success

Dell'Anno works at Sealed Air's facility in Passirana, Italy and serves as senior manager of EMEA product and process innovation. It's a demanding job that requires leading a team of R&D technicians, process engineers, and others to combat the current global raw material crisis.

"My role as a manager is to provide the team with the right framework and opportunities to foster their innovative ideas," he said. "All of the people who work on my team have solid technical backgrounds. My job is to get them together and give them structure, so we all go in the same direction."



*Dell'Anno working in his Sealed Air office in Passirana, Italy.*

His R&D team focuses on the reformation of products and material product development for protective food packaging. "Pardon the pun but they are like chefs in the kitchen," Dell'Anno said. "They have a long list of ingredients and have to put them together in the right way so that in the end the 'cake,' which in our case is the material, does what it's supposed to do."

Ram Ramesh, vice president of materials, performance and innovation at Sealed Air, agrees with the analogy. "Baking is like product development," he said. "Science, some art, and lots of creativity are needed."

As a chemical engineer with a Ph.D. in advanced materials who has spent his career managing research in the field of industrial composites manufacturing, Dell'Anno said he's trained to think of the process

that happens in a bake—chemical or cake. “The complexities are different of course,” he said. “If you screw up a sponge cake, it’s a shame. If you screw up an Airbus wing, it’s a problem. The environment is different, but the concepts are transferable.”

Dell’Anno took the job with Sealed Air not only to advance his career but to move back to Italy, his home country, from Bristol, England where he and his family have lived for the past eight years. His wife Laura and their three sons, ages 5, 7, and 9, will move to Milan this summer. For now, he’s commuting between the two countries.

“There aren’t many places in Italy where you can do R&D at the level Sealed Air does it,” Dell’Anno said. “So, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me because I could keep doing research and development, which is what I want to keep doing, in a space that is close enough to what I used to do, which is composites, polymers, and plastics, and in a place that was good for me logistically and geographically.”

### **Family Ties**

Dell’Anno’s father was the spark that ignited his love of baking. Cosmo Dell’Anno was a professional chef and passionate baker.

“My dad baked for us every Sunday. I used to wake up in the morning and have breakfast while he was putting his cakes in the oven, with the smell of cinnamon and vanilla in the air. I loved it,” Dell’Anno says.

It wasn’t until he moved out on his own that Dell’Anno realized how lucky he had it at home with all of his father’s baked goods to sample. But because his father had done all the baking, Dell’Anno never learned how to do it himself. It wasn’t until he became a father that he jumped into baking full force.

“I wanted to give my kids the same feeling I got from my dad,” he said.



*Baking in his home kitchen, Dell'Anno applies an Italian meringue buttercream crumb coat to a carved vanilla layer cake.*

Though his health is faltering, and he doesn't bake anymore, the elder Dell'Anno is supportive of his son's culinary success. "I'm very lucky because he lived long enough for me to do this while he could still understand it," Dell'Anno said. "That is probably the most important thing about the whole experience for me. Everything I did on the show, I did to celebrate his legacy."

The next step for Dell'Anno may be writing a cookbook based on his father's recipes. He's been wading through his father's old notebooks and "Turns out it's a treasure trove of tricks and hints and bits of information. I haven't even started scratching the surface of it," Dell'Anno said.

His initial idea was just to tidy up his father's notes and create a special memory book for his sons but since his baking competition win, he's realized a lot more people would be interested in an actual cookbook. "Doing a proper book that's very curated, very high quality with well-tested recipes that can become a bit of a bible for people who like Italian cooking, that is something I would really consider," he said.





*Dell'Anno's almond cookies*

Just don't expect a cookbook to be on store shelves anytime soon. Dell'Anno's role at Sealed Air comes first and baking second (sorry Giuseppe fans). He said it could take at least a year to test and bake all the recipes in his spare time.

But when it comes time to publicize the cookbook, the beloved TV baker has the publicity thing down pat: "I abandoned shyness a long time ago," he said with a laugh.