



Sold out! 500,000 gluten-free pies

■ Audrey Ellard Walsh

IT'S a very merry Christmas for busy bakers in Little Island as Cork-based company Denise's Delicious Gluten-Free Bakery announce they have sold the last of their 500,000 hand-finished gluten-free mince pies.

One of Ireland's leading producers of cakes and baked products for coeliacs and those following a lifestyle free from **gluten**, wheat, dairy and yeast, **Denise's Delicious Gluten-Free** Christmas range is available from all major supermarkets, artisan food stores with special Christmas Hampers still available to order online.

The sell-out coincides with **Gluten-Free** Baking Week which takes place from December 14 to 20, and marks the end of a very successful year for the company.

Already available throughout Ireland and the UK, **Denise's Delicious Gluten-Free** Bakery increased their production by 20% this year, launching their Christmas range of mince pies, puddings and festive cakes in the German, Italian and French gourmet markets for the first time.

Creating an additional 100,000 mince pies for these new markets, had proven to be a wise move, with **Denise's Delicious** products appearing on counters across Europe including in the prestigious Galeries Lafayette in Berlin and Paris. A family business, **Denise** is joined by her husband Derek and parents, Michael and Mary O'Callaghan with sister Louise helping out over the busy festive period.

A former investment banker, Ms O'Callaghan was inspired to explore **gluten** free cooking by her father who is coeliac.

What began as a home-cooking passion to support him, prompted the opening of Ireland's first gluten-free artisan bakery in 2008. The business has grown substantially since then and now employs a team of 13 at its base in Little Island.

Speaking both French and Italian, Ms O'Callaghan found the Italian buyers love good, high-end baked treats while in Paris, gluten-free is a current trend.

"We have been very busy since August planning and working on creating half a million individually hand-finished mince pies this year.

"It's a very busy but exciting time for the bakery to be entering new markets in Europe and one we hope will pay off and increase into 2016."

To nab a last minute **gluten** free gift including **Denise's** cookbook **Delicious – Recipes from my Gluten-Free Bakery** see www.delicious.ie.



STAR BUY: Denise O'Callaghan, whose bakery in Little Island has tasted international success this Christmas, courtesy of her **gluten-free** mince pies, inspired by her father Michael.

Picture: Clare Keogh