

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our De Dutch bi-monthly newsletter, De Pannekoek Krant. This is the first of a three-month (six-issue) trial period. We think there may be interest, and if so, we'll continue. If not, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

It's almost impossible these days to have a conversation or read a publication that doesn't mention the value of telling your story. At first glance, this seems a little self-indulgent, but when we take a step back and look at the thousands of people we have interacted with over the last 50 years, it's obvious there may well be some interest in our story—or should I say, the story of thousands. The interesting thing is that our story is historic, but it's also an ongoing, living thing. Since 1975, those stories have included customers, employees, franchisees, suppliers, charities, professionals (lawyers, accountants, consultants), schools, universities, sports teams, and so many more. In this publication, it is our intention to not only tell some of those stories but to give you a peek under the tent at what we do and who we do it with. We will share some interesting facts about our roots, books in our library, podcasts that educate, some personal stories, stuff we are doing, and stuff we plan to do or want to do. Our story, however, isn't a story at all without you. We want to hear from you. What is your connection to De Dutch? I cannot promise that what you tell us will be shared here, but who knows. Enjoy, and hopefully there will be enough interest for us to continue beyond the initial trial period.

## In The Beginning

Church bells throughout the village begin to ring welcoming in 1934 - Geertje Dijs would later tell her eldest son that they were in fact announcing his arrival and would do so every year from then on. Born Gerrit Jan Dijs he would be known as John. The second child of six and the eldest of three sons, his role was predestined.

Bodegraven is small village situated in the province of South Holland in the heart of farm country, an area that specializes in cheese (kaas). John's father owned the local cigar store, made kaas wagons and was part of the volunteer fire department. The family lived in a typical two storey house on one of the main streets in the retail part of town behind their cigar store (the house still stands there on Kerkstraat).

The clouds of war had already started to form in Europe before he was born and by the time he was seven Holland was occupied and run by the Nazis. For a young boy it was an adventure, stealing shoe polish from the German soldiers and trading cigars (considered a luxury item) for things that were more life sustaining.

The horror of the German occupation was given a face for young John in December of 1944. The liberation had already begun in the south east that fall but as winter set in the allies were bogged down and their progress was stalled. Realizing their days were numbered, the Nazi occupiers in the rest of the Netherlands resorted to greater brutality and viciousness in an effort to enforce their will. On Christmas Eve of 1944 the Mayor of Bodegraven was taken to the town square by the Nazis and shot in retaliation for the killing of a German soldier by the underground. This

senseless act, with the war's end in sight, would be burnt into John's memory for the rest of his life.

Post-war Holland was like much of the rest of Europe - rebuilding, recovering and breathing new life into things that had been deferred during the war years. Washing kaas boards in the Rhine during the day and riding his bicycle to Gouda to attend business school in the evening, took up all of John's time. The Netherlands had compulsory military service so at the age of 19 he was inducted into the army. A year or so into his army stint he and a friend were given the opportunity to leave the army and emigrate to Canada - it was a tempting adventure they simply could not resist.

It was his parents' 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and the whole family was back home in Bodegraven to celebrate. Now in the restaurant business in Vancouver, it was only natural for him to pay attention to the various restaurants and eateries in his homeland. Of course when he left so many years earlier, post-war Holland had scant few restaurants but as with so many other things, this too had changed. One evening he went with his family to a restaurant located in a recreational forest called Lage Vuursche.



This was no ordinary restaurant, it was a pannekoek house - Pannenkoekenhuis "De Vuursche Boer". He had never been to a pannekoek house before and he was so taken by the whole idea that he said to his father "I am

going to take this idea back to Canada and make a million dollars". Then in 1975 he opened the first pannekoek house in Canada - "The Original Dutch Pannekoek House" located at Knight Street and King Edward and the rest, as you already know, is history.

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### Best Ever Christmas Gift Card Sales

This past Christmas season De Dutch an online gift card offer that seems to have struck a cord with many. The offer was buy \$100 and receive \$125. . .this was an amazing offer that was a bonus for many customers. This is a reminder the \$25 bonus cards are valid until March 31, 2026. We are looking forward to many happy redemptions!

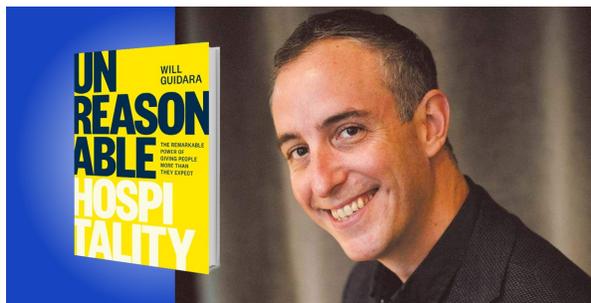


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### Focus on Hospitality

What is hospitality and isn't it the same as service??? Short answer is no. In so many ways "service" is check the boxes time. . ."did you smile", "is the table clean", "did you explain the features", etc. Hospitality is so much more. It starts with authentic engagement with our guests. For some, particularly new to this, the idea of having a conversation that's not just about taking an order, is a challenging concept. I get that, many these days communicate via text. . .as someone of "vintage" (that means I'm an old guy. . .LOL), I didn't grow up texting and don't always feel comfortable doing so. I guess it's the opposite to those who mostly text. But, here's the grand thing about being able to talk to strangers. . .by nature human beings are social creatures and once you open up to others, they generally reciprocate. Making that kind of connection generally enhances the experience for both parties.

Final thought, one of my favourite books is *Unreasonable Hospitality* by Will Guidara. He describes the difference between service and hospitality. . . "service is black and white. . .hospitality is colour". . .I love that.



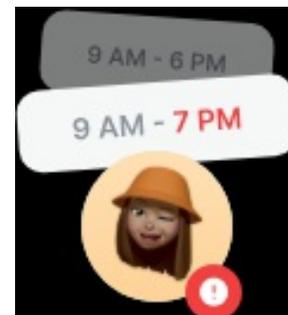
We have many hospitality focused folks at De Dutch . . . recently two were praised via Google. . . Liza at Poco:



1/20/2026  
*This is my second time coming here. The place is very clean and well-organized. My server, LIZA was very kind and patient, and she answered my questions about the omelet ingredients with care and a sweet smile. It was a very pleasant experience*

-Kimia Rajabi

and Sam at Burrard Landing:



1/25/2026

*Sam was our server and he has great energy, Bert attentive , great attitude, I'd hire him for my company for any service centric role, and he helped us pre order food quickly prior to our ferry ride. Great service Sam thank you!*

*-Sean Marthinsen*

Stay tuned for future hospitality stars!!!

## Investing In “Do Better”

Let me take a brief stroll down memory lane. My first restaurant was a small 40-seat establishment in Kitsilano. Most of the equipment was used or domestic... in those early days that was the way to go when you're new to the industry and didn't have a lot of money. From day one I was focused on upgrading everything from the dishwasher to the grills, deep fryer, the dining room decor, washrooms, signage and so on. Nothing was sacred. By the way, that first location cost \$40,000... nowadays a single flat top grill costs over \$20K.

Today we look for new ways to improve the guest experience. This includes methods of preparing and cooking food, expanded menu offerings, and tech integration. Two recent significant investments include switching our point of sale system to Touch Bistro and the addition of Rational Combi Intelligent ovens. Touch Bistro integrates a variety of apps that appeal to many guests and uses tablets which speed up order preparation. The Rational ovens have multiple benefits including consistent high-level cooked food, reduction of human error, and the ability to add oven-cooked items.



I must say none of this is cheap. . .installed, ovens are \$25K+ each, Touch Bistro \$6K - \$10K plus ongoing fees. I do believe despite the cost the end result is worth it. . . Do Better.

## Nederlandse Woorden

Dutch	English
Tot Ziens	goodbye
ja	yes
nee	no
alstublieft	please
dank u wel	thank you
ja, graag	yes, please
pardon	excuse me
goed	good

We hope you have found Issue 1 to be informative and maybe even entertaining. . .keep your eyes open for Issue 2. . .stay authentic.

Bill Waring.