

Baking saved North Shore man during Holocaust

By John M. Glionna, Los Angeles Times

Of all the guilty culinary pleasures that Ernie Feld whips up at his tiny pastry shop in the forest, one is particularly bittersweet: the popular poppy-seed strudels.

That's the delicacy Feld made for the Nazi SS officers who held him captive as their personal baker during the final years of World War II, a time when Feld literally cooked for his life, using empty champagne bottles to spread his dough because rolling pins were in short supply.

At 90, he still runs Ernie's International Pastries on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe, artfully preparing the treats he has made for seven decades – his signature strudels, Austrian Sacher torte and lemon Napoleons.

He's a wartime survivor who has kept his sweet, grandfatherly sense of humor, whether he's serving up one-liners to customers or recalling his painful past. While Feld was held at a makeshift German-run airport in Budapest, three dozen of his family members – including his beloved mother, Sara – went to the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

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