



Clockwise from above: Dotty and Dave Dalquist in 1944; Gold bakeware with Bundt cakes; Nordic Ware headquarters in 1946 and 2021; the Dalquist family (Left to right: H. David Dalquist III, Dotty Dalquist, Nicholas Lynch, Susan Brust, Jennifer Dalquist).

Bake it till you make it

Nordic Ware brings family and friends together with Scandinavian-inspired kitchen supplies

by ANA GASCON IVEY

Dave Dalquist had just returned to Minneapolis after serving in World War II, when he and his wife, Dotty, resolved to start their own business. As they brainstormed ideas with Dave's father and brother, they dug into their family roots, which were steeped in Scandinavian specialty recipes. But the kitchenware they needed to make these specific meals wasn't available in Minnesota, even though the state was (and still is) a melting pot of people from Nordic countries like Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Humble beginnings

With \$500 in their pockets, Dave and Dotty launched Nordic Ware in their basement, creating and selling products like the ebelskiver pan to their Nordic neighbors and beyond. (The pan is used to make small, round, fruit-filled pan-

cakes.) They even developed and trademarked the original Bundt® pan.

"In the late 1940s, a group of women in the Minneapolis area approached my grandfather to see if he could produce a tube pan for them," explains Jennifer Dalquist, Dave and Dotty's granddaughter and now the company's executive vice president of sales and marketing. "My grandfather cast the pans from aluminum, our specialty, to conduct heat more evenly, and added a fluted design."

He called it a Bundt pan from the German word *bund*, which loosely means "a gathering of people." Americans failed to embrace the pan until the 1960s, when a woman won second place in the Pillsbury Bake Off contest with a recipe for a Tunnel of Fudge Bundt cake.

"Suddenly, every kitchen in America needed to own a Bundt pan," says Jennifer.



Since its inception, Nordic Ware has sold over 75 million Bundt pans, and the company today boasts more than 50 different styles of Bundt pans in various sizes, themes and shapes. They also manufacture more than 500 other kitchen items, such as cookie sheets and cake and pie pans, in their 300,000-square-foot plant in Minnesota (all products are made in the USA).

Giving back

Dalquist credits Nordic Ware's success to years of employee perseverance and dedication.

"We've had literally dozens of employees who began with our company straight out of high school or college and have

spent their entire careers with us," says Jennifer. "Many began on the factory floor and grew into leadership positions. It is not uncommon to encounter Nordic Ware employees who have been here for 30, 40 and even 50 years."

To thank their workers and the community, Nordic Ware awards higher education scholarships to their employees' children and grandchildren. They're also committed to donating 5% of their annual net profits to charitable organizations located primarily in Minnesota, such as Loaves & Fishes, a nonprofit that serves community meals to those in need.

"We also donate our kitchenware products as part of disaster relief efforts when natural disasters strike communities, to help get residents back on their feet and in a position to cook basic meals for their families," says Jennifer.

All in the family

Nordic Ware's operations feel like a gathering of friends and family. In fact, several of Dave and Dotty's descendants have worked for the company since they were kids. H. David Dalquist III, the founders' son, started out painting wooden handles on krumkake pans for a penny each when he was in grade school. Today, he's Nordic Ware's CEO.

Susan Brust, one of the founders' daughters, serves as the company's executive vice president. And Nicholas Lynch, Dave and Dotty's grandson, is a mechanical engineer at Nordic Ware. He leads the team that has built most of the company's machine automation systems over the past five years.

"It's not uncommon to find our family leadership team rolling up our sleeves and diving in at all levels within the company," says Jennifer. "We all strive to be problem solvers and solution finders for our customers. Rather than say, 'We can't' or 'That won't work,' we say, 'Let's find a way to make it happen.'" ■

Ana Gascon Ivey is a writer, editor and content strategist.



COMPANY INFO

Company
Nordic Ware

CEO
H. David Dalquist III

Employees 500-plus

Headquarters
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Website
nordicware.com

Items at Costco
Nordic Ware Gold Baking Sheets 3-Piece Set (Item 1400872); 12-Cup Bundt Pan (Item 1481857) Warehouses/Costco.com

Quote about Costco
"The Nordic Ware and Costco brands both represent the highest-quality products at outstanding values. I believe Nordic Ware's popularity with Costco members is due in part to our products being made in the USA, using American labor and following sustainable manufacturing practices. We continue to enjoy a business partnership that has lasted more than 30 years."

—H. David Dalquist III, CEO, Nordic Ware