


The First Bridge

Claudio González and Ornella Bornancini turned their vision of bringing Argentine tradition to Hollywood, Florida, into a thriving neighborhood staple with Del Plata Bakery. When traditional banking options were out of reach due to a brief U.S. credit history, Ascendus stepped in. With a \$25,000 Fifth Third Micro Loan and fast-tracked guidance from loan consultant Adriana Contreras, the family completely modernized their space, expanded production, and laid the groundwork for long-term growth.



When Claudio González and Ornella Bornancini decided to bring a piece of Argentina to Hollywood, Florida, they had a clear vision: a neighborhood bakery rooted in Argentine tradition, serving the community they had chosen to call home. In May 2023, [Del Plata Bakery](#) opened its doors on North Federal Highway, offering medialunas, alfajores, facturas, and pan casero to Broward County. What they were building from scratch, in a new market, was not just a business. It was a long-term commitment.

Today, Del Plata Bakery generates \$487,249 in annual revenue, employs four people, and has completed a full renovation of its Hollywood location, financed in part by a \$25,000 Fifth Third Micro Loan from Ascendus. The bakery that once depended entirely on personal savings and daily discipline now has a formal credit history, a modernized space, and a team that has grown well beyond its two founding partners.

Building From the Ground Up

Starting a business from zero in a new market means learning every part of the operation firsthand. The business Claudio and Ornella acquired did not perform as advertised. They audited every corner of the operation, identified what wasn't working, and began replacing it with their own recipes, their own standards, and their own vision. Revenue grew steadily. The clientele expanded. But the space itself needed work, and the equipment needed to keep pace with where the business was heading.

From the start, Claudio and Ornella ran the operation with discipline. Every decision was deliberate. Every dollar was tracked. The step-by-step approach they describe was not just a philosophy. It was the foundation of the financial profile that would later make them strong candidates for formal credit: no delinquencies, no collections, consistent revenue growth, and a FICO score of 759 by the time they applied with Ascendus.

“At first it was pretty hard. But it taught us that we had to go step by step, little by little, until we reached our goals.”

The Renovation That Could Not Wait

By the time Del Plata had been open for roughly a year, the business had outgrown its space. The operation was functioning. Customers were returning. But the physical location, the floors, the ceiling, the lighting, the refrigerated and display cases, reflected the bakery it had been, not the one it was becoming. Claudio and Ornella knew the renovation was the next necessary step. They also knew they needed capital to make it happen.

The breakdown of how Ascendus loan funds were used tells the story precisely: \$10,000 toward renovations, \$10,000 toward inventory and supplies to match the expanded capacity, and \$5,000 toward social media and marketing to let Broward County know the business had changed. The investment was planned, not improvised.

“We had already been wanting to renovate the business because it was old, outdated. We needed to add things, buy more equipment, because thank God the business was growing.”

The Gap That Ascendus Filled

As the business grew, Claudio and Ornella began looking for financing to accelerate the renovation. The challenge was one of timing: as a business under two years old, with accounts still building their U.S. track record, traditional financing options required more history than they had. Private lenders offered capital, but at interest rates that didn’t reflect the strength of the business.

The referral to Ascendus came at the right moment. Adriana Contreras, Ascendus loan consultant, understood exactly what Claudio needed and moved quickly. In a process that had stretched over many months without a result, Ascendus delivered an approval in ten days.

“I reached out to Adriana, told her what I needed, she sent me the requirements, we submitted everything, and in ten days we had an answer. It was such a relief, because from that moment we started planning the whole renovation.”

What the Capital Made Possible

The renovation transformed Del Plata's physical presence completely. New floors, new ceiling, new lighting, upgraded refrigeration, new display cases. The business Claudio and Ornella had been quietly building was finally visible from the outside. Customers who returned after the renovation expressed genuine surprise. New customers who had not noticed the bakery before began walking in.

The impact on operations was direct. With better equipment, production capacity increased. With a stronger visual presence and a social media push, the customer base expanded. The team grew from two to four employees, with additional part-time support. Household income stabilized at \$83,266 annually, supporting Claudio, Ornella, and their two children.

"Thanks to Ascendus, we were able to grow in sales because the business grew, it improved aesthetically, we could buy more equipment, more things. That allowed the business to grow faster."

What the loan also provided was a formal business credit record. Del Plata Bakery now has a repayment history attached to its name, not just to its founders' personal credit. That distinction matters for every conversation with a lender that comes next.

The Family Behind the Counter

Del Plata is where Claudio and Ornella spend most of their waking hours, averaging 45 hours per week, alongside their children and their team. The bakery is both a business and a daily commitment to the community they serve, and a place where their children see, every day, what sustained effort looks like in practice.

"It's a source of pride to be here, to see the business keep growing, to see people enjoy it. And the people who come back after the renovation, who are surprised by what the place looks like now, and get to enjoy it with us."



For Claudio, the message to other entrepreneurs in Broward who are in the same position Del Plata was in two years ago is direct:

“Work. Look for opportunities. Stay in the day-to-day of your business. And start looking at organizations like Ascendus, which can give you the chance to grow much faster.”

The Impact of Their Journey

- **Business Impact:** Del Plata Bakery completed a full renovation of its Hollywood location following the \$25,000 Fifth Third Micro Loan from Ascendus. The business now generates \$487,249 in annual revenue, has expanded its team to four employees plus part-time support, and has established a formal business credit history for the first time since opening.
- **Household Impact:** The loan gave Claudio and Ornella the ability to invest in the business at the pace it required rather than waiting years to accumulate savings. Annual household income reached \$83,266, providing stability for the couple and their two children. The renovation and operational growth reduced the financial uncertainty that defined the business’s first two years.
- **Community Impact:** Del Plata Bakery has become a neighborhood anchor in Hollywood, FL, serving Broward County with Argentine baked goods and a renovated space that reflects the quality of what’s inside. The team of four employees represents direct job creation in the local economy. As a participant in the B.R.I.D.G.E Broward Program, Del Plata’s story is part of a larger effort to extend this same first bridge to 36 businesses across Broward County.

Claudio and Ornella did not need someone to build their business for them. They had already done that. What they needed was the first formal bridge, the capital that reflects the work you have already done, not the credit history you haven’t had time to build yet. Ascendus provided that bridge. Del Plata Bakery crossed it.

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