



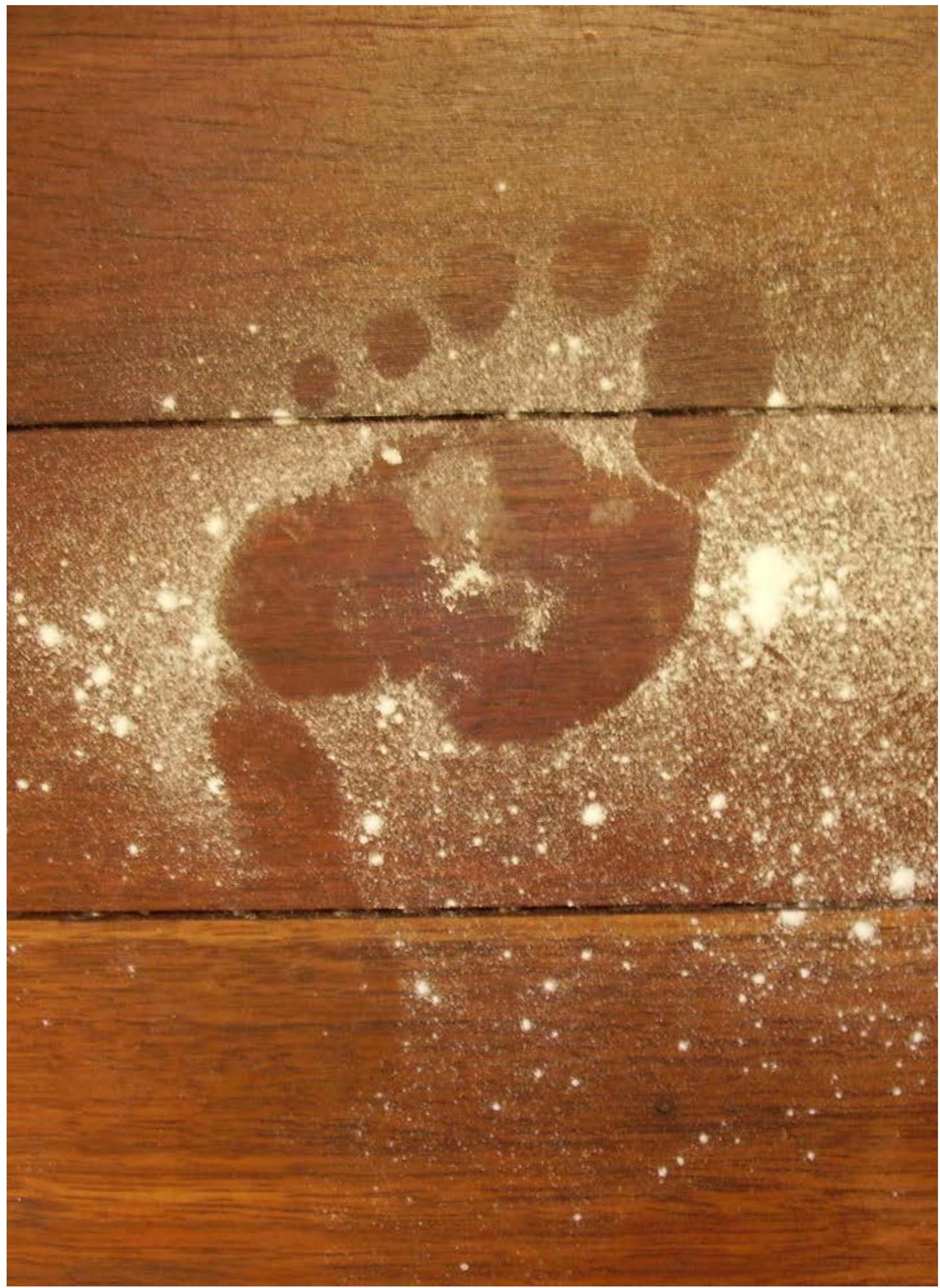
ISSUE **EIGHTEEN**



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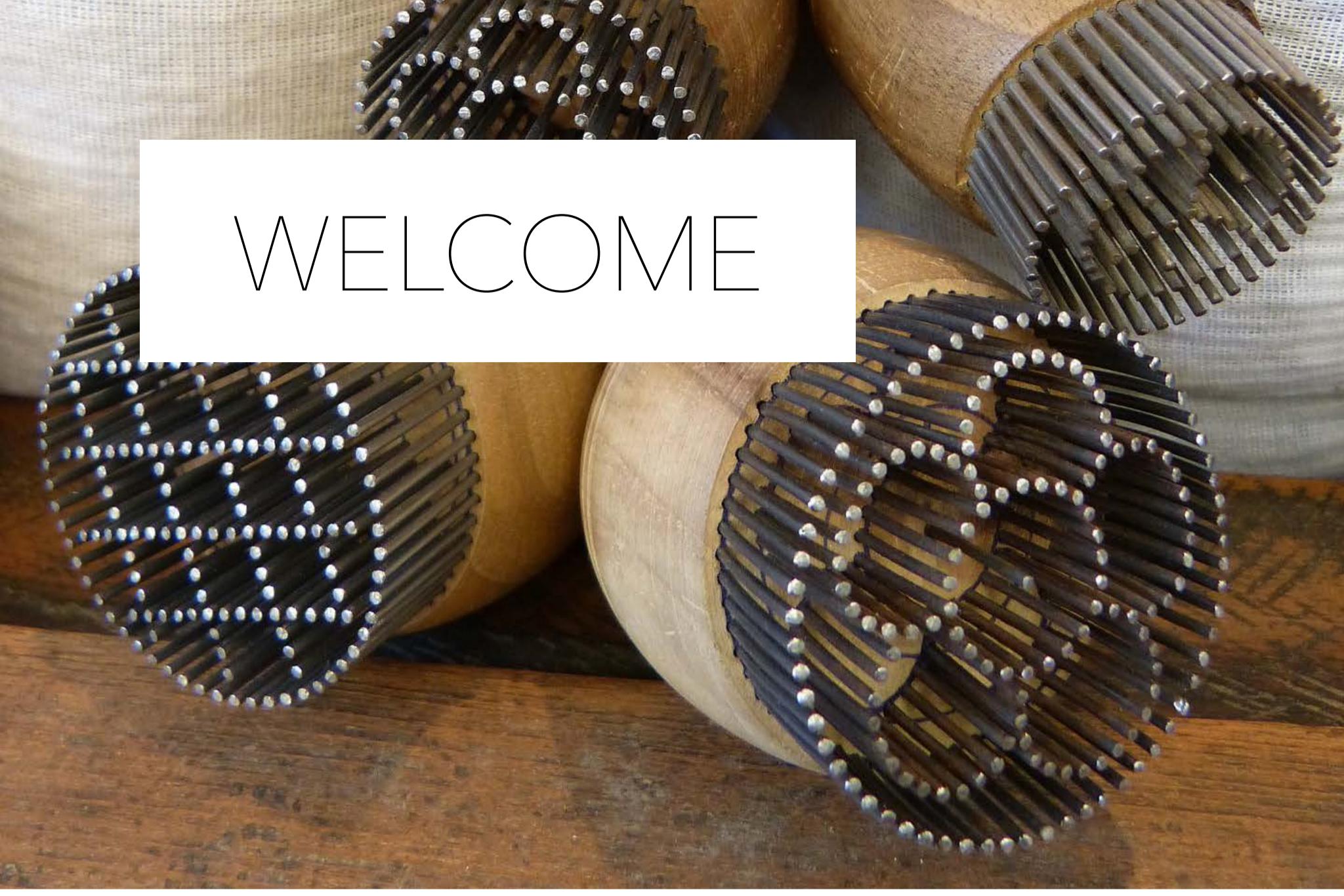
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After four amazing years, it’s time to take a deep breath and think about the future and where we want the magazine to be in years from now.



WELCOME

A young woman walks into a bakery. On the shelf, she notices a new type of bread that invokes her curiosity: the bread is labeled "Encoded Bread." She buys one, brings it home, and takes a closer look at the packaging. On it, she finds a website URL, www.breadcode.com.

On the site, she is asked to enter a four-digit code made of symbols stamped on the loaf of bread. When she does as instructed, she gets to peek behind the scenes of the bakery and read more about the baker who made the bread she is eating—what she's like, and why she enjoys making this specific bread.

Now, don't try visiting www.breadcode.com. I already did, and I can tell you the site is not up.

I first found this story when searching for videos to share on the magazine's [Facebook](#) and [Tumblr](#) pages. The clip got me excited, and when I couldn't find the site, I got in touch with the video's maker.

It turns out the video is a part of [a project](#) Louisa Zahareas made in her design studies, and not a real bakery's initiative (although this could be an interesting idea for one to experiment with!).

On her site, Zahareas writes: "The project focuses on the idea that food can act as a mediator for personal connection with a stranger. More specifically the project focuses on the production and consumption of bread, not only as a staple food common among many cultures but also as a substance that is loaded with spiritual associations in many different religions."

She goes on to explain that she thought of her project as creating a new ritual that will connect the consumer to the person producing the bread: "The purpose of the new designed ritual is to communicate who made the bread to the consumer."

This designed ritual is still waiting to be implemented by a creative bakery somewhere, but the sentiment behind it is already getting some support.

For example, in this issue, you'll meet Amy Halloran, a writer who has followed the rise of a new kind of economy around wheat, bread and beer in the Northeast states of the United States. In her new book, [The New Bread Basket](#), she explains how these bakers, millers, and farmers are not producing commodity foods—nameless, faceless products that are mass-produced to be consumed in total anonymity. Instead, their businesses build community. In a way, this is the very same ritual of sharing a bit of yourself with your customer that Louisa Zahareas designed in her project.

A good example of this kind of thinking is another person interviewed in this issue, Christopher MacLeod, a baker from Minneapolis who bakes bread using local flour and delivers it to his subscribers by bike.

While he doesn't give his customers a code stamped to bread, he does something similar: he shows a part of himself in everyday connections as he meets his customers face to face.

As usual, in this eighteenth issue of Bread Magazine, you will meet an interesting bunch of bakers and bread lovers who I'm sure will inspire you to bake more bread and to challenge yourself through new ideas.

And there are tips and recipes too.

So, without further ado, let's get started with the year's final issue.

Happy baking, and thanks for reading!

Jarkko

"The purpose of the new designed ritual is to communicate who made the bread to the consumer."



DOCUMENTING THE RISE OF A NEW GRAIN ECONOMY

Words: JARKKO LAINE and AMY HALLORAN

Photos: AMY HALLORAN, FOREST STARR, and HENRY BUSH

"Wheat is my favorite storyteller," Amy Halloran writes in her book, [The New Bread Basket](#), published this summer, and I find myself nodding in agreement: No matter what modern naysayers have against the grain, what no one can deny is that wheat's history is the history of our culture. Throughout the history of humankind, agriculture, wheat, bread, and fermentation built our civilizations.

We don't even have to look all that far back in history to see that many basic things that we take as granted, such as children's summer vacations, were first developed for the needs of farming.

Then, industrialization happened, and we lost that age-old connection to the land that feeds us. Wheat became a commodity, and we "amputated the social limb of farming from the body of our country, relegating agriculture to an unimportant rank, tucking the work out of sight and largely out of mind." And so, most of us became completely unaware of even the most basic ideas regarding the grain.

In the book, Halloran pointedly asks: "How come we don't know the first thing about the flour that makes our bread?"

Seen this way, it's no wonder that the quality of the bread sold in stores isn't what most customers care about—or that so many people were so quick to demonize gluten, without really understanding the science behind it at all.

For Amy Halloran, the journey into the world of flour started with an oatmeal ganache bar her husband brought her from a business trip. The fresh, regional flours used in the cookie were so good that she says she could taste them "[e]ven against a backdrop of good butter and chocolate." And she was hooked. So, the taste and health benefits from using well chosen grains, carefully ground into beautiful flour clearly play a big role in this wheat renaissance.

But, reading the book further, it becomes clear that what we're dealing with here is about more than just taste. It's also about the place wheat has in our society—even about the survival of our cultural inheritance. Maybe we can even get civilized once again.

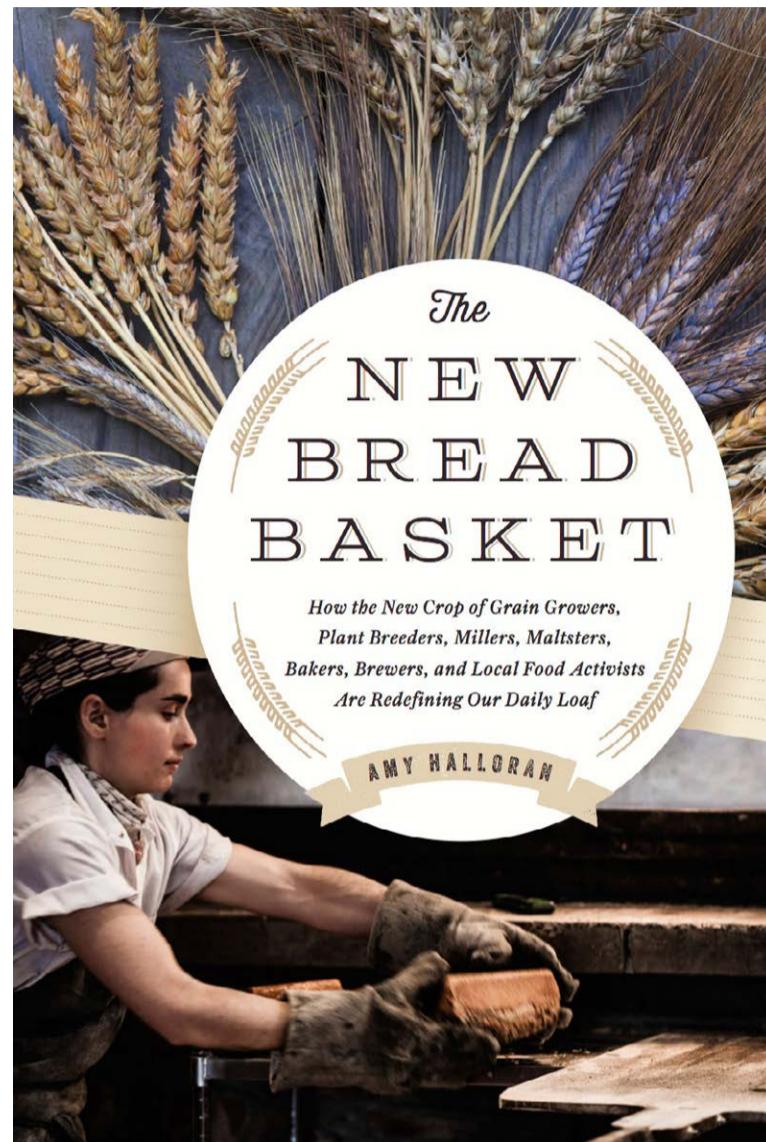
Luckily, some of this is already happening.

The New Bread Basket presents us with an inspiring group of farmers, millers, bakers, and beer brewers who are hard at work making their communities better understand wheat—and their work with it—and bringing wheat back to its rightful place in the northeastern United States.

There is something powerful when communities can stand together in saying: "*This is our bread, made with local flour, made from our local wheat.*"

To learn more about the book and Amy Halloran's thoughts on the bread and wheat revolution, I asked her a few questions.

Here's what she told me.



*"How come we
don't know the first
thing about the
flour that makes
our bread?"*

**

Jarkko: Let's start with the typical question: Why did you decide to write *The New Bread Basket*? With just one recipe (for your famous pancakes), it's clearly not a recipe book. Who should read the book, and what do you hope to achieve with it?

Amy: As soon as I tasted fresh flour, I knew I had to know more about it. As soon as I met the people making this food, I started joking about writing a book about them. These grain pioneers are so engaging. Their stories really caught me, just like that really flavorful flour I tasted in an oatmeal ganache cookie.

I think the book is for people who are curious about food, and I do see it as a cookbook of sorts, full of recipes for change. I want to show people what is possible, not so they can go out and become farmers or millers, but so they can understand more about the work that goes into our daily beer and bread.

Storytelling is a tool.

The stories we hear and read inform the choices that we make throughout the day. I wanted to show people what I saw so that we can all see more small-scale grain projects happening.

"Storytelling is a tool. The stories we hear and read inform the choices that we make throughout the day."

Jarkko: In your book, you explain how we have lost connection to where wheat and flour (and thus also bread) come from. Wheat has become a commodity that is mostly out of sight and out of our minds.

Why do you think it's important to change this and make it all visible to the consumer once again?

Amy: I used to run a farmers market, and I was in love with the USDA bumper sticker campaign **KNOW YOUR FARMER**. That phrase is a good starting place, but we really need to know more about farming, and the intermediate steps it takes to get food into our hands.

This used to be common knowledge.

Think of all the artwork and literary references to wheat. Herman Melville compares the sea to wheat fields in *Moby Dick*, and Tolstoy shows the destruction of wheat fields in *War and Peace*. Our language is littered with the artifacts of bread's importance: money is dough, and even in this gluten-free era, we are still breaking bread when we gather to eat.

I don't think these are or should be dead metaphors.

Cultivating wheat, baking bread, and feeding each other have been central activities in Western civilization. I think that these activities have the capacity to renew the human bonds that we are losing to technology and lives lived in cars and at desks.

Jarkko: Because of this broken link between the farm and the table, it's easy to have misconceptions about wheat. What are some of the common misconceptions that you were faced with in researching for the book?

Amy: The people that I interviewed were immersed in grains, and I didn't encounter many doubts about wheat until the book was published.

Now, traveling with the book, maybe half of the questions I get are about gluten.

My name is Amy Halloran. I have a new baby brother. I am seven years old and I like pancakes.

People say they are trying to cut back on wheat, the way people talk about cutting back on drinking or smoking.

One chapter looks at doubts about wheat through the lens of researcher Lisa Kissing Kucek, who did a literature review to assess what is known about wheats and digestive issues. You can read her paper, [A Grounded Guide to Gluten](#). And she does an excellent job of describing our human history with wheat [in this video](#).

Jarkko: An inspiring part of "The New Bread Basket" to me is that it's a story of people: the new generations of locally focused producers are not simply smaller versions of the big players. How would you say the local grain economies are different?

Amy: Each of the groups I profiled has very different characteristics: different levels of existing farm infrastructure, different climates, and different motivations for making something else happen with grains.

The first chapter shows a farm, mill and bakery partnership outside of Ithaca, New York. Farmer Thor Oechsner needed his organic feed crops to net more per acre, so he began investigating making a mill. Miller Greg Mol had been working in vegetables and wanted to make more of an impact on regional food systems. Baker Stefan Senders made a shift from academics to baking.

These three businesses support each other and show how commerce makes community.

Other areas show community-making commerce. Grassroots interests in Skowhegan, Maine made The Kneading Conference, Maine Grain Alliance, and Somerset Grist Mill. Organizers wanted to rebuild regional agriculture and help develop bread baking tools and skills. The event and the mill foster a vibrant seedbed for grains projects within the state and throughout the Northeast.

In Oregon, community interest in food security, and helping people of all incomes access agricultural products of the region, initiated conversations about staple crops in the Willamette Valley. This area grows many different things, and is known as the turf grass capital of the world; when that turf grass economy tanked in 2008, people were ready to shift gears and grow food grade grains.

Miller Nan Kohler started Grist & Toll in Los Angeles because she loved fresh flour, and wanted to deliver it to the public. Her work reminds me of the reasons people start micro bakeries—wanting to make real food and real livelihoods.

I hope more people follow her lead and build mills in cities.

Jarkko: *Also, why do you think people get so excited and supportive of these new ventures? Do you think this enthusiasm can be replicated anywhere in the world?*

Amy: I could talk about flour and malt all day long, and most of the people I've met in grains have this excitement, too.

I think that people are tapping into some deep human connections with working in foundational crops. And that there is something really powerful driving people in these pursuits.

As far as replication elsewhere, I don't understand enough about the way grains reach people in other parts of the world to guess whether these kinds of small-scale grain projects can fit inside other systems.

"I think that people are tapping into some deep human connections with working in foundational crops. And that there is something really powerful driving people in these pursuits."



But the example of Denmark shows the potential for new kinds of grain production and demonstrates the longevity of what might be seen as a trend. Plenty of people from the States have traveled there, seeking input to apply to their own ventures.

Jarkko: About a year ago, I wrote that 2015 would be a big year for bread, thinking about the growing local wheat movement. But in reality, things are moving much more slowly.

Why do you think the change is taking so long? What are some of the biggest obstacles to the rise of these new local grain economies?

Amy: I wish things were going faster too!

I have the patience of a flea, and as I was writing the book, I got a little down considering the pace of change. When I posed my disappointment to June Russell, from the Greenmarket Regional Grain Project, she reminded me how much the grain supply, and milling and malting capacities, and baking and brewing use had grown in the Northeast.

This isn't going to happen overnight, and there are a lot of reasons why. Trying to build an alternative to cheap commodity foods is tough, and grains are a land and equipment hungry crop. Switching gears in farming is a glacial process. The markets need development before growers can change their systems, and the public needs schooling about the differences in locally grown and processed grains. The fact that production is tucked out of sight and out of mind works against that awareness.

Price is such a breaking point, especially in bread. People want bread to be cheap, and can't justify dedicating much money to higher-quality loaves. Bakers don't have big opportunities to discuss their ingredients with their customers, and have to fight the pressures of making their businesses profitable.

The saving grace in this lament is that beer is a product that people will pay lots of cash for, and I think the growing interest in local beer and malt will eventually help people see that bread is worth extra money, as well.

"The saving grace in this lament is that beer is a product that people will pay lots of cash for."

Jarkko: When you think about the future of our relationship with wheat, how do you see the future: what does a possible, attainable goal for the movement look like? If all goes "well", how will we consume grains, most notably wheat, in the future? What kind of a time frame do you think we're looking at?

Amy: Thirty or forty years ago, freshly ground coffee wasn't acknowledged as the key to great coffee. Now many cities have cafés with their own roasters, and household coffee grinders are common.

I see a similar future for fresh flour. Bakeries with their own mills are popping up like daisies. People are asking me what kind of mill they should have at home.

Awareness of better flour and better bread is growing by leaps and bounds, and I look forward to seeing improvements on the lower ladder of the grain system, too.

All of that doubt about wheat and gluten is generating energy for new versions of our staple crops. Cereal and cracker boxes already show that Big Wheat, so to speak, is catching the marketing potential of alternatives,

advertising ancient grains and touting the lack of GMOs. A mildly apocalyptic yet optimistic part of me imagines a collapse of things as they are necessitating grain production to return to locales, and resemble some of the projects I've followed.

The more reasonable side of me predicts that industrialized farming will continue to be the prime source of food; I am hoping that changes to growing practices and processing methods – emphasizing soil health and focusing on using more of the whole grain, and slowing down the baking process – will alter the contents of our cereal and cracker boxes, not just their labels.

I think there's a lot to be excited about: the number of skilled bakers and brewers who are ready to use something different. Their curiosity will help backload the farming system and help build change. I'm also excited by the articles I read and workshops I see on baking with freshly milled flour. I'm excited by the rumblings of change that I hear: larger scale artisan bakeries want to change their main ingredient.

Jarkko: I know most of the magazine's readers will be passionate about the ideas you present in *The New Bread Basket*. So, if a reader hopes to move this type of change forward wherever he or she lives, where would you recommend starting from?

Amy: Everything starts with questions.

Start looking for fresh flour at co-ops and farmers markets, and asking at bakeries. Start asking your favorite brewery where they get their malt.

Look for people who are curious about new grain economies at organic farming conferences, and cooperative extension field days.



LAUNE BREAD

Words: JARKKO LAINE and CHRISTOPHER MACLEOD

Photos: CHRISTOPHER MACLEOD

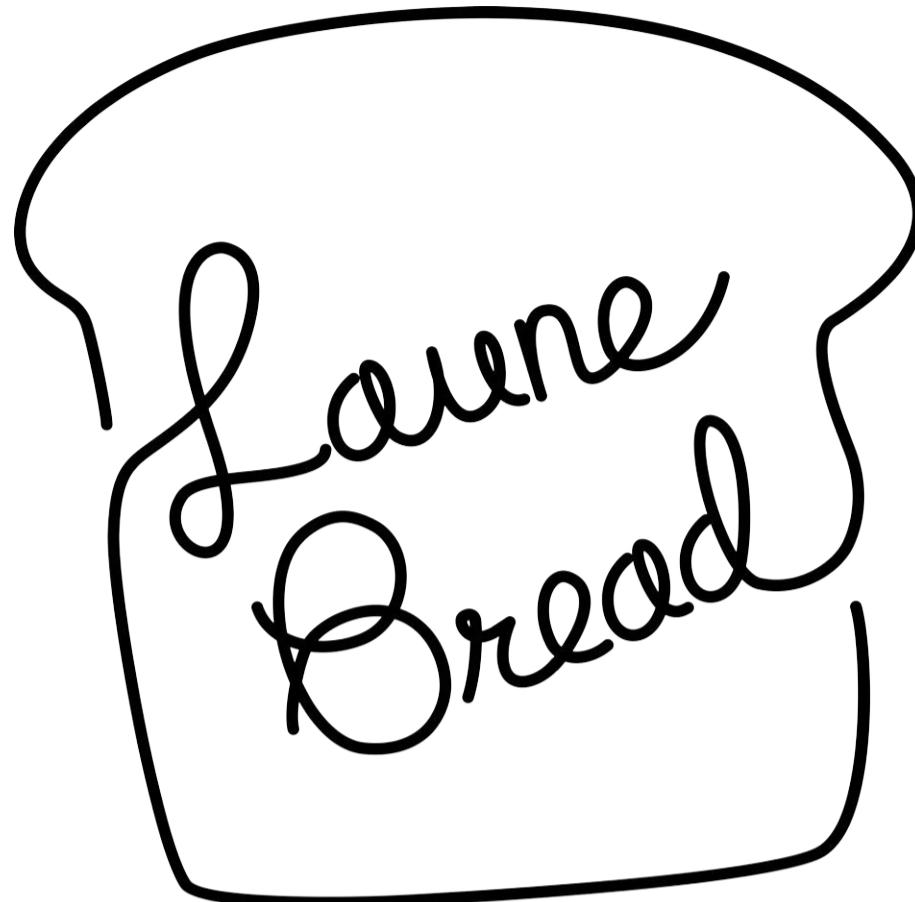
Christopher MacLeod lives in a different state, but is fueled by the same passion and drive as the people presented in the stories in Amy Halloran's book. Christopher describes himself an accidental baker who, through a love for the craft and product came to switch Rhetoric and German to flour, water, and salt.

Even a cursory look at the website of his Minneapolis-based bakery, [Laune Bread](#) ("Laune is German, meaning mood, whim, vibe", he told me), reveals familiar tones: "[We are] devoted to our knowledge, locale, and process. We honor the skills from time past to create naturally leavened, slow bread with a large amount of whole grains to develop flavor, digestibility & nutrition."

And as if that wasn't inspiring enough, to cut food miles, Christopher delivers his slow-fermented, German-inspired bread by bike to a loyal group of subscribers.

As you will read from Laune Bread's story o far, at the grassroots, revolution is hard work and moves slowly. But the customer base is growing, and when it does, both the baker and his or her community benefit.

Here's how Christopher tells his bakery story so far.



A year ago I had the intention of starting a bakery simply to work alone and bake my own bread. So I moved to Minneapolis, a city seemingly rife with bread opportunity. Compared to Portland and the Bay Area, where my baking career had thus far taken me, Mill City was, it seemed, in short supply of bakeries.

Researching the bakeries in town, I noticed a dearth for what the west coast offered with terms such as local, whole grain, and organic. It seemed like a good fit, and I thought it would be a suitable region to learn a thing or two about growing grains.

Within days of arriving, I settled into a large artisan bakery, upon which I began a conversation about transitioning to local flour and using whole-grain flours. It was with this attempt that I really started to educate myself about the availability of local, organic, high-quality wheat. Or rather, the lack thereof.

Realizing I was no longer in California with a young but thriving grain movement, I took a mental pause in approaching my dream. First I would need to familiarize myself with my new locale, connecting with farmers and millers in

the region, learning both the limitations and possibilities.

Half a year later I became co-head baker, and quickly thereafter did my mental hiatus end.

It turned out that the price of conventional flour is hard to beat, especially when you pay thousands of dollars in rent a month. Twelve-hour days became increasingly common in work weeks that would extend into the ninth day, and I found it difficult to restore my body through yoga, stretching, or running. The bread tossed out at the end of the day, and the energy expended to make that bread were by far the most frustrating aspect. My porch soon housed bags of old bread for a friend to feed his five pigs. And my desire to bake was slowly dwindling.

And thus, my intention for starting a bakery became evident during my brief tenure as co-head baker: zero food waste, local + organic flour, and adjuncts, limit sales to sustain my body and mind, and to create a relationship with my customer base.



It was apparent that the only way to achieve these goals were through a subscription based bakery, something I found feasible through renting a baking space and delivering by bike. And so now when someone asks where my bakery is located, I tell them nowhere and everywhere.

Two months in, I have approximately 60 subscribers, paying off my \$1,800 start-up costs within the first five weeks. I have yet to reach a subscriber base to afford myself a living wage (approx. 120 subscribers/week), but without a storefront, growth comes slowly. Currently, half of my customers have come from the cheapest form of advertising: word of mouth, the kind and generous words of my subscription base.

I am offering something different. Not niche, but simply different. It is an extension of the CSA model, with the feasibility of delivering by bike. There is no middleman: no grocery store clerk, restaurant table, or barista. This model offers an opportunity to create a strong connection with those who eat my bread, and to share knowledge: recipes, the baking process, how to keep bread, how to grow wheat and who the farmers are that grow them, and so on.

I am, in a sense, using bread as a platform to create a tangible relationship between location, farmer, miller, baker, and consumer. This allows for the imperfections and variance to speak for itself, to be understood.

An exciting opportunity is coming this spring when a new mill opens in NE Minneapolis, offering unblended varietals of Minnesota-grown wheat. We will be able to showcase these wheat varietals or the land they were grown on, through the variations in the baking qualities and flavor. Rather than creating a forgiving audience, I am attempting to create an understanding that wheat, just like any other plant, is not all the same, and therefore, consistency is not a requisite.

"I am, in a sense, using bread as a platform to create a tangible relationship between location, farmer, miller, baker, and consumer.

This allows for the imperfections and variance to speak for itself, to be understood."



INSANELY INTERESTED PUBLISHING IS A PUBLISHER OF MICRO MAGAZINES FOR THE CURIOUS.

A micro magazine is a magazine that focuses on a very specific topic, published online or off by a very small (but passionate) team of writers.

I am Jarkko Laine, stay-at-home dad, writer, the publisher of this magazine, beginner cigar box guitar player, and all-round creative guy from Vantaa, Finland.

I believe that as humans, we are born curious and need to keep learning about different things to enjoy our lives to the fullest. We are here to deliver a small part of that healthy diet for a curious brain.

My love for a dark crust on a soft

white crumb combined with a need to find out how things are made lead me to create the magazine you are now reading.

Through little steps, as I keep learning more about online publishing, I keep building the magazine into a sustainable, long-lasting business that can serve the world by presenting ideas and stories from people doing things they believe in.

Having you with me on this journey brings me joy.

WOMEN IN BREAD

Words: BARBARA 'ELISI' CARACCIOLLO

Photos: TERESA GREENWAY, SHARLENE MENDOZA

MCNEISH, and TAMI ISAAC PEARCE

What do a successful YouTuber and Udemy teacher from Washington State, an anesthetist nurse building a professional studio in her backyard in Charlottesville (Virginia), and a charming entrepreneur with an increasingly popular boutique in West London, share with one another?

This one common characteristic is not hard to figure out, considering where we are writing about them. *Indeed, they all have to do with bread.*

The popular YouTube and Udemy videos are in fact foolproof and comprehensive online [sourdough baking classes](#), patiently and knowledgeably taught by Teresa Greenway. The backyard studio is a high-tech bread baking lab that Sharlene Mendoza McNeish is building for amateurs wanting to learn how to bake like professionals. And the increasingly popular London-based boutique? It is the new artisan bakery, [Karma Bread](#) by Tami Isaac Pearce, which has already seen customers of the caliber of Nigella Lawson and Jamie Oliver.

Barbara 'Elisi' Caracciolo is an Italian bread lover living in Sweden. In her daily life, she is a scientist and in her spare time she bakes, eats, and writes about bread at [Bread & Companatico](#) and for the Italian Bread Baker's Guild Journal "L'Arte Bianca."



Being high achievers and having to do with bread is not, however, the only thing these persons share. First and foremost, these three bread baking personalities are all women. And not only that. They are all mothers who started their bread baking career later in life, after having raised a family.

Although their stories, as you will read, are varied, I was attracted by this common ground: A passion born while baking at home, in the little spare time a mother has to herself. Often a passion born as a byproduct of the daily task of preparing food for one's family.

The current food and baking blogger community, worldwide, is for the biggest part constituted by women. And why is it so? Because, even nowadays, women are often those most in charge of the family, and thus the ones who spend the most time at home. Instead of pursuing a career, they either work part-time or even full-time but without pushing too much. I know, it sounds old, but I have data in my hands.

Here, however, is the surprising treasure of human creativity. The craft learned while baking

(or cooking) for the family, or as a hobby, can—often unexpectedly—lead to something else: a new profession and a career.

I wanted to write about these stories of bread baking success that arrived through the back door rather than as a result of following a straight path. My hope is that these stories will inspire the many home bakers—both men and women—who sometimes dream of making something “more” of their bread baking monomania and shining through it.

Being an habitué of social media, I have seen in real time the rise and concretization of the bread projects from these three fantastic women. It is the plus of belonging to an interconnected community. We always encourage each other and, each time one of us achieves something—small or big—it feels as if we all win. Just like when one cheers for a sports team.

I do cheer for all of you: Teresa, Sharlene, and Tami. And I do wish you all to reach the stars. Now that you showed us you can reach the moon.



TERESA GREENWAY

Barbara: *Do you carry any special bread memory from your childhood?*

Teresa: I grew up in a large family of twelve children. My mom baked and made the best yeast rolls and donuts ever! She never baked with sourdough, though. A few years ago, I taught her how to bake with sourdough, and she was really happy when she baked a terrific sourdough loaf.

Barbara: *How did it happen that you started to bake your own bread?*

Teresa: I started baking bread when I was a teenager. When I was even younger (ten) I baked cupcakes and sold them to the neighbors. I've loved baking as far back as I can remember.



Barbara: What type of bread were you after when you started? What was your “perfect loaf” then?

Teresa: Eleven years ago, my daughter challenged me to bake a “real” loaf of sourdough. Previously I had baked sourdough in the tradition of the old frontier style of sourdough where sourdough was used as a flavoring and not the leaven. I took up her challenge and worked at it until I finally had my “breakthrough” sourdough loaf.

It was crackly, sang as it cooled, had an open, holey crumb and a lovely crust. And I was hooked!

Barbara: Was there something about baking bread that soothed, completed, or inspired you?

Teresa: Baking has always been creative and spiritual for me. When I pull a loaf of gorgeous bread out of my oven, it feels like I took part in a new creation, almost like having a baby.

It is so incredibly satisfying to bake. Baking is like art.

Barbara: Could we say that bread making was a way to express your previously dormant creativity?

Teresa: I’ve always been an artist, to me baking is very much like art. You express yourself through the baking process and the incredibly diverse ways you can work with a formula for new outcomes.

Baking turned into other creative outlets as well, such as starting a website, [Northwest Sourdough](#), writing and publishing sourdough books, “[Discovering Sourdough](#),” having a baking channel on [YouTube](#) and teaching sourdough baking courses at [Udemy.com](#).

“Baking has always been creative and spiritual for me. When I pull a loaf of gorgeous bread out of my oven, it feels like I took part in a new creation, almost like having a baby.”



Barbara: You started baking when you already had a family and kids and very little time for yourself. Looking back, do you think that bread baking was a way to regain your lost me-time and re-affirm yourself as a person (not just a wife and mother)?

Teresa: I started to bake sourdough a bit later in my life, but I have been baking my whole life. Before I baked with sourdough, I baked all kinds of bread, donuts, breakfast bread, muffins, cookies, pastries, etc.

Barbara: How did you fit this growing passion among your other roles?

Teresa: Baking fit in well with being a stay at home mother of ten children.

Barbara: When did you realize your passion could become something concrete? A profession or side activity?

Teresa: Not at first. But my passion and joy became so great that I had to share it with others.

At the time I started baking sourdough, the revolution of artisanal baking had just begun. There was very little information on how to bake real sourdough bread. So when I was able to do it, I felt it should not be a hidden craft, but one shared with everyone. My passion is still very infectious; I love to teach.

Barbara: How did it feel when your passion started to support you economically?

Teresa: It was awesome that my baking could produce enough income to support myself and my two kids. As a single mother of two teens, one being disabled, I had to work out of the home.

Barbara: Do you still have the time and inspiration to bake just for leisure and do you still come up with sudden bread ideas even now that you work full-time with bread?

Teresa: Because I earn my living through my baking courses on Udemy and my sourdough books, I get to bake creatively all of the time. If I was working long hours in a bakery or selling bread at a farmer's market that might not be so. I get to experiment and create new formulas, and videotape my work, which is then turned into books and baking courses.

Barbara: What do you think is the added value of women in bread? In particular, what is the added value of a passion born to feed one's family, rather than as a profession or as a hobby?

Teresa: If you don't have to bake on a rigorous schedule, and you get to be creative and use your baking skills to nurture those around you, it adds great value, not only to the immediate family also to the society.

Growing up in a family where my mother baked was a wonderful experience, every child should get that experience. Those kinds of memories are something that can bind us all together.

Barbara: Who were your early inspirations or masters in bread?

Teresa: The first books I read that made any sense for real sourdough baking were [Nancy Silverton's Breads from La Brea Bakery](#) and [The Laurel's Kitchen Bread Book](#) where she explains Desem.

I was also inspired by Peter Reinhart, who helped me out when I was ready to publish my sourdough books and became a friend.





"I have been called the
'Blister Queen.'

I know in many parts of the
world it is considered a
detiment, but in the US, it is a
highly sought after quality."

Barbara: Who are your current inspirations in life and bread?

Teresa: Oren Hadadj, a baker out of Israel, is my greatest inspiration in the bread world. I would like to bake with him; his breads are absolutely magnificent.

Barbara: Tell me three things that make a great baker.

Teresa: Patience, creativity, and determination.

Barbara: Tell me three things that make a great bread.

Teresa: Bread baked by someone who bakes with love, patience, and high-quality ingredients.

Barbara: What is your current favorite loaf?

Teresa: I have always been partial to the white lean holey sourdough with the crackly, blistered crust.

I have been called the "Blister Queen."

I know in many parts of the world it is considered a detriment, but in the US, it is a highly sought after quality. However, I love all kinds of sourdough and artisanal types of bread. They are all works of art and beautiful to the eye (and nose and mouth).

Also "Flaxseed Heaven" is probably my most popular bread, that and the "Overnight Sourdough" which is featured on my YouTube channel.

Barbara: What is your most successful bread so far?

Teresa: How do you define success? I don't think I can answer this question. :)

Barbara: What do your kids think about their bread-mamma? Are they supportive or jealous of this other big love in your life?

Teresa: My kids love that I bake sourdough and that I am a teacher of sourdough baking as well. They think I'm famous and that I bake the best bread in the world. I was sure my mom was the best baker in the world too.

Barbara: To conclude, tell us why do you think it is important to follow one's dream and feed one's passion?

Teresa: It is important to feed your passion because it is who you are at the core of your being. Your passion is what makes you happy and in turn, makes everyone around you happy. Life doesn't get better than when you are in your passion zone.

We should all support each other to follow our passions. It turns the world into a bright, happy place.

Teresa is the founder of [Perfect Sourdough](#), one of the largest Facebook bread communities, and you can find all about her teaching and plenty of her recipes on her website [Northwest Sourdough](#).



SHARLENE MENDOZA MCNEISH

Barbara: Do you carry any special bread memory from your childhood?

Sharlene: I grew up in a rice eating culture (Philippines), so I don't have many bread memories from my childhood, but I remember fresh pan de sal from the bakery, which we sometimes had for breakfast.

Later on, when we moved to Iran, I experienced those lovely lightly charred wood fire oven flatbreads that were stretched on large rocks and baked in a hot tandoori oven. We called them nan which is Farsi for bread. The flatbread was very light in texture with a delicately charred flavor from the wood fire. These flatbreads, probably the Persian version of lavash, were easily folded and used in place of a spoon to eat a meal.

My relationship with bread didn't blossom until I was an adult, though, traveling around Europe and living in large cities with good artisan bakeries. Marvelous Market in Washington, DC is the first that comes to mind. However, the Persian bread and food definitely left an impression on me of what fresh bread is like.

Barbara: How did it happen that you started to bake your own bread?

Sharlene: Essentially, I started to bake for economic reasons, and for the desire to be a better home baker.

I was limited to scones and muffins. For many years, only local chains like Panera and Whole Foods grocery with a bakery department were available to us. Like myself, none of my friends who love to cook and eat well knew much about bread, so the process intrigued me even more.



"My "perfect loaf"
was a hard biscuit.
My expectations
were pretty
modest then."

Barbara: What type of bread were you after when you started? What was your "perfect loaf" then?

Sharlene: When I first started, I invested in a bread book, and my goal was to make my bread look like the photographs. The instructions seemed straightforward, but I had a difficult time understanding the description of what the dough should feel or look like. That book sat on the shelf for a year. My first loaf was dense in texture and pale in color, looking more like an old biscuit.

I even have a picture to prove it! My "perfect loaf" was a hard biscuit. My expectations were pretty modest then.

Barbara: Was there something about baking bread that soothed, completed, or inspired you?

Sharlene: In the beginning, I was frustrated with my futile attempt with bread baking.

Once I decided to pursue an approach to learning that appealed to the way I function, my relationship with bread changed for the better. I enrolled in a week-long artisan bread class which involved all my senses.

For me, the visual and tactile experience of learning in a classroom environment is what fuels my creativity as well as boosts my learning style.

Barbara: Could we say that bread making was a way to express your previously dormant creativity?

Sharlene: Absolutely! I find I am most attracted to activities that satiate my creativity, whether it's cooking, photographing, painting or drawing.

Lately, it's bread baking, and it's feeding into my love for science and creativity.



Barbara: You started baking when you already had a family and kids and very little time for yourself. Looking back, do you think that bread baking was a way to regain your lost me time and re-affirm yourself as a person (not just as a wife and mother)?

Sharlene: I came to bread baking late in life. My bread education began as a way to save money, and it quickly became a creative process for me. Much the same way that the sauté pan is a canvas, bread making is a form of personal expression; it's edible art.

When I was young, I thought I was going to go to art school but soon realized that creating art for others and meeting deadlines wasn't for me. Over the years, I created my own art which came in various forms like cooking and photography. I love art where I use my bare hands, and baking certainly has become a source of joy, and a stress reliever, to say the least!

"I love art where I use my bare hands, and baking certainly has become a source of joy, and a stress reliever, to say the least!"



Barbara: How did you fit this growing passion among your other roles (family/work/friends)?

Sharlene: My passion for bread has definitely made me a better parent and nurturer, making good choices by using the freshest ingredients to make the best pizza or sourdough. It's having control over what I feed my family, and knowing the health benefits I am providing.

After taking my first bread class in 2010, I became a seasonal bread baker for my family and friends. In 2012, I invested in a bread oven, the Le Panyol, which has brought much joy to our family meals. The following winter, I became obsessed with wood fired oven pizza. In 2013, I became certified as a Neapolitan pizza maker in NYC.

At one point, I wanted to offer Neapolitan pizzas at the local farmer's market. Over the years, I've had friends over in my small kitchen giving bread lessons. They've mostly been beginners, and it's so gratifying to see them realize how easy it is to make your own bread.

In 2014 and 2015, I enrolled in several of the week long artisan bread courses at SFBI (San Francisco Baking Institute), which was a good review of what I learned from bread books and baking at home. I honed my technical skills in handling the dough with many hours of repetition and developed my muscle memory.

Sharing my baking experience with friends and acquaintances is quite gratifying. While I enjoy giving away the extra loaves, I feel it's more gratifying to share my baking experiences as a home baker and what I learned in baking school and workshops. I have had the great fortune of having the opportunity and time to educate myself with bread baking. It would be a shame not to share it with others who have an interest.

Barbara: When did you realize your passion could become something concrete? A profession or side activity?

Sharlene: I realized my love for bread baking became a passion when I found myself spending my free time reading bread books like novels, planning vacations in cities that coincidentally offered bread classes and workshops that same week, and buying a fifty-pound bag of bread flour was a better deal than the family-size.

I suppose that pretty much sums up my personality! I love to learn, and when I find a subject interesting, I embrace all that I can get my hands on—whether it's books, classes, or meeting people who know more about it than I do.

Barbara: How far do you see yourself going with bread? Would you consider making it into a full-time commitment? Would you want it?

Sharlene: For several years, I have been working on an e-book geared for the home baker. It will be a platform for me to share what I've learned in workshops and classes and experience baking at home.

I am hoping that 2016 will be the year that it will be published.

For the past eight months, my current bread project has been managing the renovation of the garage into a baking studio that will have professional equipment. This will mean offering classes on the weekends, inviting farmers and other bakers as guests, and perhaps, even renting out the space. Living in Charlottesville, VA surrounded by farms, vineyards and a community of DIY (do-it-yourself) folks, I think there is a need for a space, like a baking studio, for folks who want to go back to the basics of how things used to be done and used to taste.



"I realized my love for bread baking became a passion when I found myself spending my free time reading bread books like novels"

I have a fulfilling career in nurse anesthesia that I plan to continue. I think the baking studio located on the farm property will satiate my desire to make bakery-worthy bread and pastries and hope to fill in the needs of local cooks and home bakers who are interested in learning the craft of bread baking.

My current goal is to have a balanced life in spending time with my family, giving anesthesia and teaching in the baking studio.

"My current goal is to have a balanced life in spending time with my family, giving anesthesia and teaching in the baking studio"

Barbara: Who were your early inspiration or masters in bread?

Sharlene: After taking week-long courses with Artisan Bread School, with self-taught baker Carl Shavitz, in Washington state and Tuscany, I learned the basics, technique through repetition and muscle memory.

Jeffrey Hamelman furthered my bread knowledge and education reading [Bread](#), and found his recipes to be consistent and flavorful. Jeffrey Hamelman is my bread hero.

So is Richard Miscovich, author of [From the Wood-Fired Oven](#), which was my go-to manual soon after I started using my Le Panyol bread oven.

Barbara: Who are your current inspirations in life and bread?

Sharlene: Evrim Dogu, artisan baker/co-owner of Sub Rosa Bakery in Richmond, VA. He's all about heirloom grains, milling his own flour daily, and offering the best bread in the city. He embodies passion and artisan in my books. He's also an accomplished musician.

Rick Easton, an artisan baker and recent new owner of Bread and Salt in Pittsburgh, PA, who was recently interviewed by Mark Bittman. He used to bake bread with Evrim when he lived here in town. They have gone their separate ways, yet his passion for food and bread led him to open his own bakery in PA.

He called me out of the blue a couple of years ago because he needed a wood fire oven to bake his Roman-style pizzas for a wedding he was asked to cater in town. I gladly lit the wood fire oven so he could make his flatbreads authentic and real. I am all about being inspired by passionate people.

Barbara: Tell me three things that make a great baker.

Sharlene: A beginning baker makes a great baker by 1) being patient with thyself, 2) making time, and 3) not being afraid to make mistakes.

Barbara: Tell me three things that make a great bread.

Sharlene: At home, great bread 1) takes a long fermentation time, 2) is made with good ingredients like unbleached and unbromated flour (bromated flour is still sold in the US), and 3) is made with love.

MAGIC
Pizza Peel
of
TRUTH!!

EPIC
Baking Cape
of
WONDER

ERRAND
BOY!

Her Sidekick...

PILLSBURY
DOUGH BOY!

Her Nemesis...



In her quest to destroy the evil NON-ORGANICS!

THE ADVENTURES - OF - Super Baker Lady

ISSUE
NO. 1

Amazing!

Action-Packed!
Exciting!



Barbara: What is your current favorite loaf?

Sharlene: In the last couple of weeks, it's been Swedish Cardamom and Cinnamon Bread. I've been obsessed with cardamom. Usually, it's a simple sourdough loaf in which I can add dried fruits, nuts, herbs or other flavors like olives or caramelized onions.

Barbara: What is your most successful bread so far?

Sharlene: It's a tie between a sourdough and a focaccia since I bake them often.

Barbara: What do your kids think about their bread-mama? Are they supportive or jealous of this other big love in your life?

Sharlene: My 15 and 12 year old kids think it's cool that I like to bake since it's an excuse to have a party.

We are weeks away from having the baking studio up and running. It will be a new playground for the family to bake their favorite breads, cookies and pastries. I am grateful that my husband is very supportive of my passions, most recently in making the baking studio come to life.

Barbara: To conclude, tell us why do you think it is important to follow one's dream and feed one's passion?

Sharlene: Isn't that how one must live life? To follow one's dream and ignite it with passion? Life is too short to make compromises.



You can find Sharlene on [the baking group she administers](#), [her blog](#) and [her Facebook blog page](#).



TAMI ISAACS PEARCE

Barbara: Do you carry any special bread memory from your childhood?

Tami: None. Seriously, I have no special memory of bread until recently—three years ago, that's it.

Barbara: How did it happen that you started to bake your own bread?

Tami: I was in the last year of my studies to become a child psychotherapist. It was a very stressful period, having to write a series of essays, read heavy specialized literature and work on my master thesis. All while having small kids and running a household.

I started to be overwhelmed by anxiety. Suddenly I felt incapable of going forward, and something just switched off in me. I could not go that path any longer, so I slowly tried to find myself again, both physically and spiritually.

I did meditation, yoga and at some point, a dear friend and neighbor convinced me to try something manual. Pottery maybe, my mom is into sculpture. I listened.

Just around that time, an artisan baking class was available. Kneading sounded like a good idea; it was kind of like pottery. And so I went to this class, one morning a week, for five weeks.

The first time I put my hands in the dough, it just felt right. And I kept going at it. Every day I had to knead. I know I wasn't particularly good at it in the beginning, but I loved it, and soon I could not live without.

Barbara: What type of bread were you after when you started? What was your "perfect loaf" then?

Tami: No bread. Seriously, it was all about the perfect knead. The feeling, that special feeling.

"The first time I put my hands in the dough, it just felt right. And I kept going at it. Every day I had to knead.

I know I wasn't particularly good at it in the beginning, but I loved it, and soon I could not live without."



Barbara: Was there something about baking bread that soothed, completed, or inspired you?

Tami: Completely. Kneading and baking reached a peaceful place in me that I did not know existed.

Barbara: Could we say that bread making was a way to express your previously dormant creativity?

Tami: I have always found ways to be creative. But there was something about the body, the stillness of the mind when preparing bread that captured me. For the first time, I felt entirely present in my creative act.

Barbara: You started baking when you already had a family and kids and very little time for yourself. Looking back, do you think that bread baking was a way to regain your lost me-time and re-affirm yourself as a person (not just a wife and mother)?

Tami: That wasn't the intention, but it happened coincidentally—and that seemed to have been one of the gifts in what happened.

Barbara: How did you fit this growing passion among your other roles (family/work/friends)?

Tami: Easily. It fit perfectly with my insomnia.

Barbara: When did you realize your passion could become something concrete? A profession or side activity?

Tami: This is just a crazy story!

I had this friend who taught me to do babka. One day I was walking around and stumbled into a sign saying "support community bakers" and I asked the person by the stand: "Oh really? How does it work? Are you going to support me then? You know, I make artisan bread."

And sooner than I could realize I was sitting in front of the board of a big supermarket

chain with a sample of my babka and hearing them offer me to sell an awful amount of them at the supermarket.

I had to decline the offer. I could not support that production request with my little home oven. But that made me realize that I could make it. And it felt just right. I was shaking inside, but they were tasting my bread (probably underproofed, what did I know back then) and they liked it.

And it felt great because that was me.

Totally me.

Barbara: Do you still have the time and inspiration to bake just for leisure and do you still come up with sudden bread ideas even now that you work full-time with bread?

Tami: Yes, yes, yes. And that is one of my biggest pleasures.

Mass production... Well, maybe I should not say this, maybe you should not quote me on this one. But I am going to tell you anyway. Mass production does not really do it for me. What I really like is to handle a small amount of dough in my hands and to create new little ideas, new concepts, new recipes. That's what I like, and I make sure that I can do it, that I have time to do that.

Barbara: What do you think is the added value of women in bread? In particular, what is the added value of a passion born to feed one's family, rather than as a profession or as a hobby?

Tami: Our capability to create something out of very little.

We create things, feed and nurture them and we turn them into something else. It comes naturally to us to metamorphosize things.

"And it felt just right. I was shaking inside, but they were tasting my bread and they liked it. And it felt great because that was me. Totally me."



Barbara: Do you think your approach to bread keeps something of this intuitive everyday baking, and something of the rationality and common sense needed to manage a household?

Tami: In terms of running a bakery, the customers are all my kids. The nurturer in me wants to comfort, to console, to give pleasure. That is primarily what we want to do for our children, and that is what I feel like doing for my customers.

Like when I ask for their feedback: "How was the crust? Was there enough salt in that?" Just cues to make sure that they are happy with what I give them, as with our kids, right?

Barbara: Who were your early inspirations/masters in bread?

Tami: The people who supported in my early days were Jeremy Shapiro, always there inspiring and knowledgeable, and Elisabeth Wiseberg, with whom I did my Jewish baking course, I just loved her all approach. And the bakers who baked daily.

The Facebook family of bakers. You know, whatever time of the day or night someone is baking. Someone has an answer to your question.

Barbara: Who are your current inspirations in life and bread?

Tami: In life, my mom... I know this sounds cheesy, but it is true.

Barbara: Tell me three things that make a great baker.

Tami: Has a strong respect and patience for a novice. We are all novices or have been novices, I am a novice. The desire to break the common rules. And just to wait and try again, and wait and try again.



"In terms of running a bakery, the customers are all my kids. The nurturer in me wants to comfort, to console, to give pleasure."

Barbara: Tell me three things that make a great bread.

Tami: All the senses.

First, the very first thing you do when you break bread is to bury your nose in it.

The second thing is a beautiful, caramelized, darkened, crust. Whether it's from an egg wash, from high temperature with steam, whatever, but a beautiful crust. Because that is a promise of what's inside.

Third, the layers of taste.

Barbara: What is your current favorite loaf?

Tami: What I most love is our current za'atar. We do a fabulous za'atar (a Middle Eastern spice) bread with good rich olive oil. It is similar to focaccia but actually it has a crust.

We put za'atar through the dough and on top. When I do za'atar spice in small amounts, I use what I can get. I would crush some fennel seeds or fennel growing in the garden and combine it with za'atar. And that is what I love, that is the experimentation that I love. And then you infuse it in your olive oil, you put it on the top... so it is carrying the flavor well. It's a great dinner party bread. In this I use my Middle Eastern influences, as I grew in Africa—Zambia to be precise.

Barbara: What is your most successful loaf/bread so far?

Tami: My Omega Bomb. It's funny, it's yeasted and full of healthy seeds and it's more popular than any of the sourdough breads. People just love it.

Barbara: What do your kids think about their bread-mamma? Are they supportive or jealous of this other big love in your life?

Tami: My older daughter is 15 and she just loves Karma Bread. She is really proud of me.

My youngest one, who is 10, would instead like to have her mom back full-time. And she refuses to eat my bread.

Barbara: To conclude, tell us why do you think it is important to follow one's dream and feed one's passion?

Tami: Because it is necessary. You have no idea where it can lead. You know, you put a seed in the dormant ground, it lays there 200 years, but then you give it the moisture, as you would do when creating bread, and... You have no idea what will happen.

I must tell you: none of this was planned for me. I know I have been lucky.

But it's also to push yourself into it completely and to love it. That has been my part. You just give, give, give to it. You just give it what it needs.

You can follow Tami on the [Karma Bread Facebook page](#) or visit her bakery in Bushey, London, and sample some of her amazing sweet or savory breads.

SOURDOUGH FESTIVE ROLLS

Words and Photos: TERESA GREENWAY



For the holidays, Teresa agreed to share her Festive Roll recipe with us—"sourdough, of course," she says.

Originally, Teresa learned to make these rolls from her mother, who used to make a yeasted version and bring it to friends and neighbors. And now, her sourdough version is one her family requests most often for the holidays.

"It is great to bring to parties or to serve Christmas Morning with coffee," she writes.

THE FORMULA

For Festive Sourdough Rolls, use all-purpose flour or a mixture of all-purpose flour and pastry flour for extra softness in the roll. This recipe will make two large rolls weighing about 900 g each.

Preferment

This recipe uses a preferment, so the night before baking, stir together in a large container¹:

| Ingredient | Quantity | Baker's % |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Sourdough starter (at 166% hydration) | 170 g | 45% |
| Water | 340 g | 91% |
| All-purpose flour | 374 g | 100% |

Let this mixture set, lightly covered, overnight at room temperature.

Final dough

Next morning, pour the preferment mixture into your mixer and then the following ingredients in the order presented:

| Ingredient | Quantity | Baker's % |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Preferment (all of it) | 884 g | 135% |
| Water | 73 g | 11% |
| Cream (or half cream and half milk) | 73 g | 11% |
| Honey | 42 g | 6% |
| Vanilla extract | 28 g | 4% |
| Melted butter | 28 g | 4% |
| Mashed potatoes | 113 g | 17% |
| Bread flour | 654 g | 100% |
| Salt | 17 g | 2.6% |

¹ If your sourdough starter is at 100% hydration, use 128 grams of your starter and add an extra 42 g of water.

1. Mix the preferment and the additional ingredients on a medium speed just until mixed. This takes about three to four minutes when using a mixer.
2. Allow the dough to rest for 20 minutes.
3. After resting, mix the dough a few more spins of the mixer for about 15 seconds, then put the dough into a folding trough or large container and bulk ferment the dough in a warm place for 3 to 4 hours. Fold the dough once an hour.
4. After bulk fermentation, divide the dough into two pieces of about 900 g (2 pounds) each, and then gather each into a ball.
5. Let the dough rest for five minutes and then roll out each piece of dough into a circle shape about 16-18 inches (40-45 cm) across.
6. Spread the coconut filling (see next page) across each rolled-out circle of dough. Then, taking one edge, roll up the dough, coil slightly into a circle and place in an oiled or greased round pan or glass baking dish or pie dish.
7. Spray some cooking oil or brush butter or oil on the surface of the roll to keep it from drying out.
8. Allow the dough to proof for about one more hour in a warm place (21-26°C / 70-80°F) until the dough has about doubled and is puffy looking.
9. When ready to bake, make several slashes deeply into the roll, slashing down into at least two layers.
10. Bake at 190°C (375°F) degrees for about 30–40 minutes. Turn the rolls a couple of times for even browning during baking. Brush with butter while the rolls are still hot, then cool before glazing. The center of the dough should register about 90°C (195°F) on instant thermometer when done.



Coconut Filling

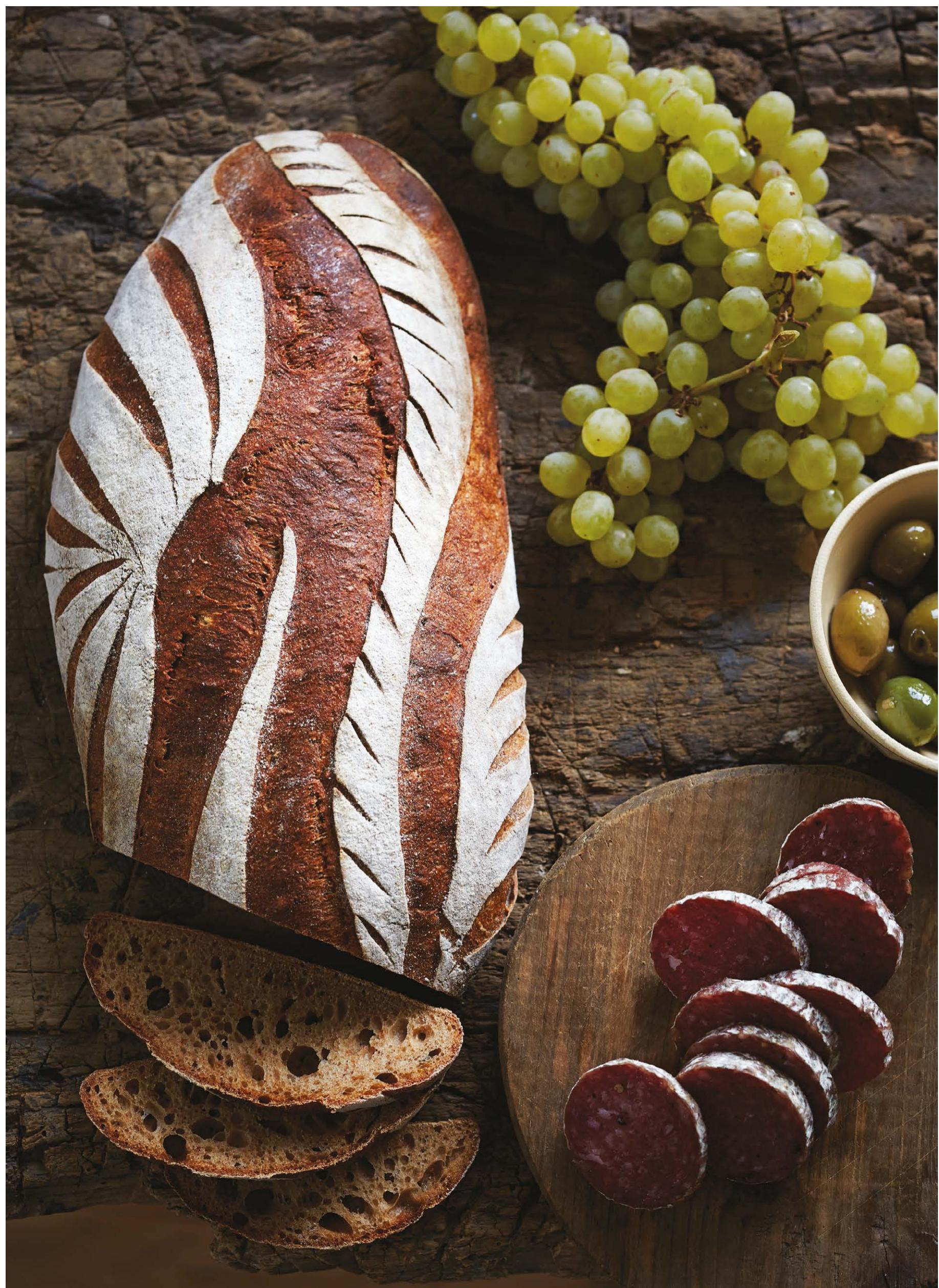
| Ingredient | Quantity |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Butter | 113 g |
| Cream (or half cream and half milk) | 56 g |
| Sugar (white or brown) | 198 g |
| Shredded coconut | 141 g |
| Chopped nuts | 56 g |
| Cinnamon | 2 g |
| Vanilla | 8 g |

1. Add all above ingredients to a medium sized saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat while stirring.
2. As soon as the mixture boils, take off heat and cool before using.

Glaze

| Ingredient | Quantity |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Powdered sugar | 1.5 cups |
| Vanilla | 1 teaspoon |
| Cream (or half cream and half milk) | |

1. Add the powdered sugar and vanilla into a bowl. Then slowly add milk until the mixture reaches the desired consistency, stirring well.
2. Twirl glaze on top of Coconut Roll once the roll is cooled.
3. To add holiday decorations on top of the rolls, use nut halves and sliced glazed fruits to decorate and add color.



A NATURAL PARTNERSHIP OF ROSES, SOURDOUGH, AND BREAD

Words: JARKKO LAINE, SARAH OWENS

Photos: NGOC MINH NGO

I'd like to start this article with a confession: for a long time, I thought Sarah Owens's name was Rosa. *Rosa Primula*.

Like so often happens in the online bread making community, I first met Sarah on Instagram. There, at the time, she was using the handle @rosaprimula, and so my mind quickly started playing games on me by switching her name to Rosa.

But Rosa, in this case, wasn't a name but a reference to a flower and Sarah's other big interest beside bread. Sarah is a self-taught sourdough baker and owner of the Brooklyn New York micro bakery BK17 Bakery. But she is also a professional gardener, and before diving deep into the world of bread making, she worked as a rosarian at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

This November, Sarah published her first bread making book, [Sourdough: Recipes for Rustic Fermented Breads, Sweets, Savories, and More](#)—a beautiful, creative mix of her diverse passions.

I asked Sarah a few questions to learn more about the book, and her thoughts on bread, baking, as well as how gardening fits the picture.

Jarkko: Let's start some of background. Can you tell about yourself and how you first got excited about sourdough bread?

Sarah: When I discovered the wizardry of sourdough, I was living and working in Brooklyn, NY. I had been having some acute digestive complications that were interfering with my personal life and work performance and was finding it difficult to navigate traditional medical channels to find answers.

It took some time to cut through the dietary fads, heal my gut, and understand the processes of fermentation as a benefit to digestion.

Eventually, I discovered that the lactic acid bacterial component of sourdough helped to mitigate my digestive issues. At the same time, I really fell in love with the process of mixing, shaping, baking, and, of course, eating good bread.

I love the craft and feel it is a creative discipline I am committed to practicing long-term.

Jarkko: You are a professional gardener as well as a baker at your micro bakery, BK17 Bakery. Do you think there is a common thread between the two? Also, how has the background with gardening influenced your bread making?

Sarah: Absolutely!

To be a good baker, you have to develop an intuitive ability to gauge variables such as time, temperature, and humidity and how they affect fermentation. Gardening works with the same principles and both rely on the nurturing aspect of human hands to come to fruition.

There is also an increasing trend in gardening to culture the beneficial microbes present in the soil in order to grow healthy plants. Keeping a sourdough starter is exactly the same – providing a healthy environment for beneficial yeasts and bacteria they thrive and work in our favor!

"To be a good baker, you have to develop an intuitive ability to gauge variables such as time, temperature, and humidity and how they affect fermentation."



A deep, innate connection to nature's variable rhythms has always played a strong role in both my recreational and professional endeavors. Gardening and baking are ways to not only honor that connection but also embrace an ongoing relationship with the wild side of life.

This idea of living my work has carried through to growing, baking and now writing. I have chosen a professional life that regardless of the medium, is a meditative practice dependent upon many outside influences and the unpredictability of and reaction to both.

Jarkko: How did you get started with BK17 Bakery, and where is the bakery today? How about in the future?

Sarah: BK17 (BK=Brooklyn, 17=17th street where my first starter was created) began as a way to make a little extra money and bankroll an obsessive habit I had formed for chasing the elusive 'perfect loaf'.

It evolved from this simple idea into a beautiful ability to connect with my community through a subscription service coupled with my local CSA. In a city such as New York where you can live so anonymously, I really value the intimate connection of being a community-supported baker.

As my lifestyle changed and I left my job as a rosarian at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, I've found the subscription model to be flexible enough to accommodate being a little nomadic.

But being a good baker requires consistency. This is not easy to cultivate when you have to jockey for space in other people's restaurants or incubator kitchens or work out of a home oven when the right conditions don't align. Supply never seems to meet demand and quality control is a challenge, not to mention keeping overhead costs low enough to make it worthwhile.

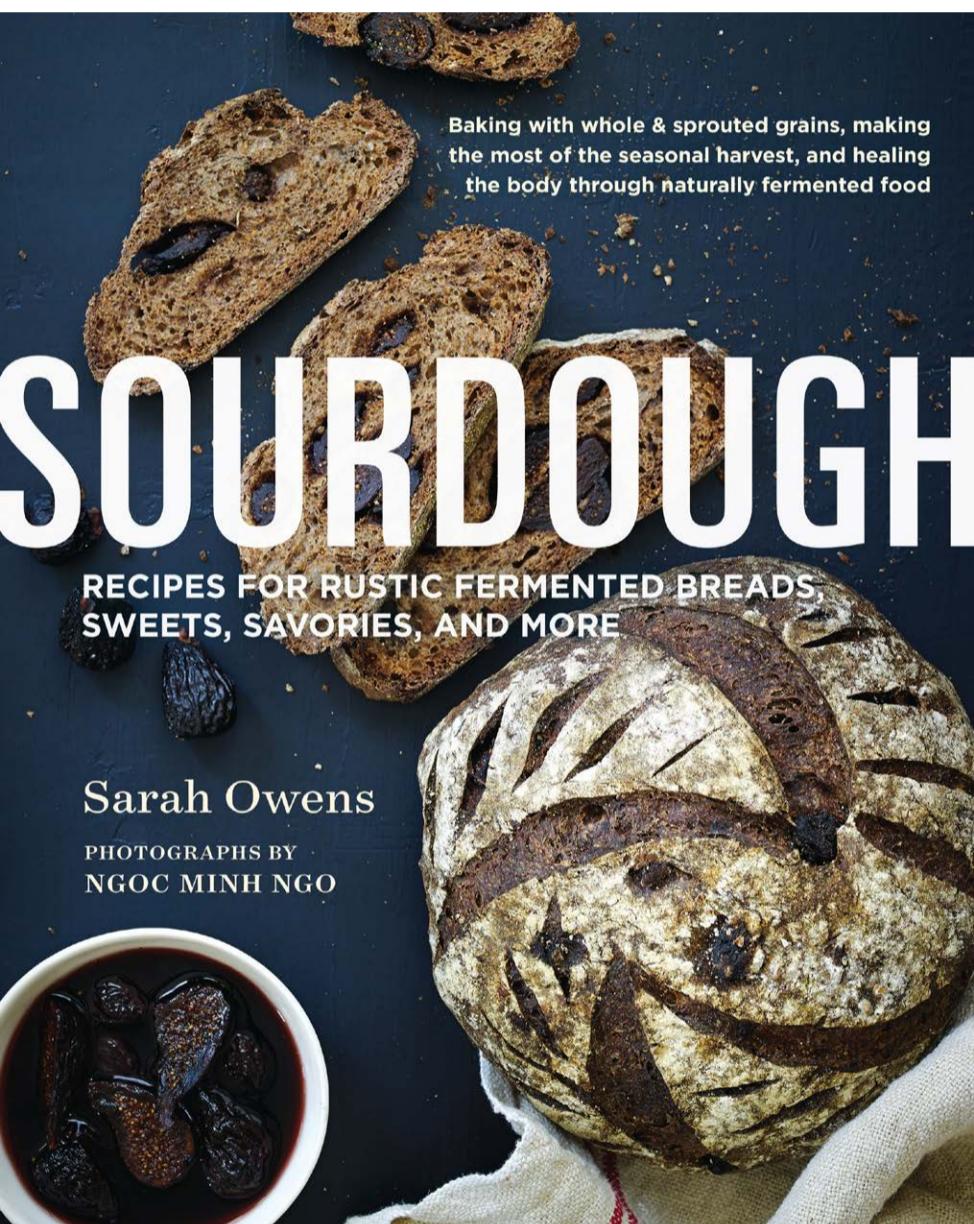
For these reasons, BK17 has served more as educational outreach lately, fostering conversations about grain, flour, and fermentation. I am shifting more toward teaching classes and love empowering people to learn the craft of baking.

"My ideal lifestyle would be baking with wood and writing a few days a week, gardening the others, teaching classes a few times a month, and, of course, traveling 6-8 weeks a year."

In the future, I would love if BK17 could find a more stable location where the grain revolution is strong and good flour is available consistently and in abundance.

While I'm not rushing to re-enter New York City, settling in a quiet community with access to a larger city would be ideal. My ideal lifestyle would be baking with wood and writing a few days a week, gardening the others, teaching classes a few times a month, and, of course, traveling 6-8 weeks a year.

So I am slowly working toward that goal as resources and opportunities present themselves.



Jarkko: Your book, *Sourdough: Recipes for Rustic Fermented Breads, Sweets, Savories, and More*, was released last month. Can you tell a bit about that project and how it came to be?

Sarah: BK17 has a certain momentum that I feel has always been a little out of my control, as in baking chose me rather than I chose baking; the positive response has been overwhelming.

I was lucky to receive some good press in the very beginning from Edible Brooklyn, Gardenista, and a few bloggers such as 66 Square Feet (Plus).

This caught the attention of my literary agent and subsequent publisher Roost Books, and the idea formed to do a project that revolved around my personal story as a gardener and baker who is inspired by seasonal growing, baking, and eating.

As a former ceramic artist, garden designer, and all-around creative person, I am very visually oriented.

I had been working on a little side project helping my photographer Ngoc Minh Ngo to document old heritage roses when I started visualizing Sourdough. I could see the story through her lens and rather naively invited her to be the photographer.

She ended up being my food stylist, mentor, acting art director, and publishing confidant and put so much more work into it than I could have ever expected. But we had the luxury of shooting with the seasons and spending time with some really inspiring ingredients from my work as a garden curator.

By the time we reached our last few photo shoots, we brought in a very talented food stylist named Frances Boswell, who helped us bring the project to a close.

I owe a lot to the patience and dedication of these women!



Jarkko: Tell us about the book: What makes it unique and who should read and use it? Why did you decide to build it around sourdough?

Sarah: I am a self-taught micro baker inspired by seasonal whole foods. I really believe in the flavor and health benefits of sourdough not just in bread but as an ingredient in other recipes as well. I wanted Sourdough to reflect these details of my baking journey.

There are so many incredible bread baking ‘bibles’ already published by very accomplished professional bakers and it didn’t seem appropriate to try and write another one in the same manner. Many readers of Sourdough are surprised by the entertaining stories and anecdotes of the recipes.

I really want readers to be inspired to not only bake with gusto but to live with intention and passion in all aspects of their lives.

“I really believe in the flavor and health benefits of sourdough not just in bread but as an ingredient in other recipes as well.”

"Eating with the seasons ensures you get the maximum amount of flavor and also nutrition from your food. (One is generally an indication of the other)."

Sourdough is an excellent book for anyone who loves whole foods, those just beginning to bake with natural leavening, or professionals who want to incorporate some non-traditional, seasonal ingredients into their baking repertoire.

Many people are surprised to find that madelines or sweet or savory shortbreads can be made with sourdough. I also wanted the book to be useful for bakers such as myself who are always looking for ways to utilize old starter when doing a feed. Besides the bread recipes, there are a number of items that use sourdough as an ingredient rather than as a leavening agent.

Instead of throwing out unused 'flat' starter when preparing for a maintenance feed, you can incorporate it into a Dutch pancake, scone, or quick bread recipe from the book instead. These are the easiest and generally quickest recipes to follow and the ones I suggest many people start out with if they feel overwhelmed by attempting bread.

Jarkko: *Using seasonal produce in your baking—and bread making—is important to you. Why is this, and how does this affect your bread making?*

Sarah: Eating with the seasons ensures you get the maximum amount of flavor and also nutrition from your food. (One is generally an indication of the other). It builds community with the farmers who steward the land in closest proximity to you and ensures your carbon footprint remains fairly small.

Baking seasonally is also just a practical reflection of what is available in my kitchen at any given time.

As a gardener, I am always trying to find uses for the bounty of the season, especially during high summer when produce is overflowing! But it is really nice to incorporate vegetables in the dormant season as well as reflected



in the use of parsnips, winter squashes, beets, and salsify that keep well for long periods of cold storage.

And of course, if you are aware of what is in season, you'll be sure not to miss the special ambrosia of fresh figs in a crostata or the tender sweetness of fresh apricots combined with tarragon in scones.

"To actually see indigenous ingredients being utilized as they were intended in their original context is a real luxury. I find dusty kitchens with chickens running afoot as inspiring as those of the most talented New York City chefs."

Jarkko: Travel seems to be another important part of life for you. How does this show in your baking and the new book?

Sarah: I love the ability to learn from other cultures and their food traditions. This is why New York City and its incredible ethnic diversity have always been so alluring.

But to actually see indigenous ingredients being utilized as they were intended in their original context is a real luxury. I find dusty kitchens with chickens running afoot as inspiring as those of the most talented New York City chefs.

There are several recipes in Sourdough that reflect my travels including the exotic Moroccan spices in the Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust (page 95), the emphasis on chilies (Smoky Chili Bread page 127, Indian Chutney Bialys pg 133, Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake pg 153), and the Saraguro Cheese Bread (page 119) using barley flour made on a comal.

Jarkko: On your blog, you write that one of the biggest challenges in making the book was to figure out "how to coach the reader to develop intuition."

Why is intuition so important in sourdough baking? Also, did you find an answer to the question?

Sarah: Intuition and observation skills are most important with bread baking.

You can follow a recipe exactly as it is written but there are so many variables that can influence the outcome of your loaves including the type of flour you have available, the temperature of your kitchen, the efficiency of your oven, and the humidity of your climate. It takes practice to be able to read bread dough and I find that teaching classes where students have the direct ability to touch and observe is the best way to coach intuitive skills.

But I have also done a great deal of answering emails since publication from inquisitive bakers!

One woman, in particular, tried one of my recipes and had a miserable result. I coached her on the appropriate flours to use, encouraged her to try again, and she achieved delicious success and a beautiful loaf. Sometimes it's just a matter of personal one-on-one problem solving.

I believe that is why there is such a strong, almost tribal culture around the hobby and profession of baking bread.

Jarkko: Did you learn something new about bread and baking while working on your book?

Sarah: I learned that there is so much more to discover!

There are a number of heritage grains that I would love to incorporate into more recipes, particularly heritage types of wheat, barley, and corn. As they become more available to the general consumer, I hope that I can work them into my next book.

Until then, I'll keep wandering the world and gardening in search of inspiration.

Jarkko: Is there something else you'd like to add?

Sarah: I want to encourage all of the new bakers who are reading this interview and may have bought Sourdough or one of the other new baking releases this fall.

Bread baking in particular requires a lot of patience, discipline, and repetitive practice but the rewards are great and the ability to share them with friends and family is enough of a reason to keep trying. Keep asking for good and fresh stone-ground flour and support the small millers who work with small farmers to provide this incredible service.

Without their hard work and dedication, we wouldn't have the ability to make better bread and break the notion that it is not good for us.

Keep the bread revolution strong!

* *

To follow Sarah Owens on her adventure of baking and gardening (and to try some of her recipes), check out [her blog](#) and [Instagram profile](#).



LEARN BREAD MAKING, FAST



Words: JARKKO LAINE

Photos: SHUTTERSTOCK, JARKKO LAINE, and MIKE MCCUNE

To master bread making, you need to practice.

In the past, I have mentioned the 10,000-hour rule of expertise, popularized by Malcolm Gladwell. In short, the idea is that to reach an expert level at anything, you need at least 10,000 hours of deliberate practice. While the number is surely just an approximation, the idea most likely holds: To become great at any activity, you need to adopt a craftsman's attitude, and work hard.

However, no one has ever started at the top, and trying to go for world class right from the start is a recipe for disaster.

That's why, if you are just starting to make bread, or about to embark on an experiment to learn to make a new type of bread you've never tried before, the ten thousand hour rule is not what you should be thinking about.

If you want to make your first croissants for your partner's birthday breakfast in a couple of weeks, you simply don't have all those years to spend practicing.

That time for continuous practice comes later, but first, you need to get some quick early results.

Luckily, as Josh Kaufman explains in his 2013 book, [The First 20 Hours](#), the biggest leap in learning a skill takes place during the first hours of practice. And for many, these first hours can be the only ones that matter (not all of us even want to be among the best professionals).

The remaining 9980 hours? They are for those who want to go from being a beginner to being a real expert—one of the best.

"The remaining 9980 hours?

*They are for those who
want to go from being a
beginner to being a real
expert—one of the best."*

In his book, Kaufman presents a list of ten principles of effective learning that will help you get started quickly. He applies them to skills such as windsurfing, yoga, playing the ukulele, and learning some simple programming.

Reading the book, I got sort of interested in each of them, but now, let's apply them to bread making.

If you're just starting out, use the tips to plan your practice for your first loaves of (sourdough) bread. Or if you're already more experienced, pick something you have been wanting to try but never got to (I'm thinking of croissants, or in the spirit of Christmas, Panettone), deconstruct it according to the principles and then see how far you can get in your first twenty hours!

* *

PRINCIPLE 1: RESEARCH THE SKILL AND RELATED TOPICS

At first, when you are just getting started, one of the trickiest hurdles is that you don't know what you don't know. Also, one big advantage that the expert has over a beginner is that she understands the bigger picture of what matters and what doesn't. She also knows the language used in the recipes—often written in short formats that a beginner will easily misunderstand.

This happened to me recently when I did my first ever attempt at making Panettone: I followed the recipe to the letter, according to my best understanding of bread making. When my results looked nothing like those in my inspiration photos, I asked Barbara Elisi for advice.

She told me that following the recipe that way had been my biggest mistake!

So, what can you do to get some of those advantages without spending thousands of hours in your kitchen?

Kaufman recommends doing a thorough but quick early research: Pick three to five books on the topic as well as a few other resources such as videos or online courses. Then skim the resources, keeping an eye on tips and advice that is repeated in all of them. If everyone is giving the same instruction, it must be something important.

"The intent of this early research is to identify the most important subskills, critical components, and required tools for practice as quickly as possible." Kaufman writes.

This way, you won't have to reinvent the wheel, but you're also not simply copying one baker's or teacher's method without understanding it. In bread making, the list of books to choose from is strong and growing every year. Pick a few from the more advanced level—and maybe, if you're just getting started, one that is aimed at the total beginner.

But as Kaufman is quick to remind us: don't get stuck in this phase. Skim the books, note down what you don't know yet, look for the common threads. And then, move on. You'll come back to the books later—still during the first 20 hours, and definitely after them as you dig deeper into the craft.

PRINCIPLE 2: JUMP IN OVER YOUR HEAD

"It's good to find yourself confused." Kaufman writes.

At first, when you're learning something you haven't tried before, it's only natural that the new information feels hard and that you get the impression that nothing you read is sticking. That's simply because it's new and the ideas are not yet connected to your earlier experiences.

So, if you want to get results fast, don't start from the shallow end but jump right in and allow some of the more challenging material to confuse you. Then, use the confusion as a compass: if you get confused about something, that's a sign that it's something you need to learn more about.

"When you're learning something you haven't tried before, it's only natural that the new information feels hard and that you get the impression that nothing you read is sticking."



This is also a good reminder for the more experienced bakers among us: if you never find yourself confused anymore, maybe you could add some more fun to your practice by throwing yourself at a new bread project?

PRINCIPLE 3: IDENTIFY MENTAL MODELS AND MENTAL HOOKS

One way to identify an expert is that she has the expert's tools and knows how to use them. A big part of this, are mental models—shared language that help the baker to cut to the core of what he's doing without going the long way or relying on others' recipes.

One such thing is understanding bakers' percentages and concepts such as hydration level or extraction rate. This is why, in Bread Magazine, already in the first issue, instead of just sharing recipes, we start with a base formula based on "real" bakers' maths.

Understanding the concepts will give you results much more quickly and consistently than just following a recipe.

PRINCIPLE 4: IMAGINE THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT YOU WANT

Here's a surprising tip—one of those ideas that make me ask "Why didn't I think of this myself?"

Instead of looking at the perfect croissant or sourdough loaf and thinking about how to get there, Kaufman suggest thinking about the opposite.

"What if you got the worst possible outcome?" he asks.

What's the worst mistake you could do in making your bread? When I think about this, I get the picture of a sourdough loaf that is totally flat and bland tasting. Maybe one where I messed up the fermentation and forgot to add salt. The failed croissant would be "bready", without any layers whatsoever. And burnt, quite naturally.

"Instead of looking at the perfect croissant or sourdough loaf and thinking about how to get there, Kaufman suggest thinking about the opposite."

Now, think about this for a while yourself, writing down your thoughts: Describe the disaster in as much detail as you can. Then, look at your list and figure out how to avoid these mistakes.

"By studying the opposite of what you want, you can identify important elements that aren't immediately obvious." Kaufman says.

PRINCIPLE 5: TALK TO PRACTITIONERS TO SET EXPECTATIONS

The age old tradition of apprenticeship has its pros and cons. Being near an expert is a great way to absorb knowledge, even things that the master never thinks of explaining to the apprentice—tactile, quiet knowledge about ways to handle the dough and work in the bakery.

At the same time, the way the method has traditionally been applied is impossibly slow. This is simply because the apprentice, as the youngest member of the staff, is cheap labor that can be used to take care of manual, boring tasks that no one else feels like doing.

Learning on your own, you get to choose your methods, so you can try and get the best of both worlds.

"Talking to people who have acquired the skill before you will help dispel myths and misconceptions before you invest your time and energy."

"Talking to people who have acquired the skill before you will help dispel myths and misconceptions before you invest your time and energy." Kaufman writes.

If possible, get in touch with more advanced bakers who have already done what you're attempting and listen to them closely as they share their experiences.

Here, as Kaufman writes, you should use the input to dispel your own false expectations (for example about how easy something will be) as well as pick some cues on what are the things you need to learn more about. For example, as the baker talks about fermentation, take mental notes about the steps involved and then, in your own time, research them in more detail.

PRINCIPLE 6: ELIMINATE DISTRACTION

The human mind is very good at processing information and learning, but not so good at doing many things at once.

As Kaufman writes: "Distractions kill focused practice, and lack of focused practice leads to slow (or non-existent) skill acquisition."

I have noticed this a lot recently, myself. Even though bread making doesn't require hours of focused practice at a time, it needs to be thought about.

And so, writing, programming, and taking care of the family errands while making bread in the background, quite often I've had my doughs overproof or my 30-minute autolysis stretch into three hours before I remember about it. I even forgot to add salt to my latest rye bread dough.

So, to get great results and truly learn, the best way is to actually focus. For example, if you decide to make Saturday your bake day, don't plan to take on other commitments for the day. Instead, take it easy and relax.

This way, when your dough requires your attention, you are ready to give it all you've got.



PRINCIPLE 7: USE SPACED REPETITION AND REINFORCEMENT FOR MEMORIZATION

It's common knowledge that repetition is the key to learning. Whether it's learning a new language or practicing shaping the dough, new skills only stick if you practice them over and over again.

Kaufman writes: "New concepts need to be reinforced regularly, but the longer you've known a concept, the less regularly you need to review it to maintain accurate recall."

As an example of how to use this method, he suggests using flash cards that you can carry with you and practice with when waiting for the bus or standing in line. In bread making, I can't think of too many things that you could

practice using flash cards—bakers' maths, maybe—but the idea of repetition itself is important.

One of the reasons why it can take so long for a home baker to become a master of the craft is that we always make only a few loaves at a time. So, if you think about shaping, for example, a night shift at a bakery can teach you more than many months making your own bread at home.

So, if possible, try to think of ways to get to shape many loaves of bread at one go, and then repeat again the next day or week. This could be something like going to a bread-making workshop at a local bakery, or mixing a big practice dough and just shaping away, maybe even without ever planning to bake the bread at all.

PRINCIPLE 8: CREATE SCAFFOLDS AND CHECKLISTS

Earlier in the article, I mentioned how I forgot to add salt to my rye bread dough. It's an easy mistake, but it's also easy to prevent by creating a checklist of things you need to do in your bread making. A good thing about such a checklist is that you can create one that can be applied to almost all types of bread with just a few small variations.

I'll leave the creation of the actual checklist to you as it will be a great way to research the bread-making project you're jumping to. But as an example, here are some ideas I think I'd add in my version:

- The night before you are going to mix your dough, remember to refresh the starter.
- Before turning the oven on, check that your baking stone and the cast iron pan for generating steam are in place.

Scaffolds, on the other hand, are routines describing the steps involved in doing a specific part of the bread making process; by breaking the step down to scaffolds, you can be more deliberate about learning to do the step in a way that works.

For example, let's look at how I load the oven. It always follows the same routine: First, I heat some water in my water boiler. While the water is heating, I flip the bread on the baking peel and score it. Then, I open the oven door and place a kitchen towel on its window. After this, I slide in the bread, our water in the cast iron pan, quickly remove the towel and close the door. Finally, I lower the oven temperature to the desired baking temperature.

Always going through the same steps helps me work with more clarity and with less hassle.

PRINCIPLE 9: MAKE AND TEST PREDICTIONS

Once you have made some progress in your learning and have made your first bakes, it's good to start testing your understanding as quickly as possible.

For this, a notebook comes in handy: from the beginning, write down notes about your every bake and experiment. This way, you'll collect a valuable resource documenting the things you learn as you practice. But the biggest benefit comes when it's time to move to testing your assumptions.

"Can you guess how a change or experiment will turn out before you do it?" Kaufman writes.

In your notebook, write down what you plan to do differently in the next bake, and how you think your bread will change because of the modification. Then, test the assumptions by actually making the change and observing the results.

If things went as you imagined, you can congratulate yourself and do another experiment with another, maybe even bigger, change. On the other hand, if your results surprise you, it's a great sign for what to study more next.

PRINCIPLE 10: HONOR YOUR BIOLOGY

As the last principle, Kaufman reminds us to not try too much at one go.

He says that "the optimal learning cycle appears to be approximately ninety minutes of focused concentration." Practice longer than this at once and you'll start to get distracted and tired, and the learning isn't as efficient anymore.

In bread making, the breaks come more or less naturally. But even so, remember to not strain yourself too hard.

Learning should be fun!



A BAKER'S FAVORITE BREAD: MICHELE DOGATI

Words: JARKKO LAINE and MICHELE DOGATI

Photos: MICHELE DOGATI



In our series, “A Baker’s Favorite Bread”, I ask bakers two questions: First, tell us a bit about yourself and your bread making. And second, what is your favorite bread, and why?

In this issue, we meet Michele Dogati, a baker from Milan, Italy who is in the process of going from a passionate home baker to a professional, running a micro bakery business, Slow Bread Lab, with his partner, Kaisli Kiuru.

To follow the baking couple’s journey, check out the bakery’s [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram profile](#). Some time ago, they published [a beautiful video](#) in which Michele talks about bread and the bakery.

Here’s how Michele answered our two questions—and his rye bread recipe.

* *

My bread making had a quite casual start. A few years ago, I wanted to try to make pizza at home. As the results were not satisfactory, this made me try harder, getting to understand that behind it, there was a whole universe to know and learn about.

I started to do research, and soon my curiosity moved towards bread making. In an instant, my attention was caught by sourdough, so I prepared a starter using rye flour.

As bread has such essential ingredients—flour, water and salt—I thought the quality of the ingredients would make the difference, which also reflects our choices in other food matters.



"After a few years of intense home baking, exploring, and testing, the idea of opening a bakery started to seed in our minds."

After a few years of intense home baking, exploring, and testing, the idea of opening a bakery started to seed in our minds.

We knew it would be a big change in our lives, but as our former working careers were also based on artisanal skills, patience, and passion, we took on the challenge. Now we are about to open a micro bakery in the heart of Milan (Italy), where we bake using sourdough and stone ground organic flour.

As there is always a reason to prefer one thing over another, the Finnish rye bread is one of my favorites as it reminds me of the Finnish origins of my partner.



THE RECIPE: SUOMI RYE

First Stage

| Ingredient | Quantity | Baker's % |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Coarse rye flour | 100 g | 100% |
| Water | 81 g | 81% |
| Rye Sourdough (at 150% hydration) | 25 g | 25% |

Balance the water temperature to reach the desired dough temperature. Mix the ingredients, then keep at 25-27°C (77-80°F) for 12 to 15 hours (overnight).

Second Stage

| Ingredient | Quantity | Baker's % |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| All of the stage one | 206 g | 76% |
| Coarse rye flour | 270 g | 100% |
| Water | 340 g | 126% |

Mix, then keep at 30-32°C (86-90°F) for 3 to 4 hours. Again, adjust water temperature to get to the desired dough temperature.

Final Dough

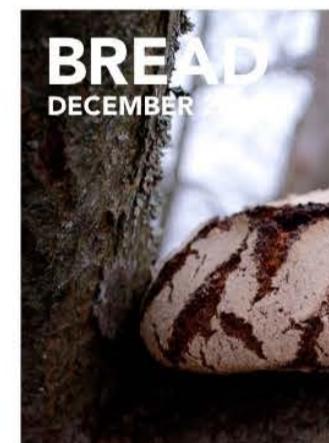
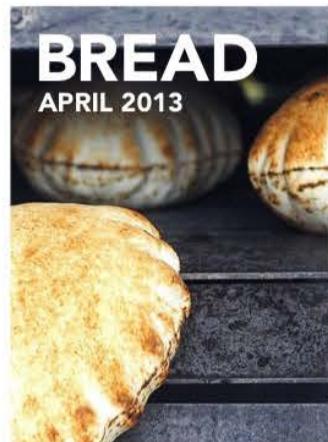
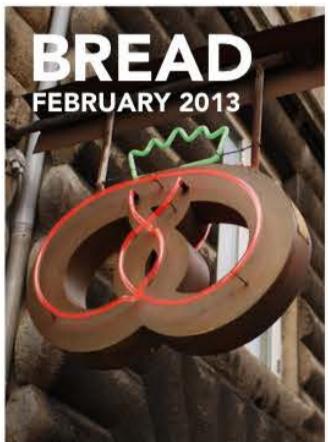
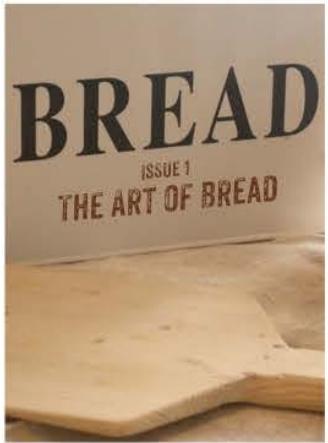
| Ingredient | Quantity | Baker's % |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| All of the stage two | 816 g | 130% |
| Coarse rye flour | 430 g | 68% |
| Sifted rye flour | 200 g | 32% |
| Water | 479 g | 76% |
| Salt | 16 g | 2.5% |
| Mashed potatoes | 250 g | 40% |
| Sunflower seeds | 180 g | 29% |
| Flax seeds | 30 g | 5% |

Notice: The baker's percentages above are calculated for each step separately. Overall, the dough has a 90% hydration, with 1.6% salt, and the flour divided 80% coarse rye and 20% sifted rye.

Instructions

1. Mix the flour, water, and salt with the dough from the second stage.
2. Mix at first speed for 5 to 6 minutes.
3. Add the mashed potatoes, sunflower seeds, and flax seeds. Then mix until they are all well incorporated into the dough.
4. Let the dough rest in bulk fermentation for 45-60 minutes.
5. Divide into four pieces of 600 g. Shape into square loaves, covering each of the faces with some oatmeal flakes.
6. Put the shaped loaves in square wooden baking baskets such as Le Comte by Panibois.
7. Leave to rise at 26-27°C for 60-90 minutes. Keep an eye for cracks on the dough's surface as a sign of readiness.
8. Bake at 230-240°C for about 55-60 minutes. For the first 25 minutes, try to have steam in the oven.
9. Let the baked loaves cool on a wire rack. Then, wait for 48 to 72 hours before cutting the bread!





IN 2016, BREAD MAGAZINE TAKES A DEEP BREATH

Words and Photos: JARKKO LAINE

You have now reached the end of the eighteenth issue of Bread Magazine.

It's quite amazing that we've come this far: Bread Magazine has now been around for a full four years! When I started the magazine in 2012, I had no idea where we'd go with it, and how long it would last. Not to mention the big question of whether people would find it any good or not. It makes me happy and humble to find you still reading these words.

I hope you've enjoyed the journey so far!

These past months leading to the end of the year, I've been struggling with the question of what to do next. Annoying my wife with my constant changes of mind, I've been jumping from the idea of going on as usual to making some big changes, and back.

But in the end, I had to make a decision.

To make sure the story can continue for years to come, as we enter 2016, we'll take a break from publishing new issues.

Why?

Is this the end of Bread Magazine?

No. I don't think this is the end. Yes, I know taking a break is risky: you guys might not be there when we come back.

But let me explain.

"When I started the magazine in 2012, I had no idea where we'd go with it, and how long it would last. Not to mention the big question of whether people would find it any good or not. It makes me happy and humble to find you still reading these words."

In these years and through all the changes in publishing schedules, pricing, and all, there's always been a solid following of both new reader who have just found us and long time readers who have stayed with us from the very beginning. Emails from you keep reminding me that this is something valuable.

I'm ever grateful for that, and for this, I dream of keeping building Bread Magazine into something that will survive the years and thrive even decades from now.

But to make that happen, there is some work we need to do on the foundation. Work, that because of realities in life, I have to admit to myself, I won't be able to do while publishing new issues.

FIXING CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATION

If you've been following my updates on our Dough Wizards mailing list—or these "Welcome" and "What's Next?" essays in the magazine issues, you might remember that I've mentioned quite a few things I have been working on to support the magazine and to help it reach new people.

Things like my short book (*What I Talk About When I Talk About Bread*), or making the newsletter more useful and active, or how I said I was going through the first four issues to update them to match my current thinking about bread making best practices...

What's in common between all these things is that while they are all crucial to the future success of the magazine, I haven't had the time to finish them. *Put it another way, they are cracks in Bread Magazine's foundation.*

At the moment, even though I'm still amazed by the magazine's success, growth isn't fast, and the magazine is still more or less something I do on the side—a serious hobby rather than a full-time business.

Which means I can't spend all my time working on the magazine.



This is why, this year, while we've been able to publish some great issues, the backlog ideas—or cracks in the foundation—have gone unaddressed. At this point, I believe fixing the cracks in the foundation before continuing to pile up more issues on top of it is the right thing to do.

However, even though this means that we are not ready to promise new issues for next year, this doesn't mean no updates!

In fact, I think 2016 will be an exciting year with a lot more activity around the magazine. I have a bunch of ideas for new blog posts I'd love to explore, and feature plans for the site I can't wait to share with you. The new versions of the four free issues should be exciting, and the newsletter update will be very practical (and fun, I think).

So, if you're not yet signed up to our free newsletter, [do it now so I can notify you](#) of all these fun new things as they develop.

"I think 2016 will be an exciting year with a lot more activity around the magazine"

BUILDING A TEAM

Breadheads, bread nerds, bread lovers—no matter how you like to call the group of bread enthusiasts that gathers on the internet, I think you are a wonderful bunch.

I've said this before, but it's worth repeating: the community is one of the friendliest I've ever met.

And so, in my dreams, Bread Magazine isn't just a business. Most of the time, I don't even think of it as a business but something we're creating for the community. I don't know if this is arrogant to say, but I'd love to see bread people think of it as "our magazine."

That's why, as I look beyond 2016, I see a magazine that is less about me and more about all of us.

In these past years, I've been lucky to work with a bunch of amazing individuals from around the world. During 2016, I hope to engage with this group in more detail and gather them all together (virtually, over the internet) to plan for our big comeback in 2017.

Together, I hope we'll find answers to questions like: How can we make the magazine even better? Who should be writing for it? How can we turn it into something new and bigger while maintaining the spirit that makes it so special?

If you'd like to be a part of this group, you can [join a special mailing list](#) I've set up for anyone who'd like to be a part of the team.

THANK YOU!

Again, thank you for all your support so far. I'm ever grateful for the opportunity you've given to me to write these words to you and send them to your email inbox. And I hope you'll stay with us as we look for a new direction throughout the coming year.

So, this December, there won't be a call to action at the end of this magazine issue. Sure, I'd love it if you told your friends and relatives about the magazine, but no, I don't have a new subscription to sell at this point.

Instead, I wish you a merry Christmas, and a wonderful new year 2016. Let's make it a great one!

Thanks for reading, and happy baking!

- Jarkko



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