
BREAD
ISSUE #1:
THE ART OF BREAD

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WELCOME

WELCOME to the first edition of BREAD, the magazine on great bread and people who make it!

WHAT IS "BREAD"?

BREAD STARTED AS AN IDEA for a book.

As I heated my oven again and again, reading books about bread (and browsing for more on Amazon) and practicing my bread making skills, I dreamed of going on an adventure to explore all the pieces that together make up great bread, from the farmer who grows the grains to the miller who turns the grain into flour to the baker who makes the dough.

This magazine is that book.

IN THIS EDITION

THE FIRST EDITION, which you are now reading, works as an introduction, taking an overall look at bread and what makes it beautiful.

Interviews with three amazing bakers look at what it is that makes people passionate about bread. To the advanced home baker, these stories will give new ideas on what to try next and to which direction to take their interest in bread making.

IF YOU ARE JUST GETTING STARTED with bread (or haven't even considered bread making before), I hope you will get excited. And when you do, the basic bread recipe starting on page 17 will be there waiting to get you started.

Baking bread is a craft but even your first try will lead to a fresh loaf, which I'm sure you will enjoy. Now is a great time to start!

HOW TO READ THE MAGAZINE

FOR AN OPTIMAL READING EXPERIENCE, I suggest you save the magazine to your computer's hard drive and open it in a PDF reader (such as Adobe Acrobat, or Preview if you are on a Mac). This way, when you click on links, they won't open in the same browser window with th magazine and make you lose track of the page you were just reading.

If your PDF reader supports a full screen mode, I suggest you use it—the magazine just looks so much better that way.

Any text that looks like this is a link and can be clicked to open up more information in a web browser. Go ahead, try it now.

SHARE AND TALK BACK

BREAD IS A BRAND NEW MAGAZINE and you may well be among the first to read it.

So, if you enjoy what you read, it will a be a lot of help if you tell your friends by sharing the magazine with them and pointing them to Insanely Interested for more information.

Thank you!

I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD to hearing your feedback. As this is my first attempt at publishing a magazine online, I'm sure I won't get every piece in the right place right from the start. So, if there is something you like, or that you'd like me to change in future editions, don't hesitate to get in touch with me by sending email at contact@insanelyinterested.com.

SUBSCRIBE

TO GET THE FUTURE EDITIONS FOR FREE right as they are published, click here to subscribe to the magazine.

BUT NOW, enough talk about the magazine. I hope you will enjoy what's ahead.

Happy baking!

Jarkko Laine
editor and publisher


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BREAD: A LOVE STORY

MY STORY WITH BREAD begins two decades ago in the small Senegalese town of *Fatick*.

In my memories, Fatick is a small, slow paced town. It's never cold, and rainy only in summer time. The only road with pavement is slowly getting devoured by sand. Sheep and the occasional cow wonder through the streets, backed by the sound of roosters trying to impress their mistresses. No one is too busy to stop and share lengthy greetings with their neighbors.

In Fatick, just like most of Senegal, only one kind of bread is sold: a baguette with a soft white crumb and a crusty yellow crust. Not quite as dark as the artisan baguettes you would find in Paris, but delicious nonetheless. During Ramadan, the month of fasting according to Islam, the baker adds sugar to the dough and bakes a sweeter variety, perhaps to give some extra energy to the faithful fasters who need to survive from sunrise to sunset without eating or drinking.

THE BREAD IS SOLD in small kiosks sprinkled in street corners all over town. The kiosks are bare and simple: just a shelf for keeping the morning's worth of baguettes (usually one big bag of bread), a door, and a small window from which the customer gets served. The kiosk stays open until the bread has been sold and then opens again the next morning after the bread delivery truck has made its rounds.

As the eldest of four boys, it was my job—a job I was proud to do—to buy the bread while my father prepared the porridge and made the table. So, every morning, I put on my flip-flops and walked to the closest bread kiosk just around the block.

THE MAN AT THE KIOSK was named *Birame*. He was a happy, friendly fellow in his late twenties or early thirties, always greeting me with a wide smile on his face.

When buying bread, I always asked for one bread, *"un pain."* Birame gave me two to choose from, one with a darker crust than the other, but otherwise pretty much the same. When I pointed at the one I wanted, he took a piece of newspaper and wrapped it around the baguette.

EVERY MORNING, I PUT ON MY FLIP-FLOPS AND WALKED TO THE BREAD KIOSK JUST AROUND THE BLOCK.

I handed him a coin of 100 FCFA and brought the bread home to my family.

ONE MORNING, WHEN I WENT TO BUY THE DAILY BREAD, Birame was not there. The door and the window were closed. I was probably just a bit early, but ten-year-olds rarely stick around and wait.

I knew where the bakery was, about a kilometer from the kiosk, so I started walking towards it, hoping to meet Birame on the way.

I arrived at the bakery and after pacing my steps at the door for a while, I went in through the open door. Birame was there, waiting for his daily batch of bread. And I had just entered a very special place.

I smelled the scent of bread baking in the ovens, watched the mixer working more dough in the corner, and the bakers at work. The details escape my mind, but still today, after twenty years, I can't forget the smell of fresh bread, the big bags of flour—and the mixer in the corner of the *boulangerie*.

After returning to Finland and growing up, I mostly forgot about bread, until in 2007, I found it again.

THIS TIME, I FOUND BREAD within the walls of my own home. Surfing on the internet, I stumbled to a simple sourdough recipe and decided to give it a shot. I made my first soudough starter and experimented with Finnish dark rye bread.

I wrote in a blog post:

"Baking rye bread is an every day miracle that turns water and flour into a tasty, nutritious bread with a crispy crust. When the first bubbles appear in the starter, a grown man becomes a child again, amazed by the beauty of life. The starter is a living organism that can be passed from generation to generation: from father to son and again to grandchildren."

I realized baking was an act of slowing down and practicing living in this moment and that making bread you can feel good about is something all of us can do.

MY BIGGEST REVELATION was still yet to come. It came when I found a video of *Richard Bertinet* (you can find his interview later in this issue of Bread) working his dough. The way he did it was completely different from anything I had seen before: Appreciative to the dough but firm and decisive all at the same time.

Until then, I had been saving money for a KitchenAid mixer but now I knew I didn't need a machine; I needed to learn what this man was doing. I bought Bertinet's book, Dough, and started practicing his techniques and recipes.

My interest in bread soon moved from Finnish rye bread towards the French style airy loaves. Equipped with a small notebook, a pair of hands, some utencils, a couple of books on bread, and tons of enthusiasm, I set out to learn the craft behind he perfect loaf of bread — moist and full of air on the inside, dark and crunchy on the outside.

For well over a year, I baked all the bread my family could eat (occasionally leaving some extra loaves in the hallway for neighbors to taste and enjoy), and still today, I bake most of it: After tasting a loaf of slowly fermented sourdough, it's hard to appreciate anything you can find in the supermarket.

IT'S EASY TO GET STARTED with bread, and once you're hooked, it's very hard to give up. For the curious, there is always something new to learn and experiment with.

And all the while, you get to enjoy the taste and smell of fresh bread, right where you are, in your own home, sharing it with your loved ones.

CHRIS YOUNG

In 1928, Otto Frederick Rohwedder created a machine that would change the way we buy our bread—sliced and wrapped in plastic.

In the sixties, the trend continued as fermentation was replaced by machines pushing air in the dough through intensive beating. Bread factories greeted this as a major step forward: bread making, once a time consuming process, could now be completed much faster—and without relying on experienced bakers. Factory bread invaded our homes and the art of a slowly fermented, hand made loaf was almost forgotten.

Now, this is about to change.

I interviewed CHRIS YOUNG, the coordinator of *Real Bread Campaign*, a project dedicated to putting *real* bread back to its rightful place in the dinner table. He talked about the campaign, his appreciation for bread, and shared interesting facts about bread and its place in history.

JARKKO: How did the Real Bread campaign get started?

CHRIS: THE REAL BREAD CAMPAIGN was the brainchild of *Andrew Whitley* who, as an organic artisan baker, has been highlighting since the mid-1970s the state of bread in Britain, and sharing with people how we can all help to make a positive difference.

He knew that in order to bring Real Bread back to the hearts of our local communities in significant numbers, a national organisation was needed. This would bring together everyone who was sick of industrial loaves as a mutually-supportive network, sharing ideas and experience; championing positive steps in the right direction, and challenging legislation and other obstacles to the rise of Real Bread.

He brought this idea to the charity Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, which, as a campaigning organisation, was happy to take on the task.

We launched the Campaign in November 2008 and the open-to-all membership scheme in September 2009.

JARKKO: How did you get involved with the campaign yourself?

CHRIS: MY FIRST ATTEMPT at bread making as a student resulted in a brick, which I still use as a doorstop. Thankfully, I tried again and soon got the hang of baking a basic loaf. I got more interested in 2004, when I found *Dan Lepard*'s *The Handmade Loaf*. It was the first bread book I'd seen that didn't just take one or two basic recipes made with instant yeast, then throw in a handful of herbs or cheese or just make a load of different shapes, then write "Contains over fifty recipes" on the cover.

Then in November 2008, I went on a course with *Andrew Whitley* at Schumacher College. Reading his book *Bread Matters* and listening to him talk about the issues and his proposed solutions literally made me say "How can I get involved?"

He told me he was about to launch the Campaign, so I signed up for the newsletter, which a few months later advertised a vacancy for a volunteer…

JARKKO: What is "real bread"?

CHRIS: WE DEFINE REAL BREAD as being made without the use any processing aids, artificial additives, flour "improvers", dough conditioners, preservatives, chemical leavening or, well, artificial anything. Well-made Real Bread that's been given time to "ripen" and develop flavour naturally tastes delicious! There is also a growing body of research that has concluded a variety of health benefits of longer-fermented real breads, especially genuine sourdough.

"THERE IS ALSO A GROWING BODY OF RESEARCH THAT HAS CONCLUDED A VARIETY OF HEALTH BENEFITS OF LONGER-FERMENTED REAL BREADS, ESPECIALLY GENUINE SOURDOUGH."

Even better if it's Real Bread made by craftspeople at local independent bakeries, as this helps create more jobs-per-loaf than industrial loaf manufacturing plants.

JARKKO: What goals do you have for the campaign? Have you seen signs of progress so far?

CHRIS: IN OUR FIRST FOUR YEARS, we're being funded by the Big Lottery's Local Food programme. The aims we've agreed with them are to run a membership scheme for everyone who cares about the state of bread in Britain, encourage bread making to be taught in at least 100 schools in England, provide support for at least 100 people wanting to bake Real Bread for their local communities, and help to get more Real Bread being made available in public sector canteens and through food access schemes.

It's just over two years since we launched our membership and already nearly 750 people have joined us, in a wider supporter network of over 4,500. We sold all 500 copies of *Knead to Know*, our book for would-be bakers, in a few months and have since sold most of the second run of 500; and our bakers' forum has more than 400 subscribers. Lessons in Loaf have been taught in 75 schools, and we're organising workshops for teachers, schools cooks, and people in food access projects, as well as making introductions between bakeries and organisations wanting to supply Real Bread.

On 23 January we launched *Bake Your Lawn*, a scheme to show school children how to take a handful of wheat and grow it, mill it, bake it, and eat it. By the end of the following day, more than fifty schools had applied for packets of wheat seeds from us.

JARKKO: What should bread's role be in today's world, in your opinion?

CHRIS: I HAVE QUOTED a writer called *Andrew Wheeler* many times before but I'll do so again: In his book Eat Britain! 101 Great British Tastes, he writes:*"The people of Britain need to be reminded that bread isn't just something to keep your fingers dry when eating a sandwich."*

It's a cliché, but Real Bread should be the staff of life. We believe that the vast majority of what is sold in the UK as "bread" has been so altered by chemicals and no-time processes that it shouldn't be allowed to bear that noble name.

We're finding ways to make Real Bread available to more people, and calling for an Honest Crust Act so that if a loaf has been made using added enzymes or other artificial additives, or has been baked twice, or isn't genuine sourdough, or has not been touched by an artisan baker, shoppers know this.

JARKKO: How about the role of a baker? Why is it important to support local, small scale producers instead of the supermarket in-store bakers?

"THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT BREAD ISN'T JUST SOMETHING TO KEEP YOUR FINGERS DRY WHEN EATING A SANDWICH."

CHRIS: A REAL BREAD BAKER on the high street isn't just a quality food producer. By setting up his or her business in the heart of a local community, he or she is providing a valuable service to other people in that community: a bakery is a place to meet and catch up; money spent with a locally-owned independent business is more like to be re-invested locally than if spent in a multiple chain; and surely walking to a bakery is better all round than climbing into a petrol-guzzling car to drive out of town to buy something that was produced at the other end of a motorway.

JARKKO: What would you recommend people who love real bread and would like to see it rise again in their own countries to do?

CHRIS: CONTACT REAL BREAD BAKERS, independent millers, teachers and anyone else who you think is doing the right thing, then get out there and say: "Here are the problems; here's how we can make a difference – who's with me?" The internet makes this so much easier to do than in times gone by, and social media helps you to reach out to make contact with potential allies, who you can then meet in the real world.

JARKKO: In the past half a year to a year, here in Finland, low-carb diets have become a big phenomenon and now big bakeries are starting to artificially manufacture breads low in carbohydrates in order to survive... Have you seen this happening in the UK and what's your

take on it? How can Real Bread respond to this attack?

CHRIS: SADLY, YES. I think it's a shame that some people choose synthetic alternatives to delicious natural food, perhaps paying a premium to do so, rather than simply looking at everything they eat and the exercise they take and balancing things out.

Carbohydrates have always been a key element in a healthy, balanced human diet. Unless you're diabetic or have another professionally-diagnosed condition, there seems to be little evidence to the contrary.

People have been eating and enjoying Real Bread for thousands of years and there's a good chance that low-carb might well be another short-lived fad. Sooner or later, I have a feeling many carb curbers will say "Hang on, I'm missing out on crunchy sourdough toast here. Why don't I cut back on some of the fatty stuff, walk a bit more and enjoy a crumpet every now and then!"

JARKKO: And finally, why is bread worth preserving as part of our culture, and as more than just something you eat to quickly fuel your body?

CHRIS: REAL BREAD HAS BEEN a central part of people's diets in many countries around the world for so long it's interwoven into the fabric of life. As well as being one of the most basic foods, it is also one of the most luxurious – just think of all of the celebrations that have one type of bread or another at their heart, from English hot cross buns, to Jewish challah, to Mexican pan de muertos, to Finnish traditions of laskiaispulla and giving rye bread and salt as house-warming presents.

Perhaps more significantly, bread has made its way into our language and so the way we perceive the world. The word *companion* (and several similar words in other European languages) comes from the Latin cum panis (literally 'with bread') meaning one with whom you eat bread. Even the English word *lord* comes from hlafward (loaf ward) meaning the person who guards the bread. In English, loaf is a slang term for head, as in "use your loaf", and both bread and dough are synonymous with money.

Imagine any of this being true if the history of bread had started with an additive-packed, fluffy, arguably bland, wrapped-sliced factory loaf, and not what we see as the real thing…

"THE WORD COMPANION COMES FROM THE LATIN CUM PANIS (LITERALLY 'WITH BREAD') MEANING ONE WITH WHOM YOU EAT BREAD."

For more information on the Real Bread Campaign, visit realbreadcampaign.org or follow on Twitter at @RealBread.

AS A PART OF ITS EFFORTS to make real bread available to everyone in Britain, the Real Bread Campaign has published an introductory guide to becoming a Real Bread baker who produces great bread for her local community.

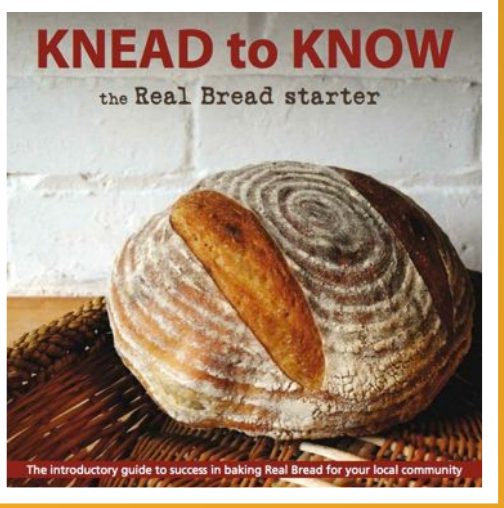
Knead to Know covers a wide range of topics from baking Real Bread to marketing the bread and from opening your storefront to finding funding to locating the best second hand equipment for your bakery.

AT FIRST, THESE TOPICS MAY SOUND like they are far from a regular home baker's interests, but I believe many of us—at least secretly—dream of sharing our passion with the people around us. Knead to Know will give you a better idea on what is involved in making that dream reality.

So, if you ever feel the tiniest itch to find out if you have what it takes to make it as a producer of Real Bread, this book is worth the small investment. I read Knead to Know shortly after it was published a year ago, and although I still haven't started my own bakery (and most likely never will), for many weeks I found myself vigorously browsing the internet for more information about famers' markets and the legalese required to sell bread at one of them in the summer. In other words, this is an inspiring book.

The business related information in Knead to Know is naturally very UK centric, so if you live elsewhere in the world, you will have to do more searching to get your country specific details—but the book will serve as a good starting point, giving you ideas on what to look for.

YOU CAN BUY YOUR COPY of Knead to Know on the Real Bread Campaign's web site as a PDF download for £10. For British residents, there is also a print version available for £15.



PHIL AGNEW

PHIL AGNEW is a 35 year old home baker from the mostly sunny city of Brisbane in Australia. He works as a graphic designer, but spends his bus commutes plannning recipes for his next bake. Every Saturday, he bakes a new batch of naturally leavened bread—made with his home milled flour—to share with family and friends.

Phil posts his recipes and beautiful bread photography on a blog he publishes at the artisan baker community, *The Fresh Loaf*.

In this interview, Phil tells his bread story and shares some of his thoughts on what makes bread special.

JARKKO: Can you tell a bit about your background? How did you get excited about baking bread?

PHIL: I GREW UP IN A SMALL COUNTRY TOWN. I am not a city kid even though I live in one now. My parents are grounded people so we were raised with awareness about the value and nutrition of good food.

I have a distinct memory of my father baking bread rolls in my grandparent's bright yellow kitchen. He had a damp cloth sitting over rising bread rolls and I remember him talking about yeast and keeping the dough warm and out of drafts. It's a special memory for me.

I BECAME EXCITED ABOUT BAKING my own bread when I read an article on *Jim Lahey*'s no-knead bread. Up until this point I had made some simple yeasted breads and pizza dough but without much understanding of what I was doing. I was just following steps in a recipe.

The no-knead process was something new and exciting for me. The first attempt tasted fantastic and so did the second, apart from giving myself really nasty burns when picking up a scalding hot pot. A mistake I have never made since.

ABOUT THIS TIME, a small boulangerie had opened down the road that sold "real" sourdough breads. This was something completely unknown to me. So it all was kind of happening at the same time. I was experimenting with no-knead breads at home making all kinds of concoctions plus buying and eating quality sourdoughs.

Then one day, when passing through a book shop, I decided to browse the food section for

a book on bread baking and found *Richard Bertinet*'s book *Crust*. It all changed from that moment on. I bought it, raced home and poured over it before spending the next week preparing my first natural levain (sourdough). I haven't stopped baking and learning since.

I ENJOY so many aspects of baking bread. It is a tactile process which utilises all of my senses. There is an ongoing history and tradition encompassing endless skills and processes to understand. It brings an appreciation and gratitude to the food we eat, but most of all, it is a way of sharing and bringing together family and friends.

JARKKO: Where are you now as a baker?

PHIL: HA, STILL A NOVICE I THINK, with much to learn. Being able to write my own formulas with a finished bread in mind was very important to me and is something I have worked hard at for the past couple of years. I often backward engineer other bakers formulas to understand why they would do things and what effect that would have on a finished loaf.

JARKKO: Why bread? How would you explain your passion for bread to someone who is not a baker herself?

PHIL: I HAVE BEEN ASKED THAT QUESTION a few times by people—why bread?

It completely captivates my thinking. I can't imagine a day when I am not thinking about bread that I want to make or flavour combinations I wish to try. To see a loaf rise in the oven made from nothing more than flour I have milled, water, and salt is a miracle that still stops me in my tracks. It's magical.

It brings me closer to the present moment. I have to be aware of temperatures, time, where I am and what I am doing. I smell and taste the levain to judge its ripeness. I feel the dough develop and strengthen as its kneaded and smell the aromas as the fermentation continues. I use my eyes and fingers to judge the final proof, before listening for the hollow tap of a well baked loaf. All my senses are involved.

JARKKO: What's your favorite moment in the process of baking a loaf of bread?

PHIL: WATCHING SOMENONE taking the first bite.

In the baking process though, I would say giving the dough a stretch-and-fold and feeling the life and strength that fermentation has given it.

JARKKO: In one of your recent blog posts you mention that you are baking weekly loaves to a friend. Are you planning to go further along this path into professional bread baking?

PHIL: THIS IS A HARD QUESTION FOR ME. It torments me. I have helped a friend a few times bake bread in his *Alan Scott* wood-fired oven to sell at farmers markets. It is hard work but I love it. We were involved in the entire process from mixing by hand, baking and finally selling to happy customers. It is very fulfilling.

A long term plan would be to do something similar part-time on a small scale and supplement it with another income but I am at a point in my life where this is not yet possible so I am learning quite a bit of patience. Actually the blog has been a real blessing for me as it has given me a creative outlet plus contact with a great community of bakers. The photography has also changed how I think about my future role with bread. I'm just not sure how.

JARKKO: How often do you bake? Do you have a weekly baking schedule, or how do you find the time to bake bread?

PHIL: SATURDAY IS MY BAKE DAY, but now that I have picked up a few customers along the way I have had to add some bakes during the week but so far this has not added too much work. I often spend an hour or so the day before tweaking formulas, milling flour and building levains. The formula writing usually happens during the week while riding in buses.

I used to bake whenever I could, often to the detriment of a nightly routine but now I find setting a day aside for it much more relaxing and beneficial. Adding the blog into the equation has certainly increased the amount of time I spend baking and thinking about baking, but my partner *Nat* is very supportive. She sees my passion and a place for it in our future.

"TO SEE A LOAF RISE IN THE OVEN MADE FROM NOTHING MORE THAN FLOUR I HAVE MILLED, WATER AND SALT IS A MIRACLE THAT STILL STOPS ME IN MY TRACKS. IT'S MAGICAL."

JARKKO: How did you decide to start the blog?

PHIL: THE IDEA FOR THE BLOG came about soon after I had purchased the mill. I was really nervous about baking my first loaf of wholegrain bread with freshly milled flour. When it came out beautifully I felt like I had to start sharing my breads and what I was doing. I was very excited. I had been a quiet visitor on the Fresh Loaf website for many years so it is nice to be able to give something back to the community that I have learnt so much from.

JARKKO: How has blogging affected the way you bake?

PHIL: I THINK THE BLOG HAS AFFECTED my baking quite profoundly. I now dedicate almost a day to baking and depending on the photos this can spill into part of the next. And I don't usually factor in the writing and transcribing of formula's which can take quite some time.

Initially I put a lot of pressure on myself to make each posting better than the last... I soon learnt to relax and write and bake for my life and not try and impress others. Be more natural.

The best part for me though is responding to comments and questions. I still get a real kick out of the interaction with people who have a similar passion.

JARKKO: How about in the future, what kind of plans do you have your blog?

PHIL: AT THIS STAGE OF MY LIFE, I think the blog will continue to have a life of its own. I am not actively pushing it and have no special plans but it does seem to be evolving and growing of it's own accord.

The idea of taking it away from the Fresh Loaf to another domain doesn't really interest me as I want to keep that interaction.

There are a few places (bakeries/mills) that I would like to visit and photograph but at this stage they are just ideas.

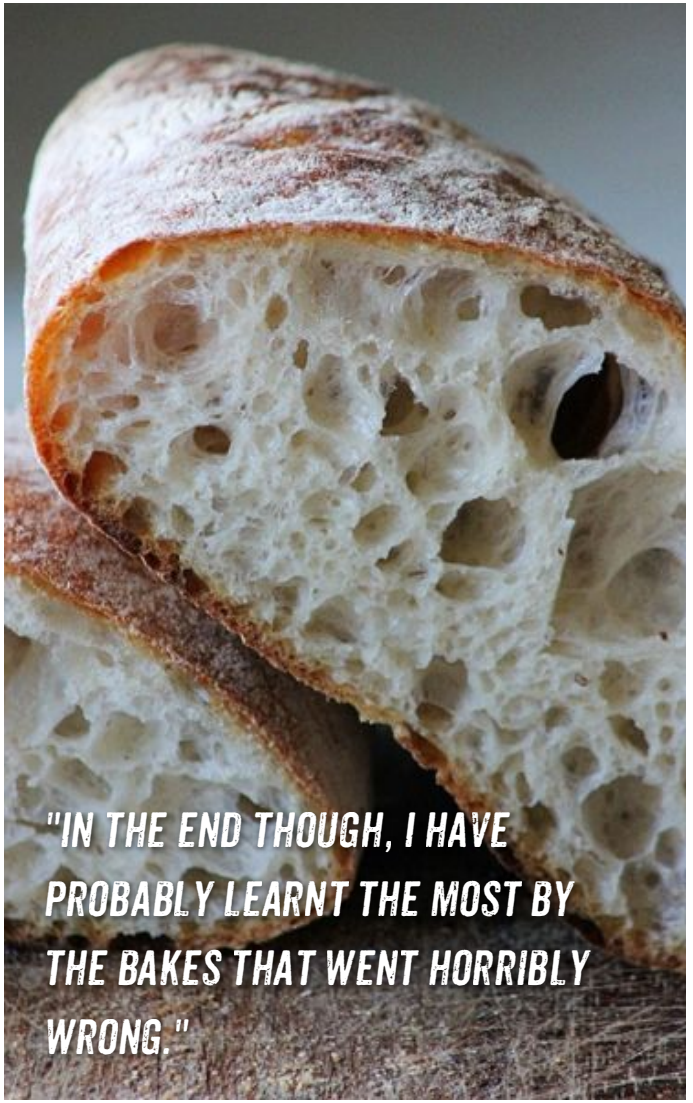
JARKKO: Do you have a bread recipe you are known for?

PHIL: I BAKE A SOURDOUGH LOAF with fig and aniseed. It's my favourite plus a favourite of many I know. Aniseed is a polarising flavour for many people. They either love it or hate it.

JARKKO: Where do you look for information on baking? Have you taken courses or are you completely "self-taught"?

PHIL: I AM "SELF-TAUGHT". I find when you are passionate about something learning isn't a chore anymore. I absorb as much as possible both by reading and experimenting. I have read about and tried for myself so many different methods that after a while you begin to get a feel for what works best for you and the bread you want to make.

I have a shelf dedicated to bread books much to the amusement of visitors, plus websites like *The Fresh Loaf* have fantastic



SO WHAT DO I WANT my bread to be like?

This question only found its way to me at the end of a long week. A long week with too much time spent looking at what other bakers/bakeries were doing. A week with too much time spent on other people's lives and not my own. A week with too much time spent on wondering what I could possibly bake for the blog … and of course this is an endless ever-growing list.

For me, this seems to be the wrong way to go about it. Better to bake for my life and show the results, whether they are same and mundane or new and exciting. Even the same and mundane is never really the same and can be quite a challenge as we all know.

—From Phil's blog.

communities of knowledgeable and creative bakers that willingly share advice and ideas. It's very inspiring.

In the end though, I have probably learnt the most by the bakes that went horribly wrong. A failure forces you look deeper into your process and the decisions you made. You are then challenged to make changes and try again. And sometimes again.

JARKKO: Which bread making book have you learned the most from? And what book would you recommend for someone just starting out?

PHIL: THAT'S A TRICKY ONE. Technically the book I learnt the most from and inspired me most is *The Bread Builders* by *Dan Wing* and *Alan Scott*. It is not a book of recipes but an in-depth investigation of hearth breads, natural levains and masonry ovens.

I guess the book for someone starting out would have to suit the style of bread they want to make and the amount of time they are willing to spend. *Maggie Glezer*'s *Artisan Baking* is a great book as an overview, plus it has the advantage of listing the formulas under experience levels. For someone beginning in baking it has breads using commercial yeasts which can be baked and refined before moving on to sourdoughs if they desire.

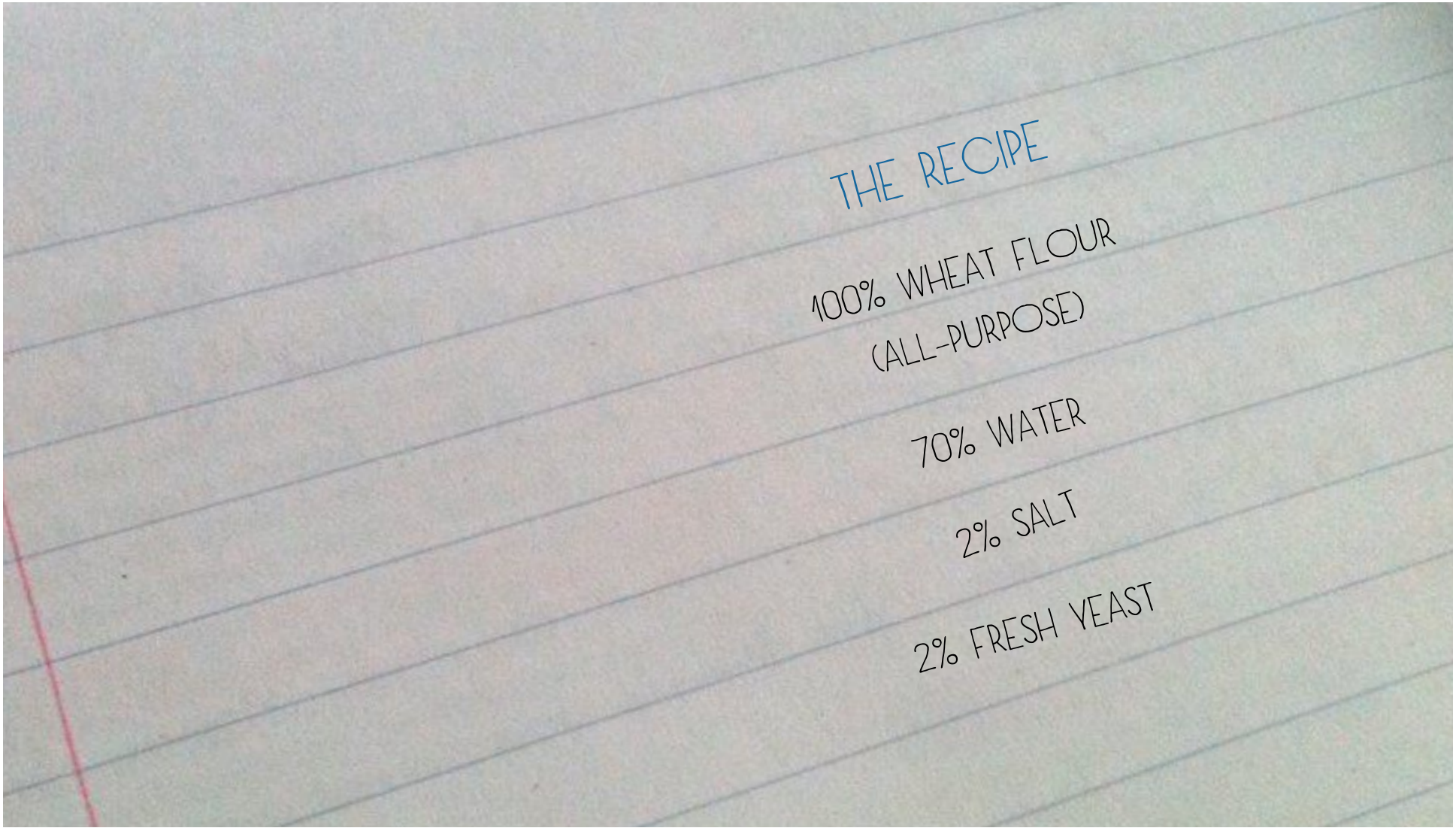
FOR MORE of Phil's writing and photography, visit PiP's blog at The Fresh Loaf.

A HOME BASE FOR AMATEUR BAKERS

The Fresh Loaf is an active and friendly community of "amateur bakers and artisan bread enthusiasts", as the web site's tag line will tell you. Started by Floyd Mann seven years ago, it has become the number one go to place for bread making advice online.

The site contains a lot of information for the home baker, but most importantly it's the home for an active forum and a set of baker blogs. Anyone can join the discussion, ask a question, or start a blog.

To learn more about The Fresh Loaf, visit the web site—just be prepared to spend a few hours if it's your first visit. There is a lot to see.


THE RECIPE
100% WHEAT FLOUR
(ALL-PURPOSE)
70% WATER
2% SALT
2% FRESH YEAST

THE RECIPE

The bread recipe in this magazine is built around the idea that there really is only one bread recipe and endless variations of it. More complex recipes add new steps and more ingredients, but still at its core, even something like a brioche can be brought back to these simple roots.

My goal in this first edition of BREAD is to teach you this recipe and the key concepts behind it so that you can get started with your experiments, and will be prepared for the new variations we'll introduce in future editions.

The recipe has four ingredients:

Flour, water, salt, and leaven.

In editions to come, we will look closely at each of the four and the different things you can do with them. But now, we'll start from the most basic version which you can bake in just a few hours.

MEASURING INGREDIENTS

MOST BAKERS measure their ingredients by weight instead of volume measures. For professional bakers, this is very handy as they use big bags of flour, often 10 kg or more. They can just take the bags they need and pour them into the dough mixer without worrying about cups and such.

Another reason for this is accuracy—which is also why you should start measuring your ingredients this way right from the start. When you use a scale to weigh 100 grams of flour, you are much more likely to get it right than if you try to get an exact cup of water.

If you don't have a scale, go and buy one before continuing (I promise this is the only piece of equipment you have to buy for now). Choose a digital scale that can be reset to zero between measurements.

BAKER'S PERCENTAGE

WHEN YOU FIRST SAW THE RECIPE on the previous page, you probably noticed that all of the ingredients were presented as percentages rather than weights such as 800 grams of flour.

This method is called "*baker's percentage*" and it's how professional bakers remember their recipes. For some reason, the method is usually only taught to more advanced bakers. But the concept is not complicated and will help you remember the recipes by heart (a very handy way to impress your friends), so why keep it from you?

Here's how it goes:

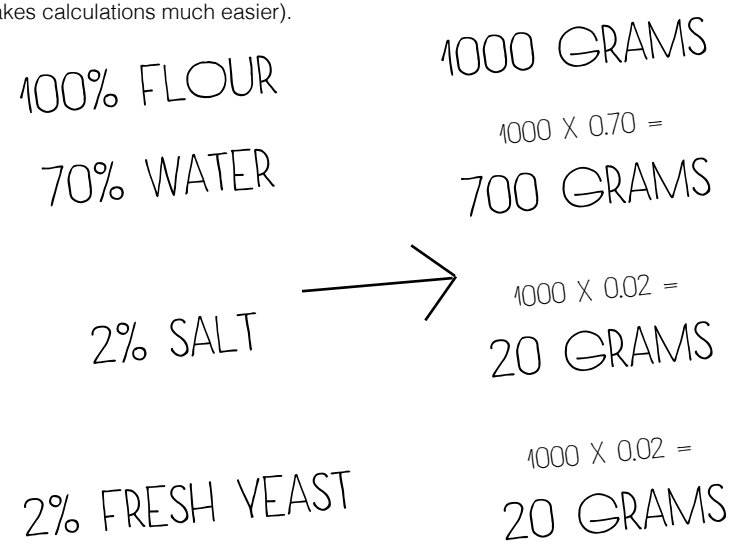
The baker's percentage presents the ingredients as their proportion of the total amount of flour in the dough.

An example will help you grasp the idea:

Start by deciding how much flour you want to use in your dough. To make calculations easier, we'll start with 1 kilogram, or 1,000 grams. It will lead to two large loaves or a bunch of buns.

Then, we look at our recipe: flour has a percentage of 100% and all other ingredients some lower percentage, relative to the amount of flour. For example, 70% water. With 1,000 grams of flour, this means 700 grams.

As you will notice, the percentage is not the proportion of the ingredient in proportion to the finished dough but the flour (which is good because it makes calculations much easier).



HYDRATION LEVEL

THERE IS ONE MORE CONCEPT to think about before you can start mixing your dough. Don't worry too much if you don't get it right away—understanding this one is not a requirement for using the recipe. But the concept is rather simple and follows naturally from the recipe we just went through.

Hydration level quite simply means the amount of water (or other liquids) in the dough. A higher hydration level means a wetter dough.

When talking to bakers, they often describe their breads by the hydration level, saying things like, "To make this Ciabatta, I decided to go with a 80% hydration."

What they mean by that is that in a dough with 1,000 grams of flour, they used 800 grams of liquids (or 400 grams for 500 grams of flour, and so on).

A wetter dough is harder to handle, but will lead to a softer and more open crumb. Practice and experiment with different hydration levels and you'll notice the difference.

For example, for this magazine, at first, I thought of giving you a recipe with 65% hydration. Then, when testing the receipe on the dry winter day in February, it felt a bit too dry to work with, so I went for 70% hydration instead.

So, if the weather at your place is more humid, you may want to start with 65% instead...

THE METHOD

1. MIX THE DOUGH

USE YOUR SCALE to measure all ingredients in a bowl. Mix them with your hands until no dry flour remains. Then, flip the dough on your table (don't flour it first) and work it for about ten minutes.

There are many ways to work the dough, but I prefer the one described by Richard Bertinet in his books Dough and Crust. The best way to understand the method is to first see it in action and then try yourself. So, here is a free video of Richard Bertinet working his dough, from Gourmet magazine.

The method is not that complicated once you practice it for a while—and it's a lot of fun!

2. REST

AFTER WORKING THE DOUGH for about 10 minutes, form it to a ball, place in your lightly floured bowl, and cover with a towel.

Leave the dough to rest in a warm place for about an hour, or until the dough has almost doubled in size. Heat the oven to 250° Celsius (or 482° Fahrenheit).

3. SHAPE

ONCE THE DOUGH HAS RESTED, flip it on a lightly floured table. To begin your bread making, I suggest you start with making buns as those are the easiest to shape (and you probably know how to make them already). We will look at more advanced shaping in a future edition, but If you want to learn more right now, visit this page for some instructions.

Place your shaped buns on a baking tray, cover with a kitchen towel and leave to rest for another 60 minutes.

4. BAKE

PLACE THE TRAY IN YOUR HEATED OVEN, reduce heat to 230° Celcius (or 446° Fahrenheit), and bake until the buns have a nice, golden crust. For buns, this will take about 20 minutes.

Take the tray out of the oven and let cool for a while before eating. Then, share with friends and family—and enjoy.

AFTER YOUR FIRST BAKE, you can practice more and learn about things such as steaming the oven or how to shape the dough properly. But don't let the things you don't know keep you from enjoying your baking. What matters most is that you are having fun right now.

LARRY LOWARY

Larry Lowary may be retired from his 30-year career in baking bread professionally, but he and his partner *Gerry Betz* still work harder than most people.

Every week, they bake bread and pastry in their small bakery, *Tree-Top Baking*, on the beautiful Whidbey Island to sell at the local farmers' market to a loyal group of customers. Larry specializes in bread while Gerry is in charge for the other baked goods.

After all these years, Larry is still a man with a passion—or strong interest, as he prefers to call it—for bread.

LARRY HAD OWNED AND BEEN RUNNING a typesetting and graphics arts business for 13 years when his world changed. Personal computers became more popular and his customers began using them for the work that they had been buying from Larry's small company. Faced with a situation where he had to either rework the business model from scratch or pick a whole new direction, Larry was ready for a new challenge.

Larry decided he wanted to do work that was more basic, and—he thought—simpler.

"As a typesetter, you're at the beck and call of clients who are always in a rush and who make difficult last-minute changes. As a baker you produce a loaf of bread, sell it, and your customer consumes it that day, and hopefully comes back for more the next day—or week", Larry says.

He closed his shop, sold the equipment, and began a new career as a baker, following in his grandfather's footsteps.

"My grandfather had retired before I was old enough to see him work—unfortunately I know very little about him and his work. But my mother, who was the oldest of her siblings, remembered. And we were brought up in a house where bread and bakery products were always around." Larry says.

Larry took a one year course on breads, pastries and experimental baking in one of the country's oldest baking schols at the time, *Dunwoody Technical Institute* in *Minneapolis.*

AFTER COMPLETING the Dunwoody program, Larry first baked bread for a small neighborhood bakery and a downtown boutique hotel in Minneapolis. He enjoyed the work but still wished to return to California one day.

"So, when I met Gerry at a baking convention in Minneapolis and learned he needed a baker,

I offered to help him out. I figured I would work for him for several months at his bakery in Grover City, CA, and then move on to another job", Larry says.

Plans change, however. Gerry sold his business at the end of the year, and the two moved to San Francisco where they worked for a German man who had bakeries in San Francisco and Fairfield, CA.

From San Francisco, the journey continued to Seattle, where Larry and Gerry both found jobs at a small local upscale grocery chain called Larry's Markets. Larry managed one of the company's largest bakeries and Gerry baked, then managed, then supervised the baking program for the chain.

As years passed, it became harder and harder to find trained bakers and Larry found himself often pulling double shifts. He quit and went to office work for eight years, thinking he would never return to baking anymore.

When he turned 65, Larry quit the office job. The two sold their Seattle home and moved full-time to Whidbey Island where they had owned a weekend home for many years.

HAVING BEEN A MEMBER of the *Bread Bakers Guild of America* since 1993, in 2005, Larry attended an event organized by the group in San Francisco. The three-day *Camp Bread* event gathered several hundred serious home bakers, professional bakers, millers, equipment manufacturers and educators. This event made Larry return to baking: "It was an exhilarating, uplifting experience and I came home with a determination to return to baking."

The following year, they worked with an architect and a builder and constructed a baking studio about 50 feet from their home—a property that's surrounded by lots and lots of trees with a view of *Puget Sound*. They bought an oven, a mixer, a proof box, and basic baking equipment, and started baking for friends.

Soon, it became obvious that baking small batches of bread was a waste of energy (their propane-fired oven takes two hours of constant burning to get to temperature).

"So, in 2007, we named the place *Tree-Top Baking* and tried our luck at selling at our local farmers market", Larry says.

I ASKED LARRY a few questions about Tree-top Baking, bread, and working as a baker.

JARKKO: What's the role of Tree-top Baking in your lives and in the community of Whidbey Island?

LARRY: OUR LIVES are very wrapped-up in the bakery—probably more than anything should be. During the market season (late April through October and from Thanksgiving to Christmas) we work six to seven days a week mixing, prepping, baking and selling our products.

Although there are several other small retail bakeries on the island, no one produces the variety or quantity of items we do, and we have been fortunate to have grown a very loyal following.

BECAUSE OUR BAKERY was started as a hobby and is not full-time, we think very differently than most retail businesses. We aren't focused on statistics. We measure success primarily in being able to create and sell a wide variety of breads, pastries and cakes to our customers. We think we've had a really good week when most everything we baked has been sold and when we've gotten appreciative feedback from customers.

I have arrived at a point in my life where I do not want to work any harder than I am [working now]. As I near 70 years old, I'm very happy I've been blessed with good health—but I know things change, sometimes quickly. So, much as I love baking, I want to back off a bit from the schedule we keep. I want to travel and if I'm lucky enough to continue to have the resources and time, I plan to do so.

JARKKO: You sell at the farmer Bayview Farmers' Market on Whidbey Island once a week. Why did you choose to focus on the farmers' market? Do you sell through other channels at all?

LARRY: OUR BAKERY is in a residential community—there is not enough traffic to support a retail store. Initially we decided to sell at the farmers' market because our county allowed home-baked items to be sold at markets. Since then we have made changes to our operation so we have a full Food Service

"WE MEASURE SUCCESS PRIMARILY IN BEING ABLE TO CREATE AND SELL A WIDE VARIETY OF BREADS, PASTRIES AND CAKES TO OUR CUSTOMERS."


Tyvek
HomeWrap
Tyvek
Tyvek

Establishment license even thought we consider the market our store-front.

We do a small amount of wholesale baking for a local gourmet wine and cheese store, but have discouraged other non-market business. Although we have been approached by many restaurants, coffee shops and caterers, our once-a-week baking schedule does not work for customers who need fresh items every day of the week.

JARKKO: How does this once-a-week baking schedule look like?

LARRY: SUNDAYS ARE SPENT CLEANING the bakery and deciding what we'll bake the next week.

On Monday we generally begin prep work for croissants, coffee cakes and other items that are frozen and baked later in the week.

Tuesdays are often spent procuring ingredients off-island.

Wednesday and Thursday we do more prep work.

On Fridays we bake from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. We go to bed at 5 p.m. and get up and bake through the night, finishing about 6 a.m. We shower, shave and leave to sell at the market about 7:30 am. We set up, then sell from 10 am to 2 p.m. when we break the booth down and come home—generally very exhausted.

JARKKO: I really like the idea of running a bakery as a hobby with your own schedule and rules. But you sure work a lot for a hobby! Do you ever get tired and wish you had chosen a hobby that required less work? What keeps you baking?

LARRY: I GET TIRED—very tired—every week. And the idea of baking EVERY weekend of the year (when our weather is nicest of the year) takes its toll.

But if we want to sell fresh products, the only way to do so is how we do it—with long hours the day before the sale.

What else would I do? I really don't know.

Although we've found that it's important to bake on a regular schedule (every week), we have decided to not bake four or five weekends this season. Hopefully that will help us feel less tied down by the work.

JARKKO: Do you have many regular customers? How important are they for your business?

LARRY: WE ARE VERY FORTUNATE—we have developed a very loyal group of local customers. And during the Summer, these great friends and neighbors are joined by tourists coming to enjoy the beauty of our island.

During market season, we send out an email to a list of about 400 customers who have signed up to get our updates. We invite pre-orders and depending on the week get between 10 and 25.

JARKKO: You bake a rather big variety of different breads and seem to be changing the offering quite often. Why is this, and how do your customers respond to this?

LARRY: WE ROTATE MOST BREADS on a weekly basis and we do so because I like variety and believe customers do too.

Each week we bake a sourdough bread, a wheat bread, a rye bread, and then several other varieties—generally a total of 10 to 12. We listen to what customers tell us they like and try to bake favorites throughout the season.

This schedule gives me the chance to try new breads during the year. Although some customers miss not getting a certain bread if it's not baked that week, most are understanding. And good customers simply try something else.

JARKKO: What do you do when you are not baking? Like now, when you are taking a break from the farmer's market season?

LARRY:THREE MONTHS NOT BAKING seems like a long time, but it isn't—the time evaporates before our eyes. We spend the time doing yard work (we have nearly an acre of planted yard), re-visiting friends we're unable to see during the busy season, working on special projects (right now we're building a new room to store ingredients), and taking trips. We plan to visit Europain 2012 in Paris in February.

ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING ASPECTS of

"ON FRIDAYS, WE BAKE FROM 4 A.M. TO 4 P.M. WE GO TO BED AT 5 P.M. AND GET UP AND BAKE THROUGH THE NIGHT. WE SHOWER, SHAVE AND LEAVE TO SELL AT THE MARKET ABOUT 7:30 AM. WE SET UP, THEN SELL FROM 10 AM TO 2 P.M. WHEN WE BREAK THE BOOTH DOWN AND COME HOME—GENERALLY VERY EXHAUSTED."

visiting other countries is to meet bakers, exchange ideas, learn new techniques, and try new products—I think that's a pretty universal feeling among bakers. Although some bakers are very cautious about sharing details of items they consider proprietary, I've found the majority are open and willing to share ideas and formulas. Bakers are amazing individuals who work long hours for (generally speaking) low wages. Most stay in their craft because they love producing good bread.

JARKKO: How do you define great bread? How important is the aesthetic side?

LARRY: GOOD BREAD is any bread that is appreciated and enjoyed by friends, family or customers. There are so many good breads, it would be impossible for me to pick just one: I like crispy crusts and an open crumb for sourdough breads, but consider a softer crust and more tight crumb great for rye breads.

I do believe appearance is important, but taste is most important. A beautiful loaf with a bland taste is very disappointing.

JARKKO: How would you explain your passion for bread to someone who is not a baker herself?

LARRY: IT'S THE SAME as the passion for anything—it's a deep interest in and love for something that not only tastes good, but is nutritious and healthful.

JARKKO: But why bread and not something else, like cheese, for example? Is there something special about bread that captures your imagination?

LARRY: BREAD IS SOMETHING I've found I can successfully bake. I've got a lot to learn (Will I ever bake a baguette I really like?) but overall, I think customers are pleased with the product I make.

It's hard to put into words my passion for bread—it just feels good to watch basic ingredients come together and develop, and turn into a beautiful loaf.

JARKKO: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT in the baking process?

LARRY: THERE ARE TWO: The look and smell of freshly baked bread (and croissants) just out of the oven, when the crust sings a beautiful song. And comments from appreciative customers who lavish us with compliments at the market.

For more information on Tree-Top Baking as well as Larry's and Gerry's adventures with bread, visit tree-topbaking.com and their blog at bakerstastytravels.blogspot.com.

Tree-Top Baking is also active on Facebook and Google+.

RICHARD BERTINET

Together with his wife Jo, Richard Bertinet runs the *Bertinet Cookery School* in the historical city of Bath, England.

Richard's bread making classes are booked for months in advance—thanks to his best-selling books, Dough and Crust which have been translated to many languages already. In addition to the bread books, Richard has published a book on cooking and his next book—out in May—is called "Pastry".

Richard has been a big inspiration in my baking, so I was honored to interview him for this magazine. We talked about bread, baking, and a bit about going from home baker to doing it for a living.

JARKKO: In Dough, you say that you have been crazy for bread ever since you were a child. Can you share a bit of the story. How did you become a baker?

RICHARD: I THINK IT CAME FROM GOING to the bakery every day. Today, we see bread as a kind of a pleasure, but on those days when I was young, going to the bakery was like a job. You could never sit down at my house without a piece of bread. I grew up with bread on the table every day.

So, I used to go to the bakery every morning, on the way back from school. The back door was slightly open and I could always see the young bakers work. There was something fascinating about that: the small T-shirts covered with flour, and that pride, you could see it in their eyes: Every time they looked through the door, they could see customers looking at them, and you could see that kind of a gleem in their eyes—the pride of being a baker. It was something fascinating.

And one day, I found myself behind that door, working there. Then I understood what it meant. When I put my foot through that door, it was too late, I could never come back.

I WAS ABOUT THIRTEEN—FOURTEEN and I knew school was not for me. I had to do something with my hands, so from fourteen—fourteen and a half, I started to work.

In the early age, you learn very quickly to behave yourself and to respect—and to work hard. It was in those days...

The work was really tough. This was before apprenticeship: I used to do two weeks at school, and then two weeks at work, but I also worked after school and I used to go to work every weekend. By the time I did my apprenticeship, I knew the job. I was running

the oven by myself, when I was fifteen—sixteen.

JARKKO: That's impressive! So you were a real baker already at that age?

RICHARD: I KNEW THE BASICS. When a new person is starting, he tries to show off anyway. So, he is working harder and harder. It's a psychological war: you can never say to anybody that you don't know your job, so you work harder to prove that you can do it.

BEFORE I REACHED EIGHTEEN and went to the army, I had to get qualifications as a baker at least to be able to carry on after coming back from the army. So I worked hard enough to be able to get that qualification and then went to the army for two years and then came back and worked at the same bakery again for a bit.

JARKKO: How about today, do you think a route like this to becomeing a baker would still be possible in France?

RICHARD: I THINK THE BAKERY INDUSTRY is much more regulated now; you can't work the hours you used to do twenty years—thirty years—ago. But there are some small bakeries where they still do the old style, so if you are young and ambitious, and you want to work and that's what you want to do, I'm sure it's possible.

When you grow up, you always think that when you were in your days, everything was better. When I was young, I remember the old people saying "well in my days it was better." [laughs] So, I think it's evolution, you know. We do things in different ways, we adapt. Everything changes: the methods of work change, the conditions of work change, everything.

BUT I THINK THE THING WITH BREAD IS, it's still three or four ingredients. The skill of the baker is still quite primitive and something you work with your hands. You get to create something from nothing, and that is—with all the machines in the world—the real skill of a baker.

You can put it into books but it's something you practice, it's something you refine with years, you know. The more I teach, the more I learn about the dough: the way it feels, the way the dough behaves. I always describe it a bit like if you are making pottery. If you get some clay to make a nice pottery, at the beginning you will be a disaster. The more you work with it, the more you understand the material you're working with, and the better you become. Same as painting. The experience of a craftsman, or somebody working on his craft develops over years and years and years.

You can give a kilo of flour to ten different bakers and they will make something different, each one of them. And that's the beauty of the job.

JARKKO: Yes, baking is definitely a craft. So, what

BREAD ON TWITTER

If you are on Twitter, look up the tag #realbread and you'll find a vibrant discussion bread—and a lot of photos.

Richard Bertinet is also an active Twitter user (@BertinetKitchen). Here's what he told me about it:

"Twitter is such a good medium for a baker. People communicate through bread from all over the world and talk to each other.

Bread is a kind of a language and people understand each other just by looking at a loaf of bread or a piece of dough. I just saw a tweet today from somebody in Germany doing my bread. I couldn't understand it and thought it was something nice and translated it and it was a pretty bad review so it's quite funny. People interpret recipes and techniques in different ways.

[...]

It's fantastic.

It's fascinating that people are watching what's going on and the media is moving at a pace now. You can bake a loaf of bread now, and send me a picture within ten seconds. You get feedback on it and everything. There are so many bakers..."

Join the discussion, share your loaf of bread, and follow Richard (and me). It's a whole world out there.


BERTINET
KITCHEN
cooking learning eating
Bakery

"THAT'S WHAT BREAD DOES IN A SOCIETY. IT UNITES PEOPLE A BIT TOGETHER. YOU PUT A BIG LOAF OF BREAD ON THE TABLE, YOU MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY."

is the most important thing for a baker to master?

RICHARD: I THINK, FOR ME—if you do it for business—it's money. But money can only be achieved by pleasing people. For me, that's when people come to my shop and their eyes lighten when they walk past and they come in.

They stop and look at what bread should look like, or spend time to chew their loaf. They fall in love with bread again. And they start to discover that with good bread there's a bit of price to pay, but when you actually buy that loaf, it's wonderful. It's a kind of a rediscovering of the senses we used to have and we still got but we have hidden away somewhere.

The main thing for any good baker is pleasing the customers. And for me, it's when people say to me: "Oh, I love your bread." That's the best compliment you can get.

JARKKO: How about the community at large, for example in Bath, how do you see the role of your bakery in the city?

RICHARD: IN THE OLD DAYS, the bakery was the heart of the village or the town. Now, in Bath, there are a few bakers—we are lucky, there's a few of us making bread. I think my role is to please people, there's nothing more I like than when people walk past and stop and come in.

It's a kind of excitement, and they treat themselves. It's kind of a naughty pleasure in a way, and then it becomes a habit and...

We opened the new shop three days ago, it's not finished yet, but we're getting there. People come and say, "Oh, I have just been running this morning," and they will still treat themselves with a croissant. It just shows that instead of buying crap from the supermarket or crap from anywhere, people will buy the right thing and treat themselves and appreciate it. Instead of spending money on something they don't appreciate, they will and buy a good almond croissant and will come back and say "This is the best almond croissant I've ever had."

When they buy it, they don't waste it, they appreciate it. It becomes more than just buying cheap stuff from the supermarket, it's to people to rediscover the pleasure of eating good food.

JARKKO: So, it's more than just fuel for the body...

RICHARD: EXACTLY. Let me take a few examples. Some of our best friends in Bath, it took me two years to convince them that actually a good sourdough is worth more than sliced bread. They could never understand why my sourdough, a 1.2 kilo sourdough, cost five pounds while they could buy a two pound fifty loaf of bread from the supermarket. Because "bread is bread."

Now they will never never never again eat white sliced bread or cheap nasty bread because they understand that when they cut a slice of sourdough, and they eat it, there's something satisfying about it. When you understand that, the satisfaction you get out of it, there's no price for it. It's more than money; it's one of the little pleasures in life you can get.

That's what bread does in a society. It unites people a bit together. You put a big loaf of bread on the table, you make people happy.

JARKKO: Let's return to your story or a while. What brought you to the UK and Bath—and finally to running your own cookery school and bakery?

RICHARD: I CAME HERE FOR A TWO WEEK HOLIDAY, and I have stayed for 25 years.

The first job I applied for when I arrived in England was to work in a supermarket bakery as that was the only job I could apply for and the only thing I knew—I couldn't find a small bakery. And they turned me down because I didn't speak English well enough!

So I went to work in a hotel and worked in kitchens and so on. But my baking was still there in the back of my head. I just couldn't find anywhere to do it. I have done so many different jobs: running restaurants, hotels and this and that.

I CAME BACK TO BAKING probably back in the late nineties. The idea for the book (Dough) came to my head, and it all started from there really. When I first wrote the book, it was before we opened the cooking school. As I wrote the book, the idea of teaching was growing in my head.

I taught a few classes in London and people loved the style I was doing and the technique I was using, which for me was just natural. I

didn't want to open the restaurant again, so I thought... My wife's been a lawyer, and we wanted to combine our skills and do something together, so the cooking school idea came up.

After that, we had to find the right place in the UK to open it. Bath was the right place.

That was six and a half years ago and the rest is—like they say—history. The cooking school opened at the same time as the book was launched. The book was, and still is, a great success worldwide, so we're still teaching and still excited. It feels like we opened yesterday, and it's been six years already! It's funny how it goes, yeah. And we're working on book number four now. Book number four is coming out in May.

JARKKO: Your first two books were about bread. Book number three was about cooking, which I'm also studying, by the way. And now, the next one is Pastry. Does this mean that you have you said all there is to say about bread or do you have plans for a new book on bread at some point?

I DON'T KNOW. I would love to make a traveling book. I would love to follow the trail of Dough.

Dough has been published in fifteen countries now. So it's fifteen countries. We just published in Russia... And Japan as well. So, there is fifteen countries where the book has been translated into a language. And for me—I always say to people—dough is like a language: if you understand the dough, then the bread will follow.

So, I would love to visit those countries and see the culture behind the bread and then put everything to one book. And because I spend my life teaching people, I would love to go around those countries and learn from people about their bread and then be able to translate those recipes into a language that people could do at home. I've seen my book is in Finnish as well?

JARKKO: Yeah, Dough has been translated to Finnish.

RICHARD: THERE'S ALL THOSE PEOPLE who bake from my book and I would love to go around and meet those people and just put everything into a book. That's one idea I see in my head.

To write down more recipes for a new book, I just don't see the need for it. The recipes I've got are the ones I use. So, I don't know. Never say never.

JARKKO: I like the idea! And welcome to Finland, if you decide to do the trip!

RICHARD: YEAH, EXACTLY. It's a good excuse for me to travel a bit. I don't have enough time to travel.

JARKKO: Let's talk about your breadmaking classes. They seem to be very popular... I think I saw that they are all sold out until April, already?

RICHARD: THEY ARE. And that still amazes me.

This week I have been teaching bread for two days. Next week, I'm teaching five days of bread. I've got pastry and croissant this week too. And I've got somebody from Texas and I've got somebody from Spain. And every week, I'm just amazed. The amount of effort people will take to come to learn from me the technique I use and everything.

It's really a huge honor and compliment for me when those people make so much effort to come, because there is so much passion for bread, and so much demand for bread. So, I try to cram so much in one day with them for them to understand the technique and... it's like a bootcamp really.

JARKKO: So, do you focus mostly on handling the dough and the technique? Or what kind of things do you do in the class?

RICHARD: INTRODUCTION TO BREAD MAKING is me. It's all about understanding the dough. You know, I don't believe in schools that teach you in one day... They teach you brioche, they teach you sourdough, basic bread, naan bread, so many breads in one day. No way! You can't learn them. You can be shown, but you won't learn it.

So, the first thing I teach is that water and flour stick. They don't say that in books. It's obvious, but when you have the dough and it sticks, you will fight with the dough. So, what we teach them is to show the dough who's the boss. If you are baker or boulanger, working in

"SO, WHAT WE TEACH THEM IS TO SHOW THE DOUGH WHO'S THE BOSS. IF YOU ARE BAKER OR BOULANGER, WORKING IN FRANCE, YOU GOT TO MASTER THE DOUGH."

France, you got to master the dough. The dough shouldn't stick to you. You should show the dough who is the boss, and learn to handle the dough. You know, you make good dough, you make good bread. You make bad dough, you make bad bread.

So, I really try to make them understand the dough: how it feels and how the dough should be handled. That's why we do everything by hand. We mix all the dough by hand. Then, when you understand what the hand can do, you can use a mixer.

Some people will never get the technique. Some people, they just refuse to understand, and they fight with the dough. So they rather put more flour into it. But it you are ready to accept that you communicate with the dough, then the dough will come off the table and fly, and be smooth and beautiful, and you can work with it. It's a kind of a mastering.

It's a kind of a taming the dough.

JARKKO: Yeah, actually, I think how I first found out about you was through a video on handling dough that you did for Gourmet magazine. I had never seen it done that way before!

RICHARD: THIS TECHNIQUE IS NOTHING NEW. It has been done for hundreds of years. What I have done is only repeat what they used to do in the old days. This technique I'm using is described in the old baking books: The mixing of the dough, the *frasage*, the *passage en tête*, *découpage*, *étirage par soufflage*—that's all described in books. The problem is that this is the professional way from the old days how to do it, and somehow that's been lost.

You know, it's always been the dream for bakers to make a dough which was light—much lighter—and airy, so you can digest it. There is no recipe that I've seen where they want to make a very dense loaf. They all want to make a nice, light, crusty and beautiful loaf. And, if you need to add more flour, you can't do that. So, for me it's natural.

That's why I was very surprised when the book came out and it received the success it still has now. What I've done is that I've gone back to what we used to do in the old days—don't change it.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF BAKERS who always try to compromise. They will put oil on the table, and more flour. But you would never do that in a mixer. You never add flour or oil in the mixer. It's only because they don't know how to handle a sticky dough. So, if it sticks, they fight with it. But you should be able to handle it with no flour, no oil, nothing.

A bakery in France or anywhere would never add oil to the mixer for a baguette dough or white dough. You work with the dough, you understand the dough. The top and bottom of the dough, the smooth side. You know how to touch it in a way so that it doesn't stick.

This is what we try to teach on day one at the school. So, usually if you spend five days with us, you mix about 150 kilos of dough by hand. So you will get the technique right by it.

JARKKO: That's a lot of dough! But that's how you learn. It's the only way...

RICHARD: THAT'S HOW YOU LEARN. There is no messing around. You've got to do it. Learning is repetition. And when you get older, it's harder to learn. When you are young, you learn very quickly. The older you get, the harder it is.

I still get email now from people who say they are still baking the same way with no problems. It's all about understanding the dough.

JARKKO: You do classes with kids too? Is it different with them?

RICHARD: WITH CHILDREN, what you got to do is to not be hung up with the technique. Children have no fear.

It's like skiing: You put me on the ski and I go very slowly because I don't know where I'm going. You put my children on the skis and they fly downhill, they don't care. Same with bread: they put their hands in the dough and they're having fun. And they're not scared of the dough. So, they're learning the feel of it.

The technique can be explained to them, but they don't care if it's messy. They quite enjoy it. So, it's for them to enjoy doing it. To enjoy the concept of baking, of cooking, and all this stuff together have been part of the grain of world.

If you see your kids at home and tell them "Oh no, go away, I'm cooking," they go, and you can't ask them to come and eat the food—they will just feel like "You pushed me away one minute and now you want me to eat it?"

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If you get your kids involved all the time, then they learn. That's how we learn. As grown ups it's easy to get on with our own thing and forget that the young ones around us want to learn too.

JARKKO: That's a good point. So how does it work in your home? Do you still bake at home and with your kids?

RICHARD: FROM TIME TO TIME, I do that. Pancakes, for example... I try not to make bread at home because I'm so used to it at work. There, I can do it very very efficiently. At home, the oven... It's not my kitchen... I need to redo my kitchen. I find it stressful to bake in my kitchen again. I can't do it. [laughs]

JARKKO: I see.

RICHARD: WE STARTED DOING CLASS on Skype. So, we teach a lot of kids now through Skype. When they want to do a bread project, they contact us and we send them a box with books and scrapers and things like that.

They start a week before and then I spend an hour on Skype with them through a plasma screen in their school. We mix the dough together and then they send me pictures of the bread when it's baked. And it's quite fun.

We did a class in America, we did one in France, we did two or three in England. And we are now trying to get a project going on to take it a bit further afield so we can do two or three classes at the same time around the world and to bring many kids to bread.

JARKKO: That's very cool! So it's like a video conference where you both see each other?

RICHARD: YES, we do it live. We see each other. First, we talk about bread and everything else. Then, I get my flour, my water and do it in front of them—with them. We do it together.

It's very interesting, very interesting.

JARKKO: Is there anything else that you are experimenting with? What are you interested in right now? What is the big thing that takes most of your time at the moment?

RICHARD: MY CHILDREN take a lot of time. [laughs] That's normal. Now, we just opened the new shop three days ago. We are working to get the right products in there, and the right look for the shop. It's teamwork and my wife is working really hard on designing things.

My new book is coming out in May, so we're just finishing the final touch on this one.

And at the cooking school, it's teaching. It's every day—it's just non-stop. The teaching takes a big part of my time and it's hard work. But it's very enjoyable and very rewarding to teach people.

The next big thing after that is opening a new shop somewhere, I don't know where... We're looking at new options all the time. We're still very young with it, so we're learning and getting on with it really.

JARKKO: So, how does your bakery operate? How much do you participate in its daily work yourself?

RICHARD: WE HAVE A PRODUCTION UNIT where I've got four bakers and a pastry chef working there—and a driver. They are people who have been baking with me and people I can trust.

They are working every night, every day. They're running the bakery. I go there every day and check that everything is good and work a bit with them and give new recipes, but it's their job. You got to be able to trust people around you and let them get on with it as well.

So usually if I don't say anything it's because everything's good.

JARKKO: Once someone has read your books and practiced with them, how would you recommend to carry on with the sort of the "home baker's" training"?

RICHARD: IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME. A lot of people come to us who have baked from my books for a couple of years. They know the recipes, have done it, and they are itching to do something different. And it's always the home baker who wants to become a professional baker. You know, to make a living out of it.

It's because when you make your bread at home for your friends and your family, you get a good feedback. You get a good buzz out of it. So people want to multiply that buzz by hundred and get a bakery.

And that's where the problem is with a lot of people: It's one thing baking at home, making ten loaves of bread and it's another thing starting to make a hundred of them. The pleasure becomes a job, and the job becomes a problem—because of all the little problems that got to go with it.

Trying to make a living out of bread is much harder than getting pleasure out of it. If people like baking for the pleasure of it, then there's plenty of books they can explore. They can explore different recipes. They can try different flours. They can explore what's going on a bit more.

THE MAIN THING FOR ANY BAKER is to be able to make bread consistently the same every single day. If you make bread, you need to go for consistency. If your bread is never the same, then you've got a serious problem.

For me, my quest any time I bake is to get consistency in my bread. So I never get bored. Even with just one recipe I bake every day.

And that's the aim for any baker: to be consistent.

JARKKO: You mentioned the dream of opening a bakery... How often does the question pop up? And how often does it actually work out?

RICHARD: AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, we've got somebody who wants to "ditch the job" and to become a baker. Very often, when we do the five day class, people will come and on the Monday they will say, "Yeah, I'm a lawyer and I want to open a bakery. That's it," And they expect to learn in one week enough for them to open a bakery.

I always make sure that within the week, I give them very much hard work, for them to understand what's going to wait for them when they make the jump—that actually, making bread is *every day*. It's not just once a week. It's every single day. You got to get up, and there is nobody else who will do it for you. You got to get up, you got to get it right. It is not an easy job. It is not for everybody. It's a fine line between the two.

AND I'LL SAY, if you want to build a bakery, you've got to specialize on something. Find the right niche, find the right bread. If it's just one bread, it doesn't matter. But do the right one. Don't try to do 35 different breads... I've seen so many bakeries who tell me "This is our brochure and we're doing 17 types of different bread." Why? I just don't get that.

If you go to a local bakery in any country, they don't do that. They just do good bread for the local people. Every day the same. That's the beauty of it. If you look at a good restaurant or a good shop, or anything, they're consistent. It's being consistent that is the key for a bakery.

It's the same with the class we're doing: If one day my class was bad, and the other day was good, I'd be empty. So, I need to be consistently good all the time when I teach people.

The more we teach, the more people expect,

"THE MAIN THING FOR ANY BAKER IS TO BE ABLE TO MAKE BREAD CONSISTENTLY THE SAME EVERY SINGLE DAY."

because the more people talk. So people come to us and say "Oh, I heard it was very good." Just with that already, they put my game up all the time so I got to push harder all the time. So, when they leave, they had a better time—until I can't give anymore. [laughs]

It's the same as with every job: if you do it because you love it, it's not about the money. You feed on people's pleasure: the more pleasure you give to people, the more satisfaction you get for yourself.

To learn more about Richard Bertinet, visit the web sites of The Bertinet Kitchen or the Bertinet Bakery—or follow Richard on Twitter at @BertinetKitchen.

MY JOURNEY THROUGH DOUGH

I BOUGHT MY COPY OF DOUGH in July 2009. Right from the beginning, I took on the habit of marking a small cross next to the recipe in the table of contents whenever I was trying it for the first time. After a few weeks, I realized that I had marked about one fifth of the recipes, and thought to myself: "Why not bake them all?" I like to set myself arbitrary goals like this, so I counted the total number of recipes—51—and got to work.

While baking through Dough, I bought a couple of other baking books, including Richard Bertinet's second book, Crust, and baked from those occasionally as well (marking crosses next to the recipes, naturally). I also found myself returning to some favorite recipes from Dough again and again: recipes such as the *Somerset Cider Bread* and *Pain de Campagne*. All the while, I would still make time to try the recipes still remaining in the book.

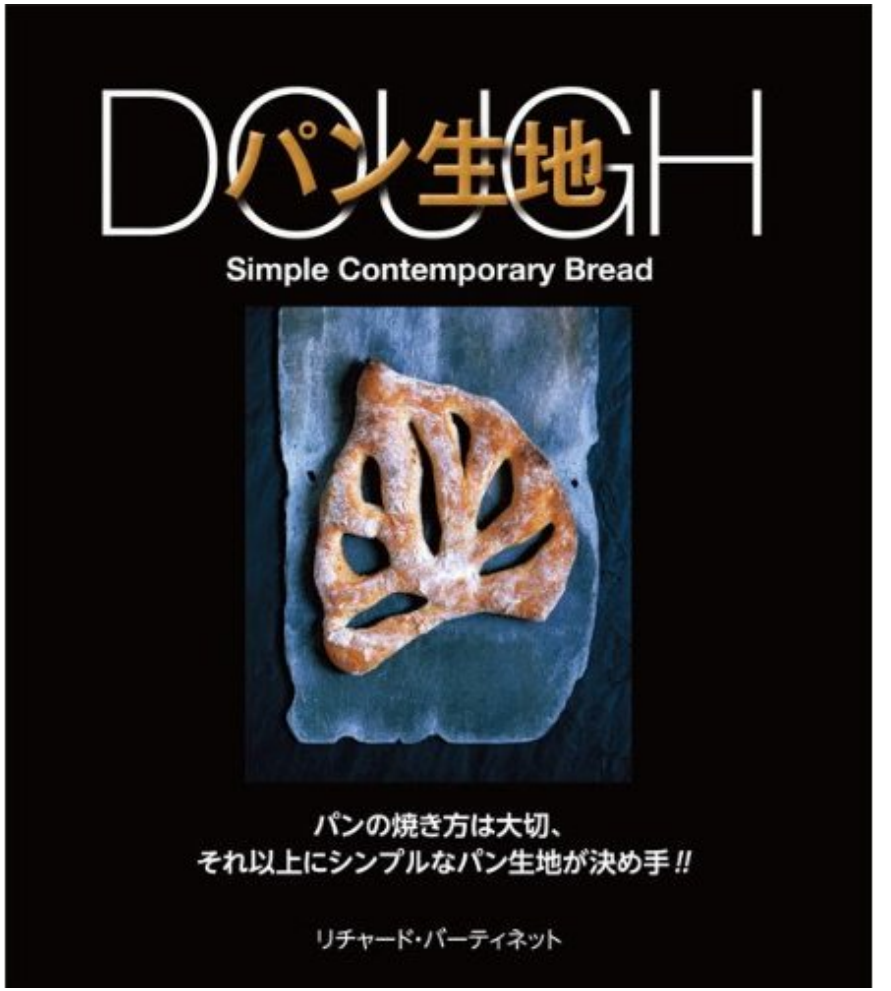
TWO YEARS LATER, there was just one recipe left to try: *Honey and Lavender Loaf*.

This one became a real challenge. The only place I was able to find lavender was in laundry detergents! So, after considering my options for two weeks, I decided I had to grow my own. Having completed 50 recipes already, there was no way I was going to give up. So, I went to the gardening store near my home and bought a plant that was just about to bloom. I brought it home and waited. A couple of weeks later, I baked my lavender bread. While it didn't become my favorite bread in Dough, it was definitely the most memorable one.

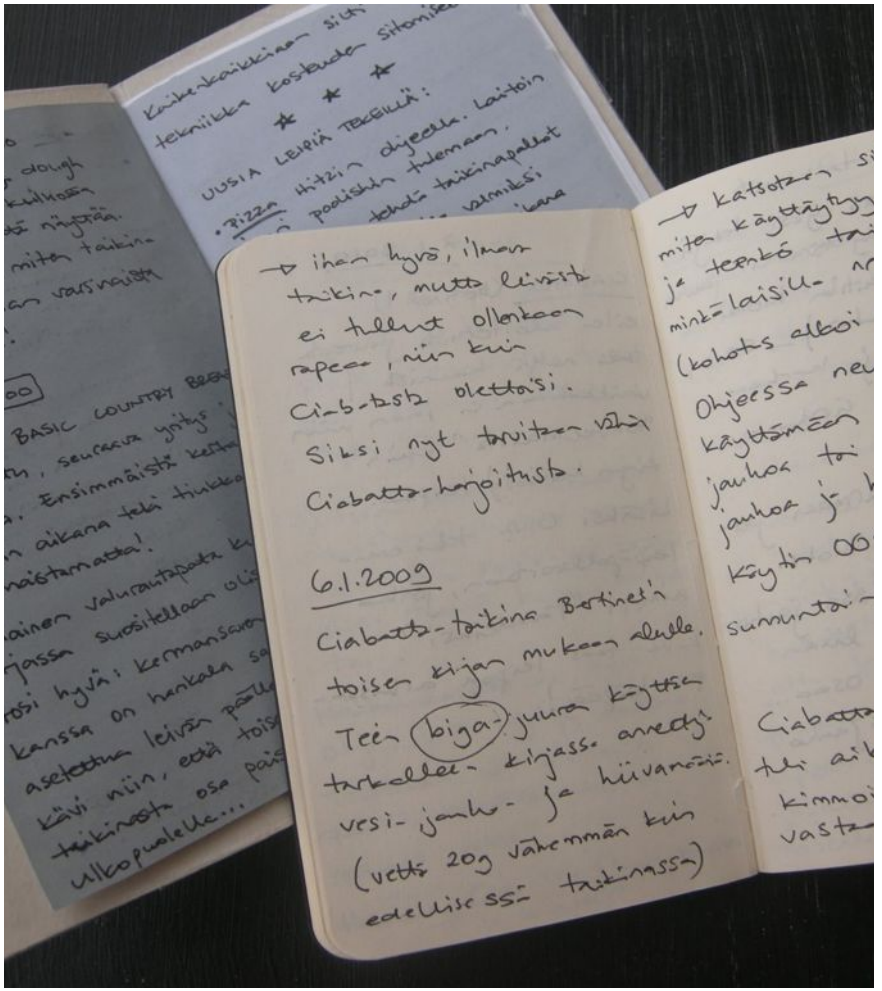
DOUGH IS THE PERFECT INTRODUCTION to breadmaking. In my family, I have seen many times how people pick up the book and can't help but get excited about the possibilties. Richard Bertinet is a great teacher with the skill to make the techniques easy to understand. His recipes are simple enough to follow successfully so that in the end you will feel proud of the bread you just baked.

While baking throught the recipes, I realized that I enjoy the simplest bread the most: Many recipes include spices and other special ingredients and look exciting when you read the recipe—and sure, they taste delicious too. Still, when I go back to the book and think about what I want to bake today, I almost always end up picking something like *Pain de Campagne,* a recipe with no more than four ingredients.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO BAKING, this is a good book to start from—and a lot of people seem to agree: Dough has been published in 16 languages (including the Japanese edition you see on the right), and has received numerous awards, including IACP Cookery book of the year 2006, and many more.



BAKING TIP: TAKE NOTES



IN MY BOOKSHELF, right next to all the baking books, I have a collection of small notebooks, full of notes from my bread making experiments.

At different steps in the baking process, I write down any changes I make to the recipe, whether planned or accidental. Things such as "S*ome trouble getting the baguettes in the oven —maybe a peel of a different shape could help?* " or "*Yet another sourdough experiment. The recipe is otherwise the same as last time, except that this time I used 711 grams of starter at 100% hydration...*"

Then, when the bread is ready, I take some photos, taste the bread, and write down my impressions. This way, by combining the results of the bake with information on what I did differently during the process, I can learn about the effects these changes have to the bread I'm baking.

Sometimes the recipe works out, and on those events, I will come back to the recipe over and over again to make the same bread that I know I have enjoyed in the past.

IF YOU ARE JUST STARTING YOUR JOURNEY into bread—or if you haven't picked the habit of writing notes about your bakes—this is one habit I recommend you adopt as soon as you can. Get yourself an empty notebook, open the first page and start writing.

Start with the date and time, followed by a short note on which recipe you're baking, and where it can be found. Then, keep the notebook and a pen near you as you bake, and write down thoughts and impressions as they come to your mind (if you are in the middle of working the dough, it might be a good idea to try to keep your thoughts in your mind until your hands are clean again).

There are also a number of other useful things that you can write down for later analysis if you have time, such as the room temperature, the temperatures of the ingredients, and the humidity of the room in which you bake.

At the end of your bake, write down a short summary of whether the recipe was a success or not.

Once you have gotten started with the habit of taking notes, don't forget to review your notes from time to time. They will prove to be an invaluable resource for improving your baking skills as well as a nice diary documenting your journey.

THE NEXT EDITION OF BREAD will be all about *flour*: from farms to flour mills and from flour mills to bakeries—not to forget your own kitchen.

Click here to subscribe for free and get the magazine to your inbox as soon as it is finished.

IF YOU ENJOYED THE MAGAZINE,
SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS!

INSANELY INTERESTED IS A TINY PUBLISHING HOUSE publishing online magazines for the curious.

When I say tiny, I mean it: All of the publishing operations (including all the writing) at Insanely Interested are run by just one man, Jarkko Laine—a stay at home dad, writer, and a guy insanely interested in everything.

THIS MAGAZINE you just read is my first attempt at creating a very focused PDF magazine for people passionately interested in bread or otherwise curious to see the art and craft that goes into a beautiful loaf. I hope it has delivered to your expectations and you are eager to see what's coming next.

As the magazine is very new, I would love to hear your feedback on the magazine. So, if you have comments or ideas for the upcoming editions, I'd love to hear from you at contact@insanelyinterested.com.

IN ADDITION TO BREAD, Insanely Interested publishes an email newsletter called Curious&Creative. The newsletter is a call to live with open eyes and a curious mind, enjoying the experience of continuos learning and experimentation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on Curious&Creative or Insanely Interested as a whole, visit our web site.

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