



The Best Bread in Ever

American bread-baking is the best its ever been

By **David Landsel**

January 25, 2022

Somewhere in the middle of the last decade, a handful of the country's most forward-looking bakers started milling their own flour, not just as a way to fight back against the broken grain supply chain, but also because freshly-milled whole grains, still brimming with nutrients and life and local terroir, make for better bread.

At the time, the idea might have seemed a little far-fetched, but if we have learned anything from the last couple of years, it is this—we really want to be, need to be eating better bread. Also, most commercial flour, supposing there was any left on the supermarket shelves? Not very good at all.

The quiet revolution taking place within American bread baking may have predated the pandemic, but this strange moment saw the whole thing go wide. By now, we all know the story—cooped up at home, everyone with a working oven became a sourdough expert, until many of us realized just how much work it could be.

That hunger for outsourcing, coupled with bakers also being cooped up at home with time on their hands, led to an absolute explosion in the cottage baking industry, with some of the best bread many of us will have ever tried coming out of the kind of oven you can buy with a few clicks.

Two years later, where are we? This list aims to answer that question, and one thing is clear—we're left with far more good bread than we started with. The only-recently quaint-sounding trend of milling your own flour has become

almost the norm, at least among the top tier of bread-baking talent across the country.

Local grains have become the holy grail, too, with fledgling alliances between growers and bakers only strengthening as time goes on. Almost every region of the country has its own high-quality commercial milling operation, from Maine to Texas to the trendsetting Pacific Northwest.

Sourcing is perhaps more transparent than it has ever been. Most bakers on this list will readily reveal the makeup of their breads, and some of them are already able to keep things 100% within their state, or at least the region.

The present might feel unsettled, the future distressingly unclear, but there's one thing we do know—that better bread is here to stay.

Alabama



beehivebakingcompany
Irondale, Alabama

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After the last two years, the story will be familiar to most. A charming young

baker, or in this case, pair of bakers, starts tinkering around at home, sells comely loaves of rustic sourdough via social media, gains big following, becomes local hero. In the case of Birmingham's **Beehive Baking Co.**, however, husband-and-wife team Caeden Oliver and Sarah Schlund didn't hang around waiting for a pandemic. The couple got to work in 2017, almost like they knew the storm was coming—which they weathered, along with everything else life threw at them, all the while ramping up production, and their rounds of front porch deliveries. More and more people discovered the pleasures, in these upside-down times, of opening their front doors to find fresh bread on the doorstep. Bread, in this case, made even better with local grains, often milled right in the bakery.

Alaska



fireislandbread
11.8K followers

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Some people retire to take up golf. Jerry Lewanski, however, left his job as the head of Alaska's state park system, hopped a plane to California and spent a year in baking school. In short order, **Fire Island Rustic Bakeshop** made its debut on a side street just outside of downtown Anchorage; everybody who stopped by for bread and pastry and cookies couldn't believe their good fortune—along with wife Janis Fleischman, and able assistance from the kids, the family had dragged the local baking culture well into the future. That was well over a decade ago; today, Fire Island is as up to speed as it was back then, a rolling stone gathering no moss. Using all organic flour from Central Milling in Utah, and a nicely mature starter, the classic, European-style loaves are quite easily the best in Alaska.

Arizona



barriobread
37.5K followers

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Introduced to the Sonoran Desert at a time when the Pilgrims were still catching their breath on Plymouth Rock, wheat and the Southwest go way back. As happens, that tradition was all but lost, until cheerleaders like Don Guerra of **Barrio Bread** in Tucson decided to make it their mission to help revive, grow, and promote Southern Arizona's heirloom grain economy. What better calling card, at least for starters, than bread, featuring those very grains? From the cactus-stenciled Locavore loaf to Guerra's Pan de Kino, both made with soft, slightly sweet White Sonora wheat, one of the oldest surviving varietals in North America, this is baking with serious *terroir*.

One little shopfront in Tucson can cast quite the long shadow, it turns out, but Phoenix has its own greats. Marco Bianco's stellar baguettes at **Pane Bianco** are as legendary locally as the Bianco family pizza business is nationally. Jason Raducha's stone hearth-baked loaves at **Noble Bread** are worth a drive from anywhere in the valley.

Arkansas

serenity_farm_bread
925 followers

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Back in the early 1990s, Dr. Morris Keller—a successful Dallas podiatrist turned chef—founded **Serenity Farm Bakery** in the tiny Ozark mountain town of Leslie. A gamble to be certain, at least at a time when sourdough bread was still a curiosity in so many parts of the country. Turned out, however, there were enough health nuts, hippies, and other assorted converts to keep the business alive through multiple owners, the latest being Jordan Archote and Adrienne

Freeman, who grew up visiting (and later working at) the bakery. They inherited the handsome, thirty-year-old, wood-powered brick oven, a century-old starter, and a pretty darned loyal clientele, who stop in for all the classic favorites, along with more experimental loaves like a molasses rye loaf brightened up with a hint of orange. Far from your average morning piece of toast.

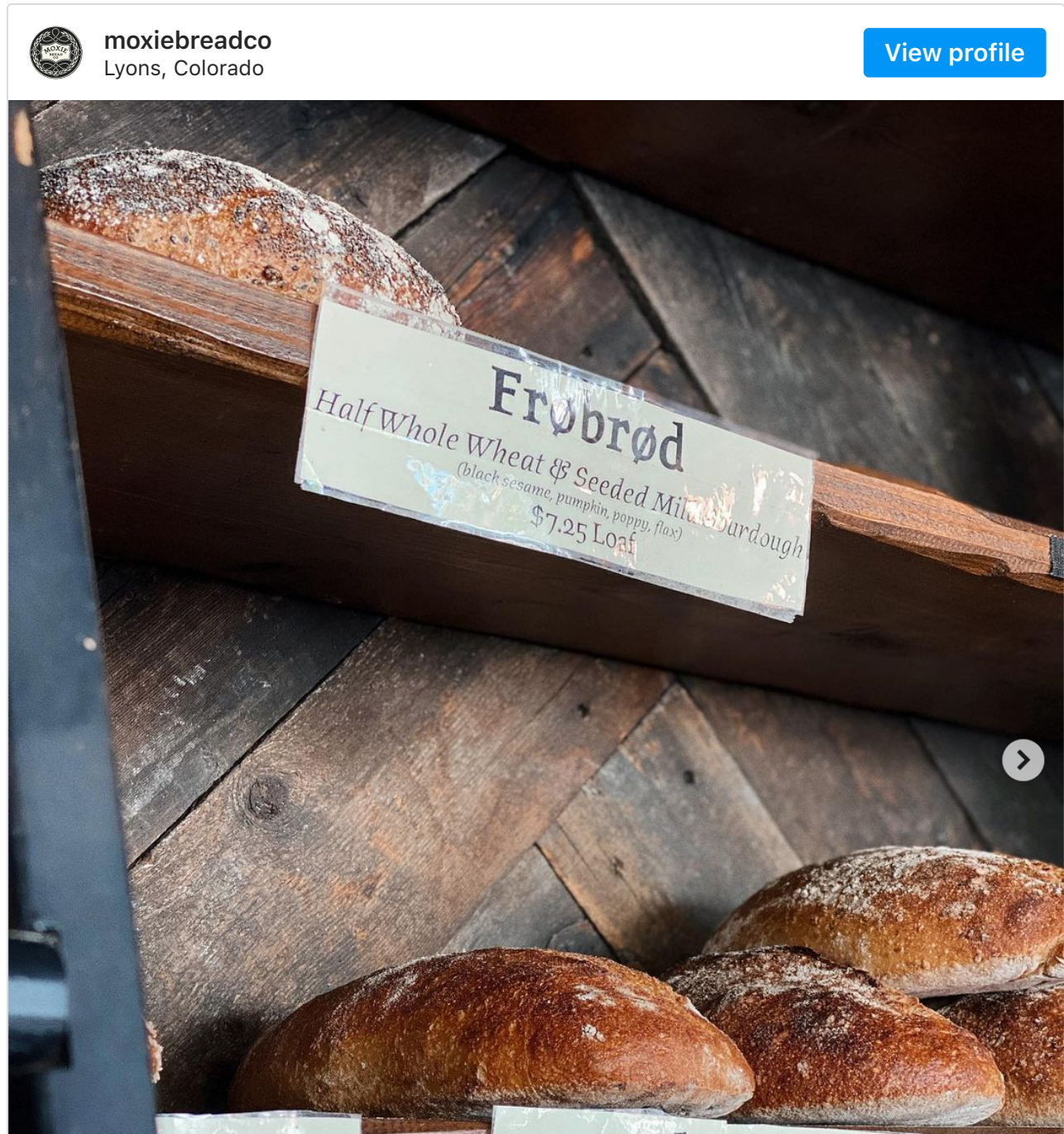
California

The thing that many American bakers have yet to learn is that when it comes to the baguette, there's such a thing as trying too hard. Yes, this is one of the more elevated forms of white bread in existence, but as most often consumed in its home country, that's exactly what it is—one of the best pieces of white bread you've ever eaten. Stray too far from that original ideal, and you can very easily fall short of the mark by overstepping it. At **Manresa Bread** in Los Gatos, Avery Ruzicka and team stroll confidently right along the divide between earnest New World artisanship, and classic Old World technique, giving us a quietly thrilling, naturally-leavened upgrade on the French staple. In a state that has so often set the standard for American baking, the latest wave of talent has been thrilling to watch in action, from San Francisco, where Outerlands and Tartine alum Matthew Jones at **Avast Bread** casually delivers more of the country's finest baguettes to the sleepy Outer Sunset farmers' market most weeks, to the East Bay, where Iliana Berkowitz bakes astonishingly good challah at **As Kneaded Bakery**.

Kristin Colazas Rodriguez took everything she learned baking her way through the Bay Area home to Southern California, opening **Colossus Bread** in the remote San Pedro section of Los Angeles, growing so quickly in popularity that she's now expanded across the port to her hometown of Long Beach, where Arturo Enciso has created a beautiful modern panaderia at **Gusto Bread**, celebrating ancient grains, Mexican tradition, and classic bread technique.

Finally, in Santa Monica, ex-Gjusta baker Jyan Isaac Horwitz is barely twenty years old, but he's already got lines out the doors at **Jyan Isaac Breads** in Ocean Park, because why not more great sourdough for Los Angeles, in this case just a couple of minutes from the beach?

Colorado





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We're not there quite yet, but it feels like we're getting close to the time when being the best baker in town will only be half of the job. More and more customers will soon be asking, *do you mill your own grain?* This is easier than it sounds—anyone with a coffee grinder and a dream can make their own flour, while people running serious bakeries can buy their own grain mill. A surge of interest in sourcing the freshest flours possible is leading the industry in all sorts of new directions, and bakers themselves are very often leading the charge. Andy Clark is one of them. At **Moxie Bread Co.** in the Boulder area, each ounce of flour is milled right on premises, much of it organic heirloom wheat, and all sourced from within the region. Even a couple of years ago, this sounded a lot more revolutionary than it does now; Clark himself might be among the first to say that's a good thing. Looking for the best bread right in Denver? Head for Ismael de Sousa's **Reunion Bread Co.**, where you've got to be quick to get your hands on good stuff—baguettes, seeded sourdoughs, and an excellent brioche pullman loaf.

Connecticut



bantambreadcompany
Bantam Bread Company

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Long before the Litchfield Hills village of Bantam gained an outsized reputation for food, Niles Golovin, a talented chef who'd moved on from New York City life, was here raising the regional bread game at **Bantam Bread Co.**, baking the sort of sourdough that you used to find mostly on the West Coast. Twenty-five years later, these loaves still sing, but so does the crumbly Irish soda bread, baked on Thursdays. For the first five years at **Wave Hill Breads**, there was actually just the one bread, a simple—and remarkable—pain de campagne; it was enough to bring the ahead-of-trend operation heaps of adoration. The Norwalk-based bakery has now diversified, but the original article remains a favorite.

Delaware



oldworldbreads
2,340 followers

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Like so many graduates of the Culinary Institute of America, Keith Irwin headed out into the world ready to take on the restaurant world. At his first job as a line cook, he had the opportunity to start working with pastry. Years of experience on that side of the kitchen later, Irwin opened **Old World Breads** in Lewes, back in 2014, which in modern bread years was already quite some time ago. The long-fermented Italian bread (and rolls) are a must for anyone who thinks they know good Italian bread. While you're there, pick up an orange cardamom sourdough loaf for the ride home—no air freshener could ever make your car smell this good.

Florida



jamisonbreadhouse
3,722 followers

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There are some cities where the best bakery in town can be a little bit elusive. You'll catch glimpses here and there, while dining out, or maybe stopping into a favorite café, but you might never even know who they are, or the story behind the bread. This was certainly the case in Tampa, before the pandemic, where the top chefs in town all knew about **Jamison B. Breadhouse**, about Blue and Jason Laukhuf and their bread. Jason, formerly the executive pastry chef at one of the country's best steakhouses (Bern's, like you had to ask), was tired of seeing frozen bread trucked into town from other places. By the end of the last decade, everything was going great. *And then.* Like so many other businesses that depended on restaurants for their survival, the bottom dropped out—the couple estimated that at one point in 2020, they'd lost half of their business. These days, things are mostly back to rights, but a pivot to at least some kind of regular retail operation seems to be here to stay. For bread lovers, Saturday morning pickups at the warehouse drive-through (necessity being the mother of invention, and all that) are a weekly highlight.

Down in South Florida, Zak Stern continues to set the regional standard for European-style bread at Miami's **Zak The Baker**, but there are two excellent up-and-comers in Miami Beach—Matthieu Bettant is a fourth-generation baker from France, which is to say you are in good hands at **Bettant Bakery**, right in the middle of the South Beach scrum. Meanwhile, tucked into a neighborhood north of Venetian Way, **True Loaf Bakery** turns out some very fine naturally-leavened loaves.

Georgia



independentbakingco
Independent Baking Co

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Back in those innocent pre-2020 times, Kevin Scollo was kind of a hot shot on the New York baking circuit, working with Zachary Golper at Bien Cuit, and then Danish legend Claus Meyer at the ambitious, gone-but-not-forgotten Great Northern Food Hall at Grand Central Terminal. Scollo, a Georgia native, had been thinking about going home before the pandemic, and just weeks before the country went into lockdown, he picked up the keys to the **Independent Bakery Co.** in Athens, where he was all set to make his big debut. Fortunately, one of the things everybody seemed to want, right away, was more bread, better bread, and that's what they got. Scollo mills all of his own flour from whole grains, right at the bakery, with half of his supply coming from a farm just up the road. Looking for the next big thing in Atlanta? That's **Osono Bread**, where pastry chef turned home baker Betsy Gonzales started out small a few years back, hitting her stride during the pandemic. All of her grain comes from high-quality Southern sources.

Hawaii



breadshopnl
Breadshop

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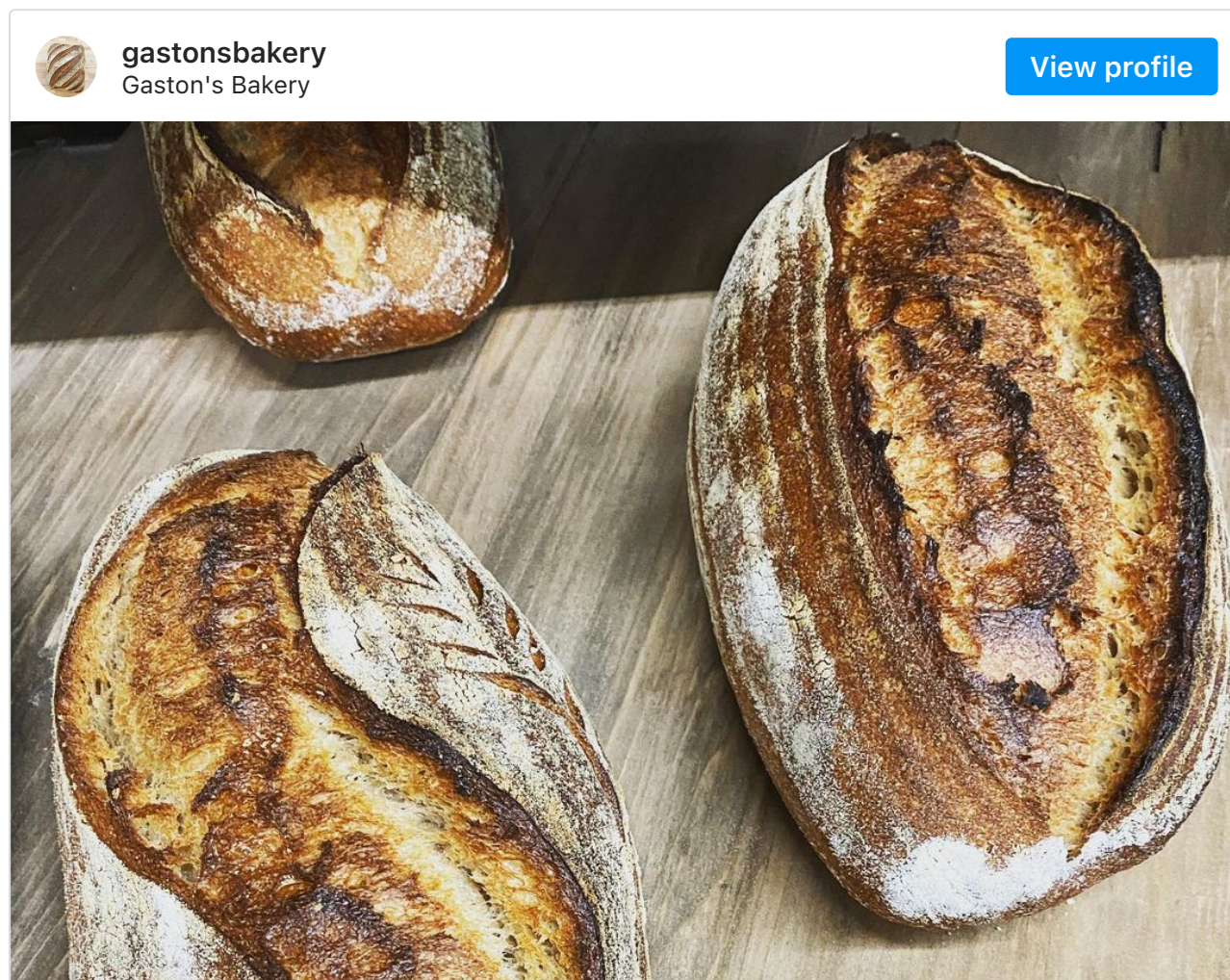


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Chicago (Alinea), New York (Cru), Napa (French Laundry), and even actual France–O'ahu native Chris Sy has seen a few things, and worked in a few kitchens, to say the least, a journey that began after leaving home to attend the University of Chicago. For a decade or so now, he's been back home, baking bread, most recently out of his own storefront, **Breadshop**, in Honolulu. Since the pandemic changed everything, regulars know to sign up on Tock for their weekly hauls every Tuesday morning. The reward for getting your orders in on time? The most spectacular naturally leavened breads west of San Francisco, including some expert-level pan loaves, from classic country to rich, dark pumpernickel.

Idaho



gastonsbakery
Gaston's Bakery

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Twenty years ago, Mathieu Choux left his native Burgundy to open a restaurant in Boise, where all the baking was done from scratch, and customers began to ask, almost immediately, where they could buy some of this very good bread. To supply his own restaurant and the apparent demand in the city, Choux opened **Gaston's Bakery & Mill** in 2006 and has yet to look back. That's mostly because he's too busy looking forward—Gaston's has over time become so much more than a place to buy a good boule. Choux's vision for a cleaner, more local loaf has led him out of the bakery and into Idaho's wheat fields. These days, a growing amount of the baking is done with local grain, milled right here—a bag of Gaston's flour is getting to be as popular around town as a loaf of the Idaho wheat pain au levain.

Illinois



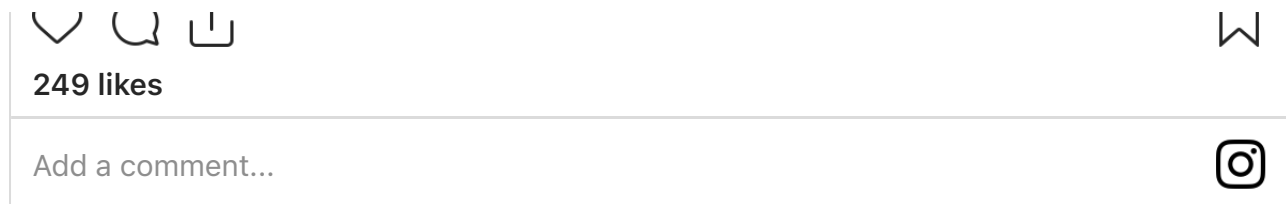
hewnbread
Hewn

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Back in the spring of 2020, Ellen King and Julie Matthei, like so many other talented people on this list, found themselves staring at a list of wholesale clients that no longer needed their bread. Some bakers might have been able to easily pivot, but the couple behind **Hewn** in Evanston had a slight problem—they'd already committed to an ambitious expansion project, in which a crosstown move was involved. After the initial scramble for survival, it became clear that there was nothing to be gained by turning back. Fast-forward to now, and the relocated bakery is doing just fine, still turning out the region's most inspiring bread, a great deal of it featuring the best artisan grains the Midwest has to offer. Next door in Chicago, fine dining vet Bobby Schaffer (Grace, Blue Hill at Stone Barns) makes a masterful Scandinavian-style rye, among other things, at **Lost Larson**. White bread lovers can upgrade their habit with the shokupan and pull-apart milk rolls from Aya Fukai's elegant **Aya Pastry**.

Indiana



leviathanbakehouse
7,794 followers

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After a quarter century in the business, pastry chef Pete Schmutte, who began working with bread for a living as early as his college years, was finally ready to open his own bakery. One problem—he was finally ready to open his own bakery in the middle of 2020. Actually, it wasn't a problem at all, in the end; **Leviathan Bakehouse** not only made a triumphant debut during the latter part of the first pandemic year, but it's been charging ahead ever since, turning out everything from porridge breads to naturally-leavened polenta loaves and delicate milk

bread. Like so many of the best Midwest bakeries on this list, Schmutte works with a growing number of high-quality grain suppliers in the region, including Janie's Mill in neighboring Illinois.

Iowa



rustic_hearth_bakery
Rustic Hearth Bakery

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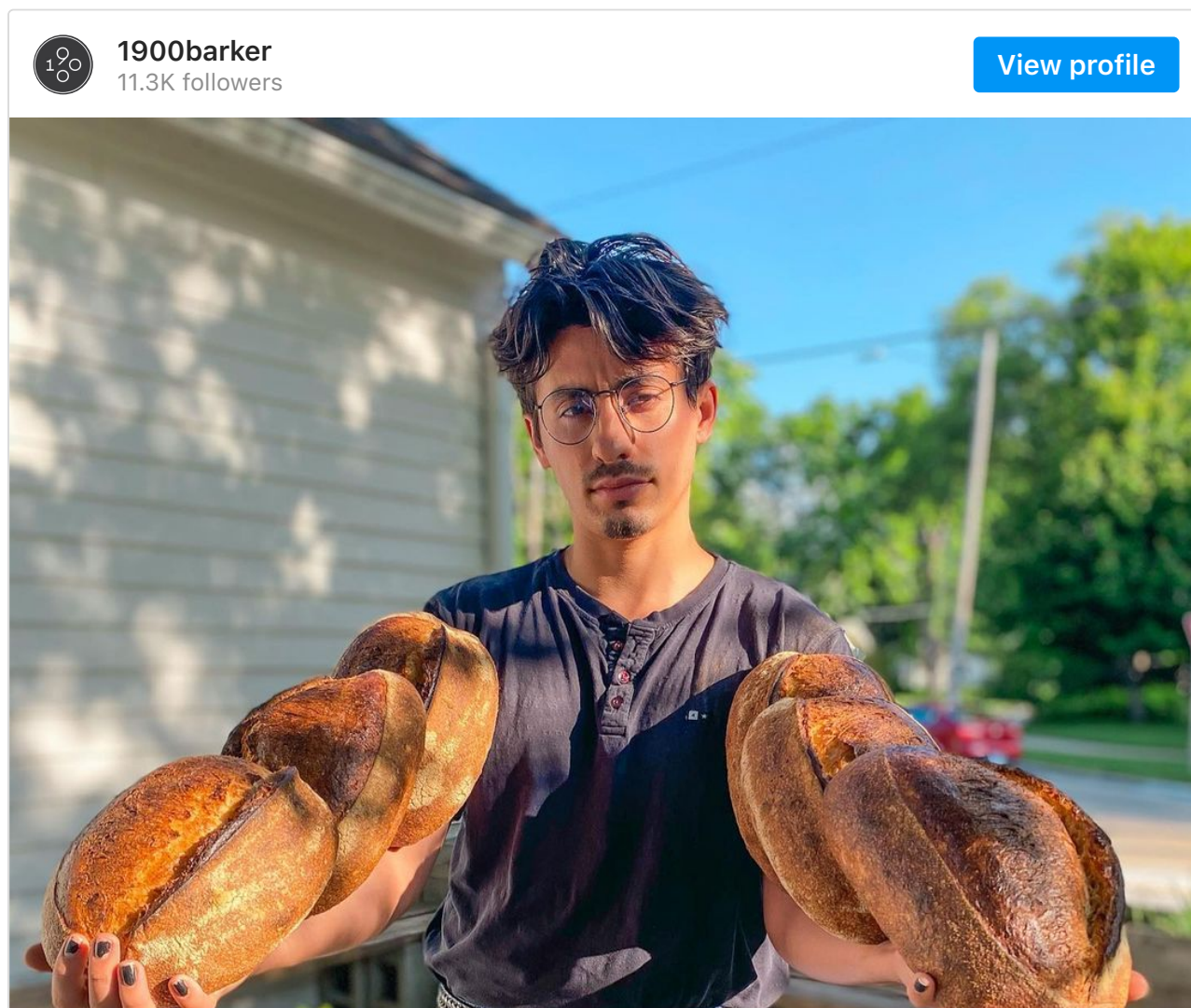


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When Tom Schmitt was downsized from his aerospace job a few years back, he had already been impressing his colleagues with his considerable baking skills. It didn't take him long to figure out what the next chapter would be, which was great for Cedar Rapids. Since 2015, **Rustic Hearth Bakery** has been supplying the city with crusty, naturally-leavened loaves, not to mention some very fine baguettes; Schmitt mills his own flour, right on premises. Things started relatively small in the local public market, but the bakery soon had to relocate—these days, you've got to make the drive out toward the edge of town to pick up your bread, which is a small price to pay for greatness.

Kansas





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The enterprising Petrehn brothers—Taylor and Reagan—were in their early twenties when they took an old laundromat in the college town of Lawrence and turned it into **1900 Barker**, the best, most stylish new bakery in a town that already had its share of options. That was the better part of a decade ago now, but it's all still true, with the breads still knocking it out of the park, from deadly-serious classic baguettes to approachable sourdough specials like jalapeño cheddar and sage walnut.

Kentucky



bluegrassbakingcompany
Lexington Farmers' Market

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Long before some of the bakers on this list were even born, or at least before they could reach the kitchen counter without a step-stool, Jim and Francine Betts took what must have felt like the gamble of a lifetime. They opened a bakery, **Bluegrass Baking Company**, focused on quality, naturally-leavened breads, and not just any place, but in Lexington, in a strip mall, way out in the suburbs. One of their first customers walked in, found out they didn't make donuts, and left as quickly as they arrived. Others stayed, and then more people found out, and before you knew it, roughly three decades passed by, and now every city in the country either has, or is about to have, a bakery like this. They turn out pretty pain au levain, baguettes, and excellent local specials like a bohemian beer bread, made with local brew, and an elegant Vollkornbrot, with much of the grain sourced and milled locally through a partnership with the agriculture department at the neighboring University of Kentucky. If the some of the youngest bakers on this list are very lucky, they'll also remain this important to their communities, thirty years from now. Looking for the best bread in Louisville? Pick up a perfect Pugliese loaf from **Blue Dog Bakery & Cafe**. Or a baguette. Or both.

Louisiana



bellegardebakery
Bellegarde

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There's something memorable about an early morning stroll in New Orleans, watching the bread men go about their essential business, dropping one giant brown paper sack after another on the front walks, steps, and porches of the city's various restaurants, sandwich shops, and corner markets. Turns out, it takes a lot to stop the daily deliveries from coming, and the pandemic certainly didn't meet that stress test, not around here. The people needed their cotton

cloud po' boy bread, a style that feels as if it hasn't changed much in at least a generation, or maybe three. Loyal as many are to the classic French (and Italian, don't forget the Italian) breads, New Orleans has, over the years, made room in her rather large heart for the modern, or should we say modern interpretations, of a different kind of classics. Take, for example, the rustic country batards at Graison Gill's **Bellegarde Bakery**, which have been around for enough years now so as to feel equally essential. For baguettes, it's **Mayhew Bakery**, another more recent, and welcomed addition. Unlike many American bakers, Kelly Mayhew doesn't second-guess the classic style, resulting in something close to the kind of baguette you see being delivered daily by the bread men all over France.

Maine



tinder.hearth
Tinder Hearth

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With enough land to supply the entire Northeast with high-quality grains, a thriving community of millers, and one of the country's most vibrant baking scenes, Maine is starting to feel like one of those places where you not only get to peek into the future, but you're sort of there already. There are so many great bakers here right now, and the state really does deserve its own list of bests, but you'll never go wrong seeking out Tim Semler and Lydia Moffett at **Tinder Hearth Bakery**, who started out with a cob oven and a bike-powered grain mill on an old piece of family property in Brooksville. Things have changed just a little bit in a decade-plus, but the breads, currently available for pickups on Wednesdays and Saturdays, are no less earnest (or delicious). Count among the couple's many fans Daniel Leader, mostly retired from the baking life at his pioneering Bread Alone in New York. Leader now lives nearby, at least part of the year, and can be spotted at the bakery from time to time.

Maryland



ovenbird_bakery
5,702 followers

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Long before biologist Keiller Kyle decided to switch gears from studying birds to studying bread, the Baltimore resident liked to bake just for fun, to the considerable benefit of his friends and neighbors. It wasn't until 2019 that he got serious and decided to make the switch—**Ovenbird Bakery** made its debut in the middle of a very uncertain 2020, right when everyone was running around looking for sourdough bread, which just so happened to be Kyle's specialty. The best bakery in Annapolis isn't the easiest one to find—**Bakers & Co.** is tucked into the quiet Eastport neighborhood, where St. John's College grads Chris Simmons and Lucy Montgomery have created (and sustained over a considerable number of years) one of the finest little bakeries in the Mid-Atlantic region. Everything is memorable, but it's the baguettes that really stand out—long fermented, and baked on the stone hearth.

Massachusetts



lasaisonbakery
7,289 followers

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Bread in Boston these days is an increasingly global affair. Soheil Fathi began baking in Tehran over a decade ago, apprenticing locally once moving his family to the United States. These days, the most sought-after naturally leavened loaves in town (try the beautifully textured yogurt sourdough) come from Fathi's own **La Saison Bakery** in Cambridge. In addition, weekly bakes of delicate, Persian-style flatbread topped with sesame and Nigella seeds, are worth setting your watch to. Same goes for the opening hours at **Mamadou's Artisan Breads**, with locations in Winchester and Arlington, where the sourdough and brioche and everything else tends to sell out rather quickly. Mamadou Maye, who co-owns the bakery with wife Mame, learned French technique in Senegal, where he grew up. After ten years of planning everything out, he opened his first location, and then, rather promptly, another. Well before other East Coast cities began switching things up, Boston had **Clear Flour Bread**, established back in 1982. The pioneering Christy Timon and husband Abe Faber have since retired from the Brookline institution, but Jon Goodman and partner Nicole Walsh have been doing a stand-up job of keeping the dream alive.

Michigan



birddogbaking
1,918 followers

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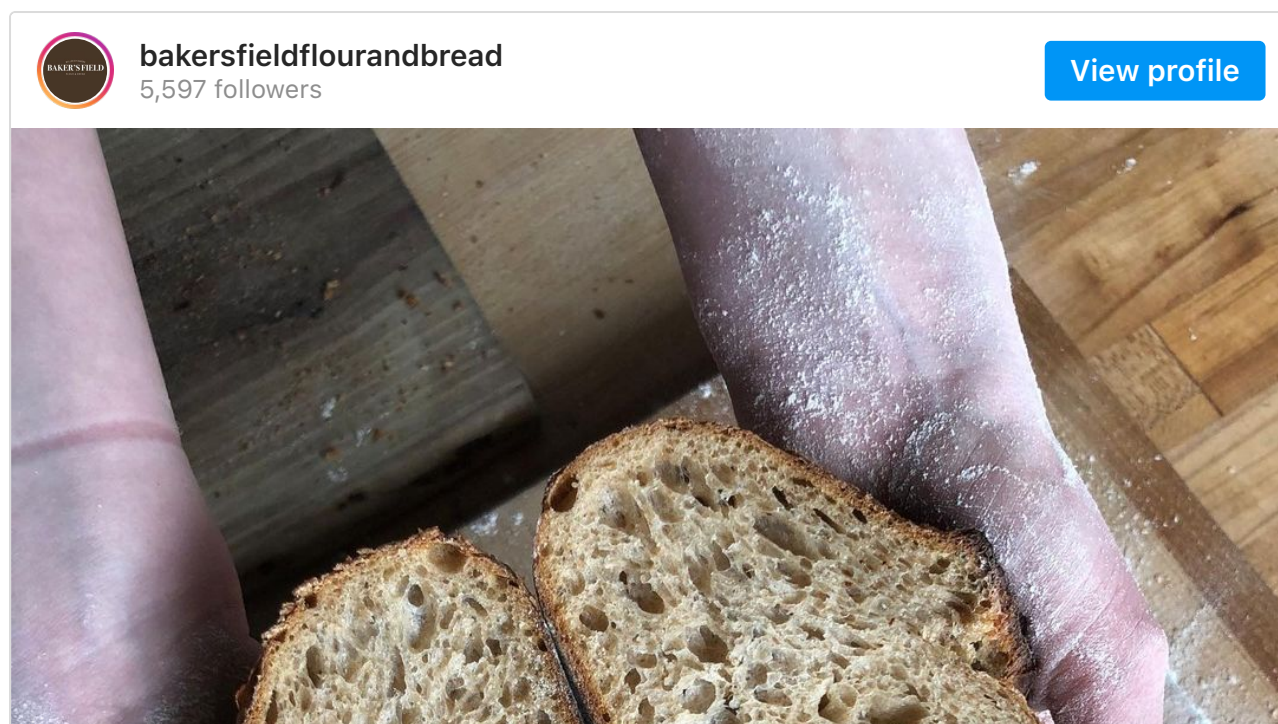


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Jennifer Haglund and Mark Bogard met in San Francisco while manning the ovens at Josey Baker Bread; by the time 2020 rolled around, the couple were engaged, and Haglund, an Ann Arbor native, had convinced Bogard to move back to Michigan with her, where they would start their own bakery. They weren't even back for a week when the state went into lockdown, but by now we all know that if there was one thing this virus couldn't beat, it was bread, especially very good bread. **Bird Dog Baking** made its debut in Ypsilanti as a delivery service, and right at the top of the craft, too; all of their Bay Area-beautiful loaves are naturally leavened, and made only with organic, stone-ground grain sourced from around the region. It takes a special kind of talent to be able to blow into town and knock everyone's socks off, particularly when that town is right next door to Ann Arbor, where **Zingerman's Bakehouse** has been at it since 1992. Their mix of European-style breads, alongside more modern offerings like the True North loaf, made with Michigan grains, continues to lure us in, all these years later.

Minnesota





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57 likes




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There was a time when Minneapolis called itself the flour milling capital of the world. By 2019, that was all pretty much gone, with just one of the historic mill complexes left in operation. Across town, however, the future was taking shape at **Baker's Field Flour & Bread**, where local baker Steve Horton, frustrated by the lack of good, fresh flour in the city that once sent so much of it out in to the world, decided to be the change he wished to see in the world, opening up shop in 2016. By now, Baker's Field is one of the best artisanal mills in the entire


Midwest, working double-time to narrow the chasm between farmer and baker –they do plenty of baking themselves, actually. Their efforts fuel more than a few great operations in the Twin Cities, such as St. Paul's **Brake Bread**, which started out in 2014 as a bread bike—as in, you buy bread, they deliver it by bike, a service that was essentially built to thrive during the pandemic. (Surprise—it did.)

Mississippi







broadstreetcafe
Broad Street Bakery & Cafe


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There are some distinct advantages to spending time in cities that don't always move so quickly toward every single trend that comes down the pike. The impressively large, locally-loved Lumeria Books, residing comfortably in its current home for more than thirty years now, is something of a shrine to those magical, now mostly lost book palaces of the late 1990s, couches filled with coffee-sipping customers and all, because what's a bookstore from that era

without a fine in-store cafe? This one just happens to be **Broad Street Bakery**, another hello-from-way-back gem for classic, San Francisco-style sourdough loaves, and the finest challah in Mississippi, a nod to owner Dan Blumenthal's grandfather Sol, who spent much of his life running a bakery in New Jersey.

Missouri



ibisbakery
16.1K followers

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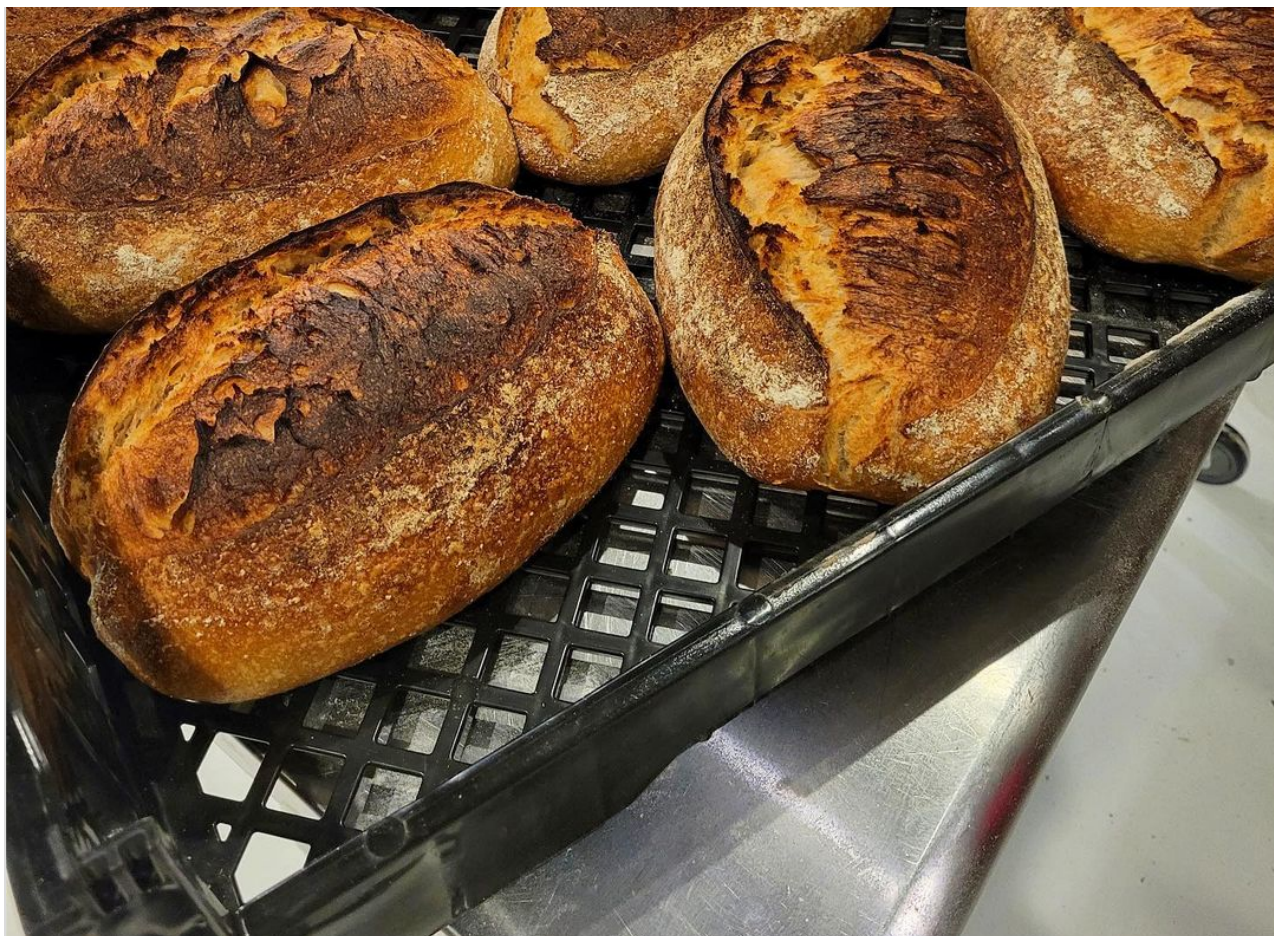
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Entering the **Ibis Bakery** flagship operation in Kansas City's happening Crossroads District isn't so much like walking into most other bakeries you've seen, but rather more like a visit to a pavilion at the World's Fair, if we even have that sort of thing anymore, a pavilion dedicated the future of baking. And coffee, too. This multi-story, Apple Store-sleek operation, all but built around its own, giant granite grain mill from Vermont, also happens to be one of the city's most popular coffee shops and roasters, Messenger Coffee Co., because why not all of our favorite things under one rooftop deck? (No really—they have that too.) Chris and Kate Matsch started out simple in 2013, baking for a coffee shop in the suburbs, slowly taking on the world, or at least one corner of it—not bad for barely a decade's work. The crew at **Union Loafers** in St. Louis have been hard at it for nearly as long, and while their storefront, which is also a popular café, might not be quite so glamorous, but that's more than okay; the bread, the city's best, commands most of the attention anyway.

Montana





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Before turning the lights on at **Grist Milling and Bakery** in Missoula a few years back, Dan Venturella and Selden Daume spent years working in other people's bakeries, which explains why the bread from a relatively new operation feels like the work of professional. (Plus, they source as much grain as they can from Montana.) Working out of the storage area of an old quonset hut out near I-90, their work hasn't had much trouble finding an audience, thanks in part to the building's other tenant, Black Coffee Roasting Co., which seems thrilled to showcase their neighbor's talents. Billings is a long way from Missoula, mileage-

wise, and otherwise, but even further from Dijon, where Francois Morin hails from. After a long IT career that had him in a lot of different places, Morin ended up here, opened **Le Fournil**, and started turning out the best baguettes the city had ever seen.

Nebraska



le_quartier_
4,879 followers

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26 likes

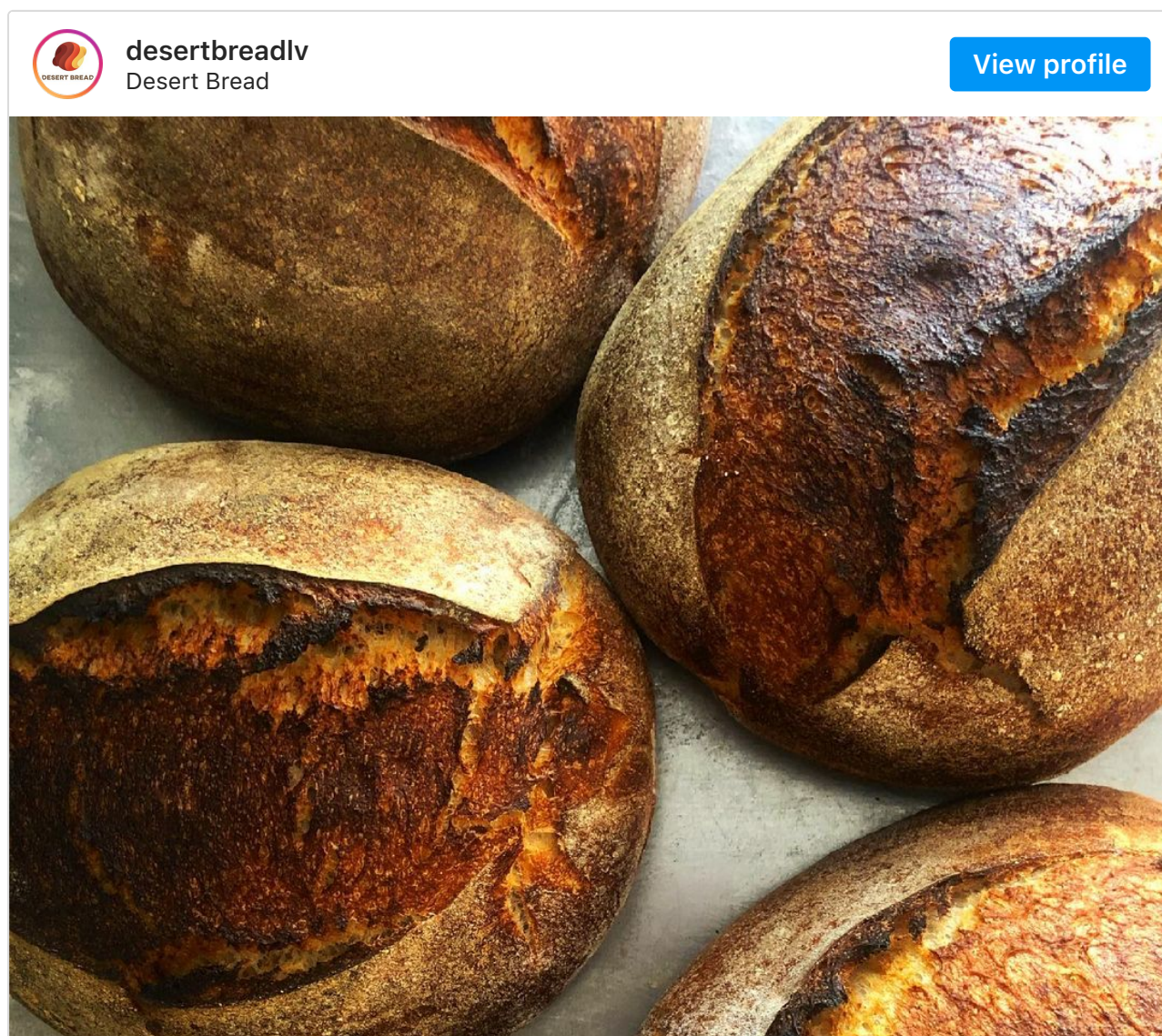


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When you're out on the Great Plains, baking local can be a fairly straightforward affair. The distance between the Miller Dohrmann Farm, and the closest **Le Quartier Bakery & Cafe** in Omaha, is about seven miles. One grows the wheat and mills the grain into flour; the other turns that flour into the area's favorite whole wheat sourdough loaves, as well as a rather stellar 100% whole wheat multigrain bread. Hobby baker John Quiring shipped himself off to Montreal and Paris to get educated, returning home to fire up his first commercial oven back in 2006. In Lincoln; today, there are three shops in the region.

Nevada





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114 likes



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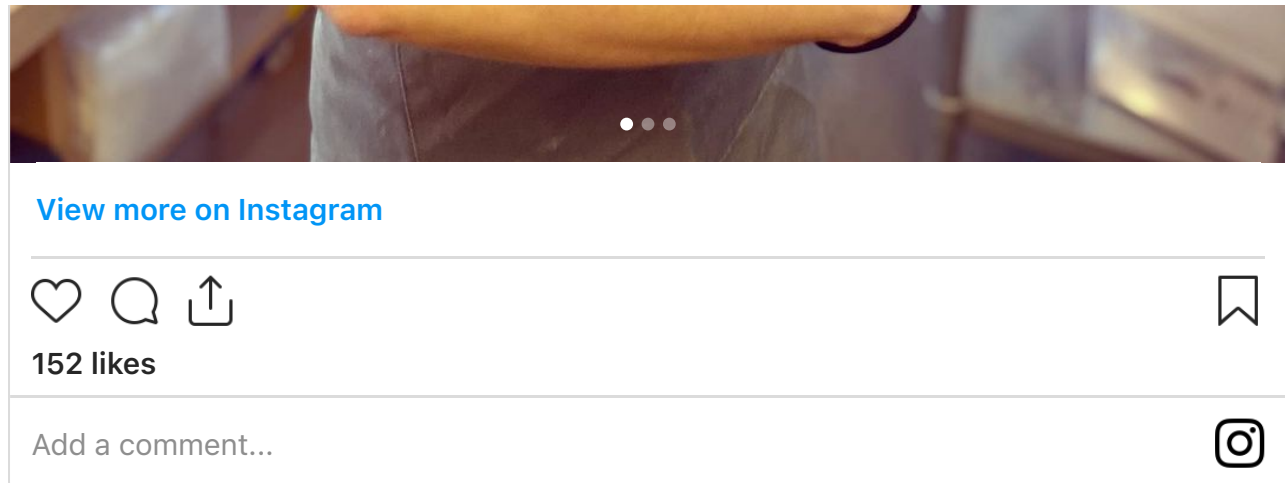


Turn up to one of the two (soon to be three) **Perenn Bakery** locations in Reno/Tahoe, and you'll probably run into at least a few people taking pictures of Tyler and Aubrey O'Laskey's photospread-worthy croissants, or the Scandi-chic shops themselves, or the cutest avo toasts for miles. The breads at this explosively popular operation may not be the first thing that jump out at you, but they're the reason to keep coming back, again and again. The couple, who both attended the Culinary Institute of America, are exceptional bakers. Something as simple as a country loaf, or a baguette, or a seeded loaf clad with sesame, might blend in with the surroundings, but if there's one thing we know by now, it's that real heroes don't always end up with their own dedicated social media accounts. Down in Las Vegas, **Desert Bread** operates out of owners Brett Boyer and Brandon Wilharber's driveway, which hasn't done anything to slow sourdough fans in their tracks—weekly pre-orders became a hot item during the depths of the pandemic, just follow the other cars headed into their subdivision

on Saturday mornings.

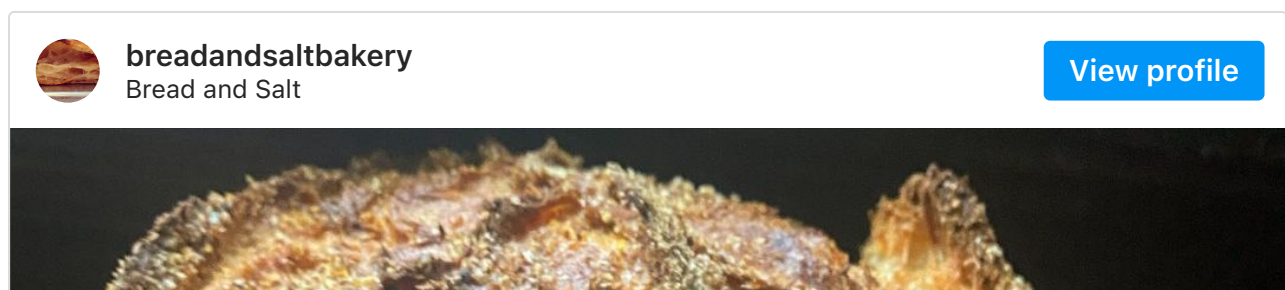
New Hampshire





A French historian and a Japanese anthropologist walk into a small town in New Hampshire. How does that one go? Except it's not a joke—when career academics Sam Temple and Bridget Love moved to Keene, they weren't exactly sure what was going to happen, other than that they'd be closer to family after years away. Temple had been learning the ropes as a baker in the years prior, and started baking in the family barn, wondering if he might turn his side-hustle into a business. He did just that, back in 2017, and these days, it's hard to imagine Keene without **Fire Dog Breads**, where stone-milled whole grains, much of it supplied by New England farms, form a strong foundation for an eye-catching selection of breads, including an exceptional Vollkornbrot. Across the state, Sarah Kozuma bakes a mean loaf of Hokkaido milk bread at the **Horseshoe Cafe** in Newmarket, which also happens to be [Food & Wine's favorite coffee shop in New Hampshire](#); the pain au levain is equally good.

New Jersey





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433 likes



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Besides the terrific views of the Manhattan skyline, the next best advertisement for the Heights section of Jersey City right now would easily be Rick Easton's **Bread and Salt**. Not only is it one of Food & Wine's favorite places for pizza in

New York, even if it happens to be in New Jersey, but it's also the place to go when you want a really serious loaf of Italian-style bread, here referred to matter-of-factly as "regular bread," because Bread & Salt is just that kind of place, doing exemplary work, without a lot of fanfare, apart from the attention it continues to get from hungry New York food writers. Initially a major hit in Pittsburgh, Easton's plan was to relocate the bakery to Brooklyn; he got this far, and then stopped. How lucky for Jersey City. One of the things you learn, rattling around on this side of the river, is just how much of the work New York is known for is actually done here. Did you ever wonder, for example, how **Balthazar Bakery** got all that baking done? They certainly aren't doing it in SoHo –at the busy commissary in Englewood, just a couple of minutes west of the George Washington Bridge, locals line up for a wider selection of some of the best bread in Manhattan, which actually comes from New Jersey.

New Mexico



burquebakehouse
The Burque Bakehouse

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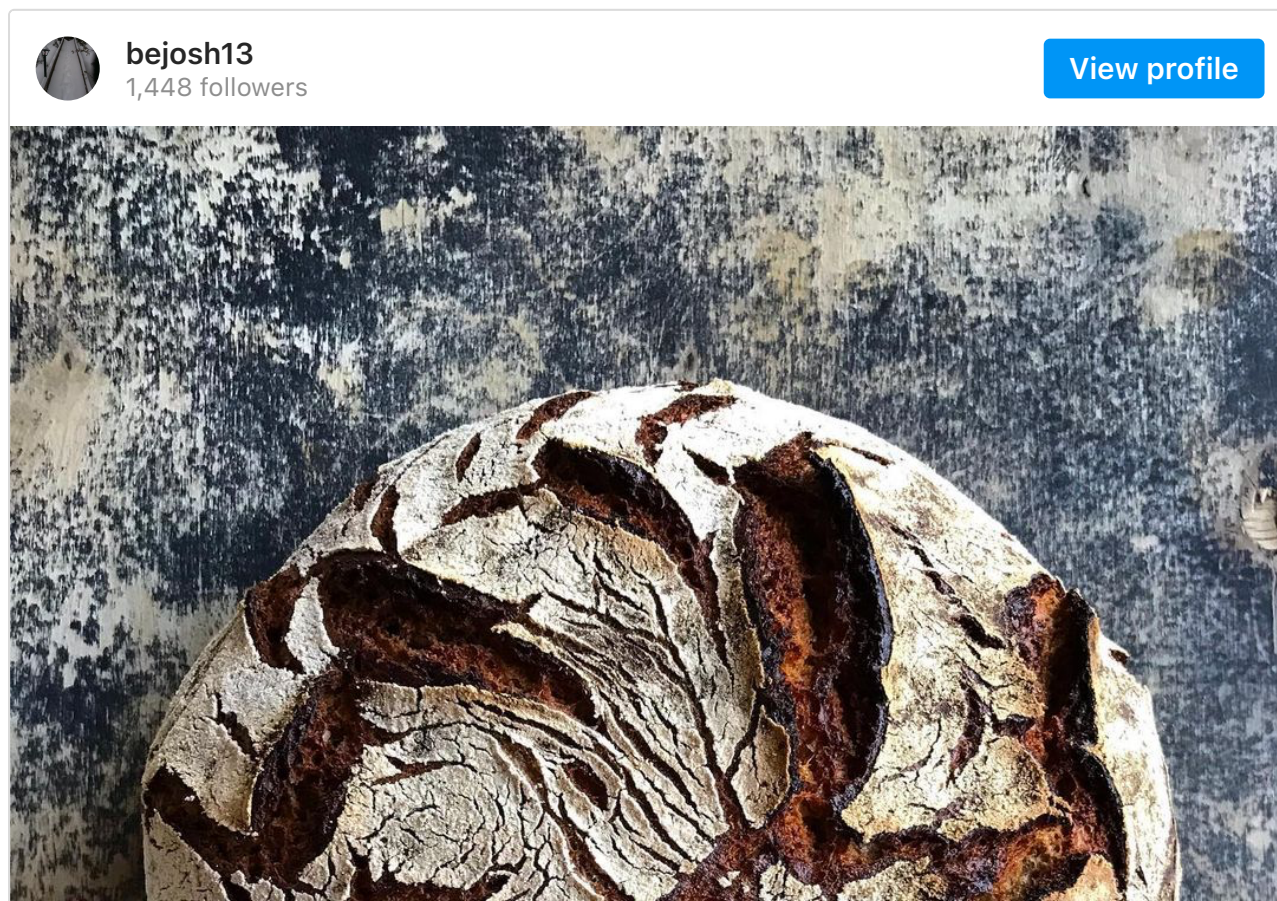
There isn't really any other kind of neighborhood in Albuquerque on a weekend morning, but South Broadway, where you'll find **The Burque Bakehouse**, always seems sleepier than most—save, of course, for the block with the line of people waiting patiently to get to that take-out window for their supply of piñon sourdough, or amaranth sourdough, or whatever is left, really. (Even on a Sunday, if you don't get out here first thing, you take your chances.) Sarah Ciccotello and husband Chris McQuary started by selling at farmers markets seven years ago; in late 2020, they managed to swing a very successful move. When one Albuquerque market fave goes brick and mortar, another takes its place, it seems—these days, the buzz is on **The Ferm Brinery & Bakehouse**, known for their blue cornmeal sourdough, and ancient grain loaves; they join the long running **Bosque Baking Co.**, which created and perfected the green chile sourdough loaf, years ahead of trend.

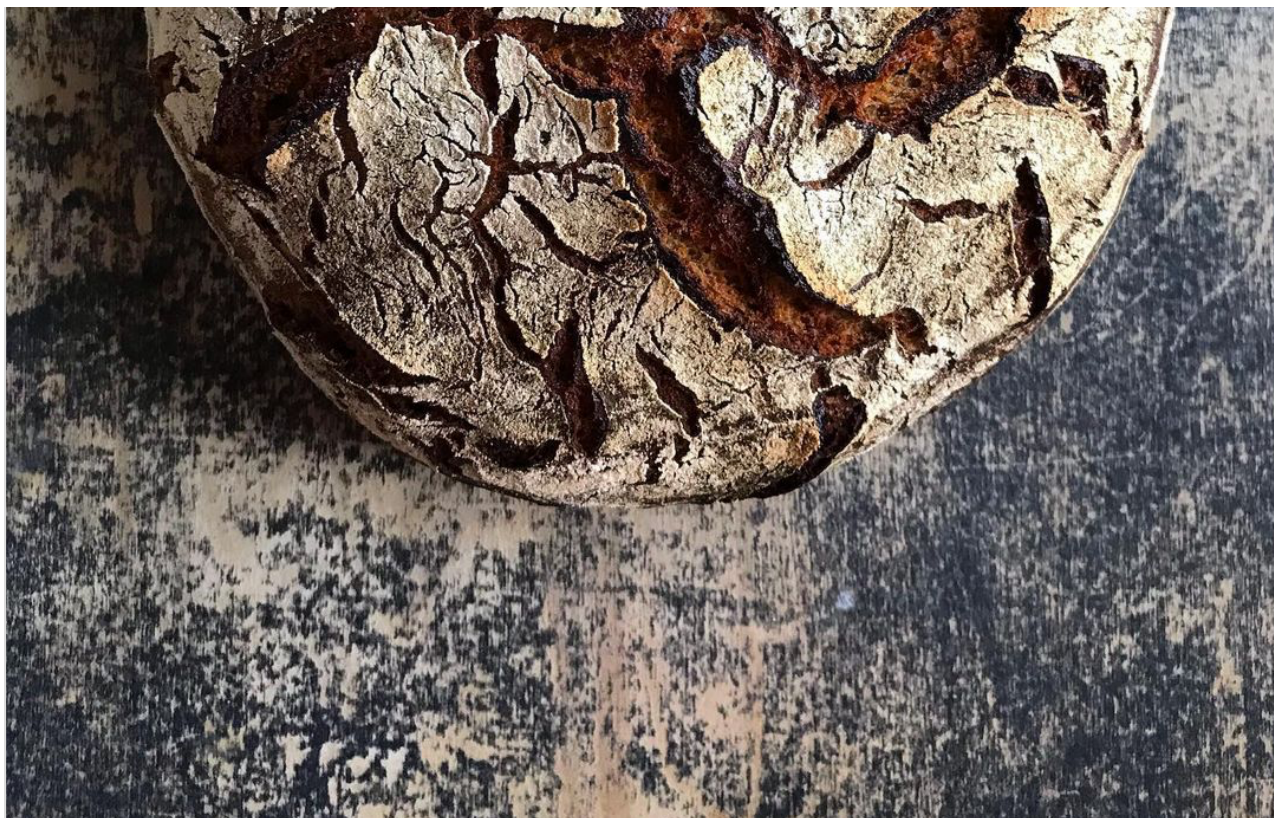
New York

Anyone blessed with the good fortune to find themselves on a tranquil patch of land somewhere up the Taconic State Parkway during the earliest days of the pandemic was already doing as close to okay as could have been hoped for. Then, during the summer of 2020, along came Norman Jean Roy (a well-known fashion photographer) and wife Joanna (an accomplished artist). The couple opened **Breadfolks** in Hudson, and the lucky people riding out the storm in mostly-rural Columbia County got even luckier, gaining unfettered access to the most elegant bread the city of 6,235 had ever seen. Jean Roy has remarked that they're just people baking bread, which is a bit like saying Chagall did windows. Few bakers in this country walk the tightrope between New World trend and Old World technique quite so ably as this crew, every organic loaf as rugged and handsome and camera ready as you like, but then comes this delicate kind of perfection, when you cut into it, the sort of perfection you normally have to travel across an ocean to find.

There must be something in the water in Columbia County, because there's more, starting just a few blocks away at **Talbott & Arding**, a popular gourmet market that did so well during the pandemic, they managed a move to a stunning new home. The in-house bakery turns out some of the most craveable focaccia this side of Liguria. Just down the road is **Sparrowbush Bakery**, which Ashley Loehr and Antoine Guerlain had up and running for about a year before the pandemic, during which they were able to assemble a small army of new fans. The wood-fired loaves, some of them made with grain grown right on the farm, are as rustic as they come; this is bread to be eaten in a kitchen with century-old exposed wood beams, perhaps along with a cup of strong coffee, fresh from the percolator. The custard-textured raisin oat sourdough loaf should probably be re-classified as dessert.

North Carolina





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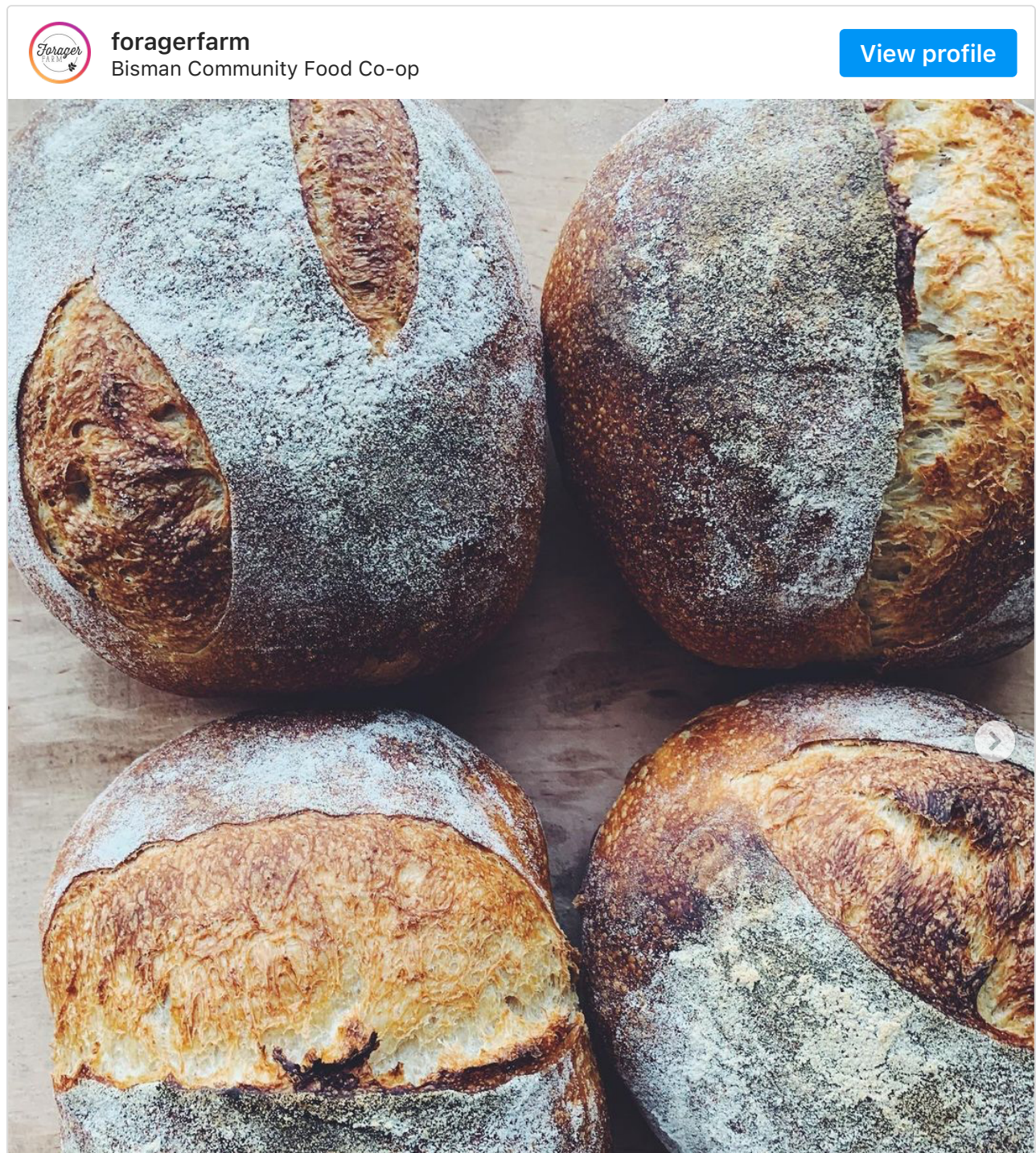
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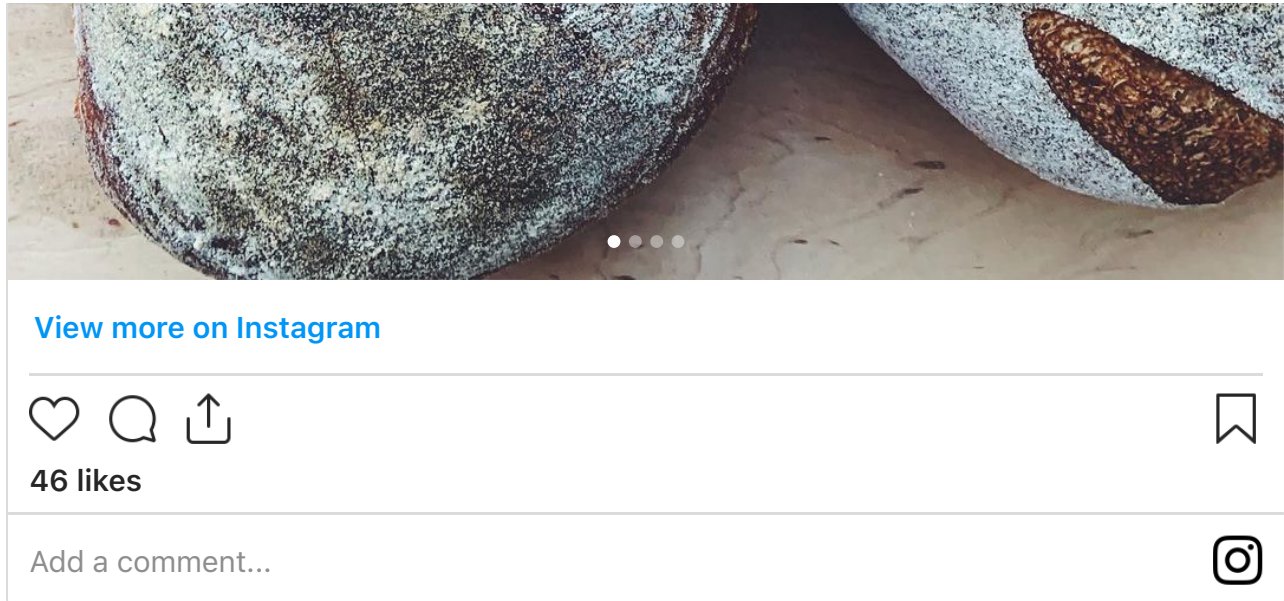


Back in 2014, when **Boulted Bread** made its debut in Raleigh's lucky Boylan Heights neighborhood, the co-owners got sort of used to pointing out that the grain mill they'd built was actually a real thing, and not some kind of hipster gimmick. At that time, this just wasn't something you saw every day, someone milling grain right on premises, but that's the kind of place Boulted was from the start: a collective of bread nerds, each with plenty of experience in the business, ready to kick this baking thing to the next level. Which is exactly what they did—for the South, and for the rest of the country as well, stirring more than a few young bakers to action. Besides the staples, which are easily at the top of their class, look for a breathtakingly good Nordic Rye, as well as a

wonderfully unusual bread made with smoked oats. In Asheville, anyone suffering from low sourdough levels should make tracks for **OWL Bakery**, a charming pastry shop and cafe that also turns out some seriously strong bread.

North Dakota





Rezarta Dibra grew up in an Albanian family that did a great deal of baking, and all of it from scratch. As an adult, she began to miss that part of her life, but there were no recipes to fall back on—they had all been in her grandmother's head. So she sent herself to baking school, got the basics down pat, and when she moved to North Dakota a few years back, she decided it was time to put her skills to the test. In 2018, Dibra and her family opened **Minot's Daily Bread**, where her all-natural (and naturally-leavened) loaves (regular and rye for the purists, plus cranberry, jalapeño cheddar for the rest of us) have been making waves in the remote town of 50,000 from day one. Also in 2018, local kids Hannah and Jonathon Moser fired up the oven at **Forager Farm** and started selling the kind of sourdough loaves they'd fallen in love with while working in Australia. Followers of their social media can easily get in on the occasional bread sales while the couple work to ramp up the farm's baking capacity.

Ohio



sixteen_bricks
6,920 followers

[View profile](#)



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394 likes



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Before the spring of 2020, it would have been accurate to refer to Ryan Morgan's **Sixteen Bricks** as the home of Cincinnati's best bread, but it took a pandemic for many of the locals to be properly introduced. Mostly very busy milling and baking for his wholesale clients (and fending off the odd offer to buy what quickly became a very successful operation) during his first few years in operation, Morgan, who just a decade ago was working as a mechanic, found himself with a little extra time to think. Like many bakers with restaurant clients, he quickly threw himself into neighborhood outreach, raising funds to bake as much bread as he could for the suddenly hungry, and throwing bake sales that were open to the public. These days, you're back (mostly) to snapping up every loaf you can find at local retail stores and supermarkets, but it's always worth going on the hunt. Morgan's Arcade loaf, made with red wheat and fermented Kentucky rye, is a tribute to one of New York's very best bakers in recent years, the now-retired Roger Gural.

No hunting required, however, to snag the very-French loaves from Tom McKenna's **Allez Bakery**, bringing an outsized share of good vibes to Cincinnati's Over-The-Rhine neighborhood since 2017; you just have to show up before the shelves go bare. Way across the state in Kent, the wood-fired sourdoughs at **Brimfield Bread Oven** are worth the journey. Owners Jud and Genevieve Smith are avid supporters of Ohio grain growers, sourcing wholegrain spelt, rye and whole wheat from nearby Holmes County, home to one of the country's largest Amish populations.

Oklahoma



farrellbreadok
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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Maybe it's the sprouted whole wheat bread made with organic, Oklahoma-grown wheat berries, or the no-junk, perfectly breaded loaves of egg-washed challah, positively glowing in the display case, but you know right away, walking into one of the **Farrell Bread & Bakery** locations in Tulsa, that you're in capable hands. A popular name locally since the late 1990s, Justin Thompson, a chef with considerable name recognition of his own, took the reins back in 2018, which has only meant good things for the bakery and the city's bread-loving bunch.

Oregon



starterbread
St. Johns

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89 likes

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At a time when everything feels upside down, it's almost like Matt Kedzie and Zena Walas at **Starter Bread** have been sent from the recent past to remind us that Portland will never be done being Portland. It's a place where a home baker might wake up one day, determined to stick it to Big Ag, and then go do something about it, a place of secret bread pickups, a place of single-origin loaves made with grains sourced from a family farm just up the road. Most importantly, the couple remind us that Portland will probably always be a place where the public never stops being excited for great food. In a city that's been just a little bit busy raising the bar on American baking for decades now, it's great to know that there's always room for one more enthusiastic evangelist, one more talented innovator. Like many fine Northwest bakeries, Kedzie and Walas source from the great **Camas Country Mill** in Eugene. One of the foremost suppliers of quality flour west of the Rockies, the in-house bakery is an excellent showcase for the work that they're doing.

Pennsylvania



ursabakery
East Falls Farmers' Market

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80 likes



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The Omnibus loaf at Clare McKopp Williams' **Ursa Bakery** could well be the purest, most joyful expression of modern Pennsylvania bread right now, using, like all of the breads at this online/farmers' market operation, only grains grown right here in the state, in this case a blend of hard red wheat, whole spelt, and rye—a little bit of everything, inside one perfect country loaf. McKopp Williams baked in Philadelphia with Marc Vetri for quite a long time, which is to say she knows a thing or two—any legwork required to connect with her baking is exercise worth doing.

After a challenging 2021 involving an ambitious expansion and the dissolution of a partnership, Alex Bois of the much-celebrated **Lost Bread Co.** is heading back to basics—sourcing local grains, milling flour, and baking some of Philadelphia's best bread, which you can find at farmers' markets both in town and New York City. Out in Lancaster County, pandemic favorite Kristen Richards has come a long way in almost no time at all—her **Front Porch Baking Co.**, which literally began with orders picked up from a container on her front porch, now has its own storefront in Millersville. Richards' sourdough loaves and baguettes, once again heavily favoring Pennsylvania grains, are well worth seeking out.

Rhode Island



southcountrybread
Kingston Pizza

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After a lengthy period of plotting and planning, Jeffrey and Keri Lyn Collins opened the permanent location of **South County Bread Co.** in mid-2021. While their still-very-new shop on Main Street in Wakefield might not be the first to pop into your head, when you think about where to go to find the perfect loaf of 100% naturally-leavened bread, trust us, you'll get there. The most exciting loaves here are edible billboards for local grains, sourced from some excellent New England farms, with much of the supply milled right in-house. Summertime beach picnics and the baguettes at **Le Bec Sucre** in Middletown are the perfect fit. Of course, it helps that B elinda Quinn, who opened the bakery not all that long ago, came to town from Paris armed with one heck of a resume, including a stint at the Palais  lys e.

South Carolina



oakhillcafe
4,876 followers

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60 likes



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One of the South's best new restaurants, **Oak Hill Cafe & Farm** in Greenville, is much more than that. Besides actually having its own farm, the in-house bakery has become a regional go-to for some of the best bread around. Sourdoughs, yes please, but also look for milk bread and a fine honey wheat loaf, all of which you can order in advance for pick-up. Down in Charleston, another city where those on the hunt would do well to look to the restaurants, **Butcher & Bee** isn't just a pretty face, it's also really good at baking bread. Made with Carolina-grown grains sourced from Lindley Mills and Anson Mills, you can pick up your loaves at The Daily, just a few blocks back toward town.

South Dakota



thesoursd

Rapid City, South Dakota

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36 likes



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As happens to many Californians, there came a time when the Napolitano family began to consider life elsewhere; in their case, elsewhere ended up being Sioux Falls. After a series of adventures, son David came home ten years ago and started a bakery out of his parents' garage, and one thing lead to another. These days, **Breadico** has become a regional favorite, for seeded, naturally-leavened and long-fermented loaves, alongside hearty, winter-worthy breads made with potato flour. In Rapid City, do what it takes to get your hands on a loaf of the cinnamon raisin sourdough, or the green chile, or anything, really, at **The Sour**, a promising new cottage bakery. Peter Mitchell and his crew, better known as the rest of the Mitchell family, are turning out some of the most exciting breads in South Dakota right now.

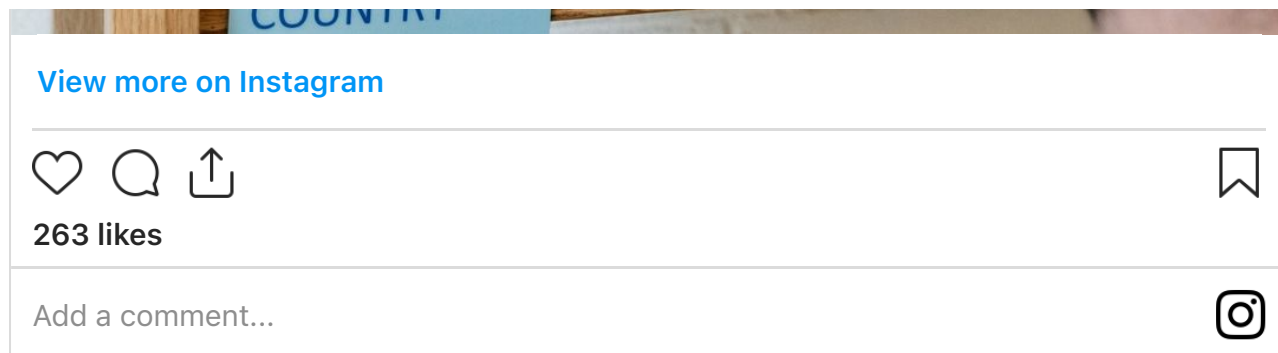
Tennessee



dozenbakerynashville
Dozen Bakery

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Back in 2009, Claire Meneely did a seasonal pop-up at Nashville's downtown farmers' market, selling her cookies; one pop-up led to another project, which led to things getting pretty serious. Now, particularly after what we've all just been through, it's difficult to imagine life in Nashville without **Dozen Bakery**, a staple not only of its fortunate neighborhood, but of the city at large. Start with the weekend-only baguettes, made with freshly-milled wheat, and work your way into the considerable bread menu from there. Over in Chattanooga, look to **Niedlov's**, a local classic that Erik and Lauren Zilen took over in 2015. Since then, the bread program has been modernized considerably—naturally-leavened, rustic loaves have become a staple offering.

Texas





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88 likes

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Bread in the Lone Star State has come very far in not very much time at all, which is to say that 2018 already feels like ages ago. That's the year Ryan Goebel took the bold step of opening **ThoroughBread** in Austin. At his modest-seeming shop, tucked away from view in the Zilker neighborhood, Goebel was, from the very start, turning out some of the finest naturally-leavened loaves in the state,

back when there weren't a ton to choose from. These days, that's still true, but there's no denying that the drought is officially over. From the sprawling North Texas suburbs on down, sourdough is kind of a big deal right now. There are two standouts: the beautiful, catch-them-if-you-can loaves at the online-only **Kuluntu Bakery** in Dallas, and **Magnol French Baking** in Houston, where chefs Otto Sanchez and Brittany native Matthieu Cabon have been shaking things up since 2019.

Utah

breadriotbakehouse
Salt Lake City, Utah

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180 likes



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When Phillip Massey put word out last summer that **Bread Riot Bakehouse** was growing, but needed a bit of help in doing so, it took barely two weeks to meet the goal of his fundraising campaign. That's how much Salt Lake City had come to value its most talented bread maker, who had largely disappeared from the public eye during the pandemic. Not by choice, but rather by necessity—starting out in 2017, Massey had always sold his baguettes, and sourdoughs, and porridge loaves at the downtown farmers market, which went on a lengthy hiatus, prompting a move toward wholesale baking. That's over now, thankfully—the market, held year-round, is back, and so are the regulars. Up the hill (so to speak), Andrew Berthong has grown his home baking operation into a proper business, **Hawk & Sparrow**—currently, his quality workmanship can be found for sale at Park City's Lola's Street Kitchen.

Vermont



elmoremountainbread

28.5K followers

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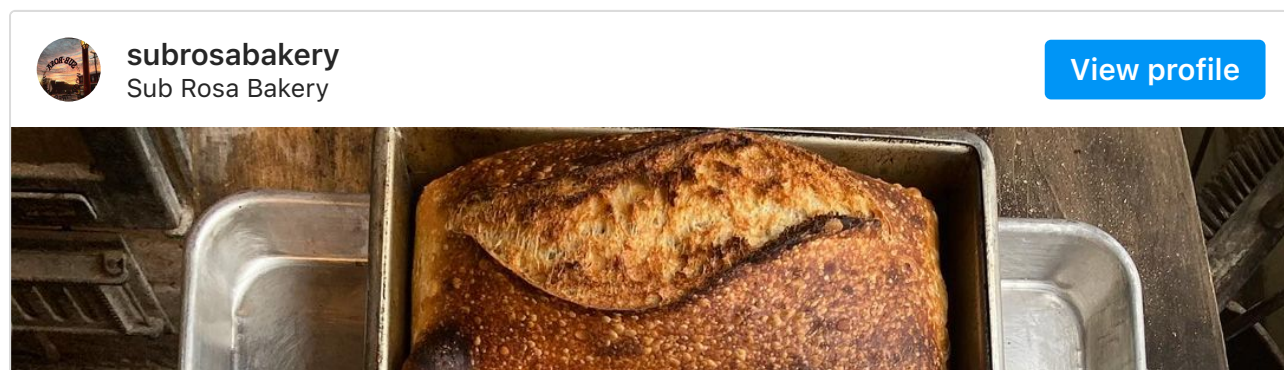
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When Blair Marvin and Andrew Heyn at **Elmore Mountain Bread** decided, almost a decade ago, to cut ties with other people's flour and start making their own, they looked around but couldn't find a mill that worked exactly the way they wanted it to. So, they invented—as you do—their own, a new kind of stone mill, one they made using local granite. These days, mention New American Stone Mills to most bakers, and watch their eyes light up. If they don't have one of Heyn's creations, chances are very good they want one. Between hastening the repair of the broken supply chain and baking the Northeast Kingdom's favorite breads, the couple have also found time to make another outsized contribution to the bread world, as founding members of the Skagit Valley, Washington-based [Breadlab Collective](#), a group of equally talented and forward-looking bakers—many of them on this list—and other future-minded individuals attached to the industry. Their mission? To see the best bread remain available to all, baking what has become known as the Accessible Loaf—high quality, but never so expensive as to be out of reach.

Well before **Back Door Breads** in Charlotte became their main focus, Jim and Lynn Williams were getting serious about grains, even experimenting with growing their own, servicing their popular bakeries in Rhode Island. Once retired, the couple moved up to Vermont full time, where they still grown their own wheat, and bake some of New England's best bread.

Virginia





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654 likes



Add a comment...



To many people in Richmond, siblings Evrim and Evin Dogu are just the finest

bakers in town; for nearly a decade, **Sub Rosa Bakery** has been raising the bar on bread in Virginia's capital, a celebration of French technique, of regional grains, and of their own Turkish–American heritage, which is how you get polenta breads made with local heirloom cornmeal, fast-baked pide topped with herbs, and a classic pain de levain, all on one menu. Behind it all, however, the brother-sister team have been leaders in the fight for a top-to-bottom transformation of the supply chain—the bakery was one of the first in line for a stone mill made by the pioneering Andrew Heyn in Vermont; the in-house milling operation has now expanded significantly. Evrim is also a founder of the Common Grain Alliance, an organization working for greater sustainability by narrowing the gap between bakers, millers and farmers in the Mid-Atlantic region. In Charlottesville, be sure to look for **Althea Bread** on the local farmers market circuit; Marian and Susan Bayker started baking in their rural Albemarle County cabin back in 2018; the couple mill their own grain as well.


Washington


Before the pandemic, Seattle's **Sea Wolf Bakery** wasn't just where you went for the city's most exciting sourdough loaves. The shop, just a couple of blocks north of Lake Union, was also one of those places where you could step inside, out of any kind of weather, and feel good, thanks in part to an abundance of sizable windows letting in natural light. After months of handing customer orders through the door, around the time when it became clear that this pandemic business was going to be hanging around for awhile, brothers Jesse and Kit Schumann had an idea—open up one of those giant windows, facing directly to the street, and suddenly, Seattle's best bakery in town was a kiosk. A giant kiosk, moving through pallet after pallet of flour, all milled from Northwest grains.

The bread in this part of the world has been exceptional for the longest time—it's hard to believe that the trendsetting **Breadfarm** in tiny Edison is going on twenty





years old now, or that Leslie Mackie's **Macrina Bakery** is already pushing thirty. Sea Wolf's arrival on the scene just a few years ago, with their ruggedly handsome sourdough loaves, was an excellent reminder that in even the best bread cities, there's always room for one more. At **Barn Owl Bread** on Lopez Island in the San Juans, they grow, mill *and* bake. It's one of the toughest bakeries to reach on this list, but every bit worth your time—plus you get one of the finest public ferry rides in North America.

West Virginia


 **sarahs_on_main**
3,466 followers [View profile](#)



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82 likes

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Many people are saying (and by "many people" we mean us very specifically, we're the ones saying this) that the best bread in West Virginia is a fresh pepperoni roll from the extremely classic Italian bakeries in Fairmont and Clarksburg, and on many trips through the state that certainly has been the God honest truth. Everything evolves, however, even in the tradition-bound Mountain State. Down in the state capital, WVSU biology professor Mark

Chatfield moonlights as the baker and co-owner of **Charleston Bread Co.**, known for its excellent and affordable sourdough loaves; same goes for **Sarah's on Main** way up in Wheeling, where popular local chef Sarah Lydick struck on her own in 2018, opening a charming cafe and bakery right downtown. Lydick is known locally for her salty bread–lanky, crusty ciabatta-esque loaves sprinkled liberally with sea salt.

Wisconsin



originbreads
ORIGIN Breads

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55 likes




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Down in the depths of March 2020, a group of Midwest bakers, all members of the regional Artisan Grain Collective, were burning up the chat lines with ideas of what to do, how to help, how to keep baking, how to do some good for their communities. It was out of these discussions that the Neighbor Loaves project came into being—customers could add a loaf onto their orders, which would then get baked and distributed to those struggling to keep food on the table. One of the first to throw on the proverbial baker's apron was Kirk Smock at Madison's **Origin Breads**, where every single loaf—every one naturally leavened—is made with exclusively locally grown and milled organic grains. Madison may be the most food literate city in the state, at least from a modern perspective, but there's good bread all over these days—in Milwaukee, it's **Stephen's Breads**, where baker Stephen Blanchard is equally passionate about grain provenance, while up in Green Bay, it's the sourdough loaves from **Voyageurs Bakehouse** you're looking for.

Wyoming



persephonebakery
18.3K followers

[View profile](#)



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♡ 💬 ↗ 🔖

328 likes

Add a comment... 📷

Oh, to be nearly so cute and popular as **Persephone Bakery**, Ali and Kevin Cohane's bright and beautiful morning hang. On any given day it draws in what feels like everyone in Jackson, which is a great deal many people, to the point where there are now two locations. What do they come for? For brioche French toast breakfasts, for smart coffees, for buttery kouign amann and croissants—this is all well and good, but you're here, elbowing your way, ever so politely, past the crowds and toward the bread selection, toward the pain au levain and *les*

baguettes, which you will have smartly ordered ahead of time. Let the first-timers fight over the last of everything else—retreat into solitude with a stash of good cheese, and have yourself a merry little picnic. Just don't feed the bears.