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p10



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p20



Waitrose

15 OCTOBER 2015

weekend

On the rise

How bakers are embracing the art of breadmaking - from a slow proof to good springback, p8



Photography: Gareth Sambidge

English wine prepares to roll out the red carpet

It is no secret that English fizz is good enough to rival Champagne and Prosecco. And now, thanks to a bumper harvest and record sales, one domestic winemaker has its sights set on the red wine market.

The Bolney Estate's sales of red wine have doubled in the past year, and it predicts further growth following a bumper harvest of red grapes at its West Sussex vineyard.

'In 2015 we've grown more Pinot Noir grapes than ever before,' says Bolney's Aimee Knight. 'This is partly because the quality of English Pinot Noir wine has skyrocketed in the past few years thanks to the sourcing of better vines and the use of more sophisticated techniques.'

'English red wine also has a growing reputation among British consumers due to its success at international competitions.'

'This year, for example, we beat off stiff competition from producers in France, Italy and Argentina when our Pinot Noir took silver at the International Wine Challenge.'

The French region of Burgundy is 'home' to the Pinot Noir grape, but winemakers around the world are successfully cultivating it in cooler climates, notably in New Zealand.

English Pinot Noir could benefit from a wider trend for red wine. Although historically the UK has been a nation of white wine drinkers - particularly Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio - sales of reds will soon match those of whites, according to figures from wine and spirits analyst IWSR.

More delicate than those produced in warmer climates, English Pinot Noir appeals to consumers who want a middle ground between a light white wine and a heavy red.

This trend has been reflected in sales of the wine at Waitrose.

'The Bolney Estate continues to triumph, making truly exceptional English wines,' says Becky Hull MW, Waitrose's English

TURN TO PAGE 3

You can't hurry loaf

A rising number of people are embracing the art of baking bread by either making their own or buying from artisan bakeries. Anna Shepard reports on the trend

Remember to consider structure. We are looking for springback and impressive bounce, but there also needs to be resilience.' Steven Hallam is up on stage giving this advice to an assembled group of nervous-looking people.

It may sound more like a martial arts competition, but the delicious doughy smell filling Westminster Cathedral Hall in central London is the giveaway. Another clue is the line-up of carefully wrapped packages, many of which are loaf shaped. And the fact that everyone is wearing aprons.

Yep, we are talking baked goods. It is judgement day at the third Tiptree World Bread Awards, Britain's leading competition for professional and home bakers.

Hallam, a master baker and managing director of pie company Dickinson & Morris, is explaining the judging criteria to a room full of experts who will be pooling their collective bread wisdom to pick this year's winners.

Mostly the judges are bakers, chefs and professional foodies and this year there are several *Great British Bake Off* finalists in the mix, along with Waitrose food editor Alison Oakervee.

It's not a simple question of white, brown and wholemeal. In this high-ceilinged Edwardian building, there is a spread of scones, fruit breads, baguettes, ciabattas and flat-breads that conjure images of an industrial scale tea party. It's a celebration of yeasty innovation.

Farmhouse loaves nestle alongside exotic-sounding creations, such

as Turkish delight brioche, a Norwegian bloomer and a stunning sourdough with a bright gold-painted crust. There's even a gluten-free category.

More than 1,100 baked goods have been submitted, meaning the number of entries has increased by a fifth on last year. Many have been couriered to arrive on time, ensuring absolute freshness. Others have come by taxi or been delivered in person. What matters is that the loaves are on the table ready to be sampled by midday.

Bring out your bread

With only moments to spare, Kathryn Minchew arrives with her smoked Gloucestershire bread to enter in the speciality savoury category. 'I didn't realise you had to enter two loaves so there was a bit of a last-minute panic,' she says, visibly relieved as she lays her wares on the table. 'I cook my bread over an open fire, so I can only do one loaf at a time. I spent 14 hours yesterday creating these two.'

Minchew, a *MasterChef* semi-finalist in 2008, who now runs a pop-up restaurant in her shed, has travelled from Gloucester on the train. She is happy with her loaves, flavoured with cider and Cerney Ash goat's cheese – not least because they have reached their destination intact. But appearance is only one of the criteria they will be marked on. Taste and flavour, crumb texture, resilience, baking and crust colour also matter.

Each of these categories is marked out of 20, then set against



penalty points. Before a single crumb can be sampled, a control loaf must be collectively judged under Hallam's expert guidance. All this makes for a complex process, which is already baffling some of the judges.

Bake Off 2013 finalist Kimberley Wilson is one of those judges, as is winner Frances Quinn, who says it reminds her of being

back in the tent. 'It's worse than the technical challenge,' she whispers, while Hallam elaborates on what degree of springback you can expect from your crumb. 'You get the fear of God before you dare put any flour in a bowl.'

Another familiar face is Luis Troyano, *Bake Off* 2014 finalist, who is judging the

ALL RISE Clockwise from top: Bertinet bread, an artisan bread delivery, Gail's bakery and Kimberley Wilson with Georgina Pilz and Steven Hallam

BEST BAKE Christopher Foster wins with 'flower power' bread



Knead to know

The latest bread-baking trends and why seeds are this year's surprise hit



Top twists

'Increasingly, Waitrose customers want to do something different when they bake,' says Waitrose baking buyer Tim Shaw. 'This could be using ground almonds instead of flour in a crumble, or topping their loaf with sunflower and pumpkin seeds.' In the past year, sunflower seeds sales have grown by 28% and pumpkin seeds by 25%.

Big hits

Salted caramel is still hitting the sweet spot with its sugary/salty flavour combo. Look out for Waitrose salted caramel doughnuts (£1 each) or essential Waitrose Salted Caramel & Chocolate Éclairs (£2/2s). For a new flavour that Shaw predicts will take off in 2016, look out for ginger icing and sprinkles.



Rising star

Don't have time to bake a loaf? Think again. With easy bake yeast (try Allinson's Easy Bake Yeast, 99p/100g), dried yeast is combined with the bread improver ascorbic acid, which makes the yeast work more quickly. 'You only need to knead your bread once, prove it, then it's ready for the oven,' says Shaw.

Wheat swaps

Whether or not you have a serious health reason to avoid wheat, many of us are experimenting with alternative flours, with sales of rye, spelt and buckwheat flours up. 'The Waitrose range of unusual flours means you can combine them when making bread at home to create your own distinctive loaf,' says Shaw.

Shortcuts

While more of us are baking, when it comes to icing, we're fond of a shortcut. The joy of fondant icing is that you just roll it out and lay it onto a cake (it's a popular choice, with sales up a third on last year). For another fun topping trick, top buttercream icing with essential Waitrose Mini Pink & White Marshmallows, 83p/150g.





The presence of three favourites from the hit BBC show at the awards is a reminder of how far baking has come over the past few years. No longer the boring part of a lunch-time sarnie, bread is becoming the main event. Many of us now ruminate over the texture and bite of our sourdough crust.

According to market researcher Mintel, *Bake Off* has energised the sales of home baking products, which have risen from £523 million in 2009 to £1.7 billion in 2014. Customers at Waitrose, meanwhile, are becoming more adventurous with their recipes. Sales of buckwheat flour have risen 67% since last year and spelt flour is up 10%.

‘It’s such an important staple in our diet,’ says Chris Young from the Real Bread Campaign, an organisation that wants us to care more about our daily loaf. ‘We eat it several times a day, and yet a lot of what is classed as bread is made using quick industrial processes that can make it less digestible.’

According to Young, there’s been a huge increase in micro-bakeries – places which bake just a handful of loaves to sell at a local market or shop. ‘A growing number of people have found they can’t get quality bread so

‘Farmhouse loaves nestle alongside exotic-sounding Turkish delight brioche’

they bake it themselves, in some cases converting their garages into bakeries and making a profitable business from it,’ he says.

‘There are also local bread clubs where customers subscribe and pay in advance for a certain number of loaves to be delivered every week. We call this community-supported baking. The One Mile Bakery, in Cardiff, for instance, delivers its bread within a one-mile radius of its kitchen.’

The awards are also about inspiring the next generation. With this in mind, there are two junior home-baker categories – one for under 12s and another for 12 to 17-year-olds. At the junior judging table, Fiona Hamilton Fairley, founder of The Kids’ Cookery School in west London, is assessing an octopus-shaped loaf called Otto, dominating the 12 to 17-year-old category table. Each of his legs is made from a different-flavoured bread.

Competition is fierce, however, and Otto is up against a professional-looking loaf, described as ‘flower power’ bread. In the end, Otto comes a close second. After all, he does have multi-flavoured tentacles. Even Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood couldn’t ask for more.



Great British White category. He is looking for a soft crumb inside the loaf and a decent crust. ‘The key is a slow proof – good bread can’t be rushed. Compared to making cakes, baking bread is a gentler art. It hasn’t yet taken off in quite the same way, but once you get the bug, there’s no going back.’

Art of baking

Appreciation of the time and effort that goes into artisan bread is illustrated by two ranges sold in Waitrose.

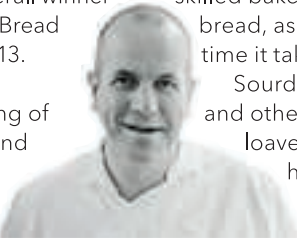
Speciality loaves from two bakeries – Gail’s in London and The Bertinet Bakery in Bath (owned by Richard Bertinet, right) – are baked and delivered straight to shops in the South East and South

West on the same day. Both ranges include sourdough and a variety of flavours and styles. Gail’s San Francisco Style Sourdough was the inaugural overall winner of the World Bread Awards in 2013.

‘People’s understanding of sourdough and other artisan breads has increased,’

says Waitrose bakery buyer Kate Smith-Bingham. ‘They appreciate the taste and structure that using the best ingredients and skilled bakers gives to a bread, as well as the time it takes.’

Sourdough and other artisan loaves’ sales have risen by a third since last year.



Who makes the best bread? 2015 winners

KitchenAid Young Baker (under 12)
Georgina Pilz, seaweed bread

KitchenAid Young Baker (aged 12-17)
Christopher Foster, flower power bread

Home Baker Open
Graham Kinnear, tomato, olive & basil loaf

Home Baker Sourdough
Lawri Dowie, artisan sourdough

Home Baker Scone
Sue Foster, rockin’ Roquefort & walnut scone

Special Merit For Innovation Award
Mark Bennett, Christmas time twist (Patisserie Mark Bennett)

Tiptree World Bread Awards Overall Winner 2015
James Freeman, London bloomer (Victoria Bakery)

Photography: Getty

Fi Glover

In my opinion



The BBC Radio 4 journalist airs her views

Rebecca Sharrock must have heard all the Arnold Schwarzenegger jokes. She is one of only 80 people in the entire world known to suffer from ‘total recall’, not the 1990s sci-fi blockbuster featuring the political bicep that is Arnie, but a condition called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory which means she can remember every single conversation she ever had, every thought she ever processed and every memory ever stored. She can remember being put in a car seat when she was 12 days old, and everything that’s happened to her since.

It’s an intriguing condition that makes Rebecca’s 25-year-old mind of enormous interest to medical research. For instance, she has no control over the memories that crop up, something that causes her great distress. The fact that Rebecca can tell doctors what is happening in her brain could be vital in understanding memory disorders and that all helps in the fight against the epidemic of our times – dementia.

Most of us hope to live to a ripe old age where, like fine line-caught tuna, we can pick the memory we want to dwell on rather than have to sift through the enormous drag net of everything left on the seabed of our minds. Last month Alzheimer’s Research released data that predicts that one third of all babies born in 2015 will go on to develop dementia

‘What does a long life look like? Imagine doing 40 or so jobs for 80 years with the promise of mental distress at the end of it all’

in their lifetimes. It says age is the biggest risk factor. That is a huge worry when our children can expect to live to 100, something that is considered to be progress. What does this long life look like though? Last week a head teachers’ conference was asked to consider another part of the picture. Futurologist Rohit Talwar told them they must prepare their young pupils for long working lives containing 40 or so jobs.

‘You might be driving Uber [taxi] part of the day, renting out your spare bedroom on Airbnb, renting out space in your closet, doing delivery for Amazon, renting out your driveway for somebody who wants to park their car there,’ he opined.

Imagine doing all that for 80 years with the promise of mental distress at the end of it all?

What is so scary is how the medical profession continues to ride two totally different horses – one constantly seeking to lengthen life through better treatments and drugs, the other not able to reassure us that there will be the right kind of drugs for what we become. I’m not alone in thinking that I don’t really want to back the first horse unless the second is going to come in too.

In the meantime I wish Rebecca all the luck in the world as she gets older and the weight of her memory becomes heavier. How fantastic if one of the things she can look back on when she is 105 is how she helped to assuage some of the biggest fears of this century.

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