



LIONEL VATINET

Maitre Boulanger

Visit La Farm Bakery and you'll discover a Master Baker who's risen as one of the highest quality bread producers and most sought after bread baking consultants in America - Lionel Vatinet. Inquire about his breads and Vatinet is likely to invite you to sit with him for a bread tasting that will change your outlook on breads forevermore. He'll gather a huge selection of breads, slice them in half, and suggest you squeeze each one allowing them to reveal their yeasty aroma, crisp exterior, creamy paste and developed character, all the while explaining that excellent artisanal bread begins with proper fermentation – or the “spirit of the house” as he calls it – and from there, the quality and flavor profile of the bread develops, with patience. Thanks to his depth of knowledge and understanding of every point of the process – from milling to fermentation to baking – Lionel Vatinet has been one of the foremost forces in the American artisanal bread baking industry for the past 20 years, traveling the world as a consultant to assist the most well known bread brands, and finally opening his own bakery in Cary, North Carolina in 1999, La Farm Bakery.

Lionel Vatinet's passion for bread was first nurtured when he joined France's prestigious artisans' guild Les Compagnons du Devoir as an apprentice at age 16. □ Emerging 7 years later with the distinguished and hard-earned title of Maitre Boulanger (Master Baker), Vatinet pledged to devote his life to teaching, sharing and preserving the ancient art and science of bread baking. □

Rather than propagate secrets, Vatinet's mission has been to demystify baking and enable more bakers to produce high quality handcrafted breads. He's dedicated his life to sharing his knowledge, consulting nationwide and abroad for bakeries, in-store bakery programs and manufacturing par bake programs, training bakers in Europe, the Middle East, Central and South America, Canada and the United States. In 1995 Vatinet was the founding instructor at San Francisco Baking Institute, the first school of its kind in the US. Bakers from the most respected bakeries in America – La Brea, Acme, Zabar's and Panera – traveled to SFBI to study with Vatinet, who has been credited not only for his skill and passion, but also for his knowledge in maintaining quality while increasing production – a critical component to the growth and success of the artisanal bread baking industry in America.

After years spent traveling the globe with yeast and flour in hand, Vatinet realized his lifelong dream and opened La Farm Bakery in Cary, North Carolina in 1999. La Farm Bakery is a modern bakery that continues the centuries-old baking traditions and techniques and honors the ordinary yet extraordinary boulangeries that once flourished in every little town in France. At La Farm Bakery, Vatinet produces 15 different styles of breads, and an additional 20 seasonal breads throughout the year using a European-style hearth oven. He's best known for his signature “La Farm” sourdough bread – an impressive 5 pound boule with an intense flavor, similar to those still enjoyed on farms throughout France. Vatinet possesses both a superior understanding of the fundamentals of French bread baking and the American zeal for innovation, and as a result continues to develop new, exciting breads such as the Asiago-Parmesan, White Chocolate Mini Baguette, Cinnamon Raisin Pecan Currant, Spelt and Multi-Grain.

Among Vatinet's achievements, his participation with Team USA at France's competition La Coupe du Monde de la Boulangerie in 1999 is one of his most proud; the American team earned the Gold Medal for the first time ever at this International Olympic style baking competition. Since, Vatinet was featured in Maggie Glezer's James Beard award winning book, “Artisan Baking: Baking By Hand, The Recipes, The People, The Science (Workman Publishing, 2000),” and has received accolades in Pastry Art & Design and Country Home, among others.

Vatinet's handcrafted breads are available at La Farm Bakery in Cary, NC, in the Moore Square Farmers Market and at the State Farmers Market in Raleigh, at such celebrated restaurants as Herons in The Umstead Hotel and Spa in Cary, and as of February 2007 at all four Whole Foods Markets in the Triangle area. La Farm Bakery also sells via their web site, and ships overnight throughout the US. Thanks to these outlets, Lionel Vatinet is able to keep this centuries-old tradition of artisanal bread baking alive, and deliver bread from his hearth to yours.

Lionel Vatinet lives in Cary, NC with his wife and business partner, Missy Vatinet. When he's not pulling breads from the oven, he may be seen at a table outside his shop breaking bread with customers.
