

HUCKLEBERRY

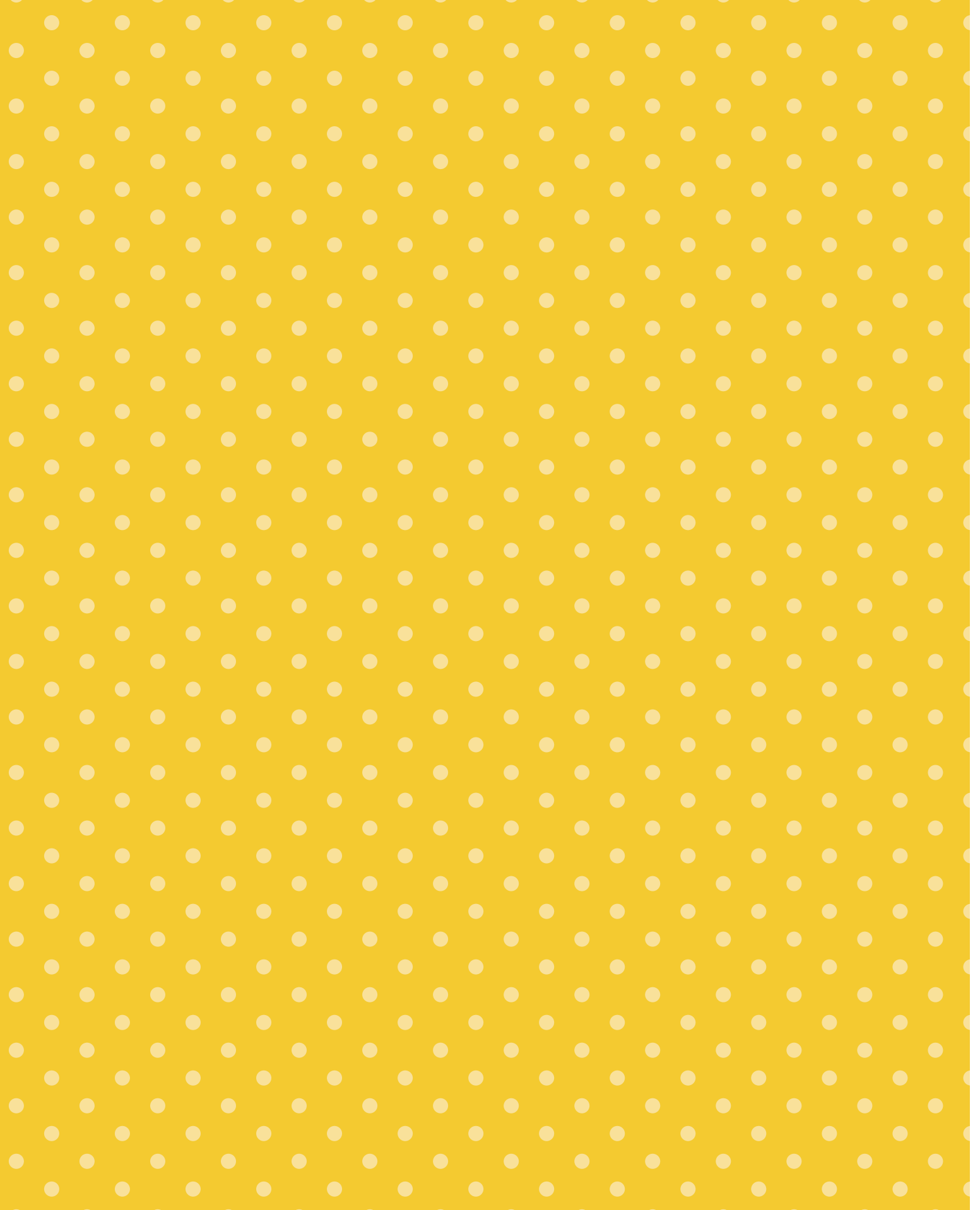
STORIES, SECRETS, AND RECIPES FROM OUR KITCHEN



ZOE NATHAN

WITH JOSH LOEB AND
LAUREL ALMERINDA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATE ANDERSON



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT ARMENDARIZ



CHRONICLE BOOKS

SAN FRANCISCO

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Being part of a restaurant is the same as being part of a large, complicated, supportive, sweet, and sometimes not-so-sweet family. I dedicate this book to my family—both blood and restaurant. Without you, I have no reason and no way to do all of this.

Love, Zoe

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josh's foreword

Yes, I'm biased. I'm married to Zoe, plus share a family and several businesses with her, so I don't blame you if you're a bit skeptical about my ability to write objectively about her culinary skills. But the truth is I fell in love with Zoe's cooking and baking even before I fell in love with her (though the two were not very far apart).

Zoe came into my life when my first restaurant, Rustic Canyon, was just a six-month-old baby. My mom, Shirley, desperate for me to meet the right girl, met Zoe's mom, Jesse, a fellow Santa Monica resident, and after hearing about Zoe and her passion for food decided that the two of us should meet. Now, granted, I wasn't looking for a wife at the time, Zoe had plenty of other job offers, and the last thing I wanted was to be set up with someone by my mom; we met.

Zoe came to Rustic Canyon and did a tasting for me, and it was amazing. Up until then I didn't really know what Rustic Canyon's pastry program should be, I just knew that it wasn't there yet. Zoe had a vision and her execution was perfect. She wowed me with moist and buttery Warm Blueberry Cornmeal Cake and a beautiful assortment of cookies including her glorious Kouign

Amanns, a cookie she picked up during her travels through France. She made homespun ice cream and chocolates the way they should be made, not too sweet and with enough salt to bring out the true flavors without tasting salty.

She was everything I was looking for professionally and personally, but until then I didn't know I was looking for either. After I wrestled her away from more lucrative jobs and more prestigious restaurants with a promise that she could "make her own mark at Rustic," she finally took the job. That was when my restaurant and my life changed forever.

Zoe is a baker and chef in the same way that I imagine most great sculptors work. She has an amazing instinct for food, gets an idea, and works and works at it until it is exactly as it should be, which usually looks painfully simple yet delicious in a way that is unparalleled. While many people refer to her as a natural, she debunks the myth that "naturals" at anything even exist. Instead—as she says and teaches her staff—she just cares more and will not compromise anything in the creating of a dish and certainly will not serve it if it's not perfect. As she tells her girls every day,

"Make mistakes, throw things away, just don't put anything out unless you know it's perfect. Remember, we're trying to fool these people into thinking we're perfect!"

Zoe and I officially started dating just a couple short months after we began working together. I vividly remember one of the first moments I knew she was the one. My dad underwent an emergency heart procedure and I spent the night with my family in the hospital down the street from Rustic Canyon while they operated on him. It was touch and go, but around 6 A.M. we got news that it was all going to be okay, and I headed out relieved and completely emotionally spent. I needed to be out of the hospital but I also needed a little warmth and something to take my mind off the difficult night before. I headed to Rustic Canyon because I knew that at 6 A.M. the one person who would be there was Zoe, and I wanted to see her in a way I couldn't explain. I walked in the door and it turned out she knew already (my brother, who left shortly before me, had already come through for his hug). She gave me a big hug and a chocolate chip cookie and both were the best of their kind.

The early stages of our relationship moved at lightning speed. Within two months we were living together, four months later we were engaged, and early the next year we were married. Along the way she wowed me with freshly baked croissants out of our home oven (still my favorite). I put on a very happy extra thirty pounds, because everything she made, from her baked goods to braised chicken at night, tasted so good I couldn't stop eating it. Every time I saw a friend that I hadn't seen in a while, they would pat my expanding belly, give me a smirk, and say, "You look so happy." While I've since learned to eat her delicious cooking in moderation, she still makes me happier than ever; Zoe has that effect on people.

In April of that year, Zoe told me that she wasn't satisfied just being a pastry chef of a restaurant and wanted to do more. She wanted to open her own bakery and restaurant, a place where she could serve all her favorite pastries alongside heaping breakfast plates, freshly baked breads, rotisserie chickens, and more. We tested out the breakfast portion of her dream place on Saturday mornings at Rustic Canyon, and it turned into a huge

hit. For a few hours every Saturday morning, our dinner-only restaurant was transformed into a breakfast oasis, with a bar heaped with fresh fruit crostatas, prosciutto-Gruyère and chocolate croissants, stone fruit tarts and galettes, scones, savory flatbreads, cakes, and much more. It became clear that we had something special on our hands. People asked when we would open Zoe's place, how much they could invest, and the rest was history.

We came across a soon-to-be vacant Chinese fast-food restaurant across the street from Rustic where we saw potential, and Zoe told me if I could get it for us, she would make it special. Mine was the easy part, and she more than delivered.

Huckleberry opened in February of 2009, three weeks after we got married. It was a hit from the very beginning, with people flocking to everything she put out. Huckleberry offers a lot: great artisan coffee, freshly baked breads, sandwiches, salads, soups, dinner entrées to take home, plus desserts and of course great breakfast items and pastries. When it came time to write this book, Zoe said that she didn't want to tackle it all at once,

but that she loved breakfast and felt there weren't enough great breakfast cookbooks.

Zoe is a cookbook aficionado. One of the many bonuses I got when she moved into my house and my life were hundreds of great cookbooks. She reads them, flips through recipes, scribbles notes all over the pages, but mostly just gets inspired. This book comes not only from a chef but also a true cookbook lover. So enjoy it, get inspired, make notes in the margins, rip out pages, make delicious stuff, and occasionally eat more than you should because it just tastes so good. It's worth it, I promise.



laurel's foreword

If I didn't have a very good sense of humor and love Zoe with every fiber of my being, I'd probably want to strangle her most days. In fact, at this moment I want to strangle her. We are right up against our deadline for this book, and she is creating new recipes like a mad scientist. Of course, few of them will make any sense when she hands them to me to flesh out. Most will have at least three measurements wrong, and the bake times will only be vaguely in the ballpark. But after years of working side by side at all hours of the night and day, in all states of body and mind, including her at nine months pregnant or me with my jaw wired shut after major surgery, all I need is a sketch to know what she means. To me that is one of the most precious things about our partnership.

Before meeting Zoe, I had been a filmmaker, with a little film of mine screening at Sundance. But after I poured my heart and soul into a screenplay that struggled to get financing, and my writing partnership grew impossible to navigate, I became downright miserable. The only thing that grounded me at the end of the day was standing by my stove stirring risotto and sipping wine.

Around that time, while listening to KCRW's *Good Food*, I heard that it was to be Rustic Canyon's very last Saturday Morning Breakfast. So I dragged my then-boyfriend to the car, barely out of his pajamas, for one last bread pudding experience.

We ordered far too much food. Numerous pastries, brisket hash; it was silly. Needless to say, a to-go box was required. We gave up our table and I loaded up my box by the coffee station. But I didn't know what to do with our dirty dishes; I didn't want to leave a gross mess next to the cream and sugar. I was looking around at a loss and said over my shoulder to my honey, "I need a busser."

Zoe in her apron appeared beside me saying, "You need me," and took the plates from my hands with an easy grin.

I know it was a simple thing, but it floored me. She was so humble, warm, and generous. She and her food made total sense to me, and I thought, "I think I do need you."

The next day, I knocked on the kitchen door and handed my resume to Josh. A few days later when Zoe called me I just squealed into the

phone with uncontrollable joy at the sound of her voice. Fortunately, this made her laugh and I think it gave us both the sense that we could probably work together.

I started to intern in the Rustic kitchen. Shortly after, our little pastry operation moved from a tiny corner of that kitchen to a bakery kitchen all our own. I was sure there had been a scheduling error when I saw I was to work as Morning Baker on Huck's opening day.

For days before, we made what we thought were big batches of anything that could be prepared ahead, and filled our freezer with raw biscuits, scones, and crostatas. We thought we were set up for a week.

We went through it all on opening day.

In the beginning, we scrambled to keep up. All the while, things seemed to be falling apart around us. The prep girl we counted on to set us up would blow it, and we would start the morning wildly behind. Or our bread baker would just not show up, and we would have to tackle her station at the same time as our own. Misfires on the line would force Zoe to help fry eggs until the guys were out of the weeds. And our

purveyors would sometimes simply forget to deliver something crucial like milk.

For a good two months it was madness. We worked six-day weeks, fourteen-plus-hour days, growing more and more tired. Laughing was the only way we got through it all. We love to laugh. And we love to laugh at each other, perhaps the most. God forbid I have a new work ensemble, because I will be ridiculed all day for my palazzo pants or macramé cap.

When I think back on it now, I wonder how I did it. Why I did it.

Through it all, every batch of biscuits had to be perfect, even if she had to make them herself. Every time I saw her kick a new dent in the freezer, destroying another pair of kitchen clogs and disappearing into the office for a long while, I got scared. I would think, "This is finally it; that was the last straw. She can't handle anymore; now I'm alone in this chaos." But before too long, she would always emerge. Maybe her eyes were a little puffy, but she would go right back to her station and start her next task. And all it would take was one ridiculous customer modification to get us laughing again.

I think I hung in there with Zoe because I could see how determined she was. How passionate, and strong. I did not want to let down someone like that. Zoe was teaching me that yes, you can have your meltdowns in life; in fact, you are going to have them. But then you pull yourself together and you pick up where you left off, undeterred.

I cannot thank Zoe enough for all the countless lessons she has taught me over time and look forward to many more to come.

zoe's introduction

I wear a lot of different hats in my professional life. I'm a chef in charge of savory and pastry at Huckleberry, plus a restaurateur in charge of running several neighborhood businesses with my husband, but when people ask me what I do for a living, the answer is simple. I'm a baker.

Some people run, meditate, or do yoga to find their peace of mind. I bake. I have always loved baking, ever since I was a kid making scones with my mom, but especially since that morning when I walked by the window of Tartine Bakery in San Francisco and saw Chad Robertson and Liz Prueitt and a bunch of tough girls with tattoos shaping croissants, making scones, and filling lemon tarts that would soon be topped with fresh flowers and essentially begged them to take me on and teach me what they knew.

I love the process of baking, of working with just a handful of ingredients, and losing myself in my hands while working to transform these ingredients into something beautiful and delicious. I love taking a box of perfect peaches back to the restaurant from the farmers' market and turning them into sheet pans of whole-wheat peach squares, or peach crumble, or fresh peach preserves. When I'm

baking, the finished product almost doesn't matter; once I get into the simple peaceful acts of scaling, mixing, and scooping, I'm satisfied. When I get stuck doing management stuff and get too far away from the kitchen, I become agitated and grumpy, and I begin to deeply crave getting my hands in some dough and making something. I'm generally not okay again until I do so.

Huckleberry started from the Saturday Morning Breakfasts we used to do at Rustic Canyon. I began doing these because I wasn't satisfied just being the pastry chef at Rustic Canyon and I wanted to do more. I came from Tartine Bakery, which was always crazy-busy and where baked goods were the focus, to a restaurant where dessert was a complement to the rest of the meal, which people ordered only if they had managed to "save room." I craved early mornings, high-volume baking, and the mad push to get dozens of baked goods out and beautifully displayed by 8 A.M.

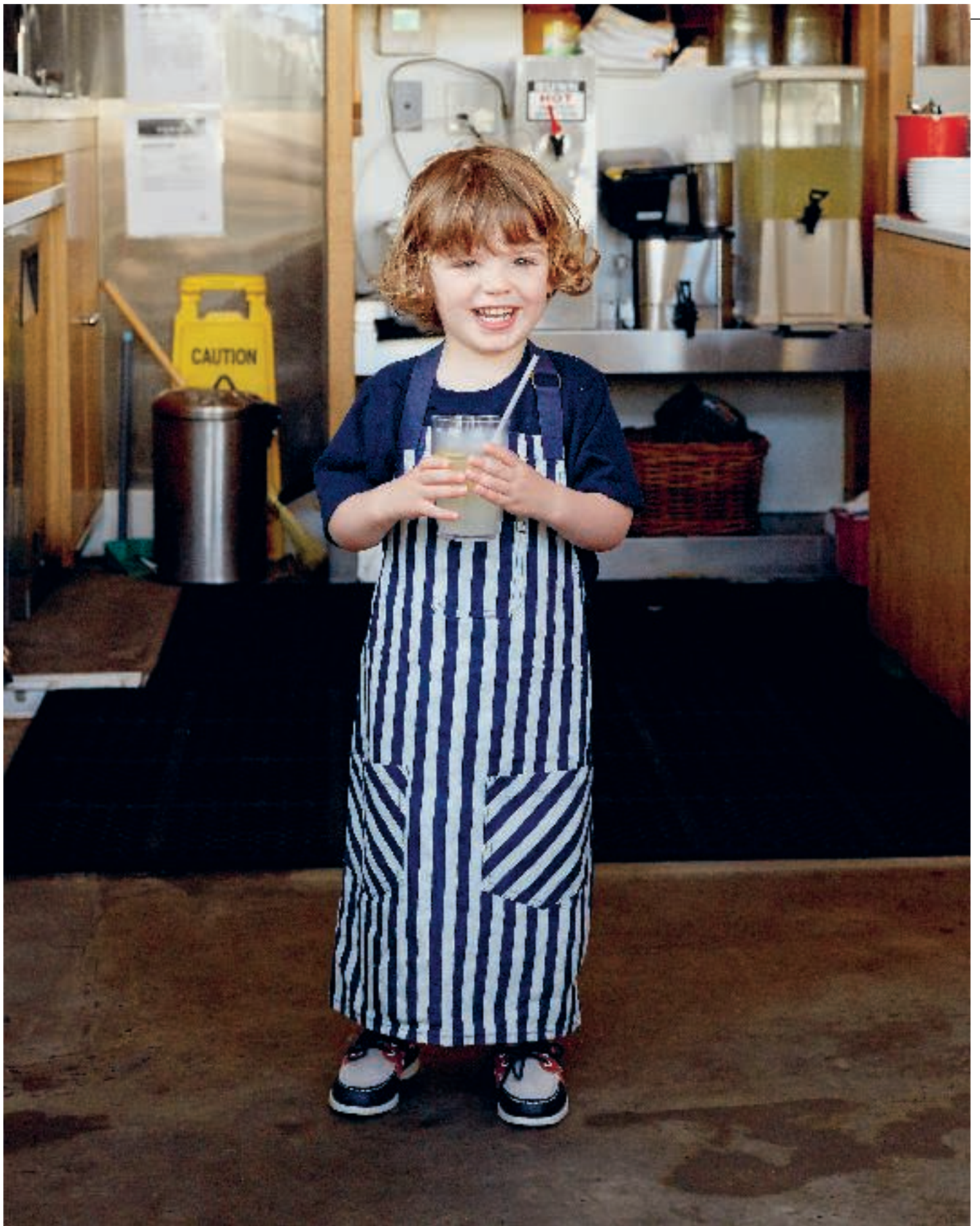
One day I was out taking a walk with Josh and I told him about my desire to hijack his nighttime restaurant and turn it into a full-scale bakery one morning each week. I could tell he wasn't very into the idea at the

time but he loved me, so he was in a pretty tough spot. Josh can be pretty headstrong, but he also gets a really big kick out of a challenge, so we compromised: He agreed to do it and help as long as we didn't hire anyone who wasn't family and wouldn't work for free and that I buy all the platters and supplies out of our own money.

A couple of Saturdays later, I arrived at the restaurant at 2:30 A.M. and started baking. Josh came with me and buttered the ring molds for crostatas and kept me company. My father, not only one of my favorite people on Earth but also incredibly talented and free labor, arrived at around 6:30 to prep his contribution, making pancakes, eggs, and fritattas, which he was famous for at our house but had certainly never done in a professional kitchen. Josh's brother Gabe worked the front with Josh and made coffee. This was our team.

The first couple of weeks weren't that busy and would end with my father and me sitting at a table, exhausted, sharing a super-sized mimosa, wondering if anyone would ever show up the following week. Those were famous last words. Pretty soon the word got out and the place was full. We screwed up so much because we





couldn't handle the volume, but the pastries looked great and I felt so good getting in there each morning super-early and working to put out an even bigger display of treats than the week before.

Josh finally realized that we had a good thing going and let me hire my friend Alice Park, who ended up helping me open Huckleberry, as well as one of our sassy line cooks, Renee Garcia, and my opening savory sous at Huckleberry, Tad Weyland. My dad stayed on, of course, and as we built this new family, which was a combination of my blood family and our restaurant family, all of whom we loved so much, we realized that it was time to find a real home for this motley crew.

We opened Huckleberry in February of the next year. Growing up, I always wanted to own a shop. Which kind wasn't that important to me; I just wanted a place where everyone knew they could find me at any hour of the day and visit me while I'm doing what I love. Huckleberry is my shop. When I think of Huckleberry I think abundance, slightly organized chaos, amazing early morning gossip, lots of blood, sweat, tears, and laughter. It's a place where I can pull a tray of

cinnamon rolls or a blueberry cornmeal cake out of the oven and walk one over to my mom or a regular who just sat down so they can eat it when it's hot and perfect. I don't get to do this every day, but I've gotten to do it a lot, and it makes me so happy when I do.

The display case at Huckleberry is the essence of abundance. It's full to the brim with heaping platters of pastries, stacked high. At Huckleberry you order at the counter, but as you move toward the front, you pass all the goodies: bowls of farmers' market salads; the abundant pastry case full of scones, muffins, crostatas, cookies, and doughnuts; and then the dessert case full of puddings, cream pies, and caramels. This is on purpose! We want you to come in with the best of intentions and then decide to be naughty and get something sweet. Then we want to make sure it's so good that you leave feeling that it was well worth it.

When I told people that I wanted to open a bakery in West Los Angeles, I was informed over and over again that it wouldn't work because people don't eat bread and pastries anymore. Well, luckily the naysayers were wrong. When someone comes into

Huckleberry for breakfast and tries to abstain from pastries because they are trying to be "healthy," I constantly want to yell (and those who know me know that sometimes I do), "Get off your juice fast! This is healthy; sitting down for a few moments and slowly eating a homemade muffin with a beautiful latte is good for you. Yoga is not the only place you should slow down and breathe!"

I don't think one needs to eat pastry every day, but I do think that pastry when eaten and enjoyed properly slows life down. I know, for me, baking slows life down. And I know for my son waiting for banana muffins to bake in the oven can feel like a month, a very slow-moving month.

Huckleberry does a lot of things other than breakfast. We offer a full-scale lunch with dozens of sandwiches and farmers' market-inspired salads. We make thousands of turkey meatballs and mounds of brisket each week, roast off dozens of organic chickens each day, and run a full-scale catering operation. I'd love to write a bunch of books about Huckleberry, but I started with breakfast because to me breakfast is where it all started. From those crazy Saturday

mornings at Rustic where we got half of everyone's orders wrong to the bakery girls being the first ones in at 3 A.M. every day to filling the bakery case so it's abundant and impossible to refuse first thing in the morning to satisfying a groggy regular with his perfect cappuccino—this is the heart and soul of Huckleberry.

Of course, breakfast is more than just pastries. I may be a baker first, but when I wake up I want eggs and bacon (with a little maple syrup), and I want them done right. I purposely chose to make Huckleberry more than just a bakery because I wanted to offer more. I wanted Huck to be an experiment in overabundance: big heaping bowls of brisket with perfectly cooked sunny-side-up eggs beside a blueberry muffin and a latte. I wanted a place where everyone could come and find something they truly loved, be it a pastry or a bowl of quinoa with eggs. I wanted to give people a crazy moment of plenty as the first experience of their day. You will never experience stinginess at Huck, that's a promise.

I love cookbooks and I've always wanted to write one, but until now it wasn't the right time. I had enough recipes, had people who

were interested in publishing it, but mainly I just wanted to be in the kitchen at work and not be bothered with the logistics of converting big recipes to home batches or recipe testing in a home kitchen or any of that. I baked all day at work; when I came home I wanted a glass of wine and a good movie, not to get in the kitchen and start baking again.

Then Josh and I had our son, Milo, and he began to eat and love food as much as his dad and I do, and all of a sudden everything changed. I started working way less, preferring to be home chasing him around. He started to want cookies, doughnuts, and other treats in my house, and I began to fall in love again with working in my own kitchen and giving him freshly baked goodies straight out of the oven. My counter at home now has freshly baked pastries on it, pumpkin muffins, and homemade granola. We go over to a friend's house and I bring a plate of cookies, baked with Milo as my assistant, rather than just something from Huckleberry. And I love it. I found my love of baking at home again, and that's what I want to share with you.

My love of breakfast began in a busy professional kitchen at 3 A.M. listening

to loud music and cranking out as many pastries as our hands would allow. It continued as I watched customer after customer come into Huckleberry and enjoy a messy fried egg sandwich, and now it continues in my home when I wake each morning with excitement and anticipation as I wonder what I will make for Milo to start his day. I look forward to sharing all this with you, and hopefully you in turn share it with the people you love, because giving something you made with love to someone you love is just about the best feeling in the world.





tips, secrets, and rules we live by

Because I am a professional baker, people make plenty of incorrect assumptions about me. They assume that I'm organized, good at math, precise with measurements, and, at the very least, good at following a recipe. The truth is I'm awful at all these things, but somehow I've managed to open a successful bakery and restaurant. I think I survive as a baker and chef in spite of my shortcomings because I trust my taste and intuition when it comes to making something good. Plus I'm not afraid to make dozens of batches of the same item until I get it just right.

There are two ways to use this book. You can find recipes that look good to you and follow them to the letter: If you choose to wake up at 6 A.M. to surprise your family with muffins made by exactly following one of our recipes, I promise you will be successful and get a lot of extra love and appreciation from your family.

You can also use these recipes to give you guidance, messing around with them, inserting your own ideas, until you get it exactly as you want it. I will certainly not be offended if you tell me that you took one of my recipes and substituted one type of flour for another, tried using coconut oil

instead of butter because you wanted to make it for your vegan friend, or even switched fruit for chocolate or ginger for lemon.

Please remember baking is supposed to be fun, so don't take yourself too seriously while you're doing it. Also remember that no one is a "natural"; there is just the willingness to make mistakes, learn from them, and still love what you're doing. That makes you "good."

The same goes for the following tips and guidelines. I live by this list in my home and restaurant kitchens, but use them only if they ring true to you.

INGREDIENTS

GENERAL NOTES

In this book the eggs are large, the sugar is always granulated, except when indicated otherwise, and when measuring ingredients we don't pack tightly.

USE GOOD INGREDIENTS

Try to buy organic and from suppliers that you know and trust. Not to sound like a total dork, but I do think this makes a huge difference both in baking and our impact on the world. Plus, the better the fruit you use, the less sugar you need, which means you can eat more!

SEASONAL PRODUCE

Don't make a fresh tomato dish in the winter. It simply won't turn out great. Use good seasonal produce from your local farmers' market and let the produce inspire and dictate what you cook.

SECONDS

If you want to feel like you're really in the know and get a great deal, in the peak summer months go to the farmers' market super-early and ask your favorite farmers if they have any "seconds." Seconds are bruised, overripe, and often ugly-looking fruit that the farmers don't feel they'll be

able to sell at full price. This fruit is ideal for jams, jellies, cobblers, and galettes, basically any dish where you cook down the fruit and want as much ripe flavor as possible. My favorite two items to get seconds on are tomatoes and stone fruit. If you want to make the best tomato soup you've ever made in your life, make it with seconds. It's also perfect for recipes like the Cherry Tomato-Goat Cheese Cobbler (page 157) and Blueberry Nectarine Crisp (page 159). Don't use seconds for anything where you want the fruit to hold its shape. It's not great for recipes like the Vanilla Apricot Tart (page 146) or the Roasted Peaches with Nut Crumble (page 154). When it comes to overripe berries, those farmers generally freeze their seconds and bring them only on request, so you'll need to plan a week ahead for those. It's a way to make great berry jams and jellies without breaking the bank.

BREAD

Support your local artisanal baker! Of course, we encourage you to make your own bread, but we also understand that it can take a fair amount of time and not everyone has that. But just because you are short on time doesn't mean you should

eat sandwiches on mass-produced, thoughtless bread. There is almost always an amazing baker either at your local farmers' market or in your town that woke up at 2 A.M. that day to bake fresh bread. It may be slightly more expensive or a little out of your way, but it will always be worth it. There are few things people actually create start to finish with their own two hands, bread being one of them, and we have to make sure to support that.

SALT

I know this is going to offend a few cookbook writers (and, honestly, most bakers) but when following a recipe from most cookbooks, double the salt. It'll make the recipe taste one million times better and will actually make your baked goods taste like something other than sugar. Almost every time someone who works for me forgets the salt, I'll ask them what they think the pastry needs and they will generally say, "More sugar." No! It needs salt to bring out the sweetness from the sugar. In baking, salt should be used as a flavor enhancer and only occasionally and intentionally as a flavor. We use only kosher salt to bake and cook with, and fleur de sel to finish because the rougher-cut,



larger granules really make your food sparkle. Please buy both; they are game changers.

EGGS

On the Huckleberry menu you will mostly see eggs done two ways: sunny-side up and poached soft (but of course we always have scrambled eggs for the kids). Why? Because I very strongly believe those are the most delicious ways to eat eggs. I like them sunny-side up because I like my yolk very runny and I think the yolk is breathtakingly beautiful on top of just about anything. I never like color on the whites because I think they are hard to cut through with a fork and I just simply don't think they taste better that way. I love poaching eggs because they feel light and you still get that awesome runny yolk. All that said, at Huckleberry we also realize everyone grew up eating and loving eggs differently, so we are always flexible, within reason, and the same goes for this book. Make your eggs how you like them—scrambled, over-easy, over-hard, basted, etc. All I care about is that you take the time to make yourself a beautiful breakfast.

BUTTER

At Huckleberry we use a good European-style butter. We think that the low water content and high fat make for much better-tasting baked goods. Always use unsalted butter so

that you can control the salt in your dish. More expensive butter generally tastes better, so on pastries that should really taste like butter, such as flaky dough, don't skimp; use the good stuff.

VANILLA

As with salt, when using recipes from other cookbooks I recommend doubling the vanilla because in most recipes, the vanilla is called for in such small amounts that it's pointless. You don't want it to be the dominant flavor, but you do want to taste it. So when you see the measurements for vanilla in this book please rest assured they are not misprints. Use good vanilla extract, it makes a difference. And lastly, we often call for whole vanilla beans in this book because I love to bake with them. Try to get your hands on them; they'll give a richer, cleaner vanilla flavor than extract. If you can't find vanilla beans, substitute 2 tsp of vanilla extract per vanilla bean.

CHOCOLATE

As always, use good ingredients, especially with chocolate. I like Valrhona 66% cacao, but find what you like and buy it in bulk so you're never stuck using inferior stuff. As we wrote this book, we had a hard time figuring out how to express chocolate amounts using a cup measure. We found that unless we

were using chocolate chips, which we never do at Huckleberry, it was difficult to quantify in that way, because depending on how someone chops their chocolate you can fit very different amounts in a cup. We did the best we could for our cup measurements, but we really encourage you to either use a scale or buy the baking bars that are scored into 1 oz portions, or the like, so you're not stuck using a measuring cup.

BUTTERMILK AND CRÈME FRAÎCHE

At Huckleberry we go through cartons of buttermilk each day. But at home, when I was recipe testing, I was floored that I could never get through the entire carton, since most recipes call for only 2 or 3 tbsp. So if you need just a little buttermilk, make it yourself by combining 1 tsp lemon juice with 1 cup/235 ml milk, and allow it to sit for about 20 minutes at room temperature. The same is true for crèpe fraîche. Some of our testers were annoyed with the price of crèpe fraîche. If you don't want to buy it, you can make your own by mixing 1 cup/235 ml heavy cream, with 1 tbsp buttermilk. Whisk them together, wrap tightly, and allow to rest at room temperature in a slightly warmer spot of your kitchen for 24 to 48 hours until thickened: the warmer the kitchen, the faster it'll go. Once it's thickened, refrigerate and use as needed.

GRAINS

I love cooking with lots and lots of different grains. Not even half of those that I enjoy working with are represented in this book. I can't push you enough to play with and learn about grains like bulgur, cracked wheat, quinoa, barley, and millet. To me they are often so much more flavorful than white-flour pastas, white rice, or couscous.

COOKING WINE

For the most part, my rule of thumb is cook with the kind of wine you'd like to drink that dish with. But I will be honest with you: When cooking for this book, if a dish called for white but I had only a lighter red kicking around, I used it. You should feel free to do the same. There's no need to stress yourself out about it. With beer it's key that you do not use a bitter beer like an IPA in these recipes because once you start cooking it down, all you'll be left with is the bitterness.

BACON

We tried as much as possible while writing this book to use ingredients that were easily accessible at your local supermarket. One item we found that you need to search a little harder for is good, thick-cut bacon. Most packaged stuff is so thin it cooks down to almost nothing. Luckily most supermarkets now have good slab bacon at the meat counter. At

Huckleberry we always serve nitrate-free bacon because pregnant women and kids can eat it, and I know that when I was pregnant it's all I really wanted to eat.

GRUYÈRE

At Huckleberry we go through 50 lb/23 kg of Gruyère every week. It's the perfect cheese for baking and great for most hot sandwiches. It's got the right amount of "stink," melts beautifully, and has a really great depth of flavor. I love the way it browns when it gets really hot, and in pastries it's the perfect complement to butter.

AIOLI

It's not that hard to make. It's much more flavorful than mayonnaise. Just do it. Use our recipe on page 224.

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