



Lionel Vatinet

La Farm Bakery

Cary, North Carolina

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Kate Medley: So we're going to get started. To start off, I'll say this is Kate Medley interviewing Lionel Vatinet of La Farm Bakery in Cary, North Carolina, on January 12th, 2018. And now I'll get you to start, Lionel, by introducing yourself.

[0:00:28.5]

Lionel Vatinet: Lionel Vatinet from Cary, North Carolina, January 12th, 2018.

[0:00:38.3]

Kate Medley: And who are you?

[0:00:40.0]

Lionel Vatinet: I'm a baker, you know, put his luggage in Cary, North Carolina, eighteen years ago, and been in the state for the past twenty-six years. Tried to be a citizen for five to ten years, I don't remember, and came to United State to teach how to make bread for fellow American and to bring the knowledge I did have to share with them. So I did in 1991, went through Washington, D.C., with Marvelous Market, whose founder was Mark Furstenberg, who still have a bakery in D.C., and after that, meet several important people in my life who make me continue to teach, consult all over North and South, Central America. My passion is bread and what I know. Don't know if I need to be brief or not with the rest of it, but from [19]91 to [19]99, until we establish our bakery here in Cary—

[Interruption]

[0:02:32.7]

Kate Medley: As you were saying.

[0:02:34.6]

Lionel Vatinet: So we have all the time, correct, to go through this little bit of my background. I'm a traveler by trade. I went to baking. I belong to a Guild in France named Les Compagnons du Devoir. The Guild start we think when they build the Temple of Solomon with carpenter and stone-maker, bakers joined the Guild in the seventeenth century. It's all about learning your trade, spirituality, live in community, and traveling. I did this. It's a five- to ten-years' apprenticeship. I did this for seven years in France, so you change city every year, and you learn through different master baker, and you live in community. It's an incredible lifestyle. You leave your own family to enter this new one, and has been an incredible experience, so definitely traveling was a big part for me.

[0:03:42.6]

Kate Medley: Before we get to the part of you leaving your family, if you'll start at the beginning and tell us your birthdate and where you were born.

[0:03:52.9]

Lionel Vatinet: Born outside of Paris, Creteil 92, Hauts-de-Seine, in 1966. I know already my voice looks so young. [Laughter] So this was at Paris until I was twelve, thirteen years old. My parents moved to La Rochelle, is Atlantic coast, is north of Bordeaux, and from there, I have an older brother who went to be a chef, so he went through a traditional apprenticeship in France. My mom, knowing I love school, but not for the good reason, she let me—and you can continue academic until the results follow, but she was smart enough to understand it was not for probably the good reason, so I went through academic year for an extra year when I was sixteen, and during this time, she make me goes to different artisan to see what stick to me. So, plumbing, electricity, mechanic, and really nothing, you know, was sticking to me. But one day, I was able to go to a neighbor's bakers, bakery. Then definitely something magical happen. Didn't know why—I cannot at this point of time—the smells was—and in the same time, I know there was this Guild I may be able to join, and everything aligned, like continued to align for many purpose of many thing we doing as we speak now, the star, whatever you want to say. And after this last year at school, I joined the Guild. So this was 1983, and so I left my family to join this new one and I start in Tours, the Loire Valley, to start the program, and finished up seven years later. So the travel was a big part. I was very not intrigued, but I know I need to move at some point, and this was provide with this whole spirituality we are given, the great tools to flourish in your work and to live in community was really suitable to me to do. So everything was great, and you have all those great artisan and masters who were giving their time to teach the youngest. So this is one of definitely of the trade of Les Compagnons, is the oldest teach to the youngest, is why we are able to pass all those century and to continue to excel in what we do. And be

surrounded by twenty to twenty-five different corporation all in the same house was an incredible journey for me. So after that, I finish. My last city in France was Bordeaux, and from Bordeaux, I went to the Caribbean, Martinique exactly. Was not too much of my cup of tea. I was too hyper for the island lifestyle, so it didn't last very long. From there, I choose another island, was England. What have I done again? And at the same time, somebody we are looking for through the Guild, Mark Furstenberg, somebody to help them to be able to produce more bread and quality and so and so forth. So I did answer one of his phone call, and after that, it's been history. So we meet in Paris. He make me come May 4, 1991, in Washington, D.C. For me, was one stop, and it's been twenty-six years of a great stop and life, what United State provide.

[0:08:37.0]

Kate Medley: Before we get to the United States, introduce us to your parents by name and tell us about what your early years were like before the Guild.

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Lionel Vatinet: Of course. I have a brother; his name is Laurent. My mom is Helène and my dad is Georges, who passed six years ago. He's listening. So, born in the suburb of Paris, did have incredible parents, both of them working, definitely want to provide to their kids. We live in this building with no elevators on the sixth floor, make us very healthy, and my dad was passionate about soccer. This, after all, if I want to have a conversation with him, was soccer first and the rest after. My mom been working in downtown, in the heart of Paris, since she was thirteen or fourteen years old. So they

very dedicated parents for their family and want to provide to them. Both of them loved to cook, so we were always have a good meal on the table, and nobody really were in the bread-baking, really didn't make bread as now I taught people to make this in their house, but always to have bread on the table. So this is what my dad always come to mind.

Every morning, we wake up with toast bread and butter and honey, and I continue to keep those tradition with my girls. And also 4 o'clock in afternoon, he was fresh baguette with salted butter and dark chocolate. The red wine came after for me, but this was all those ingredients on the table. So this is really what—I cannot be more happy to have parents like them and I was a— develop, my brother and I at some point.

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Kate Medley: What was the last line?

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Lionel Vatinet: What they brought to us, you know, we live in Paris, but we were also very in connection. My dad did have a garden outside and he have his own chicken, own pigeon, so we raised everything, and every weekend, we were there to make sure it was taken care of and have some great food on the table whole weekend.

[0:11:39.2]

Kate Medley: When you started your apprenticeship, what were those days like? Seven years. Give us a sense of what was the rhythm of that day.

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Lionel Vatinet: So when you enter the guild, you are not necessarily working for a guild member, because it's not enough of them, so in the city, I was working for an independent baker who believe in what the Guild was providing, so I was starting at midnight or two in the morning. As I say, you know when you start. You don't know when you finish. Then it was eight to ten hours' apprenticeship in this baker's, and after that, you go back to the house where we live and we eat, and he was a guild member, an orderly, who were coming, and we are receiving some more class to practice, and for them, it was depending on the subject of the day. So each house was set with a bakery or to make carpentry, so on and so forth, so it was always continuously an education to practice. We were also have a class of French and math to have a continuous education on this matter of fact.

So this was, our day was like that for seven years, and as you grow in the organization, as you receive, as I say, the oldest teaches the youngest, so you take more and more responsibility. Then you know you give back those class to the apprentice come, and you get a different—you have the historical ceremony come with that and this old teaching of living in community. So it was a lot of activity to—every time it was in the holidays or it was—when I say “party,” it was to celebrate the patron for the carpenter Saint Joseph, for example. So us, because we make bread and pastry, you know, we were doing the bread and the pastry for those patrons, or we are providing the bread for every dinner. So we were definitely can be busy, so we were putting what we did in the afternoon on the table for the night for—let me tell you, when you have a young mason

who's been putting as many hours as we did, they were hungry, so it was no leftover. It was fantastic.

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Kate Medley: And I've heard you refer to yourself as a master baker. What does that mean?

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Lionel Vatinet: Myself, no. People want to call me that, but—it was to have an ease. We don't have so much title through the guild. It's definitely by the experience naturally. It's not too much grade, I won't say, as a pastry chef or master baker. We are *boulangers*, and the knowledge speaks for himself with your experience and what your hand can do.

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Kate Medley: Were there teachers at your apprenticeship or later in life who were specifically influential?

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Lionel Vatinet: Yes indeed. You definitely develop some relationship with the people who do the Tour de France with you, and you are going to meet them in different city. One of them is very close in age, a little bit older. He's known around the world. His name is Éric Kayser, and you can find their bakery in New York. He have fifteen of

them, in Tokyo, in Paris. Anyway, so we are from the same guild, and to be older than me, he definitely take me under his wings, you know, and we kept the friendship and also what the guild provide this label, so he's been always a guide for me on this matter of fact. So he's one of them. There are some other, but this is one who definitely sometime I talk more to him than my mom. [Laughter] It's because of a friendship.

[0:16:29.5]

Kate Medley: Tell us about the era when you were leaving France. Was that a hard decision to make or something you had been planning for a while?

[0:16:39.2]

Lionel Vatinet: Not at all. Travel *à français*, France provide a lot, indeed, for my learning skill, but traveling open also your mind, so I did travel for vacation all the time. I came to United State, Brazil, Mexique, Thailand, in my young twenties for four to six weeks at a time, and this was for vacation but also to see what those culture was providing and to continue to travel with now to go outside of France now. Even though my English was not as broken as it is now, I didn't want to lose it. I want to see what did happen, how I can continue to teach what I didn't know. Patrick Joubert was a *philosophe* in the 1800, I believe, say, "To teach is to learn twice," and for me has been always a mantra. Didn't matter if I was speaking another language, I was able to express and to pass the message for people to develop and to become great baker.

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Kate Medley: What about your baking is particularly French? As compared to if you had trained in California, let's say. What's the difference in your French training?

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Lionel Vatinet: I want say what the guild provide, what France provide, being tradition, being a good base of tradition, put it this way. What I did learn when I start to travel outside, meet many bakers who necessarily didn't have the tradition but did have the open mind to try, and to go something was—for me, didn't make sense. The result was maybe not there or were there, but was not traditionally brought up. What I want say is the Guild bring us a lot, is a systematic tradition of fermentation, for example, and those base been very useful for me, but I learned so much by do this travel around the world to understand the approach of the other, and this was incredible for that, and to adapt. What the Guild bring is we need to adapt to the ingredients. We cannot blame. One of the key thing in baking, you need to adapt to the weather. The weather is not going to adapt to you. So this make how we—doesn't matter where you at, you are going to use what you have and do the best at it.

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Kate Medley: So you left France and moved to the Caribbean and then to England, and then what?

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Lionel Vatinet: Washington, D.C. Marvelous Market in Connecticut Avenue is where I end up, and I stay with Mark for six months, something like that, and in the same time, I met Michel Suas, who are the director of San Francisco Baking Institute and honors, but at this point of time, he was doing consulting and selling equipment for—he’s very well known in United State for these past thirty years. He’s been doing an incredible job to help all of us as artisan to get the right equipment. So when I meet Michel, this baking frenziness was starting, I want to say, slowly but surely.

[0:21:12.2]

Kate Medley: In the U.S.

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Lionel Vatinet: In the U.S., yes, correct. Said, “Lionel, every time somebody want to have your help, I’ll put them in contact with you,” and it’s what he did, very generously. So after D.C., I went to Atlanta. Same thing; I stayed a couple of months. And from Atlanta, I went to Fresno, and went to Vancouver with Terra Bread. And from Vancouver, I end up to Fort Collins, Colorado, and in Fort Collins we were in the [19]94, [19]95.

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Kate Medley: As you were traveling to these different cities in the U.S., what were you doing?

[0:21:54.2]

Lionel Vatinet: I was help this new owners have an artisan bakery most of the time. Sometime was a little bit of troubleshooting of an established bakery, but mainly was turnkeys, brand-new bakery, and I was there to, doing the technical support for them to be able to use the machine and to understand what fermentation was, so I was staying on premise with them. It was coming from one weeks to six months at a time.

So when I was in Fort Collins, Michel called me, and I know he have this idea to open a school, and is established in San Francisco, and one day he called me, he said, “Lionel, I found a building. I’m ready. Are you ready?”

So Mary, who was the owner of Mary McCullough Bread Bakery in Fort Collins, she was able to be on her own. I say, “Look, I need to take the road again,” and went to San Francisco and help Michel to start his dream and for me to continue education to open San Francisco Baking Institute. So this was in [19]96.

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Kate Medley: When you left France, what was your dream?

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Lionel Vatinet: I still don’t have any, I want say. [Laughter] What I say, for me, I live this, the day-to-day. What’s happening today, I living it fully, and what’s going to come tomorrow, I’m going to face it. But I’ve been lucky enough to be surrounded of people, friend, my wife, where they are really the vision of it, and not saying I’m necessarily only follow, but is going to make sense, what’s going to happen next. So it was to answer

Mark in [19]91, arriving in States for how long, and one thing after another one make me continue to stay in North America and to fell in love. After three years in United State, I didn't know if it was really my call, tell you the truth, but I was in Colorado and met some very dear friend of mine, Olivier, and we went to start to do trips in canyons and doing the Green River canoeing, and really, it was really in the Native American culture, and this was fascinating for me about it was not just big building, as New York was, but it was this old history. I was definitely searching somewhere, and I fell in love, and at this point of time, I say, "I'm going to stay here because is so much to offer," for this spirituality piece was definitely there. And after that, Michel called, went to San Francisco, and life continue, and in [19]96, helped Michel to open the school, start to be known and to get more student that was there, and we were doing a lot of shows. And we were in Chicago at McCormick Center, we were promoting the school, we were talking about consulting. Missy, my future partner, wife, mother of our two daughters, were walking by with—they were looking for somebody who can help them to implement a bread system and company where she was in Richmond, so they ran the school for two weeks. She came with two bakers. She's very energetic. She have vision. She know how to put the culinarian on a pedestal. And one day, she said, "Don't you want to open a bakery?" It was [19]98. So as I say, is an opportunity, but also what people come on the cross of your *camino*, of your road, and she was one of them.

And I say, "Yes, why not?"

So we start to look at where we can establish our bakery. She have big credential, I did have some credential, and I love the West Coast. She was from the East Coast and never been to North Carolina, but I mentioned to her, "What about North Carolina?"

When you travel, you talk, and people were talking about the Triangle maybe, and Raleigh and Durham and what is excitement in this city. She was coming in when she was a young girl. Her uncle work for IBM. We called him. We did check before all the West Coast. We check Denver. We check all over very intensively, and we arrive to Cary, North Carolina, to her uncle, and we start to explore and to understand. I remember the style of bread I was still making at this point of time was crusty, fermented, and here in the South not necessarily yet familiar with, because we have a culture more of biscuit, you know, and the South provide for this type of food, but it was a big community of international people, people from up North who already did have the culture of this style of bread. So everything aligned again. We find our location in Cary and we say, “That’s it. Is where we are going to establish.” And it’s been an incredible journey since we did this.

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Kate Medley: All right. So you skipped over a few things there.

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Lionel Vatinet: Did I?

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Kate Medley: At what point did y’all fall in love?

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Lionel Vatinet: You need to ask her. [Laughter] So what she says, this point of time, I live in San Francisco. I did have even longer hair than you have, so I was not a hippie, but definitely was different than what the East Coast—not politically correct. I’m sorry. But anyway, I fell in love with her too. I say she fell in love with the teacher. She was definitely—she came with two professional bakers. She was the management behind it, and Missy have a lot of drive, okay, and definitely I love that about her, okay, and she was definitely directing those two guys like with a whip, almost. I said, “Maybe I need to show her who is in charge.” [Laughter] But anyway, so we met. After that, I went back to Richmond to develop the program, and I believe—not I believe—I’m sure we met again in Vegas to some baking shows over there, and I kissed her between—it was a jackpot between two slot machine, you know. This was incredible. And that’s where the story start. I never says this to anybody, but anyway, now we are taped. [Laughter]

[0:30:12.8]

Kate Medley: On the record.

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Lionel Vatinet: On the record, yeah.

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Kate Medley: What were your first impressions of the South?

[0:30:32.8]

Lionel Vatinet: Hot and humid. I did have some experience with D.C. a little bit, and Atlanta, I went to Atlanta, so in between, definitely when you are in the West Coast, the climate is drier and can be more suitable, but I say you adapt to—it doesn't matter where you are, so you adapt to the condition you are in. It came after that a little bit later, really. When you establish something, doesn't really matter where you at. I really discover it as we start to establish ourself here in Cary and to start to understand the richness of the South by what the South have to provide, you know, from the history about it, but definitely is an agricultural state, and this is very suitable to what I do. We need our farmers to be able to make bread, and start to participate to different event where it was people wanting connection. And by meeting these different people, you know, they were very close to what I do and what I was doing when I was also in France. And I'm going to talk a little bit more about—there was this Bread Festival, or still are, Asheville Bread Festival over there, and went there, been invited to participate, and I start to meet Jennifer Lapidus, who did have her bakery at this point of time, but was in transition. For her, there was nobody between the miller, nobody between the farmers and the baker she was, so she did want to close this gap, and a very passionate individual. So we connect very fast together with Jennifer, and she definitely go to the bottom of it really to understand and to see what can we do better, and what bread she was making was definitely in line of what I think bread should be with the fermentation and how it need to be made, and so on, so forth. So we start to really connect very well to each other, and we keep contact and we follow each other, how she was progressing to now find farmers who were willing to grow wheat in the South where wheat was grown but was not really useful for bread, was a lower protein and was more for cattles and for biscuit purpose. So she find

some incredible farmers, individual who want to take the chance to try, and she select us also as to be the tester, to see can we make bread because of the climate, the environment, because of all that all together. The result came incredible, and we say, “That’s it.” So when she finally been on business and opened her mill and all this kind of stuff, we stick to each other, and the beauty to knowing your farmer, to knowing your millers, us, I say we deal with the weather every single days. They do the same thing. We are going to be the alchemist at the end of the day to tweak it, because it might be dry, it might be water season, it might be so many, many reason, cold, hot, so on, so forth, and I think what bread is not consistently are going to be the same every single day for all those reason, so it’s what we do, but to make it so its consistency be the same, and it’s what makes a challenge and the beauty to be a bread baker. We deal with three ingredients: water, flour, salt. And from that, it look like not very challenging, but it is, and we learn every single day for it.

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Kate Medley: You opened La Farm in Cary in what year?

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Lionel Vatinet: 1999, October 23rd.

[0:35:28.7]

Kate Medley: What was your original vision, and has that changed?

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Lionel Vatinet: For vision, we need to talk to Missy maybe, later. No, the vision was, for us, always been to—as I say, she put the bread baker on a pedestal. It was to see if where we put the bakery, people were going to want to have fresh bread come out of our oven and to be crispy and fermented and different texture and different density. We know we are going against of a lot of unknown. We did know we have a statistic, who are living here and who we have to educate, but it's always this mystery, and people start to show up and people start to spread the word, you know, it was this French bakers in Cary over there and what he does is worth to go to check out. We are definitely customer service-orientated, is no doubt about that. We are all about people to test constantly and to share where stuff coming from and what is going to be good fiber-wise for the human consumer over there.

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Kate Medley: What do you remember about that first day of business?

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Lionel Vatinet: So we open, and it was Missy and I, and we try to say, okay, what we should do, what quantity-wise, and it was, if I remember, twenty cinnamon buns. These was for the sweet. And I make our La Farm bread. I make maybe five of them, and I do some multigrain and some baguettes. Quantity was not big, and so Missy start to take the bread and start to sample it, so she probably samples this day two-third of the production. Didn't quite understand, because—but anyway, and I said, “We are going to produce

much more than we do right now.” Her specialty is to understand the consumer. Is why also to use the test, something in the French culture were not, and still not, establish. Now we start to come. If people test it, they are going to buy. And for me was, you know, when we came back, for a couple hours of rest, I say, “Missy, did you make a mistake to give all of these for free?” [Laughter]

But anyway, so end up she was right, and by doing this, our family helped us a lot. We also send Missy’s brother, like a sandwich man, you know, to give sample on the corner of each traffic light. He was her younger brother. And we have a cheese bread, and he was coming back very, very fast with no more sample. We figure out he was eating half of the loaf before he reach the light. Anyway, so this was great souvenir, and we remind him every single time we seen him. [Laughter]

[0:39:12.3]

Kate Medley: To this day, how do you and Missy separate your job duties? Who does what within the business?

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Lionel Vatinet: She’s the brand; she’s marketing; she’s the system behind La Farm. What I say, what you see is her; what you eat is me. More or less is that. She definitely is the business sense of what a consumer need, and I’m going to be behind the scene to make sure the quality of the food is to our standard.

[0:39:54.3]

Kate Medley: So here we are in 2018. Give us some sense of the scope of your business at this point.

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Lionel Vatinet: Is to serve our community. We are an artisan neighborhood bread bakery. So the first ten years, we been 2,000 square feet. It was a store only, meaning it was a walked-in, with a Viennoiserie, bread, and a little bit of pastry and some drip coffee. Eight years after that, we have the opportunity to take next door another 2,000 square feet. We change a little bit our DNA about now people can sit, can enjoy anything that can go very well with bread, like a soup, like a sandwich, espresso machine, but definitely we always say we are a bread bakery. We want people to walk through the bread wall. Very important to us. So this was now the past seventeen years is how we been functioning, and this past year, we always say we are not going to make more than we can handle at the location we were, so it was the time to make some decision about do we grow or do we don't, but if we do, is because we don't want to damage our quality. So we were able to find a building, downtown Cary, where we moved our production, and we have now a 7,000-square-foot facility with the same equipment. We definitely add more human being, because what is important to me is not to replace by equipment, but continue by teaching to develop our younger generation or older, doesn't matter, but whoever have a passion for bread. We are ready for that but to give us more bandwidth. We don't have to touch each other, and we can breathe a little bit better and we maintain the quality of our bread. So this what did happen. This was beginning of last year. It was a successful move, and end of 2017, we were fortunate to put in a bakery cafe inside the

newest Whole Food who open in West Cary, and this has been an incredible venture to be part of the vision what Whole Food have and to continue to feed and to nourish through a great grain and flour the people from the Triangle.

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Kate Medley: Are most of your clients people who are coming into your retail space or do you also have more commercial clients that you're serving?

[0:43:13.3]

Lionel Vatinet: We are retail first and foremost. We definitely been serving Whole Food stores for the past ten years, and what Whole Food does, always been recognizing the artisan. Is not an Whole Food brand is who making it, and you can see them in their cheese, in their beer, in their produce, meat, so on, so forth, so definitely we been—and we have several incredible restaurants also in our surrounding. Whoever wants the quality of our bread are welcome, tell the truth. I won't say now is no limitation, but who want quality are welcome to come.

[0:44:00.9]

Kate Medley: What's been the hardest part?

[0:44:04.1]

Lionel Vatinet: The hardest part is to talk business twenty-four hours with Missy.
[Laughter] She once says we don't put maybe the boundary as we should have done.

And probably still now we are much better, and now we have two beautiful daughters, and sometime I don't want to be in their shoes because conversation is around what we do at work. But after that, the hardest for me is to manage people. When I say that, is not to teach them, is really to find the right dedication who people work with you so you see them flourish and grow and become who they become, and they can claim they can be our bakers or pastry or to manage the front of house, and so on, so forth, and once they stick with us and they see this, I think it's incredible. So this is the beauty of it, but to manage, also drama. I'd rather to make some bread.

[0:45:23.7]

Kate Medley: That's completely understandable. Talk to me about grain in the South, specifically in North Carolina or the greater South. What is it? Why does it matter?

[0:45:40.4]

Lionel Vatinet: I'm going to go back. In France, we are backed up by a mill in the surrounding of where you live, whatever city you are. When I came to United State, was not the case. It was big distributors, big mill, was a number on the bags, never able to reach the millers because they were mass-produced. At least try to find the quality of flour was suitable was definitely a challenge, but was existing. So when I moved to Cary, North Carolina, did have some contact. Jennifer was not established yet, but once this come alive, I was the happiest man in the world to know where she was getting the wheat to be grown, and we start to go to meet different farmer. Billy Carter was definitely a pioneer, and to believe the vision of Jennifer in Pinehurst, so this was incredible meet-

and-greet. And her, to also to be a baker, understanding what was our needs, and by the style of milling she choose to provide this stoneground milling was to get all the nutritious from the milling himself, and knowing this, after transformation, are going to be passed through our consumer was an incredible find, and fell in love with that. After that, you know, meeting her and meeting all the surrounding and what all the research she was doing, found out about, heard about Glenn Roberts, for years, met through more chefs, and through his rice, and years, years back, you find out this was definitely what he was known for, but he was also doing everything about cereal and wheat and corn. I say we are so fortunate, and Glenn and his surrounding are so rich of want to find out where is coming from. I can listen to him talking for hours, because he has information, but he have also the passion, and he can definitely—you cannot wait to try to make it as a loaf of bread and to share this with your consumer. And we have Lindley Mill. Is so many other, but definitely in the near surrounding, you know, Graham over there, North Carolina, Asheville, and Glenn in South Carolina, we cannot be more please. Plus, Glenn, what, thirty years behind him of contact and knowing the farmers, and have this vision to revive all those heirlooms, and these are going to help economically, but definitely us, you know, consumer to get stronger and better and more natural with what you feed yourself are going to be relevant for the health of your kids, for your own health, and so on, so forth. So it was definitely no-brainers to be surrounded by and to support, because we always forget without farmers, without clean and sustainable hearths to provide this and to make not those big corporation, but those individual who been working so hard all their life from generation, and to continue, this is what make me so happy to be here.

In the South, for now the past twenty-six years, I'm amazed by how all what touch me, because is all about fermentation, but I'm going to talking about the wine was established already, but bread, I seen it flourish more and more, and we have all those macro bakery, and all the home bakers are such enthusiastic personality to always want to do something good for their family and their friend. So it doesn't matter the level you are, but with the cheese and with the beer, and, you know, it can go on and on. And we use the same family of yeast, and from that, you can have so many explosion of flavor from all what it provide, and a lot of them come from the grain, so our farmers, who also start—not start, but want to have this interest not to use pesticide and to make sure they are going to nourish the earth how it should be, so the nutrition are even better, this is what make me coming every morning and to continue to do that, for sure.

[0:51:31.7]

Kate Medley: If there's one type of bread, one loaf, that might be your signature item—one that's telling about who you are or your interests or what you're good at—what might that be that you sell here at La Farm?

[0:51:54.1]

Lionel Vatinet: We say at La Farm we sell energy through our bread.

[0:51:57.1]

Kate Medley: You sell energy?

[0:51:58.9]

Lionel Vatinet: We sell energy through our bread. I want say I love about the bread baking is fermentation. Now, through fermentation, we are lucky enough to get different style of wheat, of cereal, and we can be creative with that. I been born outside of Paris. In Paris, we eat baguette, okay. This is what you find traditionally. *Pains spéciaux*, as they call, is rare, was rare at this point of time, but what now I definitely always have on our table is going to be a multigrain. We do here is going to be a Scandinavian rye, so is 100 percent rye, and our La Farm natural bread is a sourdough, have some whole wheat and white, but I won't say is a dessert for me, but I go through much more fibers, and I want to definitely bring this to our kids, because in their surrounding, they only see white, white bread, in their friend house. They know they can at least fill up their belly with good fibers before they go to school.

So, yes, is going to be our Piedmont sourdough, is going to be our Wrens Abruzzi, Scandinavian rye, where is 100 percent rye flour into it, and we have so many coming. We are going to Einkorn. Through Glenn, because he's known for his rice, we revived also rice bread who were made through the colonial time, and with some whole wheat and rye into it. So anyway, so all that make it incredible and they all taste good, so this is what we can share with everybody.

[0:54:15.7]

Kate Medley: What's the importance of passing along this knowledge to the next generation for you?

[0:54:24.8]

Lionel Vatinet: Is oldest teach the youngest, is a duty of us. For me as a teacher, is no secret you need to pass them along. You always want to see who you taught are going to be better than you are, so more seeds we put in the ground and we can make them flourish and they can be their own, this is the beauty also of baking. I can teach, somebody else can teach. You are going to become your own baker, is going to be your own understanding, but at least if you can give them some strong basic, and they can fly on their own and their own understanding is what it is, we are complete what we have to do. And that is what I say to anybody who come here, you know, if you come with a secret you want to share, you are not welcome. You are willing, we are going to give you what we know, and after that, you know what? You are going to develop yourself and become who you are. So this is very important.

[0:55:29.2]

Kate Medley: What do you do when you're not in the kitchen? What do you do for fun?

[0:55:34.7]

Lionel Vatinet: I go by the kitchen in my house. No, what I do, spend time with our girls, love to go outside, and hiking, biking. This I definitely—what's we do? Traveling, of course. As soon I'm in an airport, I'm the happiest man in the world, with only one luggage or none, if I can. Now with the two girls and my wife, is a little bit more challenging. And to continue to meet people. I love to meet people. I love to be

surrounded with passionate people. Doesn't matter what you do at some point. You have a passion, you are going to have all my ears, and I want to know what you do and I want to—if you want to share, right on. If is some food around it, even better.

[0:56:29.3]

Kate Medley: What's the future for La Farm?

[0:56:34.6]

Lionel Vatinet: So we say La Farm is not Missy and I anymore; La Farm is our employees. We have some incredible individual who been with us for fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years, and people who join La Farm and the team we build up over there is definitely bigger than we ever anticipating, and now is up to them to continue to build it, and they can go as far as they want. The sky is open. Until we maintain the integrity of our quality for our bread or service, we are going to be there for the next century. But is not up to us anymore, is up to the people who we give the baton to, and they can enjoy and flourish with them.

[0:57:29.5]

Kate Medley: Lionel, are there things that I haven't asked you about that you would like to include?

[0:57:34.1]

Lionel Vatinet: My phone number? [Laughter] No. I want to definitely thank the South Alliance to what you do and to verbal communication. I'm glad we didn't use our phone today and we didn't text anything. If something is going to last, and we don't do this enough, so this is incredible, incredible. Our biggest challenge is to continue to educate the consumer to bring them to what we believe is a good food, is a good grain, and from that, to make sure they preserve also the bees. Without bees, we are going to go nowhere. So we need to continue to spread the word for people can be in a good health. Now our future is our kids and our grandkids, and so on, so forth, and we need to think of them. With that, I thank you again, Kate.

[0:58:40.0]

Kate Medley: Thank you, Lionel.

[End of interview]