

# Zingerman's®

issue #277 march–april 2020

## THANKS FRANK



zingerman's bakehouse co-managing partner  
retires after 28 years ... page 5

ibérico bacon from georgia ... page 2

italy, croatia, and slovenia ... page 10

# MARCH 15, 2020

marks the 38th anniversary of the day we first opened Zingerman's doors at the Deli.

# THANK YOU!

A thousand thanks to everyone—past, present *and* future—who has worked with us, sold to us, bought from us, made suggestions, been patient with our learning, encouraged us to keep going, helped us with insights and ideas, eaten our food, and sold us theirs. If Zingerman's is nothing else, it is a demonstration of the quality and power of collective effort. None of us would be here without each other!

And there's more to come—we're working now to write our organizational vision for the year 2032; to finish our Statement of Beliefs; and to develop new products, better processes, and ever more effective up-and-coming leaders.

We're looking forward to it!

Thank you all for all you do!

Here's to more good things to come!

—21 partners, 200 Community Share owners, 700 staff members, and everyone who's a part of the Zingerman's Community of Businesses



# GEOORGIA ON MY MIND



## IBÉRICO BACON FROM WHITE OAK PASTURES IN BLUFFTON, GEORGIA

Jenni Harris comes to Camp Bacon's Main Event on Saturday, June 6, to share her family's story, and her passion for regenerative farming and raising Ibérico hogs.

**THE YEAR WAS** 1866. The Civil War had been won the previous year. At least if you lived here in Michigan. Previously enslaved Africans had gained their freedom. The Union was formally reunited. In the South, the surrender had been signed, but that part of the country was still, essentially, in crisis. In Georgia, for most white planters, it was a time of defeat, anger, confusion, and uncertainty. In 1866, Congress overwhelmingly passed the new Civil Rights Act, the first time American government legislation had been enacted to protect the rights of African-Americans.

Five years earlier, at the start of the Civil War, Jenni Harris's great-great-grandfather had been convinced to mortgage his farm to help finance the fighting of the war from the Confederate side. He lost his farm. The South did not rise again, but Mr. Harris did. The next year, in 1866, he moved about 60 miles south and started over, outside the town of Bluffton, on the southwest edge of Georgia.

At the same time, "Black Codes" were approved in Southern states to keep newly-freed citizens from taking their freedom too far. Then-President Andrew Johnson vetoed the bill on March 27. Congress overrode his veto on April 9. Nearly two years later, the House adopted 11 articles of impeachment. The trial in the Senate began on March 5 of that year and concluded nearly three months later when Johnson was acquitted in the Senate, by a single vote. Some things, it seems, don't change.

Or maybe they do.

The work that Jenni Harris, her father Will, and the other 165 staff members are doing at White Oak Pastures, the farm that her great-great-grandfather started in the painful aftermath of the violence of the Civil War, make it a shining beacon of positivity, care, and sustainability for the entire country.

As the folks at White Oak Pastures write on their website, "We take pride in farming practices that focus on regenerative land management, humane animal husbandry, and revitalizing our rural community. We know radically traditional farming creates products that are better for our land, our livestock, and our village. We are fiercely proud of our zero-waste production system that utilizes each part of the animals we pasture-raise and hand-butcher on our farm."

I haven't yet been down to visit the Harrises at White Oak Pastures. But the more I hear about the loveliness of their work, the more confident I am that it's only a matter of time before I make the trip. They are turning what had

long been a successful—though not necessarily sustainable—six-generation farm into a model of holistic regeneration that can serve as an inspiration for all of us!

What is regenerative farming?

The more I learn, the more my mind is blown—what these folks are doing in southwest Georgia is seriously something else. Here's their take on it:

Land is meant to be a living thing. It contains the natural order of all living things: Life, Growth, Death, Decay, Life, Growth, Death, Decay. The land is our teacher. Looking back to the evolution of our ecosystem informs the way we manage land today. The energy cycle, carbon cycle, mineral cycle, microbe cycle, water cycle have all co-evolved with plants, microbes, and animals since our planet's creation. Our passion is to create an environment that allows these cycles to flow freely: microbes feed plants which feed the animals which spread urine and feces to microbes which feeds the plants which feed the animals.

Fewer than 20 years ago, White Oak Pastures had evolved into a conventionally-run commodity cattle farm. We employed all of the industrial tools that science had developed to take the costs out of farming, including pesticides, chemical fertilizers, hormones, and antibiotics. Even while using these artificial crutches, our family never ceased to believe that we were being good stewards of our land. We were completely oblivious to the grave consequences that can result from fighting against nature. We were unwittingly steering our family heritage in a direction that was not environmentally sustainable. But by the mid-1990s, White Oak Pastures Owner Will Harris had become disenchanted with the excesses of that system. In 1995 he made the bold—and some thought, foolish—decision to take the farm back to its origins.

Today, we are raising cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, poultry, and rabbits using the same methods Will's great-grandfather used a century-and-a-half ago. We proactively support nature's food chain, using only sun, soil, and rain to grow sweet grasses for our animals to eat. Using Regenerative Land Management, we rotate complementary animal species side-by-side through our pastures. The cows graze the grass, the sheep and goats eat the weeds and shrubs, and the chickens peck at the grubs and insects. All

species naturally fertilize the land, and our soil is again a living organic medium that teems with life.

Raising animals this way is not the cheapest method. Our way is, however, the right way for the sake of our animals, our environment, and for the people who eat our products. Stewardship of our farm is not a passing fancy; it is a lifestyle decision and a core value of our family. We continuously strive to improve our land stewardship.

Our animals are processed in USDA-inspected abattoirs that we built here on our farm, and they are zero-waste facilities. All animal remains are composted on our farm and used as organic fertilizers for our pastures. We have a small-scale Organic vegetable farm on our property that grows more than 40 varieties of heritage vegetables, fruits, and nuts. About 20% of our plants' energy needs are met by solar panels.

The work at White Oak Pastures around regenerative agriculture carries over into an exceptional focus on humane animal husbandry. And also on rural regeneration. Nearly all of the work of the farm is done on the farm, including slaughtering and butchering. The farm has guest houses to rent, a restaurant, and a retail shop. They have an online shop that sells everything from steaks and leather shoulder bags to sustainably-made organic dog treats. Across the board, they're making, at an impressively meaningful scale, the kind of positive contribution that I hope we can make to Ann Arbor.

What does all that mean in personal terms?

I fall back on this story from Anne Lamott, whose writing, and books about writing, have inspired and informed my own learning many times over the years. It's from her little book, *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope*. Lamott shares a story about her Aunt Janet, who was diagnosed with breast cancer, but beat it back through natural healing methods. When Aunt Janet's recovery was in full swing—shockingly to most in the medical world who'd told her there was no hope—she shared with the rest of the family that she needed them to alter their behavior if her recovery was to continue. Not that family life had been bad before—they had a long history of big happy and raucous get-togethers at holidays of which Aunt Janet had been a regular participant. But with her cancer, and recovery work, things were suddenly different. Lamott explains:



## ibérico pigs getting ready for camp bacon 2020

She said that things had changed for her now that she was fighting for her life. Her healing was dependent on loving environments and feedback, on continually giving and receiving love and positivity, and avoiding stress as much as possible. Therefore, she needed us to make a decision as a family whether we wanted to keep up our hilarious but hostile ribbing and self-doubt disguised as humor, which she had always loved and enjoyed and participated in, or whether we wanted her to join us at family gatherings in which case we need to change to a better station, with more love, listening and gentler humor.

Lamott lets us know the outcome: “We picked her.”

What Anne Lamott’s Aunt Janet was asking for was a regenerative way to be in her family. Her Aunt did recover—a miracle, many thought—and went on to live a number of happy years. It strikes me as parallel to what the Harrises have done at White Oak Pastures. They listened to the land, and the land told them that, in essence, they needed to be much gentler in all they did. They chose regenerative agriculture, the broader, long term health of their land, their animals, their community and their crew—and have been pursuing it with passion ever since. In Lamott’s context, “they picked the land.”

You can taste the quality of the work they’re doing in the White Oak Pastures organic Ibérico bacon we’ve got on hand at the Deli and the Roadhouse. Its flavor is just as fine as the quality of the ecologically-sound work that the Harrises have been up to. Man, is it good. So good, I’d say, that it too is regenerative—you eat a few bites and you just feel better!

Did you say Ibérico? Like the famous black pigs of Western Spain? Seriously? Living in Georgia?

Yep, that’s right—this is the result of a decade-long project to raise authentic Spanish Ibérico hogs in the American South. Crazy? Maybe, but so is almost every other great, innovative idea in human history. In one of my favorite books of the last 15 years, *Ignore Everybody*, Hugh MacLeod writes, “Good ideas . . . are always initially resisted.” I agree. The idea of raising Spanish pigs in southwest Georgia I’m sure evoked some serious eyerolls from those—on either side of the Atlantic—who “know better!” “It’s more like,” MacLeod lays out, that, “the better the idea, the more ‘out there’ it initially will seem to other people, even people you like and respect. So there’ll be a time in the beginning when you have to press on, alone without one tenth the support you probably need.

## DID YOU SAY IBÉRICO? THE FAMOUS BLACK PIGS OF WESTERN SPAIN? SERIOUSLY? LIVING IN GEORGIA?

This is normal.” To the credit of Jenni Harris, her father Will, and the Oriol family in Spain with whom they’ve partnered on the project, they have persevered and pushed through.

Together they’ve made something considered “crazy,” completely possible. When you taste the pork they’re curing from these Spanish Ibérico pigs you’ll know that the Harrises and everyone at White Oak Pastures are about to enter the next phase of MacLeod’s model of innovation—that’s the part where everyone “loved the idea from the get-go,” and where dozens of others begin the work to replicate the innovation. As MacLeod explains it, “Your idea finally seems to be working, seems to be getting all sorts of traction, and all of a sudden you’ve got all these swarms of people trying to join the team, trying to get a piece of the action.”

In the same sense that Jenni Harris’ work around regenerative farming is, in a strange and inspiring way, a return to the way her great-great-grandfather farmed. It’s also worth noting that the arrival of the Ibéricos mirrors hog migration from almost 500 years earlier. That’s right. The very first hogs to arrive on North American soil came from Spain as well, in 1539, with Spaniard Hernan de Soto. In 2015, 476 years after de Soto landed, Jaime and Kurt Oriol, a father son team from Spain, launched their own Ibérico hog migration. After many visits between Georgia and Spain, and a series of long conversations, the Oriols chose Will and Jenni Harris to partner with. In a 2018 article in *Eater*, Kurt Oriol shared that, “We came to White Oak, and then even though we had a few more places to go, we cancelled the rest of the tour.” His father

Jaime added, “Will perfectly understood, from the beginning, what was the idea.” I think all involved are happy with what’s transpired. And for what’s still to come. I know I am.

Not yet convinced? Ask for a taste of the bacon—it’s seriously that good. The Ibérico hogs are slaughtered on site, then hand-butchered by a nearby curer. The bellies go into a salt brine (no sugar) and are then smoked very lightly for just a couple hours over hardwood. The result is mind-blowing. Tasting the White Oak Pastures Ibérico bacon for the first time stopped me in my mental tracks. It’s clearly and intensely pork, yet at the same time, light, nutty, clean in the finish, and sparkling in the flavor. It’s unlike any other bacon I’ve eaten. Don’t get me wrong—my love and loyalty for Nueske’s, Benton’s, Broadbent, La Quercia, Fra’ Mani, and all our other amazing bacon suppliers remains strong. But the slabs we’re shipping in from the Harrises in southwest Georgia are a whole new world unto themselves. We have the organic Ibérico bacon at the Deli and the Roadhouse, and there will be more products on the way!

The even better news? Jenni Harris is coming to speak at the Main Event at Camp Bacon. On Saturday, June 6, along with 8 other great speakers, Jenni will share the inspiring story of White Oak Pastures and share tastes of the Ibérico bacon along with more of their terrific products!

Ari



Zingerman's

11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

MICHIGAN

THEATER



FILM FESTIVAL

Proceeds from Camp Bacon go to Southern Foodways Alliance, Washtenaw County 4H, and The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County.

MICHIGAN THEATER  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 7:30PM

## A FINE LINE

An exceptional film by Joanna James that explores why less than 7% of head chefs and restaurant owners are women, when traditionally women have always held the central role in the kitchen.

Hearing perspectives and experiences from world-renowned chefs, including: World's Best Female Chef Dominique Crenn, Emmy-Award-Winning TV host Lidia Bastianich, Two-Michelin-starred Chef April Bloomfield, one of *Time Magazine's* Most Influential People Barbara Lynch, First Female Iron Chef Cat Cora, World's Best Chef Daniel Humm, as well as the personal story of a small-town restaurateur with a larger-than-life personality, Valerie James. An uplifting American success story about perseverance, family, and food.

*A Fine Line* grapples with themes sparking national conversations right now, including workplace harassment, equal pay, paid parental leave, and career advancement.

PLUS! Two Award-Winning Documentary Films from Southern Foodways Alliance

## HOMEPLACE

An SFA film by Joe York about Jenni Harris of White Oak Pastures Farm in Bluffton, Georgia. Jenni will speak at the Main Event at Camp Bacon! The film tells Jenni's personal story, and the story of her family and their five generations of farming the same land and their transition to organic and regenerative farming.

## JOANN CLEVINGER: A GIRL SCOUT WITH GUMPTION

A film by Tyler Jones and Mark Slagle. JoAnn Clevenger took the Symposium stage at SFA in October 2005, just two months after the levee failures, talking with Johnny Apple of the *New York Times*, John Besh of Restaurant August, and Lolis Elie, an SFA founder and New Orleans native, about the "New Orleans Culinary Renaissance."

The films will be followed by a panel discussion featuring women chefs and leaders in the food world.

General Admission: \$30 Michigan Theater members: \$25

BUY TICKETS AT ZINGERMANSCAMPBACON.COM

# MY GOOD FRIEND FRANK

## Forty Years of Fine Food, Friendship, and Fun

*“friendship is often more enduring than love and less exacting.”*

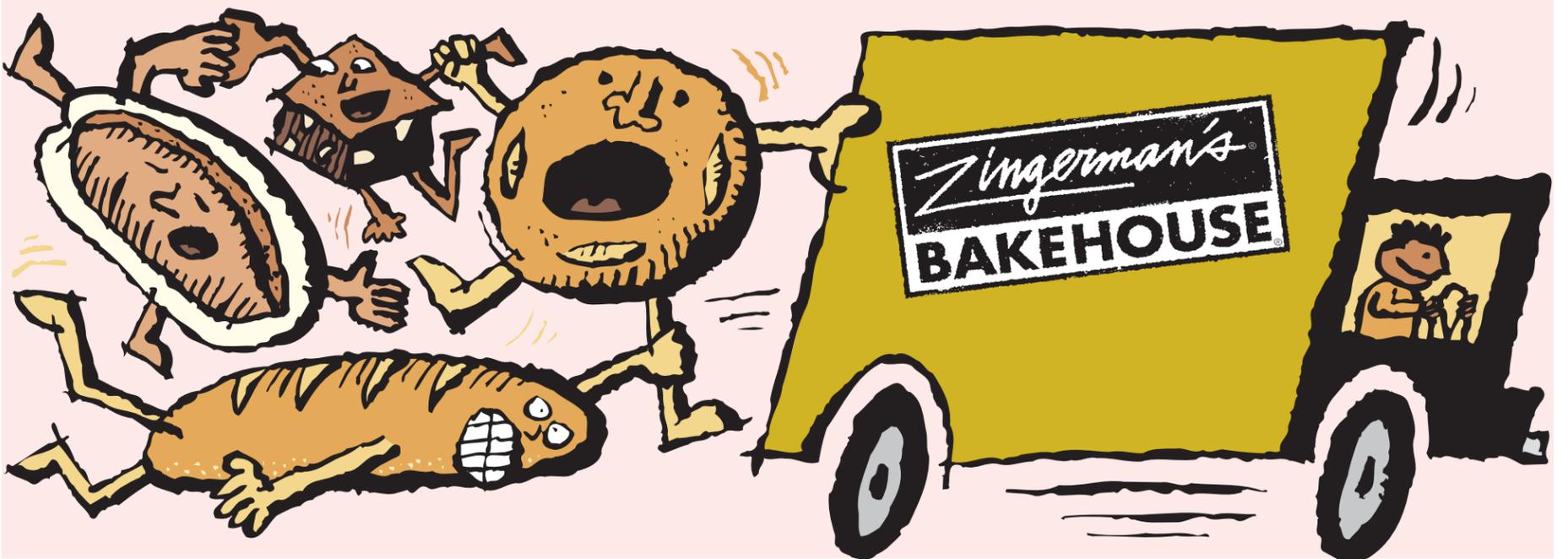
—EMMA GOLDMAN

**B**ack in the spring of 1978, I started my first job in restaurants. It was washing dishes at a place a few of you might well still remember, called Maude’s, over near the corner of Fourth Ave. and Liberty. Paul Saginaw (Zingerman’s Co-Founder) was the GM. Frank Carollo (Zingerman’s Bakehouse Managing Partner) was a line cook. Maggie Bayless (ZingTrain Managing Partner) started not long thereafter as a cocktail waitress. If I remember right, I was 21. Paul, I think, would then have been an “old guy” of almost 26. Frank and Maggie, who I’m pretty sure are the same age, would have been 22. Earlier that year the Sex Pistols played their last concert, Elton John appeared on *The Muppet Show*, and The Rolling Stones started another big cross-country American summer tour.

As I write this, for the 38th Anniversary issue of *Zingerman’s News*, Paul, Maggie, Frank, and I are all active parts of Zingerman’s—connected, learning, growing, each being ourselves, and yet working collaboratively together. That we are all still here is, to my sense of the world, a marvelous and miraculous thing.

There simply aren’t all that many foursomes of folks who work together and get along in caring and supportive ways for such a long time. The Rolling Stones, who started in 1962—two decades before we opened the Deli (!!!)—have us beat by a mile. But even they lost some of their original members early on. I love what early 20th century film critic, anarchist, and writer Siegfried Kracauer said on the subject: “Friendship civilizes.” My existence is far, far better thanks to their civilizing influences.

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# MY GOOD FRIEND FRANK

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Irish philosopher, poet, and theologian John O'Donohue once opined that, "Real friendship or love is not manufactured or achieved by an act of will or intention. Friendship is always an act of recognition." This essay is exactly that—a formal written act, probably long overdue, of recognition for the exceptionally fine partnership of my friend Frank Carollo. I'm writing this now, at what might otherwise seem a rather random time, to recognize Frank more publicly in print in this way, because next January, at the start of the year 2021, after what I believe will be our 28th successful and biggest ever holiday season at the Bakehouse, my good friend and longtime business partner is going to retire. Frank is going to step back from his super significant role at the Bakehouse, and in the ZCoB, and walk forward into the future to explore new ways to enhance the quality of his life.

The act of even writing this essay, I have to say, is rather strange. I'm talking about a relationship that started back when we were both in our early 20s, at a time when I had no clue what my life was going to look like—not even a glimmer of a good thought about anything to do with a deli that would come to be called Zingerman's, let alone the idea of creating a Community of Businesses. I had pretty negative beliefs about business, and almost no opinions one way or the other about good food and cooking. By definition, the longest-standing friendship I had

at the time would have been 10 or 15 years. If you had told me that 40 years and more later we'd both still be productively and professionally ensconced in the world of food—and in it together—I would have asked what you'd been smoking. And yet, here we are, Frank and I, working supportively, relatively near each other, but respectfully conserving the other's introverted space.

It's hard for me to imagine life at Zingerman's without Frank here every day. The band "The Left Outsidies" have a song entitled, "My Reflection Once Was Me." I like uncommon and uncomfortable phrases like that which make me take pause to really think my way through what they mean. For the moment at least, I have a feeling that their song title describes what life around here in the ZCoB might well be after Frank has shifted his days to do other stuff.

Wendell Berry once wrote, "There is a sense in which my own life is inseparable from the history and the place." I know the feeling. While I have a fairly strong sense of my own existence—business or no business—having spent most of my adult life as part of Zingerman's, it is hard to imagine my life apart from it. It's equally impossible to imagine what life around here would have been like if I had not connected with these three exceptional people. I feel very lucky to have met and then partnered with Paul back in the early '80s. And equally fortunate to have found Frank and Maggie. And then, later, over the years that followed, Amy at the Bakehouse and all the other of the 18 (at the moment—tip of the organization's

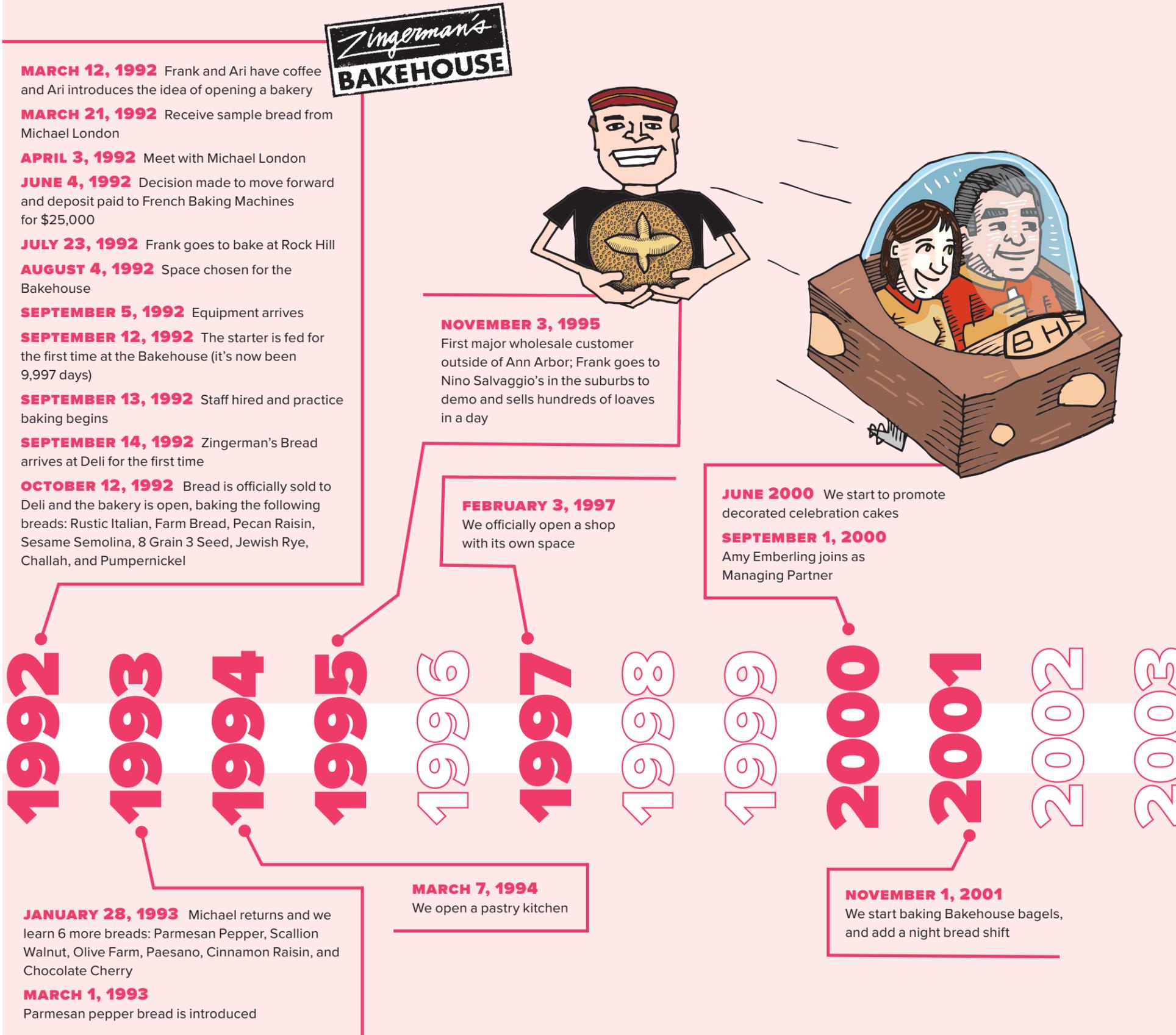
historical hat to Tom, Toni, Aubrey, Kieron, Mo, Tabitha, Grace, Rodger, Ji Hye, Kristie, Rick, Katie, Steve, and Ron) or so managing partners, plus all those who've come and then gracefully gone, who've all worked so darned hard to make the Zingerman's Community what it is.

For Frank, Paul, Maggie, and I, it's been nearly four decades that we've been, in one form or another, doing this thing that we and the rest of the world know as Zingerman's. It has indeed been a solid, superbly and spatially supportive, 40-something years of working together. The whole thing, in a sense, is so big, I can barely get my mind around it.

Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana believes that it's impossible to really assess anything in isolation from what and whom it interacts with. Although any number of studies seem to isolate variables, the reality of all of our existences, Maturana says, is that we have each been impacted by what's around us, and at the same time, we have impacted everyone and everything. None of us would be what or who we are without the contributions—direct and indirect—of those around us. I believe that. So, although Paul and I tend to get top billing most of the time when the Zingerman's story is shared, the truth is that none of us would be remotely close to where we're at without the others. Masanobu Fukuoka, the marvelously insightful Japanese farmer, poet, and writer, says that taking singular credit for something would be "like clapping your hands and then arguing about which is making the sound, the right hand or the left." Frank's part

The late English singer-songwriter John Martyn once said, "Some people keep diaries, I make records."

Maybe Frank would replace records with baked goods. **Here's a history and imperfect timeline of the Bakehouse:**



in the Zingerman's story, I suggest, is something like that of the "other" hand—while it's not the one that most folks focus on, without that "other hand," there would be no applause. And maybe no Zingerman's.

I will say then, with a high degree of delicious certainty, the Zingerman's Community would be a very different place without the determined, positive, intelligent, and incredibly skilled presence of my friend Frank. In fact, it's not far-fetched to imagine that, without his contributions, the organization would have ceased to exist a long time ago. Without Frank's early work there would have been no Bakehouse. The sandwiches at the Deli would never have been as good as they are now. Competition would have been more easily able to adapt to our other quality improvements—we might have kept up. Our Mail Order would have been deprived of its major supplier and one of its most significant market differentiators. The Creamery would have had no great bread or bagels on which Zingerman's customers could spread its artisan cream cheese or goat cheese.

I've never written a resumé or CV for myself but, here's an informal, outsider's version of one for Frank. He grew up in St. Clair Shores on Detroit's east side. His father's family came from Sicily and his mother's from Austria—both places, coincidentally, with wonderful cooking, and baking traditions. He arrived in Ann Arbor to go to school at the University of Michigan where he ended up studying engineering. At some point, he got a job cooking at Bicycle Jim's, which was upstairs, on the second floor in the building that's still on the northeast corner of South U. and Forest. Early in 1978, he, along with half a dozen or so of his Bicycle Jim's buddies, began working at Maude's. He—and they—were all there when Paul and I started at Maude's that spring.

Throughout those early years, Frank was my teacher. Had he not taught me well, I'd never have learned to cook. He trained me how to cook the line, how to clean the grill, how to organize the walk in, how to stay focused through a big dinner rush, how to be kind and find humor when one was having a hard day, and how to be humble. We played softball on the Maude's team—he was the star, faster by far, and more skilled than anyone else out there. We drank shots of tequila after games (it's been probably 40 years since we've done that). Together, we've talked through good times and bad, survived economic challenges, managed through marriages and divorces, developed products, worked on visions, and traveled. We've probably tasted literally over 20,000 things together, comparing notes and assessing quality in the process. We've talked through management issues, learned about bread making and business. Shared frustrations and fears, hopes and happinesses.

Rainer Maria Rilke once wrote, "I hold this to be the highest task of a bond between two people: that each should stand guard over the solitude of the other." It's a lovely way to say it. Especially for a pair of introverts like me and Frank. My friend Frank Carollo is one of the

quietest, most caring, and insightfully thoughtful people I know. What Frank and I haven't done, at least that I can think of, in all of those 42 years, is pushed into the other's space to give unsolicited advice or intruded into that solitude.

While we worked at Maude's, Frank was always a bit "ahead" of me. He started managing before I did. He went out to the Hilton (they owned the restaurant there) to manage before I did. Paul left and opened Monahan's Seafood Market in 1979 along with Mike Monahan (it had been the Real Seafood Company's retail market). I left a few years later, in the fall of 1981. Frank stayed on as a general manager for a few more years. Paul and I opened the Deli in March of 1982. Frank came down and helped us for free on his days off, first with renovations, then with work. When he left their organization, unsure of what he was going to do next, he came and worked in the retail department at the Deli for a while. I remember feeling exceptionally fortunate to have someone with his skill level working on the counter.

A year or two later, in 1985, Frank left the Deli to partner with Paul and Mike to open a second Monahan's Seafood Market in the suburbs. Despite their best efforts (which having worked with them all for years is a lot of effort) it didn't take off. In one of the most difficult moves any business person has to make, they closed the market late in 1986. I think what they were doing was probably ahead of its time, but their commitment to high quality—and appropriately-set prices for that quality—didn't cut it in that market.

With the second seafood market shuttered, Frank came back to town to work with Paul and Mike at Monahan's in Kerrytown. Sometime late in 1991, or maybe it was early '92, Frank announced to everyone that he was going to move on from the fish market. I don't think he was clear on what would come next, but it was time to do something different. It was, I suppose, much the same situation I was in, a decade earlier, in the fall of 1981, after I'd given my notice at the restaurant group. I was fortunate then that Paul had called me a couple days later to propose the idea of opening the Deli. I hadn't thought about this until just now, but I guess I did with Frank what Paul did with me—phoned a friend that I really liked working with to share an idea, the very beginnings of a vision, and a possibility to create something that didn't yet exist, to see if he wanted to take the lead on the project, and partner together to make it happen. In Paul's case, he proposed we put together a little deli on the corner of Detroit and Kingsley, across the street from the fish market's spot in Kerrytown. In Frank's case, the idea was to open our own, Zingerman's, bakery.

Martin Luther King once said something along the lines of, "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." In hindsight, Frank's leap of faith was even more amazing—he was agreeing to walk up a long set of stairs that weren't even built yet. None of us knew much of anything about baking. We did know

how to work and learn. Frank took the leap. We tasted bread together. He went to upstate New York to work with our teacher, Michael London, to begin learning the basics of artisan bread baking. He came back to be home for a bit and do work on the business part of things, then went back to spend more time with Michael at Rockhill Bakehouse. In September of that year, Michael came here for the weeks around the opening, bringing with him his plastic cooler filled with starter dough and with his little rubber-band-bound notebook full of hand-scribbled recipes. (Speaking of Franks, Frank Zappa played his last concert, that month.) Then, Michael flew home and Frank was essentially on his own. That he turned those tentative beginnings into something so terrific is a testament to his relentless pursuit of learning, quality, and excellence. Ideas aren't all that hard—the challenging part is making them turn into reality. In this case, Frank took that challenge and rose, naturally, to the occasion—much like the beautiful loaves we've been crafting at the Bakehouse ever since. I have huge admiration for Frank's learning. He went from knowing nothing to, very humbly, being one of the best artisan bakers in the country.

So, on this 38th anniversary of Zingerman's, my thesis, my belief, my statement, is that Zingerman's would not be Zingerman's if it wasn't for Frank. It's hard for me to imagine us without the amazing bread that the Bakehouse makes every day. Without the coffee cakes and rugelach and brownies. It's hard to imagine Zingerman's Mail Order without all of the baked goods we offer or Zingerman's in recent years without all the traditional Hungarian foods the Bakehouse has brought to town. Think about the sort of mind-boggling community that is Zingerman's "Southside"—the Bakehouse, Creamery, BAKE!, the Candy Manufactory, Coffee, and ZingTrain and all those people who now come there every day to shop, eat, drink, and glean good energy. None of it would have happened without the Bakehouse starting up first. If Frank weren't so diligent and determined and relentless in his pursuit of improvement. If he wasn't willing to go in at all hours, cover for people who didn't come in, keep working to improve and take leaps of faith when, at best, the bottom stairs were all one could see . . . I wouldn't be here writing this piece.

The Bakehouse is a story in itself. Frank and Amy's book, *Zingerman's Bakehouse* tells it in very delicious detail. Frank and I had our first talk in the Next Door at the Deli (which we'd only finished renovating that previous fall, on October 31, 1991). In March of 1992 in the Next Door Café at the Deli, we tasted Michael London's artisan breads for the first time. We were pretty much blown away by how much better it was than anything we could get in town at that time. Six months later, we sold our first loaves. Amy Emberling, who became a co-managing partner with Frank in 2000, was one of the original bakers. We only baked for the Deli and there was a small cart

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**AUGUST 2006** We open BAKE!, our hands-on teaching bakery; and CAKE!, a showroom dedicated to our decorated cakes



**OCTOBER 2018** We start fresh milling of grain at the Bakehouse with our stone mill



2004 2005 **2006** 2007 2008 2009 2010 2017 2018 2019 2020



**SEPTEMBER 2017** Zingerman's Bakehouse book published to coincide with our 25th anniversary

**SEPTEMBER 2017** Country Mische comes out





# A SERIOUS SENSE OF HUMOR



One of Frank's skills is that he has one of the driest, wittiest, and most entertaining senses of humor in the ZCoB. Amy wrote about it in *Zingerman's Bakehouse* and you can find more there to make you smile. Frank has a propensity for telling the same not-very-funny jokes over and over again for years. I'll leave them out here, but you can ask him when you see him. He's also known for being so dry and deadpan that new staff are consistently confused over whether he is joking or not.

Here are two of my favorite Frank tales.

One came in the mid-'90s when the "low-fat" fad was at its height. We stuck to our values, mission, and vision and kept making the same full-flavored traditional food we'd always made (and encouraged folks to eat the many naturally low-fat foods like salads and vegetables we'd always had). Trends, we believe, come and go; full flavor, by contrast, is forever. One day we were in a meeting talking about how to handle this, at-the-time-dominant, market trend when Frank, with his typical dry, deadpan voice says, "Hey, we already have no-fat products." I think we all looked at him like he was crazy, or as if maybe we'd misunderstood. But he looked right back at us, and with the straightest face you can imagine, said, "Yeah. We have no fat. No fat. No. K-N-O-W fat. We know fat!" A t-shirt came out later that year with that statement on it, and an image

of a winking cow to go with it. It's still one of my favorite shirts, and it still gets people thinking—and usually smiling—all these years later.

The other bit of dryness came a bit over 20 years ago. 1999. Prince's song of the same name had come out eight months after we'd opened at the Deli back in 1982, but the actual year was now here. One of the big headlines in the news at the time was the impending arrival of the new century and millennium, which accompanied the forewarning and fear that computers wouldn't be able to handle the changeover since they used the last two digits of the year to mark time and would register that it was 1900 again. The headlines were all about the Y2K—shorthand for the Year 2000. I've long advocated—as has Frank—that bigger loaves of bread taste better. The crumb, or texture, is better. The crust is better. I will, as a result, almost always buy a half of a bigger loaf, than a smaller loaf which weighs in at the same poundage. Anyway, we'd been working for years trying to convince the community that this was the case. We were in another meeting talking about this marketing challenge when Frank says, "Y2K." We pause and look at him. "Yeah. Y2K. We can do a promotion called "Why 2 K" and talk about how much better the big loaves are. (Try the 2-K Country Miche we've been baking of late!)

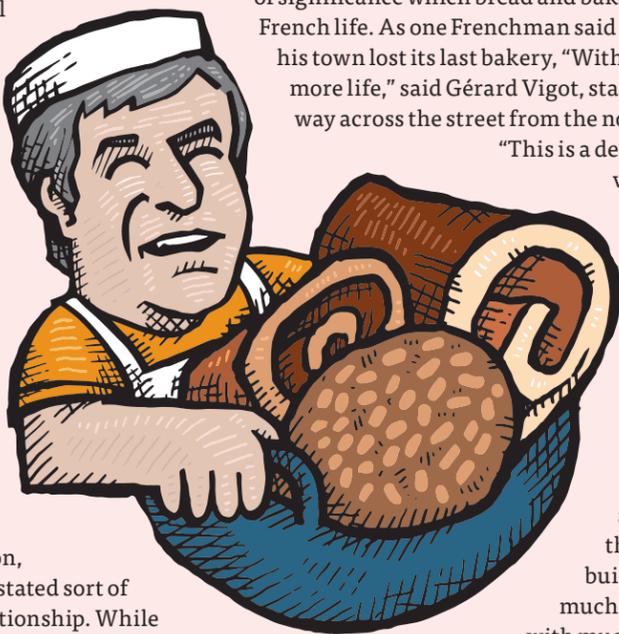
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table next to the one oven where an occasional customer who wandered in could buy a loaf. We had one "bay" in the long buildings of the industrial park out by the Ann Arbor airport that Paul had found for us—the place that most of you now know so well as Zingerman's Southside, or maybe more anecdotally as "out by the Bakehouse." We'd decided to build the Bakehouse there because the Deli's physical space was already pretty much maxed out, location wasn't all that important for a wholesale bakery, and rent was going to be much lower if we went to that end of town. A few years later we took on another bay, and then another, and then another still. In 1994 we started baking pastries. Today, the Bakehouse has annual sales of over \$10,000,000, a staff of about 130 (plus 35 more at the holidays), 150 or so wholesale customers (including the Deli, Roadhouse, Mail Order, etc.) around the area and has been recognized all over the country. Jane and Michael Stern called the rye bread the best in the county in *Saveur* a bunch of years ago. It's been in the *New York Times* and many other places too. Bottom line? With Frank's leadership (and yes, again, Amy and hundreds of other great folks with him), Zingerman's Bakehouse is one of the most amazing bakeries in North America.

Maturana wrote that, "Only love expands intelligence. To live in love is to accept the other and the conditions of his existence as a source of richness, not as opposition, restriction or limitation." It's a well-stated sort of description of mine and Frank's relationship. While the Bakehouse was being built, as all those loaves of artisan bread and handmade pastries were being baked, the rest of the Zingerman's Community was coming into being. Frank was there for all of it. ZingTrain, Mail Order, the Creamery, the Roadhouse, Cornman Farms, Miss Kim, Coffee, Candy, and Zingerman's Food Tours. We'd started Food Gatherers out of the Deli in 1988. Many new partners have come, and a few partners have left. Sales have risen and fallen. Economies have collapsed, the country has gone to war. Profits have gone up and down. We started having staff partners, employees got the chance to buy a share in the business (we have over 200 of them today). Zingerman's was mentioned in the *New York Times*, *Wall St. Journal*, *Food and Wine*, *Bon Appetit*, and *Gourmet*; we appeared on Oprah and President Obama came to visit. Through all of it, Frank was quietly there, meaningfully helping to hold everything together, making things happen, keeping things moving, coming in to cover for sick calls, making deliveries when drivers didn't show up, running shifts when managers found themselves overwhelmed. It's a rare and remarkable feat.

To take my theory of Frank's centrality to the Zingerman's story further, it's not just the ZCoB that

wouldn't be what it is without Frank; I think you could probably say the same for the whole town. Having a thriving, healthy, high quality, caring bakery in the community is not to be underestimated. If you haven't spent time living in, visiting, or studying France, it's hard to imagine just how big a role bread plays in French culture. In the years since the Bakehouse opened here in 1992, French villages have increasingly found themselves losing their long-standing traditional bakeries. There's still bread to be bought—but it's all too often from supermarkets—frozen, par-baked dough that lacks the substance soul and quality of true craft bread. In France, to be without a bakery is a bit as if someone took the University of Michigan football team out of Ann Arbor. I hear figurative gasps and see heads shaking just as the absurd suggestion that it could happen. And yet, really, that is almost the scale of significance which bread and bakeries have had in French life. As one Frenchman said earlier this year after his town lost its last bakery, "Without bread, there is no more life," said Gérard Vigot, standing in his driveway across the street from the now shuttered bakery.



"This is a dead village." Another villager, Fabien Rose, shared: "That's why the bakery has an enormous place in a village—because bread is life." Because of Frank's willingness to take that leap to start the Bakehouse in 1992, to start climbing stairs that hadn't yet been built, Ann Arbor is very much alive, a better place, with much better bread and pastry, to live. Speaking as someone who eats the Bakehouse's bread every single day in which I'm home in Ann Arbor, and as someone who rarely leaves home without a piece of said bread in my shoulder bag, I know that my own life has been radically improved by it, and I have to believe that the lives of thousands of others have been improved as well.

Frank, himself, would, by the way, admit nothing of the sort. I'm working now on a pamphlet about humility that I hope will come out later this year. If there could be a poster child for humility without compromising the humility of the person being recognized, Frank would be the guy. He models humility for the rest of us, every day. It's been a common aside over the years from any number of folks who started at the Bakehouse that they worked next to Frank on the bench making bread for two months before they realized he was one of the owners.

In the spirit of time travel, I'm working on wrapping up this essay in the lobby of a San Francisco hotel, where about two dozen people showed up in the last few hours dressed for, what I can only surmise, should likely be a '70s party. The lobby, appropriately I suppose, smells like

pot smoke. I guess it's appropriate since it's a party that might have happened back around the time Frank and I met. And here we are all these years, all those loaves of bread and Magic Brownies, and long meetings and difficult discussions, big and small decisions later . . . and we're still going at it. The idea of coming to work without Frank being around, quietly holding things together in the background, is hard to fathom.

If we'd been the Rolling Stones, then, I suppose, Frank would have been Bill Wyman—the quiet, thoughtful, somber and stoic bassist, who stood towards the back of the stage and kept the beat while everyone else was making more noise, moving around and getting a lot more attention. Because as any good musician knows, and any number of actual studies have supported, the bass player is usually the least noticed, but the most important member of the band. Last year, in *Guitar World* magazine, Christopher Scapelliti wrote about a study at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, about four hours to the east of Ann Arbor. He said, "the most important melodic information is carried by the highest voice, such as the lead singer or lead guitar, (but) the most vital rhythmic information by the lowest voice, i.e. the bass." In a more Zingerman's-appropriate assessment of the McMaster study, this past summer Anthony Capobianco wrote, "The bass guitar is like the dough in a pizza. It may not have all of the flavor like the sauce, cheese and toppings do. But without it, it's not a pizza." If you think it through, without the dough the sauce and the cheese just hit the hot stone and sizzle essentially into nothing. And so, my theory gains more traction, that Frank—not me, nor Paul, nor anyone else—might be the most important part of making Zingerman's what it is.

John Martyn's album, *Solid Air*, his fourth, came out in 1973, when, by my calculation, Frank and I were still in high school. I still have the actual vinyl LP. Frank's a year older than me so if my math and memory are right, he'd have been a senior and I was a junior. Martyn wrote the album's title song about Nick Drake, another English folk singer, who had been his close friend. Drake died, probably of an unintentional overdose, a year later, in 1974, the year in which I first arrived to live in Ann Arbor and attend U of M. Their friendship was sadly, cut short. Which reminds me again now how incredibly fortunate I feel that mine and Frank's has been anything but. Forty years later, we remain friends, supporters, gentle guardians of each other's solitude. What John Martyn wrote about his friend in the second stanza of "Solid Air," still seems quietly appropriate for my friend and partner Frank all these years later.

**I know you, I love you**

**And I can be your friend**

**I can follow you anywhere**

**Even through solid air**

Ari

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ITALY

CROATIA



SLOVENIA

A TRIANGLE  
WORTH TRAVELLING TO

by Sara Hudson

**CROATIA, SLOVENIA, AND ITALY** form a unique seaside culinary destination on the Istrian Peninsula. The countries form a triangle—which makes it an efficient place to visit, offering picturesque views and traditional foodways within a short distance. You can drive across the Istrian peninsula in one hour from the east to west coast, and the same from the northern border to the southern tip.

While Italy is one of the most prominent European destinations and doesn't need a big introduction, Slovenia and Croatia are still undiscovered places for most North American travelers. It's no wonder this traveler's dream is on the 2020 itinerary for Zingerman's Food Tours.

Kristie Brablec, tour host and managing partner of Zingerman's Food Tours, shares her fondest memory from the 2019 tour: "There was a day in Croatia where we chartered a boat and spent the afternoon and evening cruising the coastline and eating fresh fish. My favorite moment was anchoring in a small little cove and watching everyone become childlike. Within minutes, most of us had jumped into the water, splashing about, with laughter echoing off the cliffs around us. I remember the smiles on every single face, both on and off the boat."

Gábor Bánfalvi, longtime tour partner and owner of Taste Hungary, describes the backdrop of this food paradise like this: "The bluest sea you'll ever see, red soil in the vineyards, medieval towns, green rolling hills, and Venetian towers."

## ITALIAN INFLUENCE

There is plenty of Italian (Venetian) influence in Slovenian and Croatian history, culture, art, and cuisine. It's especially evident on the eastern Adriatic Sea coastline, traveling from Trieste (Italy), to Piran, Slovenia, and the Dalmatian region of Croatia, even down to Montenegro and Albania.

Most of these coastal towns and villages have a typical Venetian urban blueprint: a central square, a church dedicated to the town's patron saints, a town hall, and Renaissance/Gothic/Baroque noblemen palaces. Often, you'll see St. Marc's winged lion leaning on an open or closed book carved in white stone looking down from the bell tower or town's gate.

Italy and the Venetian Republic left some influences, or "foodsteps" if you will, in Slovenia and Croatia, too. You don't have to look further than broad varieties of risotto, pasta, brodetto (fish stew), Malvazija white wine, and truffles. Whereas Slovenian and Croatian cuisine was often described as a "peasant diet" of vegetables, grains, potatoes, meat eaten only on Sunday and religious holidays. Italian aristocracy introduced sophisticated foods like spices, rice, matured cheeses, prosciutto, octopus, shrimp, shellfish, olive oil, and wine varieties brought from the rest of the Mediterranean.

## DISTINCT FLAVORS

While it has become harder and harder to find distinctive differences between neighboring European countries, it's obvious that Italian prosciutto looks and tastes

differently than Istrian prosciutto, as does the cheese. Istrian Malvazija wine comes from the same wine family as the Italian Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, but has different flavors due to terroir and micro-climate. These are just a few variations on some of Italy's best known culinary contributions for you to discover!

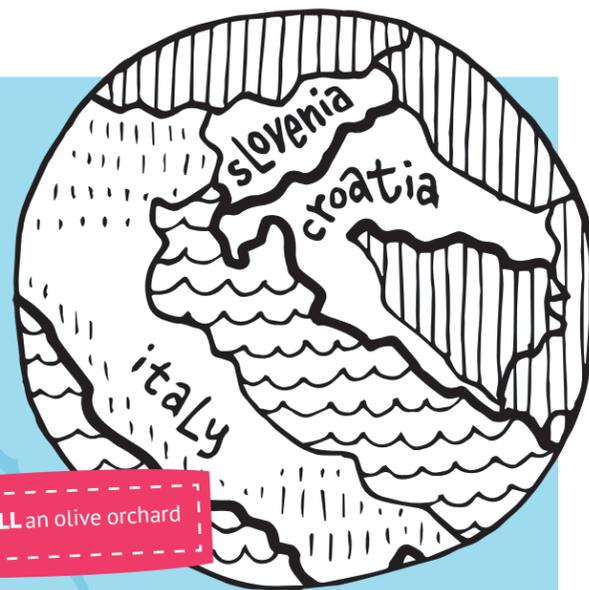
## CROATIA & SLOVENIA, TO GO!

If you're lucky enough to visit, here's a recommendation from tour partner and Istrian expert Mladen Car of what to bring back: "At least one bottle of extra-virgin olive oil and one bottle of Teran, red Istrian wine. Istrian farmers made a pledge 30 years ago to take advantage of the good climate and soil, and make Istrian olive oil distinctive in Europe and known to the rest of the world. Their march to the top was relentless. In 2019 the Flos Olei, the unofficial "bible" of olive oil, named 79 Istrian olive oils as superb on a list of 500 oils from around the world. No wonder people from north-eastern Italy and south-western Austria travel on weekends to Istria, just to eat lunch on a sunny countryside terrace, dipping cheese in extra-virgin olive oil, pairing it with Istrian Malvazija or Teran wine. There must be something special about a place that inspires people to travel over country borders just to have a meal.

As for Kristie, she says, "I'm a big-time wine lover. We visited one of my favorite wine makers in Slovenia and I felt like I won the lottery of wine. This was the trip where I learned I could pack nearly a case of wine in one suitcase and still make the weigh-in at the airport."

"Thanks in part to that dazzling World Cup run, Croatia is buzzier than ever, although each year increasing numbers of travelers seek out this idyllic haven on the Adriatic, known for its richly historic and evocative cities, exceptional food and wine, and heavenly sailing waters."

—Forbes



STROLL an olive orchard

SWIM in the Adriatic Sea

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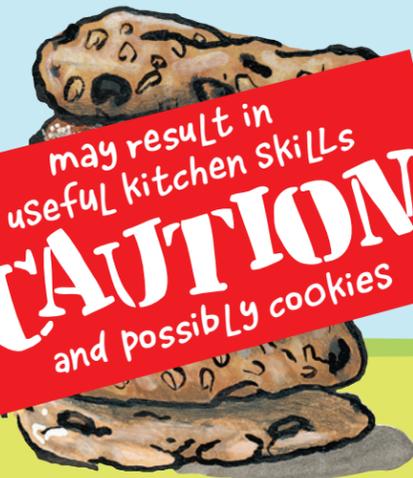
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