



# MARKET MADE

FARMERS' MARKETS OFTEN PROVE PERFECT PLACES FOR BAKERS TO RISE  
BY JENNIFER S. KORNEGAY



- AS SEEN IN -  
BAKE FROM SCRATCH  
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## Ron Graff LOAF

Durham, North Carolina

**GOT HIS START:** Durham Farmers' Market

Ron Graff understands the science behind baking as well as anyone—maybe even better. Before opening Loaf, he worked as a neurobiologist and baked bread at home mainly as a break from his job. Then he spent a few days at an artisan bread bakers' festival and wondered if others might be as interested in his bread as he was. He applied and was accepted at the Durham Farmers' Market where he sold 144 loaves in an hour on his first Saturday in 2008. For three years, he spent weekdays conducting experiments and writing grants, and spent Friday nights and the wee hours of Saturday mornings baking bread for his wife, Jaimie, to set up, still warm, at the outdoor market. (She was Loaf's smiling face at the market as opposed to Ron's bleary-eyed one.) Demand increased, and while having his own store was never the plan, his baking soon expanded beyond the boundaries of a "hobby." He finally traded his lab coat for an apron full time, opening Loaf in downtown Durham in 2011. He believes Loaf wouldn't have been possible without the market, and it's one reason he's still there. Another reason is catching up with the many friends he's made there through the years. Ron's diverse selection of breads includes everything from dark, hearty buckwheat bursting at its seams to fluffy yet dense challah, and sweet-tart, fruit-filled stollen—all joined by pastries and cookies. But bread is still Loaf's stock-in-trade, and baking's familiar rhythm continues to give Ron the reprieve that first attracted him. "On a hectic day, you put some dough on the bench, and you know what has to be done," he says. "You just start working it, and it pulls your focus off trivial things."

**KNOWN FOR:** The Market Loaf, a 2.5-pound, darkly crusted, open-crumbed bread made with flour grown and freshly ground in North Carolina.  
[facebook.com/LoafDurham](https://www.facebook.com/LoafDurham) or 919.797.1254



## Jennifer Smurr BORN & BREAD BAKEHOUSE

Lakeland, Florida

**GOT HER START:** Lakeland Downtown Farmers Curb Market

A bite of "life-changing" sourdough while on her honeymoon in Paris was moving enough to put Florida native Jennifer Smurr on a new path. Its slight tang and a tender interior under a crackly crust revealed an artistry and creative effort that inspired her to bake. "It was really a rebirth," she says. "I'd been modeling, but also trying to find what I was really meant to do, and that bread motivated me to make something for others." Within days of being back home in Lakeland, she left modeling behind and moved to Miami for a three-month baking apprenticeship. The early mornings and long days didn't weaken the pull first felt in France where she savored the taste of that transformative bread. She went back to Lakeland, found a commissary kitchen to bake in, and started hauling baskets of bread (and later pastries) to the Lakeland Downtown Farmers Curb Market in March 2015. There, between vegetable stands and jars of jams and pickles, her treats and welcoming nature quickly gained a group of Saturday morning regulars who swapped stories, advice, and encouragement with Jennifer. These loyal customers still feel like family. With their support, she opened her stand-alone bakery before the year was out. Although she is busy with the hungry crowds lining up 100 deep for her breads, Danish, flavored croissants, and all kinds of cruffins, she keeps her spot at the market. "Being there after a long week reinvigorates me," she says. "The community and collaboration are energizing."

**KNOWN FOR:** Cruffins, croissant-muffin hybrids that are often filled with flavored pastry cream, custards, or fruit.  
[bornandbreadbakery.com](http://bornandbreadbakery.com)





## Lucy Montgomery & Chris Simmons BAKERS & CO.

Annapolis, Maryland

GOT THEIR START: Anne Arundel County Farmers' Market

Lucy Montgomery respects baking's basic rules. But she also appreciates the art and alchemy of it and likes to play in the kitchen, fooling around with flavors and textures to find just the right mix. "Baking is science, but it's pretty magical, too," she says. Distributing breads, cookies, croissants, and more with a side of her effervescent personality is as fulfilling for her as it is for those on the receiving end. "I get to share the magic, which I love, because I'm pretty social," she says. Lucy and husband/business partner (and fellow baker) Chris Simmons cherish sharing at the Anne Arundel County Farmers' Market, where Bakers & Co. debuted in 2008—and where they still have a stand. Spots at this popular market are highly sought after, and at the time, there was a waiting list. Somehow (Lucy still isn't sure how it happened), they lucked out and scored a place. Every weekend, they soaked up feedback while relishing the immediate satisfaction of watching folks enjoy their wares right there. The couple kept their day jobs (Lucy as a legal secretary; Chris as manager of a tobacco shop), but customers hounded them about opening their own space. By 2012, they felt enough people were hooked on their goods to justify a storefront. They were right. When Bakers & Co. opened in December of that year, many of their market regulars were the first ones through the doors.

KNOWN FOR: The Market Bun, a cinnamon and orange zest pastry, rolled like a cinnamon bun, but flaky like a croissant.

[bakersandco.com](http://bakersandco.com)



## Paula Haney HOOSIER MAMA PIE COMPANY

Chicago & Evanston, Illinois

GOT HER START: The Green City Market

While growing up in Indiana, Paula Haney found gratification in baking early by making pie (usually apple) as an expression of affection for her dad. In college, a job baking pastries for a coffee house was as much for fun as income. After graduating, she wasn't interested in using her journalism degree, but didn't know what to do instead. Her husband's advice: Do what you love. That sparked the idea to turn her pie-making pastime into a career. The couple moved to Chicago, and Paula quickly moved up the baking ranks in kitchens across the city, culminating in a position as pastry chef under Chef Grant Achatz (then at Trio), renowned for his continual creativity. It was thrilling, but equally exhausting. On her days off, Paula found the comfort she craved in pie. "It's not trendy or complicated like the things I was making at work. I realized I just wanted to make pie," she says. So, she left the restaurant, keeping in mind her goal of opening a shop. Because of the sizable investment required for a shop, she started slowly with a stand at Chicago's highly curated Green City Market, where only local and certified sustainable products are allowed, and where she sold her first pie in 2005. The market let her earn a following, but access to local produce also helped shape her baking philosophy that's focused on seasonal ingredients. Paula still sources ruby-stalked rhubarb for her pies from a farmer she met there. In 2008, her sweet and savory pies (as well as muffins, scones, and cookies) got their own home when she opened Hoosier Mama Pie Company. Today, she's turning out hundreds of pies each week, and she's still at the market each summer.

KNOWN FOR: Hoosier Sugar Cream Pie, a simple vanilla custard pie that's the state pie of Indiana.

[hoosiermamapie.com](http://hoosiermamapie.com)

