



Worshipful Company of Bakers: Short Course Report

School of Artisan Foods 2022

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<p>What new skills and knowledge did this course give you?</p>	<p>During this course, I had the opportunity to improve my artisan bakery and viennoiserie skills, developing new techniques and gaining a greater understanding of fermentation and lamination.</p> <p>Firstly, learning about how the characteristics of a preferment can be manipulated through temperature control, hydration and selection of a flour or combination of flours was particularly valuable, as well as how these factors can affect the time it takes for the preferment to reach optimum maturity.</p> <p>I especially appreciated the opportunity to learn about how to manage sourdough breads, from the development of a mature sourdough starter to the handling and shaping of very hydrated, soft doughs. This included learning about the purpose of autolyse and double hydration – although I had used these techniques previously, I did not fully understand their importance in developing a strong dough with good gas retention and volume.</p> <p>I also had the chance to develop my skills in lamination and shaping of a variety of viennoiserie products. Learning the universal numbering laminating system helped me to understand the process more easily, and I picked up several useful techniques and rules as well (for example, slicing the sides of the dough and rotating between folds to avoid overstressing the gluten, and limiting use of flour dusting as it prevents the dough from sticking together).</p>
<p>How do you think you will use these skills in your studies and/or workplace?</p>	<p>The techniques I have learned during this course of handling and shaping long fermentation doughs and laminated pastry will be really beneficial going forward, and I now feel much more familiar and comfortable working with these doughs to create high quality products. In future breadmaking practice, I will be able to apply my understanding of the fermentation process and dough development to make intuitive, informed decisions and ultimately achieve consistency in product quality.</p> <p>I also especially admire certain approaches that the school took to champion sustainability in their baking, and this inspires me to do the same going forward. I was impressed that most of the breads were made using Wildfarmed British wheats, and I was interested to learn about the techniques they used to make the most of these flours. I also noticed how the teachers took care to minimise wastage throughout production.</p>
<p>What are the main differences between the baking methods you saw at the School of Artisan Food and the ones you are already familiar with?</p>	<p>I found the method of using water rather than dusting flour to deal with sticky bread doughs interesting. This technique made it easy to handle doughs without wasting excessive amounts of flour or interfering with the consistency of the dough. Also, the methods of containing flour to avoid it going into the air were interesting, such as placing doughs into a tub of flour during moulding rather than spreading flour across the work surface.</p>

<p>How do you think these might influence your baking in the future?</p>	<p>Wayne also taught us some effective moulding techniques, which I had not seen previously but made moulding much easier and quicker (for example, the folding technique).</p> <p>As previously mentioned, I noticed how the teachers both introduced clever ways of reusing wastage in their baking. This included using apple cores to make a spiced glaze and incorporating offcuts from croissants and chokolatines into pain au raisins and cinnamon swirls. This zero-waste approach was inspiring, and I would like to incorporate this in my future baking.</p> <p>Something else which I had not previously learned about in detail was how to work with rye flour, and I did not realise how differently rye breads should be treated in comparison to wheat breads. Learning methods such as using a high final dough temperature, mixing slowly by hand or on a planetary mixer, and starting the baking process at a high heat will be very useful as I aim to produce high quality rye breads going forward.</p>
<p>Were there any products and/or baking methods that you found particularly interesting or unusual?</p>	<p>I really liked the methods used in the production of the beer barm bread, such as using beer barm in the preferment, and using ale to both soak grains and as second stage water. This gave the bread a unique savoury flavour.</p> <p>A technique I found particularly interesting was cross lamination. I had not seen this method before, and it gave the viennoiserie pastries a bold appearance that showed off the lamination really nicely.</p>
<p>Did the course live up to your expectations? What for you were the highlights? Were there any disappointments? What recommendations can you suggest that would improve this course for future students?</p>	<p>The course exceeded my expectations; It was fantastic to learn new skills and gain insight from some very experienced, knowledgeable people in the industry. The teaching from both Wayne and Jimmy was exceptional, and it was also really valuable having Sara there to offer her perspective and explain some of the scientific background behind the processes.</p> <p>The highlights for me were producing a variety of sourdough breads and laminated products, especially the house sourdough, chocolate and hazelnut sourdough, beer barm bread and croissants. Demonstrations from Wayne in decorative baguettes and Jimmy in bicoloured viennoiserie pastries were both very impressive and helped inspire creativity in all the students.</p> <p>If I were to think of recommendations to improve the course in the future, perhaps it would be good if the students had the opportunity to produce their own decorative products (for example, one decorative bread and one decorative viennoiserie product each). That could give the students a chance to practice some of the techniques showcased by the teachers in the demonstrations, and to use their own creativity to make something unique to them. However, I understand that time could be a constraint, and considering how much we managed to cover in just one week, I would understand if there was not time for anything extra.</p>
<p>Were the travelling and accommodation arrangements satisfactory?</p>	<p>The accommodation was good, although it was somewhat difficult to get to via public transport - I appreciate however that options for accommodation in vicinity to the school may have been limited. I am very thankful for Sara kindly giving us lifts back to the train stations at the end of the course. Food arrangements for the week were great; I especially enjoyed the meals we had at the school.</p>

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the School of Artisan Food, and I really appreciate being given the opportunity to go on this short course. I would like to thank the Association of Bakery Ingredient Manufacturers (ABIM) for sponsoring my place on the course.

See below photos of highlights from the week:





