

Andrea Reusing and Miguel Torres
Lantern Restaurant – Chapel Hill, North Carolina
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Interviewer: Sara Camp Arnold

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

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Project: Carrboro Farmers' Market

[Begin Reusing and Torres Interview]

00:00:00

Sara Camp Arnold: So this is Sara Arnold for the Southern Foodways Alliance on September 7, 2011, and I am interviewing Andrea Reusing and Miguel Torres at Lantern Restaurant in Chapel Hill. So if you can introduce yourselves please?

00:00:18

Andrea Reusing: Andrea Reusing, Lantern Restaurant, Chapel Hill.

00:00:20

Miguel Torres: Miguel Torres, Lantern Restaurant, Chapel Hill.

00:00:24

SCA: And if you can tell me where and when you were born?

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AR: I was born in Washington, D.C., in 1968.

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MT: I was born in Celaya, [Guanajuato,] Mexico in 1980.

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SCA: Okay; and let's talk about Andrea first, when you started cooking.

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AR: I started cooking when I was in college in New York City, line cooking in the East Village.

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SCA: And Miguel?

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MT: I started helping my mother after school since I was like seven, eight. She's in the food business, and she's been since like 1985.

00:01:02

SCA: And how old were you when you moved to the United States?

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MT: I was eighteen, just turned eighteen, and I started working in the restaurant right away.

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SCA: Did you move straight to Chapel Hill?

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MT: Carrboro.

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SCA: Okay; did you have family here?

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MT: One uncle.

00:01:18

SCA: Okay; and Celaya is where some of Bill Smith's—the people who work with him [at Crook's Corner] are from?

00:01:25

MT: Yes; yes a lot of the people who live in Chapel Hill and Carrboro are from Celaya.

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SCA: So is that how you knew about it?

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MT: My uncle was here, so—

00:01:34

SCA: Right.

00:01:36

MT: —he worked at the restaurant called Fusions. And he—he called one day at my house and he said, “Well, there's this job that is a position open in the restaurant I'm working—I'm working right now.” And I said, “Really?” Because I never thought—I never thought that—and it happened—in my mind that I can come here, or anything like that.

00:02:00

So the decision was taken really quickly; so I come here. I was here on a Sunday. I take like two days off, and I was working on Wednesday already **[Laughs]** as a dishwasher and prep cook.

00:02:13

SCA: And then Andrea, I know you were mostly living in New Jersey and New York, so can you talk about how you ended up in North Carolina?

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AR: In North Carolina, I was dating someone and I decided to **[Laughs]** come down for the summer and live here and—and see—you know, for the summer and then I—and then I ended up staying.

00:02:31

SCA: And then can you talk a little bit about your first restaurant, Enoteca Vin?

00:02:39

AR: Uh-hm.

00:02:39

SCA: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

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AR: Yeah; so that was opened by a group of people including Chrish Peel and Louis Cherry, and they had never opened a restaurant before, so they decided that maybe it was a good idea to hire someone who had never opened a restaurant before, either. **[Laughs]** And so the—I was opened—it was opened I guess in 1999, and I was the chef and a guy named Brian Botka was the manager, and it was a restaurant focused on wine. So the centerpiece was wine and the menu was mostly local and it changed every day. And in addition to having a lot of local things we also had a lot of things from kind of all over the world. So it was kind of exotic at the same time as being focused on local, but we got a lot of our seafood from Tom Robinson in Carrboro, and so I lived here, and so I would drive it to Raleigh. It was like a—it was kind of a lot of schlepping was involved. But it was a really fun restaurant, and it just closed actually about two years ago.

00:03:46

SCA: Right; and at that time, were a lot of the restaurants in Raleigh or Chapel Hill or Carrboro doing a lot of local?

00:03:54

AR: You know, yes; Ben Barker, obviously, at Magnolia Grill, Bill Smith, obviously, in Chapel Hill, Scott Howell at Nana's. La—La Res, there was this woman named Jackie. I'm blanking on her last name but she—she was the—. Jackie Gautieri, but that might not be her last name—but she was the pastry chef at La Res, and she bought a lot from farmers. That was probably in 1996, '97, '98—you know, in the '90s. Amy Tournquist had a catering business, Sage and Swift, and she was buying tons of local. You know, there were a lot of people buying local.

00:04:51

SCA: Right; and so what motivated you to do a lot of local ingredients?

00:04:56

AR: It just made sense, kind of being here and looking for stuff that was the most flavorful things we could get. It's just what made sense.

00:05:06

SCA: Had the restaurants you worked for in New York done that?

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AR: Uh-huh; yeah, I mean we would go to the farmers' market. It was more kind of supplementing what was, you know, what was available, because the places I worked were pretty high volume. So it was definitely not the core of what those restaurants were doing, but it was definitely part of the—part of the menu.

00:05:27

SCA: And then Miguel, growing up and working in your mom's restaurant, or in the food that you ate at home, did you eat a lot of things from your region?

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MT: Yes; I think what people try to do here—going back and go green and buy local food—it's very common for us to see that where I come from. Because it's a little farm close to my house, where—when you're a child your mom say, "Can you go and buy a chicken?" You buy a live chicken. And you have to help your mother process it. And it's a lot of farms, a lot of farms

around. So it's very, very common to do what you guys are trying to do here, of using—not pesticides and all that stuff. For us, it's very common.

00:06:12

SCA: What are some of the most important crops—or the vegetables and fruits that grow best in Celaya?

00:06:20

MT: Oh—it's a long list. **[Laughs]** It's a lot of stuff. The weather is really—it never gets really cold, so it's just a long list. Like, I can think about avocados, lime, oranges, apples, it's a lot of broccoli and cauliflower in there, watermelons, all kinds of melons; I can't think of anything else.

00:06:47

SCA: That's okay.

00:06:48

MT: It's like—it's a world of things.

00:06:51

AR: But it's an agricultural region?

00:06:52

MT: Yes; yes, and so but—corn, lots of corn.

00:06:57

AR: And a lot of the stuff is going other places, right?

00:06:59

MT: Yes; yes.

00:07:01

AR: I mean, it's—

00:07:02

MT: Uh-hm; but—

00:07:03

SCA: Are they like big farms that are shipping to the U.S.?

00:07:06

MT: Hmm; it's only one farm that we know that they ship to the U.S. It's a broccoli farm, but most of the other farms are—you know.

00:07:15

SCA: Within Mexico?

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MT: Yes. And a lot of the people grow stuff in their houses, too: chilies, and most of the people has like fruit trees, like limes ,or a lot of people have avocados, pomegranates, peaches—it's like a world of things. It's like, no end.

00:07:35

SCA: Yeah.

00:07:36

MT: Like people usually—I mean if you need a lime, you go to the backyard and get a lime.

[Laughs] Or you know what I mean, like peaches and pomegranates is a big thing there; guavas—it's a lot of stuff.

00:07:53

SCA: What kinds of stuff do you remember your mom making—that were maybe some of your favorites—with local foods?

00:08:01

MT: Hmm; she used a lot of veggies. I can't remember—it's—it's you know like my—my friends—

00:08:11

AR: Chicken dishes.

00:08:14

MT: Yes; she used to make like fried taquitos with chicken in it. That was probably my favorite thing, but it never—every day was a different thing for every meal, because that’s what she did for a living. And so she has to have something different in every meal, so every time, it would be something different. And never leftovers—never leftovers. **[Laughs]**

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SCA: Do you have brothers and sisters?

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MT: I have one brother and two sisters.

00:08:40

SCA: Did they like to cook, too?

00:08:41

MT: Um, not really. They—no, not really.

00:08:47

SCA: Let’s go maybe to when you started frequenting the Carrboro Farmers’ Market, Andrea?

00:08:54

AR: Well, when I first moved here—you know, I grew up going to the farmers’ market with my grandmother in Lancaster, [Pennsylvania,] the Central Market, which is the oldest continuously operating public market in the country. And I just went back there recently, and it’s totally

thriving and totally amazing. And so kind of like farmers' markets have always been like a warm, great place for me, you know, to go. So when I first moved here, that was kind of like one of the first things I did. And the [Carrboro] Market used to be in a different spot, as you know. So it was just kind of still there a little bit right when I first moved here, so I got to kind of see that crazy old structure and what that was and—. [*To MT*] Do you know where it used to be? It used to be in the parking lot that's behind Acme and Tom Robinson's.

00:09:42

MT: Oh, okay.

00:09:44

AR: And there was just kind of this like wooden structure around it that was really rickety and amazing.

00:09:47

AR: So when it first moved I remember thinking kind of like, "Wow; you know, it feels slicker and bigger and fancier and the rain is not coming down on your head, and—" But obviously like so many more farmers could then be there and be under cover. So yeah; that—you know, that was when I first started going, when I first moved here.

00:10:13

SCA: Okay; and are there certain farmers—well, maybe we could talk a little. I know you've gotten some farmers to grow specifically produce for Lantern that's more Asian in style and provenance. Can we talk about that a little bit?

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AR: Sure; yeah. The one, you know—we often adapt things that are—people are growing that you think of as a Southern ingredient, but we put it into an Asian context here. So we use a ton of things that, you know, you’d think of as being very Southern, but okra is just as much in Indian recipes as it is in Southern recipes. And sweet potatoes are used obviously in a lot of Asian recipes, including Japanese recipes.

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So a couple things that we’ve had people grow for us are shishito peppers, which is a—a Japanese pepper, different kinds of Asian greens, different kinds of herbs, different kinds of chilies, different kinds of specifically Asian soybean varieties.

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SCA: Can you talk a little bit about the process of approaching a farmer and asking them if they’d be interested?

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AR: Well, we usually don’t have to approach them, because they’re usually sitting here or standing someplace **[Laughs]** or talking on the phone. So it’s usually people who want to kind of grow more things for us, want to sell us more things, but sometimes it’s just somebody who wants to try something. Sometimes it’s somebody who wants to get their foot in the door in restaurants, and so they’re interested in diversifying what their crops are. There can be a number of different reasons why somebody would be willing to do it. Sometimes we’re like, “Oh, this is

a weird thing; it's perfect for this person because they like growing weird things and they don't mind if there's a low yield or if it doesn't work out the first couple years." So all different ways.

00:12:03

SCA: Are there any things that you've tried to grow that you wish you could have locally that don't really work in this soil?

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AR: I wish I had an avocado tree in our backyard. **[Laughs]**

00:12:13

MT: That's awesome. That's great.

00:12:16

SCA: Did you—**[to MT]** I know that you go to Market a lot, too.

00:12:22

MT: Yes.

00:12:23

SCA: Can you tell me a little bit about your shopping at the Market?

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MT: Well it's like a social hour for me **[Laughs]**. I really like everybody at the Market and they're really easy going people and it's really—I really enjoy it. It's really nice.

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SCA: Do you usually go on Wednesday or Saturday?

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MT: Usually both days, but now I think we're going to stop doing Saturday just because a lot of people deliver stuff here and since we buy a lot of stuff, big amounts, it's easy for them to bring it here, too.

00:12:57

SCA: Uh-hm; so today is Wednesday. Let's say if you were going to go to the Market today, who might you visit and what might you buy?

00:13:04

MT: Well, I usually check the refrigerator the day before and see what I need, and sometimes I call people—farmers—so they can bring the stuff and have it ready for me.

00:13:15

AR: You pretty much always call people.

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MT: Yes.

00:13:17

AR: I mean, you don't ever go on Wednesday and don't have—

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MT: Not anymore, really.

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AR: I think the shopping idea is a little bit of a myth in terms of restaurant use. Not that you're saying that, but I think yeah; there's a little shopping involved, but it's really more—you have to know kind of like—

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SCA: You're picking up.

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AR: You're picking up, because when it's ,you know, thirty or forty pounds from each farmer, it's hard to shop that—just the time that it takes by the time you got out of there.

00:13:45

SCA: And they have to know to harvest it for you.

00:13:47

MT: Yes; yeah.

00:13:48

AR: Uh-hm.

00:13:50

MT: You know, I mean really we can't go and say, "Can I get forty pounds of tomatoes?" And they're like, "Ah, that's all I brought." It's like, you know—and sometimes you tell them, "Can—can I buy this?" You have to ask them—ask them like that: "Can I buy this?"

00:14:02

AR: Because they might not want to have nothing on their table and have to stand there still for two hours **[Laughs]** saying they're out of everything.

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SCA: So they mostly deliver to you now?

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AR: It's a combination.

00:14:14

MT: Yeah.

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AR: What would you say the volume—like percentage is? It really depends on the week and like what is available at that moment.

00:14:20

MT: Right.

00:14:22

AR: You know, in the fall when it's like pumpkins and sweet potatoes and like tons of stuff that weigh—a lot of stuff by volume or by weight, we might have most everything delivered.

Because, you know, when we get pork it's always pretty much delivered now, although we used to pick it up. We—we would be going there and picking up, you know, 200 pounds of pork, but talk about percentages, if you're interested in that.

00:14:42

SCA: Yeah.

00:14:43

MT: I think right now like a good forty percent is delivered here. It can get to more like—maybe like a month or two it would be like seventy, eighty percent delivered.

00:14:55

SCA: Because it'll be the heavier—?

00:14:57

MT: The heavy stuff; and a lot of the farmers, they only have one or two things that they only come to town to bring it to us, maybe. And they don't want to stop doing the Farmers' Market—some people.

00:15:09

SCA: Were these relationships that you started at Enoteca Vin or were they—did you meet these people just shopping at the Market?

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AR: Some people I've known since then—Bill Dow, Ken Dawson are two that stand out; Daniel [Tolfree] from Millarckee Farm. And then a lot of them are people, you know, we are getting phone calls and people coming to the back door, I'd say a couple times a week, of people that we've never met before. And it's a funny thing for us because I feel like five years ago—tell me if I'm wrong about this—but in my mind, five years ago I feel like we felt—we may be wrong, but we felt like we knew almost everyone who was farming within a thirty-mile radius of us.

00:16:05

MT: Right; right.

00:16:06

AR: And now it feels like it's not possible to keep track of it. It feels like there's just this total explosion. And I think, you know, to—for us to meet someone we've never met who has got a farm twenty miles from here and pulls in the parking lot with like a truck full of amazing tomatoes is surprising really, **[Laughs]** because we're like, "Wait a second." Like, we kind of thought we had a handle on it, but so many people are starting farms that it's—it's hard to keep track of.

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SCA: Do you find that those are mostly, you know, people in their twenties looking for an alternate career path, or are they people who have worked in different industries and want to—?

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AR: I think it's a mix. I think it's a surprising number of young people, though, given the national statistics.

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SCA: Uh-hm.

00:16:50

AR: I feel like—this is anecdotal, but I feel like there's more young farmers here and that the younger segment is faster growing than in other parts of the country.

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SCA: Uh-hm; are there—do you find that with there being more young farmers, are some of them not staying in it as long? Or do you think that some of them, you know, have the potential to be in it for the long haul?

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AR: Well, not owning land is a big hurdle, and so younger people are less likely to own land. So I don't know that—if they're staying in it less time or not, but they have more challenges than an older, established person that has family land, or land they even have a mortgage on.

00:17:37

SCA: Well, maybe someone like a Ken Dawson or a Bill Dow who has been doing it since, you know, the dark ages of the Market, what do you think has maybe made them so successful for so long—just in your opinion?

00:17:52

AR: Alex Hitt, Betsy Hitt, you know, Kathy and Mike Jones are other people that I would say like have this very long view. And I think the thing that those people share is what they're doing makes them happy and that they're not motivated by money and they—they took a really long view a long time ago. And they're all mentors to a lot of other people, so those people that we just talked about are—I'm sure I'm leaving a couple people out, if not more than a couple, but they represent kind of the core people that started the Market and grew the Market, and they didn't grow it because it would be good for them. They grew it because it would be good for the community, and they grew it because it's what they love to do. And how many farmers who now sell their—were mentored by them, I mean it's countless. So I guess that's why they're successful is they took a really holistic approach to what they do.

00:19:05

SCA: Uh-hm; and can you talk a little bit about—if you don't mind—if you don't want to, it's okay, but you know, what you get from each farmer in season? Like, “I particularly like the tomatoes from X or the salad greens from Y.”

00:19:21

AR: We—do you want me to go through like a list—like a total list of stuff, or do you want specific people?

00:19:29

SCA: Sure.

00:19:28

AR: Because we have—we buy from probably forty or fifty different farmers.

00:19:34

MT: Yeah; it's a very, very long list.

00:19:35

SCA: So maybe just a few.

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AR: So tell maybe—ask me people that you want to talk about and we'll—.

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SCA: Okay; why don't we talk about—do you get your meat from Cane Creek and Chapel Hill Creamery?

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AR: We get all of our pork from Chapel Hill Creamery right now.

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SCA: Okay; so let's talk about that.

00:19:52

AR: We got our meat from Cane Creek for a long time, and Chapel Hill Creamery is doing a project that they are feeding all of their whey from their cheese-making and byproduct of cheese-making to their pigs, and so we're getting—we're getting hogs from them. We also get the cheese from Chapel Hill Creamery. We get paneer, which is an Indian cheese, and they make the cheese from milk from their Jersey cows. They're pasture-raised, about nine months a year, and it's a closed herd, which means, you know, they don't bring cows in from outside at all. And they have about thirty dairy cows on about seventy acres and they're—they're farmers and they're artisan cheese makers, and it's an incredibly challenging thing that they do. And so that's Chapel Hill Creamery. You know there's—there's a lot there. I'm sure you're interviewing farmers, but they would be awesome to interview if you haven't interviewed them.

00:20:52

SCA: Yeah; yeah. No; but I'm interested also in the—

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AR: I don't want to speak for them. Yeah; I mean I'm telling you about them just in case you don't—

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SCA: Right; yeah, I'm just interested in your perspective on the farmers that you buy from because we are interviewing a lot of others, too.

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AR: Yeah; of course, yeah.

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SCA: Can you tell a difference in the taste of the pork when they're eating whey?

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AR: I think it's nuttier. I think it's fattier. I've not—not done a blind tasting, no. **[Laughs]**

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MT: I definitely feel like it's a little different. I mean, I'm the one most of the time who processes the—the meat. And just touching the meat, the raw meat, you can tell a little difference.

00:21:29

SCA: Really?

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MT: After many years of doing this, you can tell the difference. It's really good; it's pretty amazing. It's pretty amazing.

00:21:37

SCA: Do you ever shop at the Farmers' Market to cook at home for yourself?

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MT: Yes.

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SCA: Tell me what kinds of things you like to make for yourself at home.

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MT: Well, usually the first thing I look for is eggs—always—and then cheese and bread. That's the main three things that I always go for. And then veggies, all the vegetables that's in season, but yeah.

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SCA: Do you have a family at home, or you live by yourself?

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MT: I live by myself; yes.

00:22:04

SCA: But you like to cook for yourself?

00:22:05

MT: Only when I cook with other people and with friends—that's the only—only time.

00:22:12

SCA: And then I know that you cook at home from the Farmers' Market, and maybe we can talk about the cookbook a little bit.

00:22:20

AR: Uh-hm.

00:22:20

SCA: So why don't you tell us about the recent cookbook [*Cooking in the Moment*]?

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AR: I have a cookbook that—it's all about cooking at home over the course of a year. And so there's some restaurant recipes, but it's mostly really simple kind of ten ingredients, for lack of a better description [**Laughs**]. Fast, but kind of done through the seasons. So really just going to the market and then coming home and cooking and not really thinking about much else. But not done in kind of like a pure way, like there's lots of other ingredients from other places in it. But just kind of focusing on what can be done with local, whether it's January or June, so there's a lot of winter and fall recipes too.

00:23:02

SCA: Did you find that your home cooking changed when you had children?

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AR: Definitely; you have to cook more often, and it's more prescribed in terms of getting food on the table. So I think when I used to cook at home it was just this kind of crazy, whatever, you know, cooking for hours, eating dinner at 10 o'clock. And I think when you have to eat dinner at 5:30 **[Laughs]**, your cooking is totally different than eating at 10 o'clock. And I think, you know, your—your idea of what dinner is, is also really different, too.

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SCA: Are there fruits and vegetables, maybe, or other local things that they've tried that you've been pleasantly surprised that they've liked?

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AR: Kids are a different beast, you know. I think, you know, what some—what a kid doesn't like on one day, they might very well eat the next day. And I think like one of the mistakes people make about vegetables with kids is they get this idea, like they don't like avocado or they don't like this and it's kind of—. It can be really arbitrary and really fluid, and I think that—that something about seasonality that is helpful with kids is, like, if they don't eat green beans one year, next green bean season it can be like a totally new, fresh-slate opportunity **[Laughs]** to like start from scratch—green beans again. So that's, you know, something that's fun.

00:24:29

SCA: And when you wrote the cookbook, were you cooking—I mean were you thinking that your audience would be mostly people who already shopped at markets and were already kind of adept with local and seasonal food? Or were you trying to introduce a new audience to that?

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AR: I think I hoped for both. But definitely I feel like writing the book was a reaction to hearing from friends and people that I would run into saying things like, you know, it's—"I don't know how you can just go to the Farmers' Market and make dinner. Like, it's just not possible." And that was really frustrating for me, because I can see why for somebody who is busy, for somebody who doesn't have a lot of money to spend on dinner, it does feel like going to the Farmers' Market and making dinner is not possible. Because if you have a certain recipe in mind, the stuff that you're buying might not be in that recipe. If you're looking for specific ingredients, they might not be there.

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But there's such a bounty there, even in the winter, that the concept for the book is really kind of like you can go to the Farmers' Market and spend twenty bucks, and you can make usually a couple meals as long as you're cooking really from what's there. And cooking from what's there doesn't require a lot of expert skill. You know, this whole idea that chefs and people and food professionals are improving cooking at home, I mean, I don't see that to be true. And I think people watching a lot of cooking shows hasn't necessarily made us better home cooks **[Laughs]**. And I think, you know, the foodie thing, it's almost been weaponized to the point where it's just an intimidator; it's not an educator, and it's not something that's making people feel more comfortable with food. It's making them feel less comfortable with food.

00:26:23

SCA: And what made you—so you're taking these familiar ingredients at Lantern, but interpreting them through Asian techniques and flavors. And maybe what made you want to do that?

00:26:37

AR: Well, I think what made us want to do that is wanting to use as much from around here as we could. But when we first started—Miguel wasn't here at the very beginning, but he was here fairly early—what year did you start working?

00:26:54

MT: I started working here six months after you opened.

00:26:57

AR: Six months?

00:26:58

MT: Uh-hm; maybe less.

00:27:00

AR: Part-time.

00:27:02

MT: Part-time.

00:27:02

SCA: Because you were across the street [at Elaine's on Franklin]?

00:27:04

MT: Yes.

00:27:06

AR: But we can't talk about that—. **[Laughs]** It was all pre-approved by all parties. When we first opened, we were just trying to, like, get food on the table. That was really the objective. And so wherever it came, from it didn't matter, because it's just a struggle to even just kind of get—move food through the pipeline of the kitchen and get it out to the diners is like the real challenge.

00:27:28

So I think maybe we didn't even have tomatoes on the menu here until two years—three years after we opened?

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MT: By two years, because I remember—I remember when I started working here as a prep, I remember getting like so many strawberries from the Farmers' Market already, and like blueberries and other stuff.

00:27:51

AR: We would get lots of stuff—

00:27:51

MT: Already started filling—

00:27:54

AR: —but we weren't basing the menu as much.

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MT: Right.

00:27:57

AR: Like I would say, none of—that's just—that's interesting if you want to know about it. Do you—

00:28:00

SCA: Yeah; I'm curious.

00:28:02

AR: Okay; because it's interesting, I think, to think about like what was not local and what was local at the very beginning and how it was a real evolution. Because I think there's this feeling, sometimes people come into a restaurant that serves a lot of local and they think everything is organic and everything is local. And you know, obviously that's not the case—ever in the beginning of a restaurant, generally, and also just restaurants in general. You know, there's a lot of practical considerations.

00:28:30

So I guess we had no local meat—oh, no, chicken was North Carolina, but it was confinement. There was no pork available, really, at that time from farms, so our pork was from Niman Ranch. Our beef was all commodity beef. Our eggs were local, but they were from a

confinement operation that's local. Our milk has always been Maple View—not grass-fed, not you know—.

00:29:11

And then what—what was the first big change that you remember?

00:29:13

MT: Hmm.

00:29:19

AR: In terms of produce.

00:29:23

MT: I think we started getting peppers, because Bill Dow was one of the first ones to start coming here, I remember.

00:29:30

AR: Delivering.

00:29:32

MT: Delivering two days a week. So we used to start getting herbs, I think at some point, like different herbs that we used for desserts—or mint or basil, I think.

00:29:46

AR: We were getting cilantro when he had—

00:29:47

MT: Cilantro, I remember the big, big buckets of cilantro that we used to get.

00:29:52

AR: It's funny, because cilantro is a good example of something we have to use all year. But when it's in season here—which is very few months—we switch over to that, but then we have to go right back to—

00:30:04

MT: Right; and a lot of—well not many of the—not many of things, just like cilantro that we have to change. Well, maybe like basil—

00:30:09

AR: Onions.

00:30:12

MT: Onions, basil—like basil, we try to use as much—when it's local.

00:30:15

AR: But we still buy it all year.

00:30:19

MT: We still buy it all year long.

00:30:20

AR: Garlic.

00:30:21

MT: Garlic, hmm—

00:30:24

AR: Scallions.

00:30:24

MT: Scallions, yes.

00:30:28

SCA: You have to buy those all year long?

00:30:28

MT: All year long.

00:30:28

AR: Yeah; there's just a lot of things that—well I guess we're listing the limes and lemons, I mean stuff that we get, but you know we—we get lemons from L'Hoste in Louisiana when we can.

00:30:45

SCA: And then Miguel, had you—were you familiar with Asian flavors and techniques when you started here?

00:30:50

MT: No. I had no idea.

00:30:53

SCA: Can you tell about learning about that a little?

00:30:55

MT: It was—it—it—it was a new world. All—to see all these bottles and all these ingredients, I had no idea. And everybody seems to be very familiar with it, and I was like, “what—what is Shaoxing wine? What is rice wine? What is this?” It take me a little short time to learn it because they have a really good system then, where there are recipes so you would not get lost. But it—it was a totally new thing.

00:31:25

SCA: Had you tried any of those dishes before?

00:31:27

MT: No, no, no; not—nothing.

00:31:30

SCA: Do you have any new favorites from—since you’ve been working here?

00:31:33

MT: Here?

00:31:34

SCA: Any dishes that you really like that you hadn't had before?

00:31:37

MT: Oh, it's hard to say because I really like this, and it's a lot of dishes there I really like. Like this is—for me was one of the first places when I started eating a lot of vegetables—like a *lot*. I feel like we have a lot more—a lot of vegetarian food on the menu, and it's really interesting. It's not that simple vegetarian dish, so—.

00:32:01

SCA: Then I've also heard that you sometimes make Mexican food for the staff meal.

00:32:06

MT: Yes; well we are [**Laughs**] a big group of people in the kitchen.

00:32:12

AR: The rarity is when it's not Mexican. [**Laughs**]

00:32:14

MT: Yes; yes. Yeah; we—we cook—mostly every day, but now—now everybody cooks in the kitchen. It used to be that—you know—it used to be that only two or three people, and one of those people was me cooking, but now it's like everybody—. I think they—they're not scared to cook for everybody anymore, and they have their own dishes they want to try and from the—.

Because we have different parts of the country—from Mexico—so they have their own recipes and their own ideas. And so now we have like a grandma in the kitchen now, Rosa.

00:32:51

AR: She's not grandmother age.

00:32:55

MT: No; but it's like, she's—now she is the one who cooks for us most of the time.

00:33:02

AR: She's like grandmother activities, but she's a relatively young woman. She's under fifty.

[Laughs]

00:33:08

MT: Actually she's under forty, I think. She's under forty. **[Laughs]** But, you know, I mean we call her—everybody calls her “grandma,” and—

00:33:21

AR: But the word—the Spanish word for grandmother has a different connotation.

SCA: Do you call her “abuelita”?

00:33:25

MT: Yes; yes.

00:33:28

AR: It's a different word.

00:33:28

MT: It's a different word. It's not like an age thing; it's more like, she's in charge of the cooking. She's the boss on the cooking for staff.

00:33:38

AR: Wait; that reminded me of something. Talk about Fernando's fried rice.

00:33:41

MT: Yes; well everybody has—you know, everybody wants to cook at some point, or everybody has to at some point, I guess. And some people can do easier than other people. But one of the things that we here—not very often, but I guess maybe at least once a month—is fried rice that Fernando makes. He does a pretty good job I think, considering that he never sees the real—well not very often sees the real—

00:34:07

AR: He works during the day.

00:34:10

MT: So he never sees the real thing at night—how high it works; he just—he just does it. And now whatever we have in the walk-in, like any veggies or meat—if we have any beef or pork or chicken—anything he can find, he just makes two big bowls of fried rice for everybody.

00:34:27

AR: With lots of stuff in it, with rooster sauce—

00:34:31

MT: Soy sauce, sesame oil, carrots, shrimp—it can be pork, chicken, or beef.

00:34:37

AR: Eggs.

00:34:39

MT: Eggs.

00:34:39

AR: Ham.

00:34:41

MT: Ham [**Laughs**]; it's really, really amazing.

00:34:45

AR: Sometimes vegetables—I mean, sometimes greens.

00:34:48

MT: Yes; cilantro—always cilantro, scallions.

00:34:56

SCA: Do you have a favorite thing to make?

00:34:57

MT: Well we made the carnitas here—not as often anymore, but yeah. We cook pork a lot here.

00:35:07

SCA: And you had your carnitas recipe in the *Southern Foodways [Alliance Community] Cookbook*.

00:35:11

MT: Yes; yes.

00:35:13

SCA: Were there any vegetables that before you came to North Carolina you hadn't had because they don't grow in Celaya?

00:35:21

MT: Yeah, definitely. Well, I had never seen Japanese eggplant. That was one of the neater things. Okra is not very common. What else—we don't even have lemons in Mexico.

00:35:37

SCA: Just limes?

00:35:38

MT: Just limes. And we have other different citrus but—I can't see them here. Well, in Asian cooking, it's like bok choy or all that kind stuff—mustard greens.

00:35:53

AR: What about scallions?

00:35:55

MT: We have scallions.

00:35:57

AR: Growing there?

00:35:59

MT: Uh-hm. What else? Like Thai basil; I had never seen Thai basil. I'm familiar with Italian basil, but it's a lot of things—and maybe you can get a lot more things—and these things.

00:36:16

SCA: Right; can you guys tell me a little bit about how [pastry chef] Monica [Segovia Welsh] uses local produce and other local ingredients in her desserts? Can she come talk for just a minute? That would be great.

00:36:30

AR: Uh-hm; well I have to ask but—

00:36:34

SCA: If she doesn't want, to it's okay.

00:36:38

MT: It's pretty interesting how things work here, because really the amount of food that we do local now, it's impressive.

00:36:44

SCA: It's really incredible.

00:36:46

MT: It is impressive. If you go in the walk-in, everywhere you look, the beef, the pork, all the veggies, chicken, it's impressive. And sometimes it's really hard, because you like all the farmers, and you want to buy from all of them, but it's so hard to take a decision—what I can move in a week.

00:37:05

SCA: Yeah; and I'm sure they all want to sell to you.

00:37:07

MT: Yes; yes. They really, really like us. I think we try to be really nice to them, and—.

Because a lot of people, you know, like from restaurants they go to the Farmers' Market and they

say, “Oh, those cucumbers are no good. Wait; they don’t have this size,” and all those kinds of stuff. You got to understand they’re not going to be perfect.

00:37:26

AR: She’ll be here in a minute.

00:37:26

SCA: Okay, that sounds good. I mean she can just talk for like a minute, and that would be enough for desserts. **[Laughs]**

00:37:31

AR: Yeah; yeah, no it’s great to hear it from her.

[REMOVED: 37:36-41:34; while Reusing went to get Monica Segovia-Welsh.]

00:41:34

AR: She’s just on the phone and I didn’t want to like drag her off her call.

00:41:37

SCA: That’s fine, and if she doesn’t want—

00:41:39

AR: No; no, she wants to. She just—she’s on the phone and I couldn’t—

00:41:44

SCA: Doesn't her husband make the bread, too?

00:41:46

AR: Yeah; they have Chicken Bridge Bakery, so she—I mean I know you're not, maybe—can't do a whole sit-down with them, but their stuff is awesome.

00:41:55

MT: Pretty amazing.

00:41:57

AR: And she's super-involved in that. Like it's her thing, too, so—

00:42:03

SCA: Can you think of anything that you want to talk about that I have forgotten to ask you?

00:42:09

MT: Hmm.

00:42:13

AR: I think your mom's business is really interesting if you feel like talking about it.

00:42:16

SCA: Are you willing to tell me a little bit about it right now—about your mom's business?

00:42:19

MT: Yeah; yeah.

00:42:21

SCA: Okay; let's do that.

00:42:22

MT: Well she's been in the food business since 1985, 1986. She serves a lot of workers in the industrial area. And all day, since like lunch—and lunchtime in Mexico is at 10:00 in the morning—until like 8 o'clock when dinner is like 7:00, 6:00.

00:42:43

SCA: Is this out of your house or—?

00:42:45

MT: Yes; her house. And we just go to the market every day and buy stuff, and that's what I used to do after work—after school—is go to the market and get stuff for her.

00:42:56

SCA: So has she built an extra dining room onto the house? Or it's—?

00:43:01

MT: No, no, no; it's like a small kitchen, and it has like a building, and it has like seats everywhere. It's a very, very casual thing. But, and people—that people can afford, like not very expensive stuff.

00:43:17

SCA: So if she's buying—is farmers' market food less expensive in Mexico?

00:43:23

MT: Everything is less expensive, yes. And it's a very common thing that—you know, everybody who has stuff—grown stuff—

00:43:33

SCA: So she can go get fresh things and have it not be very expensive?

00:43:37

MT: Yes; uh-hm, like chickens.

00:43:40

AR: Especially when she's got a kid to kill them.

00:43:44

MT: Yes. We've all been there. I think Monica has been there, too, killing chickens—killing chickens.

00:43:50

AR: Describe the first time that experience—what that was like when your mom sent you to the farm.

00:43:58

MT: Well I was like seven years old, and—which the farm is really close to my—to my house and we all—I mean all the kids in the neighborhood it’s like a very common thing to do. Your mother says, “You go there—go and get a chicken,” and we kill it. The first time it was like, “You have to hold it and I’m going to cut the neck.” And I was like, “Ah, okay.” I didn’t hold it strong enough, so the chicken go all over the place without—without the head. And—but after that I learned my lesson and so—and we did it again, and again, and again, and again.

00:44:38

SCA: So you’re seven or eight years old and your mom gives you a knife and says, “Go for it”?

00:44:42

MT: Yes. And—but yeah; I mean—the worst part is cleaning the chicken and taking all the feathers and the other stuff, just—. I mean, it can’t get more local than that, I guess. **[Laughs]**

00:44:55

SCA: So who does that now that you’re here in the United States?

00:44:57

MT: I don’t think they do it anymore. They’re like, “No.” They’re not going to do that anymore.

00:45:03

SCA: Okay; and so can you introduce yourself, please?

00:45:07

Monica Segovia Welsh: My name is Monica Segovia Welsh, and I'm the pastry chef at Lantern.

00:45:16

SCA: And I was asking—the reason we asked you to come over; I'm curious about how you incorporate local produce and other—maybe local herbs into your desserts.

00:45:28

MSW: Well, it's kind of you know, part of what we do at the restaurant. So as far as desserts are concerned, usually once spring rolls around, it's just like everything's here all of a sudden—and strawberries usually are the first thing to come. And I try to think of—I go to the Market, and I kind of peruse and see what's there. And usually I try to go for the things that are the most abundant, too, because you know we want to have it stay on the menu for a while.

00:45:58

And, you know, it just changes year to year, too. Like one year might be a really bad year for peaches—like kind of this year wasn't that great for some of the people that we get them from. But it was a really great year for figs, and we've had just a ton of figs. So I definitely base the menu off of that. And just try to be creative and use things that I haven't used before; we have vendors who are always growing new things or who have started things, like a couple years, you know, before and this is like their first really great year with fruit.

00:46:36

And we have like, you know Rob and Cheri Bowers [of Whitted Bowers Farm]; they, you know, are planting a lot of fruit trees and things that are going to come in the future, so—. That's kind of how—

00:46:47

AR: Could you do like a chronological list of like your fruit—of your—not just fruit, I mean it’s like chestnuts and like—. Like really for Monica, if it’s not local, it’s almost never on the menu. Like she—Monica has more if you went for like a percentage of local—desserts is much higher in every dish than anything that we can ever do on the menu, and because of her talent and also her determination and also just because of the nature of the desserts, it’s—.

00:47:22

MSW: Well and also, too, I feel like in the past couple of years kind of once I got the hang of the menu and stuff here is to try to like preserve a lot of things that—even though they might be out of season, you know, to preserve them in a way that we can kind of carry it through the year. So, you know, we have special events in—you know for New Year’s Eve and Valentine’s Day, so you know, I might have like preserved strawberries or something that, you know, can be carried through.

00:47:52

SCA: So let’s—would it be okay if maybe we said, “Okay, right now is the first week of September—” and then say what ingredients you have right now, and go through the year?

00:48:01

MSW: Sure; yeah.

00:48:03

SCA: Not necessarily month-by-month, but just what the progression is.

00:48:06

MSW: Yeah; well raspberries are—have been going for a while, and Rob Tolbert from Laughing Spirit Farm—that’s who we’ve been getting them from. And he’s kind of the only person that I know of who does local but also organic and sustainable like any—in any kind of like mass way. I mean in mass, I mean he has like a few rows, like he has a lot of plants, so he can keep a steady supply. And so he’s about to have like a second wave, and so that’s been really great. And then figs are still going; we’re at the tail-end of the blueberries and then also we’re entering muscadines and scuppernongs. And then next will be pecans will come, and then chestnuts will come, and then we get citrus from Louisiana, since that isn’t really grown here, but it’s still regional. And we get that from the L’Hoste farm in Louisiana, and it’s organic.

00:49:08

And then let me think; I’m trying to think what we—then in the winter months we really like kind of carry through on you know pecans and chestnuts. Those are kinds of the main things.

00:49:19

AR: Sweet potato?

00:49:18

MSW: Sweet potatoes, oh yeah, pumpkins; I’m forgetting that whole squash family, and then—

00:49:27

AR: Rice.

00:49:27

MSW: Rice and grains: We get a lot of stuff from Anson Mills and try to incorporate that as well. Apples—I almost forgot about apples. We get apples in the summer, but then we get—you know, there’s fall apples, too.

00:49:42

AR: Pears.

00:49:43

MSW: Yeah; pears, and then I’m trying to think—and then kind of—that kind of carries us through until—I mean, strawberries came as soon as April this year, I feel like. And so then we start getting herbs like mint, and strawberries come, and anise hyssop and lemon verbena, and then sour cherries. And then that kind of takes us all the way back until—until blueberries start.

00:50:23

AR: And then sweet cherries.

00:50:24

MSW: And then sweet cherries, sour, sweet blueberries, and—

00:50:26

AR: Which Monica picks herself for the whole restaurant.

00:50:28

SCA: And do you want to tell us about what you do with the cherry stones?

00:50:32

MSW: Oh [Laughs].

00:50:35

AR: We don't talk about that anymore.

00:50:37

MSW: Besides being just like super-controversial, apparently, about it. [*Editor's note: An article in the New York Times on July 26, 2011, mentioned Lantern's cherry pit panna cotta, but warned that cherry pits contain trace amounts of cyanogens.*]

00:50:40

SCA: Oh, I didn't know that.

00:50:43

MSW: [Laughs] No; it's fine. Should I go into that?

00:50:47

AR: Yeah; no, no, no, it's totally fine. It's totally fine; I was totally joking.

00:50:52

MSW: [Laughs] So the—the cherry pits—well, actually all stone fruits have the bitter almond essence in them, and so I save all those and just keep them frozen and use them to infuse the flavor into the ice cream and panna cotta and cream and stuff like that. And it's really tasty.

00:51:16

SCA: I was asking because I really like—

00:51:21

MSW: Should I go—should I go to the chemistry, or can I leave it at that?

00:51:23

AR: You can leave it at that.

00:51:27

SCA: Are you from North Carolina?

00:51:28

MSW: No; I grew up in San Antonio, Texas. I was born and raised there.

00:51:34

SCA: Okay; so are there—I know the fruit availability is obviously different. Were there different things that you got used to working with in North Carolina, or—?

00:51:45

MSW: Well, figs is such a special kind of thing. Like, I, you know, didn't grow up at all even—I don't even remember the first time I had a fig. I mean it was probably like in college or something, but I lived in Northern Wisconsin for a long time, too, so that's like a totally different area and growing season and everything. So that's probably—that and chestnuts are like the two things that were really new to me and—and native persimmons, although I know that they have those in Texas, but—oh, that's another fall thing that we get.

00:52:18

AR: And process like crazy. And maybe talk a little bit about who brings them to us.

00:52:22

MSW: So there's this elderly woman, Mary Andrews, who—her family, I think, has been here for a really long time—generations. But she lives near Maple View, actually, and her grandson and some of her other family like live on the neighboring land next to her, and they have some huge persimmon—native persimmon trees. And so they lay the tarps out, you know, when it's time, and you know, some will start falling before the first frost, but the trees kind of need that first frost and then they all, you know, fall off. And they just collect them by hand and she brings us like buckets and buckets and buckets. I don't even know how many pounds it was last year, but—

00:53:04

AR: One time she brought ninety pounds in that one week. But Bill Smith introduced her to us.

00:53:11

MSW: —her to us, yeah; and she’s brought us figs and eggs before, and tomatoes, a little bit. She does a little bit of home gardening, but the persimmons—

00:53:23

AR: She’s probably over—

00:53:26

MSW: Oh, she told me one time how old she was, but I can’t remember. It’s—she’s up there.

[Laughs]

00:53:34

AR: She gathers everything herself.

00:53:35

MSW: She has great-grandchildren who live—

00:53:37

AR: But when we saw the amount she was bringing, we were imaging that she had all of her grandchildren helping her, but she’s doing it all herself.

00:53:45

MSW: Yeah; she does it all herself. I think her grandson helps her now, but also, too, I went over because she ended up wanting to get rid of some of her chickens, so I took some of them. And so I actually went and I was like—I really wanted to see these trees, and they’re massive.

They're just huge and really old and it was really cool to see, because I had never seen a native persimmon tree. Like she has a couple that are just huge and right next to each other, and they're just in the perfect spot.

00:54:12

SCA: Does she know how long they've been there?

00:54:14

MSW: She probably does. I should ask her.

00:54:19

AR: Bill Smith has a native persimmon in his front yard that has volunteers, and his tree might be a volunteer from her. That would be a good thing to talk to Bill about if you haven't talked to him.

00:54:30

SCA: Yeah; so what are some things that you do with the persimmons?

00:54:34

MSW: One of the main things I've done is make persimmon pudding here, but it's a little bit different than I think the traditional Southern style that people are used to. It's like really—it's not—it's like really black and thick and super, super sweet. The one I do here has like a lot of different spices, like ginger and vanilla bean and cinnamon in it. And then—and then I bake it in

a steam bath, so it's kind of—it's got this really funky texture. I don't know how to explain it, but it doesn't get crusty or anything. It's very soft and—

00:55:09

AR: Gelatinous.

00:55:10

MSW: But it's got a gelatinous quality that only the native persimmons really have, so after it cools it—it really holds its shape. And I've made ice cream before with it, and I've thought about making donuts, so that's another thing. **[Laughs]** It's kind of hard to think of things besides pudding to make with them because it's such a—the—the texture of the persimmons is so perfect for that.

00:55:43

SCA: Well, I don't want to take up too much of your time but I know since this project is based around the Carrboro Farmers' Market, you and your husband have a business there, too; do you want to talk just a little bit about it? Do you have time?

00:55:56

MSW: Yeah; sure. So we started selling there last spring—actually no, it's been almost two springs now, two years. And we built an earthen oven out at our house, and—which is made out of clay and sand and sawdust and—but it has a hearth floor. It has a floor made out of fire brick. And both of us had worked in bakeries before this, and we just decided it was kind of time to do

our own thing. And, you know, we have a child, and we wanted to be at home more, and all of those things.

00:56:31

So—so anyway, it’s a lot of late nights; we usually start mixing and fermenting doughs like Thursday night, and then we’re pretty much baking all Friday evening into the night before the Market. And so we mostly do hearth breads, and then we try to source as much local grains, too, as we can. I mean we get locally milled flour from Lindley Mills, but we have like a small tabletop grinder but we don’t really—aren’t really set up to grind everything that we use. I mean, we go through quite a bit in a week. But we just started getting some local heirloom rye from Okfuskee Farm; it’s an Abruzzi rye, and then we just incorporate kind of the same thing that I learned from doing here. Like, you know, we get apples and figs, and we’ve been trying to experiment and drying things in the oven, too after we’re done baking. There’s like that residual heat for a couple of days; it’ll stay at like 250. So I’ve been drying figs to use to make some special stuff for the holidays, because I’m not getting as much.

00:57:42

So you know it was like four pounds of figs I dried the other day and I think I got two pounds after that. **[Laughs]** It’s kind of like, “Okay; this is going to be very special. Only certain people are going to get this.” But you know, all the fruit, we—we try to freeze as much and process as much as we can. And you know, we make jam scones and we make our own jam for the scones, so, you know, trying to do as much as we can.

00:58:09

SCA: And then you use duck eggs in your cornbread, right?

00:58:12

MSW: Yeah; well, right now we're getting them from someone else, because we've had some predation problems at our house and so we just lost our last duck a couple weeks ago unfortunately. So we're trying to kind of regroup and restructure what's going on at our place to maybe get another little batch in the spring, but—.

00:58:32

SCA: So was the fact that you had the ducks at home—that was why you used them?

00:58:36

MSW: Yeah; because ducks are actually more consistent layers than chickens. So even with just having, you know, half a dozen ducks, we were getting a lot of duck eggs. And they're bigger, too, so they go farther when you're baking with them, too—just the weight. And, you know, we were eating them and selling them and—and everything. But yeah; they give the bread like a different texture, too. It's a little bit kind of cakier and softer, and I think it has a little bit of a more “bird-y” flavor [**Laughs**] than regular chicken eggs. Like some people don't like the flavor of it because it seems like a lot stronger. Like especially the yolk, definitely, has a more distinct flavor. But yeah; we—we have chickens, and so we use all our own eggs for making—baking, too, so—. It's a lot of work. [**Laughs**] But it's great, because, you know, we're at home, and it's easy in that way. We can like run upstairs into our house and make Simon dinner—that's my son—and then go back down and shape the next thing, you know. So that was—it's good.

00:59:45

SCA: Well, thank you for taking a little bit of time to talk to me.

00:59:49

MSW: Yeah; no problem.

00:59:50

SCA: I appreciate it.

00:59:51

MSW: Thanks.

00:59:53

SCA: And then Andrea, the last thing—

[BRIEF CUT; Reusing, Torres, and Arnold joking about the awkward nature of the interviewer's microphone]

01:00:22

SCA: So we were going to talk a little bit about the economics of—of buying local and what that means for you at the restaurant and for the farmer.

01:00:32

AR: I think that one of the goals of us using local is to try to get as much money back to the farm, to various farms as possible, and to kind of keep in mind this idea that it's not that helpful to buy something from a farmer that they can sell to someone retail for a lot more. And so what

we're always trying to do is ask people, "What do you have too much of? What are you not going to be able to sell today? What parts of the animal aren't you able to make a profit on?" and try to use—try to absorb as much of that stuff as possible, while people are still kind of in a learning curve.

01:01:14

You know, pork belly used to be called "fresh bacon" here, because that's the only way people could get people to buy it. And now it's almost impossible for us to buy pork belly if we just went to the Farmers' Market because it's such—it's really in demand. Yeah; so I think one thing that restaurants can be really useful at is trying to create—helping farmers create markets for things that otherwise they are not selling.

01:01:39

Often I think people are more willing to open their wallets in a dining room of a restaurant for an \$11 cocktail or an expensive appetizer, but that same quality of food in a Farmers' Market context might *seem* more expensive. You know, \$6 for a dozen eggs can be shocking if you're used to shopping in the grocery store. But when you see the quality of the egg and you know that like one egg per person on top of salad with some grain—or like on top of like some sautéed kale or in a bowl of soup with a couple vegetables can really be a whole meal with some Chicken Bridge Bakery bread—can really be a whole meal. And a meal is only maybe \$2.50—\$3 a person, it's really not what we think of as being expensive. It's just kind of—rying to kind of see those prices in a different way.

01:02:39

SCA: Did you have anything you wanted to add about that?

01:02:42

MT: I think one of the things that we didn't talk about is the drinks that we do in the bar. It's a big thing.

01:02:50

AR: Yeah; I wish [bartender] Wes [Wolfe] was here.

01:02:54

MT: Yeah; we process so much fruit, so much fruit for drinks for the bar. It's pretty incredible. It's very challenging.

01:03:00

SCA: Yeah; tell me about some of the drinks that Wesley makes.

01:03:05

MT: Well, we have the Red Geisha.

01:03:07

AR: Yeah; so in the spring with strawberries we have this drink called the Red Geisha.

01:03:12

MT: And we use blackberries; I'm not sure about the names of the drinks on all of it.

01:03:16

AR: Well, talk about the Red Geisha first; how much like processing is involved and what you—how many strawberries and things like that?

01:03:22

MT: We can process like—I like to process like one big batch at a time. Like every Monday, I like to do that and it would be like thirty, forty pounds of strawberries.

01:03:31

AR: So the drink is muddled strawberries that we're not really muddling in the bar—because the bar is so busy that we need to kind of do a rough kind of puree of it—with syrup that's flavored with ginger and vodka is the drink, and it's on ice. And so every week the kitchen processes—what did you say?

01:03:50

MT: Like forty pounds of strawberries.

01:03:53

SCA: So Wes will say, “Can you muddle forty pounds of strawberries for me?” Or, “Can you make—?”

01:03:58

MT: And well, basically also what I do is look for what's around, so as long as—as soon as the strawberries are out, then I bring the strawberries and I just tell him, “The strawberries are here. Are you ready to change the menu?”

01:04:11

AR: Right; “Muscadines are here.”

01:04:13

MT: Muscadines, blackberries—

01:04:15

AR: Blackberries, so we do a drink that—that’s blackberries with lemon verbena and gin. We do a drink with persimmons; muscadines; with tomatoes—.

01:04:27

MT: Persimmons, tomatoes—

01:04:26

SCA: So you’re telling him when things come, and he’ll make a recipe?

01:04:30

AR: Watermelon.

01:04:31

MT: Watermelon.

01:04:32

SCA: Yeah; I had one of his—

01:04:35

AR: Was it watermelon with—with shiso?

01:04:38

SCA: No; he—it did have shiso, but he did it for Ashley Christensen—for Stir the Pot—

01:04:43

AR: Oh yeah; yeah, uh-hm that was fun.

01:04:46

MT: Oh the other one, we also—

01:04:48

AR: That was some powerful fuel, I heard.

01:04:52

MT: —we do something with green lemongrass, the grass of the lemongrass, and—

01:04:55

AR: Oh yeah; make—Nancie McDermott, who is a food writer and a big SFA-er, brings us lemongrass from her garden, the tops—and she taught us how to do this. And it's, basically you grind up the lemongrass with sugar, and it makes this like bright green really aromatic syrup, and we use that with mango in a cocktail.

01:05:16

SCA: Wow.

01:05:17

MT: Yeah; pears.

01:05:18

AR: The Yo La Mango.

01:05:20

MT: Really; that's the name?

01:05:21

AR: Pears; uh-huh.

01:05:23

MT: Pears, I'm not sure about the pear drink. That's new—a new drink, I think.

01:05:27

AR: Spicy, black pepper—with black pepper and cinnamon, rum, and pear.

01:05:35

MT: We use cherries, too, that we pickle here.

01:05:36

AR: Pickled cherries—that’s a drink with—

01:05:42

MT: Pickled cherries.

01:05:43

AR: That’s called the Homeward Angel; it’s got pickled cherries and cherry syrup.

01:05:49

SCA: Is that the one that’s kind of like an Old Fashioned?

01:05:52

AR: Uh-hm.

01:05:54

MT: We do ramps, remember? Pickled ramps, and then infuse—

01:05:59

AR: Yeah; it’s like a Gibson with pickled ramps. Rhubarb—

01:06:03

MT: Rhubarb—oh that’s a big one. That’s a big deal, rhubarb.

01:06:06

AR: Make a cordial with kumquats from L’Hoste.

01:06:12

MT: It's a lot of drinks.

01:06:13

AR: It's a lot of—a lot of kitchen time.

01:06:15

MT: Yeah; a lot of kitchen time.

01:06:17

SCA: That's a lot of kitchen work for the drinks. I hadn't thought about it that way.

01:06:20

MT: Yes; it's a big—it's a big thing, too. It's pretty cool, I guess, to try to use all the stuff that's around. It's difficult, too.. It's like, you know, it's difficult for us to figure out what's around because in spring, everything is ready. And it's like a lot of stuff is ready. So it's so hard to get everything here and try to sell it all at the same time.

01:06:42

AR: All at the same time—and part of the interesting thing about having relationships with so many farmers is people tend to have a lot of the same stuff at all the same time. And so it's—the challenge to kind of try to spread out the buying to be able to maintain relationships with as many people as possible—maintain professional relationships.

01:07:12

SCA: Right; I understand. Do you ever go out and visit their farms, too?

01:07:18

AR: Uh-hm; yeah. No, we spend some time in farms, and we also spend a lot of time going to different Farmers' Markets to meet new people. And going to Durham, and, you know, Raleigh, and—.

01:07:34

SCA: Is there anything else that I've forgotten to ask you?

01:07:39

AR: Can't think of anything.

01:07:39

MT: I don't think so.

01:07:40

SCA: All right; thank you so much.

01:07:41

AR: You were very thorough. [Laughs]

01:07:43

SCA: Thank you.

01:07:43

[End Reusing and Torres Interview]