

# CONCIERGE



## PLUS...

- > A KENTUCKY CHEF'S BOURBON TRAIL
- > CRAFTING KNIVES
- > EDIBLE ARTISANAL SAVANNAH
- > LOVIN' THAT VA BEACH SEA SALT
- > CREATE **THE** HOLIDAY CHEESE BOARD
- > BIG SPOON IS A BIG DEAL

### CHEERS TO SOUTHERN ARTISANS

## HIGH WIRE WALKS THE WALK

TRUE SOUTHERN ARTISANS ARE DEVOTED to their craft, thrive off of community connections, and are ever-building upon the past to create an even stronger future. And when we see the likes of Charleston-based liquor distiller couple, Ann Marshall and Scott Blackwell, we see this artistry in action. Along with their line of small-batch spirits, they have reinvigorated awareness about the Bradford watermelon, a local heirloom crop known for its intense flavor, through their limited edition Watermelon Brandy. A local farmer's hand-pressed sugar cane sweetens their Lowcountry Agricole Rum. And they have more collaborative efforts soon to be revealed. This holiday season, fill your glass with High Wire's community spirits and say cheers to Southern artisans.

PHOTO BY LESLIE MCKELLAR





## WHO IS JEREMY?

Kentucky born and raised, **Chef Jeremy Ashby** is executive chef and co-owner of Lexington restaurants Azur and Brasabana. Ashby's path to becoming a chef has classic beginnings: He came to love all things culinary through a youth spent in the kitchen at his grandmother's side, absorbing her wisdom as he assisted her. His formal training took off after earning a culinary degree from Johnson & Wales University in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2000. After working with acclaimed chefs around the South, Ashby fatefully returned to Kentucky in 2007 to open Azur. The chef's passion for all things local also explains his fondness for bourbon. "It's in my blood," he says. "I love bourbon's history. It's mystical yet familiar. It's always hiding something and never ceases to surprise. There's a romance to it. Even the cheap stuff has spent several years in a barrel aging. There are no shortcuts, no ways to cheat, no ways to imitate. It just takes time." Given his roots and his passion, we trust him to lead us on the path to the brown water.

## C O N C i E R G E

### CHEF PICKS

## CHEF JEREMY ASHBY

*Top Southern Spots to Spill  
Some Brown Water*

### OBC KITCHEN

*Lexington, Kentucky*

Old Bourbon County is what OBC stands for, and this transformed barn sits right in the heart of it, offering a tavern-style bar concept with centuries-old reclaimed wood and overstuffed leather booths to let you comfortably lounge as you pay homage to Kentucky nectar. Sparing no expense, they offer more than 300 whiskeys and 15 private selections, including some extremely rare varieties.

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

### BELLE'S COCKTAIL HOUSE

*Lexington, Kentucky*

A swank cocktail joint in downtown Lexington, this little gem has the exposed brick walls, hardwood floors, and speakeasy atmosphere that makes you want to stay and relax (in Kentucky we call "people-watching" relaxing). While they know how to mix a great cocktail, they cater to the serious bourbon drinker. Co-owned by Bob Eidson and Seth and Justin Thompson, the Bourbon Boys of the acclaimed *Bourbon Review* magazine, they know their whiskey and keep a limited but powerful collection.

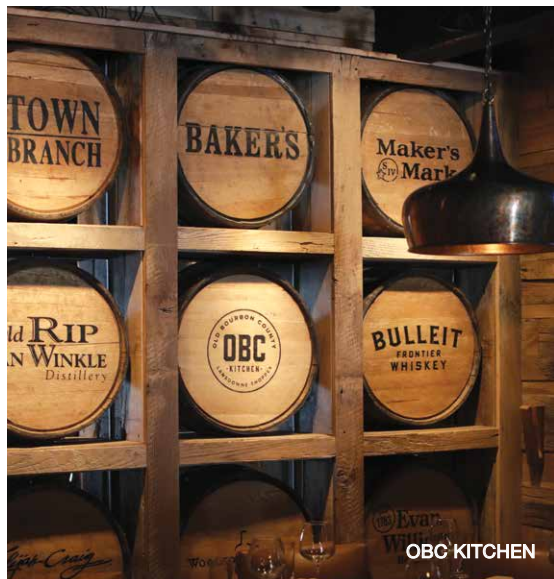
[facebook.com/bellescocktailhouse/](https://facebook.com/bellescocktailhouse/)

### THE MILLER HOUSE

*Owensboro, Kentucky*

When picking up an animal on the hoof (whole animal) from Boone's Butcher Shop, one of the greatest butcher shops in America, I often also visit my favorite nearby watering hole. Entering The Miller House is like stepping through the threshold of an old friend's house. The underground Spirits Lounge reminds me of sneaking into Paw-Paw's cellar to steal a swig of moonshine. With more than 400 bourbons and located right on the Bourbon Trail, it's no surprise that these guys know their firewater.

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



### PROOF ON MAIN

*Louisville, Kentucky*

"What are a bunch of New Yorkers doing in bourbon country?" That's what I first thought when 21c developed this hotel concept in conjunction with the Myriad Restaurant Group out of NYC. Little did I know they would set the benchmark for eclectically highlighting our region's food and also its most prized export: bourbon. Attached to a boutique hotel and modern art gallery, Proof has impeccable taste in decor and liquor.

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

### DOWN ONE BOURBON BAR

*Louisville, Kentucky*

Located in the heart of Louisville's Whiskey Row, the selection is hard to beat and the bar manager super talented. Down One has a stylish interior lined with local handcrafted wood and repurposed stained glass. There's also a secret room (shhhhh—only tell those who will truly appreciate it!) offering some of the rarest bourbons that is only accessible by entering through a phone booth. With private selections and more than 160 bourbons, it's my go-to big-boy bourbon bar.

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



## C O N C i E R G E

### THE SILVER DOLLAR

*Louisville, Kentucky*

Smash a honky-tonk and a gastropub together, pour a shot of the Four Horsemen over top of it, and you have The Silver Dollar. My absolute favorite place for brunch in the world, complete with a hair-of-the-dog bourbon selection to ease the pain of a night spent hitting the town with my Louisville Slugger. The entire concept, the staff, and the Southwestern-influenced food has the restorative power of the famous Louisville Hot Brown itself. I can personally attest.

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

### THE PATTERSON HOUSE

*Nashville, Tennessee*

This place gets plenty of press and rightfully so. It has the underground style that feels like I'm going to have a cocktail with Gatsby, or Albert



for mixing bourbon with anything at all, but these guys get it, and I like the results.

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

### PROOF

*Charleston, South Carolina*

Dining in Charleston as a culinarian is like dropping a sugar addict smack into Wonka's Chocolate Factory. It's an overwhelming experience of what not to miss and how to have one of everything without imploding. So in this city flooded with fine dining restaurants, Proof on King Street is a breath of fresh air, simply providing booze and lots of it. A bourbon nightcap is my favorite dessert and Proof delivers. Boasting a modest selection of mid-level bourbons and some small-batch and single-barrel varieties, it's an assortment that can be hard to come by outside of bourbon country.

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

### THE CROW & QUILL

*Asheville, North Carolina*

This place has a story to tell. It might be the first biker-turned-hipster bar where I've ever had the pleasure of imbibing bourbon. How this strange transition in atmosphere was accomplished is beyond me, but nevertheless it works, and it works well. The 250 whiskeys are more than enough to keep me busy while I sit and ponder the history and hows of this eclectic joint.

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

### DRAM WHISKEY BAR

*Birmingham, Alabama*

Dram is an old Scottish term for a pour of whiskey. This hotspot truly lives up to its name, offering solid bourbon cocktails and one of the



best overall selections in the city. The interior is a welcoming mesh of contemporary and old-fashioned style, perfect surroundings for late-night sipping. Seeking some variety? Order a whiskey flight, a sampling of five different whiskeys, adeptly selected.

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

## BOURBON COCKTAIL

PURISTS LIKE IT NEAT OR ON THE ROCKS, BUT SOMETIMES A SLIGHTLY DOCTORED BOURBON PROVES TO BE THE BEST OF BEVERAGES.

### SASSAFRAS SAZERAC

FROM TOM SHEFFER OF DRAM WHISKEY BAR IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Kentucky straight sassafras concentrate, enough to rinse glass\*  
2 ounces Russell's Reserve Bourbon (Black Maple Hill also works well if you can find it)  
1 ounce simple syrup  
4 dashes Peychaud's bitters  
Lemon peel garnish

Lightly rinse all sides of cocktail glass with sassafras concentrate and pour out remaining sassafras. Stir rye, syrup, and bitters together and pour over 1 large, square ice cube into cocktail glass. Garnish with thin-cut lemon peel.

\*Sassafras concentrate is used in Kentucky (and elsewhere in the South) to make sassafras tea. Dram sources it from Col. Bill Newsom's Country Ham in Princeton, Kentucky and it can also be ordered online through the Broadbent Hams in Cadiz, Kentucky ([newsomscountryham.com](http://newsomscountryham.com) and [broadbenthams.com](http://broadbenthams.com)). Root-beer liqueur is the most readily available substitute.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: JOSH MERIDETH OF BELLA GRACE STUDIOS  
OPPOSITE PAGE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HEATHER DURHAM PHOTOGRAPHY, ANDREW CEBULKA, AND JOSH MERIDETH OF BELLA GRACE STUDIOS

OBC KITCHEN



A PERSONAL ESSAY: THE ART OF KNIFE CRAFTING

*A Cut Above*

BY: WILL MANNING

GROWING UP AMONG THE LIVE OAKS OF TALLAHASSEE, Florida, I was instilled with a reverence for using the resources at hand. When a tree fell in our backyard, my father would likely make it into his next Windsor chair, his frugality stemming not from cheapness but from a genuine appreciation of the value of common materials.

Thirteen years ago, nearing the end of my high school career, I took a job at a metal shop and became fixated on steel. It was a stark contrast from the woodworking methods and tools of my youth. I eventually became the resident blacksmith at a history museum in Tallahassee, where I honed my forging

skills studying and practicing eighteenth-century techniques. Meanwhile, in my own shop, I experimented with different steels, creating many iterations of one of the most useful tools for survival—the knife. I spent a lot of time developing my skills with the help of my mentors from a local group of blacksmiths. My girlfriend (now wife) and I were brewing beer and growing vegetables. After planting our first garden, we were hooked by the satisfaction of growing food for ourselves. Making knives and testing them in her kitchen allowed me to put many interests into practice: the science of metallurgy, the detail of jewelry, forging steel, carpentry, and the love of food.

Similar to a meal, sourcing quality materials for knives

makes a huge difference. Just as I find satisfaction in picking my own blueberries, tomatoes, and flowers, I prefer foraging for the steel and wood used to create my culinary knives. I can't bring myself to put the demand on our environment by ordering virgin materials. I enjoy the hunt for materials and meeting people who understand that they are creating industrial byproducts that are still useful. The search for steel is successful when I source a steel alloy that excels at making a long sharp cutting tool. Some of the best are typically a basic 10 series alloy with a high carbon content, often very old lumber mill saw blades. I forge and heat-treat small pieces and test them for hardness in my shop, then submit the test pieces to a series of destructive tests and examine the grain size visually. If all looks good, I'll send off a small piece of the steel to a lab in St. Louis for testing and they'll tell me the exact chemical composition. From there, I can refine the approach I take for working and treating the steel. I am looking mostly for high carbon content, which directly affects tensile strength and edge retention, and also improves resistance to wear and abrasion.

For handle materials, I keep my foraging regional. The past few years, I've been working my way through a large collection of cherry, which was harvested from a renovation of the house I grew up in.

Often times, the materials are available second-hand—as nearly everyone seems to have had a tree taken down or fall in their yard. Beyond that, I use a lot of material that furniture makers can't use. Using native local hardwoods connects my



process and knives to this region, and there's simply no reason to look elsewhere. There are beautiful and functional materials all around us. Our forebearers used locally available native wood for making tool handles. It's what was

available and part of what identified them as indigenous to a specific area.

While high-tech tools, like a hardness tester, electric belt grinder, and a kiln, assist me, my process is very basic. I use an anvil, fire, and hammer.

And though I've switched from burning hardwood charcoal and coal to using propane, the work done under the hammer is labor intensive and on a basic level, no different from how our ancestors created their tools.

I'm not only shaping the steel geometrically, but also microscopically.

When forging steel, you're in control of the grain size, which directly affects how sharp a knife can get and how strong the steel alloy is after heat-treating. It's not just about great starting materials or ingredients; it's about heat control. I don't feel that creating a knife any other way is truly making a knife.

*Will Manning makes culinary knives at his small shop, Heartwood Forge, outside Athens, Georgia. [heartwoodforge.com](http://heartwoodforge.com)*





ROAD TRIP: GET TO KNOW EDIBLE

# ARTISANAL SAVANNAH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE WALTON

## THE ALLURE OF AN ARTSY SOUTHERN CITY

In the family of Southern cities, Savannah is the artsy, quirky, eclectic sister with a weakness for crab stew and Chatham Artillery Punch. With its beautiful eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture, ridiculously romantic city squares, and iconic bird girl statue made famous on the cover of the novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*—not to mention raffish students from the Savannah College of Art and Design milling about—the city practically drips with creative inspiration. Combine that with Savannahians' deep respect for traditional foodways and the natural largess of the Lowcountry and you have fertile ground for artisanal deliciousness, from pimento cheese to Tupelo honey. So pack up the car to discover it for yourself. Here's a sampling of our favorites to get you started.

## BENNE LOVE

Ben Byrd Jr. started baking scotch oatmeal cookies and delivering them around neighborhoods in Savannah in his Model T Ford in 1924. Today, his great-granddaughter helms **Byrd Cookie Company** and his cookies, from benne wafers to lime coolers, can be found in their signature tins all over the world. Visit the factory on Waters Avenue or one of the handful of outlets throughout Savannah, including the City Market store. [byrdcookiecompany.com](http://byrdcookiecompany.com)



## DAIRY DIVE

With a high fat-to-protein ratio, the milk from Brown Swiss cows is especially rich, which makes everything at the Franks family-owned **Southern Swiss Dairy** that much tastier. Drop by their farm store in Waynesboro to pick up a jug of cream-topped milk, eggnog, freshly churned butter, ice cream in a slew of seasonal flavors—think pumpkin and apple pie—or a special cut from their wide selection of pasture-raised beef. [southernswissdairy.com](http://southernswissdairy.com)



eggs, and organic vegetables. Take a tour, sample some of the Harris' bounty at their open-air restaurant, and browse the farm store for items like tallow soap and ram skulls. Can't get enough of the pastoral life? Spend the night at one of the four new cabins on the property. [whiteoakpastures.com](http://whiteoakpastures.com)



## SCRATCH GOODNESS

With homespun treats made from scratch, like banana pudding and chocolate chess pie, **Back in the Day Bakery** on Bull Street lives up to its name. Stop by in the morning for a cold brew and "bisccone" pick-me-up (or cinnamon bun if it's Saturday). Come lunchtime, it's a toss-up between the Pimento and the Pig sandwich (house-made pimento cheese spread and apple wood-smoked bacon) and the Farmwich, with butter bean spread, sharp cheddar, radishes, carrots, and cucumbers. [backinthedaybakery.com](http://backinthedaybakery.com)

## SORGHUM SYRUP

A onetime sugarcane plantation—and home of Georgia's first rum distillery—**Canewater Farm** in Darien primarily yields vegetables these days, but its sister operation in the Appalachian Mountains of north Georgia grows specialty produce, including garlic, corn for grits and cornmeal, and sorghum for syrup. Find Canewater products at markets and restaurants throughout Savannah and its environs, including the Forsyth Farmers Market every Saturday and the Market on Sea Island. [canewaterfarm.com](http://canewaterfarm.com)



## HONEY BUZZ

When a local beekeeper introduced him to a hive at the age of thirteen, Ted Dennard knew he had found his passion. He kept honeybees all through high school and college, taught beekeeping in the Peace Corps, and in 2002 launched **Savannah Bee Company**. Today, the company produces single-source honeys, including sourwood, Tupelo, and orange blossom; several blends, like Palmetto honey for sweetening tea; and a body care line, among other products. Give them a try at the flagship store on West Broughton. [savannahbee.com](http://savannahbee.com)



## GRAZELAND

The Harris family had raised cattle at **White Oaks Pastures** in Bluffton for four generations when patriarch Will Harris overhauled the operation

to practice a sustainable method of farming based on the way animals graze in the Serengeti. Today, the 2,500-acre spread is the largest organic farm in Georgia, raising beef, lamb, hogs, rabbit, poultry,



## PERFECT CUP

When **PERC Coffee** founder Philip Brown came to Savannah in 2010 after years of working as a barista in Athens, Georgia, he was hell-bent on coaxing the very best expression possible out of each bean varietal and cultivating an appreciation for the results. Judging by the company's growth, he's succeeded. Stop by the roaster on East Broad Street to find out what the fuss is all about: pick up a bag of beans or show up on Fridays at 11 a.m. for a free cupping. [perccoffee.com](http://perccoffee.com)



## SOUTHERN BREW

From seasonal beers, like Scattered Sun Belgian Wit and Moonlight Drive Imperial Coffee Stout, to one-off batch brews to old standbys—the Hoplin' IPA is a super-hopped delight—**Southbound Brewery** offers an array of frothy refreshment to cap your visit. Brewery tours are offered (free) Wednesday through Friday at 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m. [southboundbrewingco.com](http://southboundbrewingco.com)



## NOT-TO-BE-MISSED

If you are seeking to satisfy your artisanal needs with a one-stop situation, look no further than the Saturday morning farmers market in Forsyth Park. Every week, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., many of craftspeople mentioned here, along with a slew of others, set up stands in the south end of the picturesque park, a meeting grounds of sorts for the city of Savannah, and about as pretty a venue as they come. [forsythfarmersmarket.com](http://forsythfarmersmarket.com)



## NOTES FROM A FARM

## THE SALT FARMER

BY LINDSAY KASTNER

By her own admission, Amanda Jacobs was never the sort of person likely to own a farm.

"I'm totally not a country girl," she says, jumping back slightly as a thin black snake slithers past.

But when she found a small parcel of farmland for sale on Craigslist earlier this year, she jumped at the opportunity.

"It's the right place for me," she says of the four-acre property surrounded by cornfields and down the road from a hog slaughterhouse in Burgaw, North Carolina, a small town located about thirty minutes from Wilmington.

Jacobs needed the space to expand Sea Love Sea Salt Co., the now-thriving business she started almost by accident in the spring of 2014.



She had moved to the North Carolina coast from Corning, New York, the previous year, fulfilling a dream to live near the ocean. A career educator, she was searching for a job that would put her freshly acquired PhD in curriculum and instruction to use.

On a lark, Jacobs decided to try her hand at making sea salt.

She pulled water from the Atlantic Ocean at a spot near her home in Wrightsville Beach, where the state tests the water quality each week.

First, Jacobs tried boiling the water. Then, she tried baking it. Finally, she settled on a solar evaporation technique that produces a flaky, slightly crunchy salt with lots of minerals intact.

Jacobs says solar evaporation produces the best salt, but it also takes a relatively long time, a couple of weeks from harvest to finish, depending on the weather.

She believes she is one of only about five producers in the country relying purely on solar evaporation.

When she mentioned the experiment to a local chef, he asked for a sample. She delivered it in a nondescript Tupperware container. "He called me and said, 'If you could give me a pound of this salt a week, I would stop buying it from France.'"

Soon after, she started setting up at farmers markets, routinely selling out of her salt, which comes in plain and seasoned culinary salt, as well as salt scrubs for the bath. All are packaged in little glass bottles adorned with seashells Jacobs gathers.

"It was a really great idea when I didn't have hundreds to do," she says of the shells, noting that she sometimes has to drop everything to go beachcombing.

Jacobs initially produced the salt in her postage-stamp backyard, using what she generously termed a portable greenhouse—basically a tiny shelving unit with a clear plastic cover—until she found someone with a larger yard willing to let her set up a 10×20-foot greenhouse in exchange for free salt.

Soon she outgrew that space too.

This past April, Jacobs bought the Burgaw property, with plans to create a new salt house out of a large carport where the previous owner fixed farm equipment.

Farmers still stop by from time to time with tractors in need of a repair, surprised to find a sun-drenched woman with mermaid earrings tending to shallow pans of seawater.

"They think what I'm doing out here is so crazy," Jacobs says.

It might be, but it's working.

Jacobs stopped job hunting almost a year ago and now sells to several area chefs, at three farmers markets, in a handful of Whole Foods stores, and online.

Craig Love, chef and



owner of Surf House in Carolina Beach, considered salt from Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina's Outer Banks before choosing Sea Love for its clean flavor profile.

"What we really loved about what she was doing is just her method...there is no refining or additional processing going on," says Love, adding that he was also drawn by Jacobs' passion for her product.

These days, Jacobs shuttles between ocean and farm, hauling buckets of briny water in the back of her pickup truck. Initially reluctant to move production away from the beach, she soon realized that the less humid inland air hastened evaporation.

"I come out here and I'm like, 'This is fabulous,'" Jacobs says of the farm. "We kind of have the best of both worlds."

At the farm, she plans to plant a big garden of herbs and garlic to use in her seasoned salt blends.

She has a slew of ideas for the tranquil but rudimentary spot of land, which came with a

small warehouse (destined for a bright coat of teal paint), but no bathroom or even running water.

Both are on the list of eventual upgrades, but for the moment, Jacobs is just focused on making more salt—giving the neighbors something to talk about in the process.





# CONCERGE

RECIPE: ON BOARD

## THE PROPER PLATTER

BY EXECUTIVE CHEF TIM MORTON  
OF MERCANTILE AND MASH IN  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Temper your cheese. Leave it at room temperature for about 1 hour before serving. The cheeses will be the proper texture and their flavors will have been released.

We asked **Chef Tim Morton of Charleston's Mercantile and Mash** how he would go about creating the most universally appealing seasonal cheese platter in order to serve something impressively low-key to those hungry holiday hoovers. Turns out, we asked the right guy—he readily rattled off his tips for cheese platter success.

Arrange on a wood board, a classic presentation—a wood cutting board works well.

Don't be shy about the right accompaniments; add nuts, fruit, and jam to lend sweet and savory balance.

Toast some hazelnuts in brown butter and scatter around some toasted pumpkin seeds. Then add a smear of cranberry jam with allspice.

You'll need seasonal fruit, like Honeycrisp apples or Seckel pears.

Add a fresh baguette and you're good to go.

"Select local cheeses. There are so many legit Southern cheese makers now, you'll find wonderful products. Think about the offerings in terms of being a mix of textures: a hard, a semi-soft, a soft, and a super-soft, spreadable option. Also, you want the cheeses to be varied in terms of mild to strong in flavor. **Chapel Hill Creamery's Calvander**, which is sharp and forward in flavor, fulfills the hard cheese requirement. **Goat Lady Dairy's Sandy Creek** is the semi-soft choice, a bloomy-rind cheese that is tangy and not super pungent. **Sweet Grass Dairy's Asher Blue** is strong, but with a mild finish. Also from Sweet Grass, is **Green Hill**, a Camembert style that is a very soft, creamy cheese. You might not use those exact cheeses, but do try to offer local options."—Chef Tim Morton



## AMUSE:

# MARK OVERBAY

### NUTS FOR BIG SPOON ROASTERS

**Mark Overbay** started **Big Spoon Roasters** in Durham, North Carolina, in 2011 and today makes ten different nut butters, ranging from classic peanut butter to almond cocoa butter, using ingredients like runner-variety peanuts and raw wildflower honey. When asked if becoming a successful nut butter entrepreneur was initially on his radar, he laughs. “It happened way more **organically** than that.” After college, he joined the Peace Corps, working in a farming community in Zimbabwe with no water and electricity. He watched as families roasted freshly harvested peanuts over an open fire, ground them by hand between rocks, and added coarse salt and local honey or coconut oil. The experience struck a chord. Peanut butter had always been one of Overbay’s favorite foods, just as it was his Dad’s—dubbed “Big Spoon” for his habit of eating it straight from the jar. Once home, he thought “Why don’t we have the kind of peanut butter I experienced in Africa? Recreating that “beautiful, fresh version using the simplest technology” led him to begin making his own butters based on the same principles. He’s never looked back.



**What is the one thing that is always in your fridge?**  
**Cold-brewed coffee.**

**Who would you invite to a fantasy dinner party?**  
*Aside from great food and drink, **the best dinner parties make you both laugh and think.** Megan Overbay, Riley Roo Lynam, Rioja Overbay, Dorothy Parker, Ovid, Sappho, Charlie Parker, Socrates, John Lennon, Albert Einstein, Bob Marley, Sacagawea, Louie C.K., Amy Winehouse, Ricky Gervais, Will Ferrell, Billie Holiday, Wendell Berry, Jessica Koslow, and Django Reinhardt. There’s a party.*

**What would you serve to drink at this fantasy dinner?**  
*Cocktails and **buttery, salted roasted nuts** to start; **a huge salad** with produce from farmer friends; something grilled; and **pulled pork**, slowly braised in **apple cider, garlic, and fennel.***

**Who is your culinary hero/heroine?**  
*My great-grandfather, **Woodrow Williams**, who grew up in rural, coal-mining communities in East Tennessee and*



*Southwest Virginia. He could hunt anything, catch any fish, and made some of the best biscuits, cornbread, apple butter, and vegetables I’ve ever eaten. Given a cast-iron skillet, a few trout, a little bacon grease, and cornmeal, he’d take you to heaven.*

**What gives you juice?**

**Cooking** for people. I get goosebumps every time someone tastes one of our nut butters for the first time. Their face lights up with that “oh my God, this is SO good” expression.

**We know you love peanut butter, but what are your thoughts on jelly?**

**PB&J is a classic** for a reason. I have jams from Sqirl, Farmer’s Daughter, INNA, Lemon Bird, Norm’s Farms, and Bonnie’s Jams in my fridge right now.

**What’s next for Big Spoon Roasters?**

A project with **Eastern Carolina Organics**, located here in Durham. A dream of mine is to work directly with peanut farmers and to celebrate them on our packaging and website. Our peanuts will be “single origin,” meaning we’ll be able to pinpoint exactly which farms the peanuts come from.