

Life in the Country

Made from Scratch

A former art director builds an award-winning baking business in Virginia's rural Piedmont region.



Brian Noyes stands with his cherry-hued 1954 Ford F-100, which inspired his business name—Red Truck Bakery—in front of his 170-year-old farmhouse.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW THOMAS LEE.

After then-President Barack Obama paid tribute to Red Truck in a 2016 social media post, Brian had a shirt chain-stitched with his complimentary words.

Some of Brian Noyes's earliest memories of baking are during summer visits to his grandmother's in North Carolina. "She taught me cooking is about creating comfort and got me hooked on fresh fruit pies," he says. As an adult, Brian spent 25 years working in publishing in Washington, D.C., but starting a food business was always in the back of his mind. He took culinary courses during vacations from his day job, and, "When I hit 50, I decided that if I was going to do it, I better do it now."

In 2007, Brian began baking on weekends at the Virginia farmhouse he and husband Dwight McNeill purchased two years earlier. He sold his goods at a small country store up the road, and, in 2008, a *New York Times* writer happened upon his treats at a picnic and included a write-up on the front page of the food section. "I took it as a signal I was onto something," he says.

Brian cashed in his savings to begin baking full-time, and in 2009 he set up his first Red Truck Bakery in a 1921 Esso station in the small town of Warrenton. It soon gained a devoted following for its seasonal cakes, breads, and pies, leading to a second, larger location in nearby Marshall in 2015. "It was a risk to get started, but now we ship all over the country from our little town in the Shenandoah Valley," Brian says. His second cookbook, *The Red Truck Bakery Farmhouse Cookbook*, a collection of sweet and savory comfort foods from the bakery, also comes out this month. "It's dedicated to my grandmother," he says.



ABOVE: Vintage rolling pins Brian found at a local antiques festival hang on the wall of his Marshall bakery. RIGHT: Brian's new cookbook offers 95 recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, including this blueberry jam with ginger and lime.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGIE MOSIER. OPPOSITE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) ANGIE MOSIER (2); ANDREW THOMAS LEE.



At Red Truck's original Warrenton location, visitors can indulge in seasonal desserts such as peach pie, as well as muffins, biscuits, and cakes. Orders can be shipped nationwide via redtruckbakery.com.