

THE COOKBOOK



**Bourke Street Bakery:
All Things Sweet** by Paul
Allam and David McGuinness
(£25; Murdoch Books)
TESTED BY **Susan Low**

Authors Paul and David are the sugar and flour-fuelled geniuses behind the Bourke Street Bakery mini-chain in Sydney. Their first book, *Bourke Street Bakery*, published almost a decade ago, remains a baking bible for home cooks and pros. Their philosophy is one we can get on board with: “Use your hands; pursue your passion; make a mess and clean it up later; ditch the carb and sugar-free fads (there’ll be some new bandwagon we’re meant to jump on in five years)...”

This new book came about because as the authors’ young families grew, the little ‘uns asked for treats for parties and other events. The aim was to make indulgences with the best ingredients that would be way better than anything out of a packet. So there are chapters for

cakes and muffins, cookies and biscuits, tarts and pies as well as sweet pastry doughs, puff pastries, choux pastries and brioche and sweet breads.

First, though, the authors lay down the law about ingredients and techniques – what type of flour, butter, yeast, gelatine (and so on) you should buy. The ‘tricks of the trade’ section explains the fundamentals of mixing, resting and proving. All useful stuff.

QUALITY OF THE RECIPES At first glance, I wanted to make just about everything in the book. I know the bakery is famous for its flourless chocolate cake, so that was on my to-do list. I was also drawn to their equally famous ginger brûlée tarts, but the recipe makes 20 of them – too many as I’m not planning to open my own bakery.

The step-by-step instructions – and beautiful photographs – of how to make puff pastry and how to make croissants are exemplary. I’ve earmarked this section for a time when I have no kitchen distractions and lots of time (you can only dream...). I finally settled on my second



IT MUST BE LOVE CAKE
With a properly friable base

recipe: love cake, made with lots of enticing spices.

Confession time: I don’t own an electric stand mixer and probably never will. The book, however, assumes I do and the majority of the bakes specify using one, with no alternative instructions for kitchen minimalists like me. Inevitably I came a cropper. The first time I made the love cake I whizzed the ingredients in a food processor. The resulting cake had a base so hard it resolutely defied chewing.

I persisted. The second go, in a mixing bowl using an electric hand mixer, delivered the promised ‘moist consistency combined with a crumbly, biscuit base’ (hurrah!). I would have liked a few more details on how long to combine the ingredients – what should the mixture look like when it’s ready, and how long does it take to reach that consistency? But with lashings of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and pepper, the flavour was a winner.

The flourless dark chocolate and hazelnut cake also called for an electric stand mixer. I persisted with my mixing bowl and hand mixer. The recipe said to line the cake tin with baking paper to form a collar 2.5cm above the tin. I was generous with my measurements and was glad for it: once in the oven the cake rose dramatically – way above 2.5cm – before it gently deflated on removal, as it cooled to moist, chocolatey, squidgy lusciousness.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN Alan Benson’s photos are beautiful and enticing. The book is well thought-out, with excellent imagery used to demonstrate some of the trickier aspects of pastry making.

WHO’S IT SUITABLE FOR? People with stand mixers! The recipes are clearly from a professional kitchen and, despite being scaled down, many call for specialist equipment or make large quantities. That said, there are enough great recipes to make the book attractive to aspiring newbies, and the baking ground rules set out at the beginning of the book are sound.

VERDICT ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ □