

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: STARRLIGHT BAKERY, LA BICYCLETTE BAKERY, AND CREATURE BREAD

May 5, 2026



May 5, 2026

By Liz Yap

The Coop's food often comes from like-minded vendors and organizations that value workers' rights, have sustainable, ethical practices and produce healthy, delicious and fairly priced products. In this issue, we're highlighting three of the Coop's newest bakery suppliers that embody this ethos.

STARRLIGHT BAKERY



Founder of Starrlight Bakery Emanuel Ruffler. Photograph by ©Hot Bread Kitchen. Emanuel Ruffler, the founder of Starrlight Bakery, describes the act of making bread as “a little magic that happens every day.” He elaborated, “You start with flour, which looks almost like dust from Mars. You don’t know how that can ever become food. Once you mix it with the water, it still doesn’t look like anything you could ever eat.” He continued, “The fermentation starts, all the flavors come out, and you can shape it. That other element of heat comes in, and all of a sudden, you have this amazing food. It’s a crazy process. It’s magic.”

THE TWIN PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY HAVE BEEN BAKED INTO STARRLIGHT’S PHILOSOPHY FROM ITS INCEPTION.

Ruffler has always been fascinated by the idea of fermentation and culinary transformation—the art of turning raw ingredients into something else entirely. He’s made jam, tried his hand at ice cream, even dabbled in making wine. Since 2021, when he started his microbakery, breadmaking has been at the center of that exploration.

What began as a hobby in his home kitchen became a fervent passion, and eventually a business, when Ruffler began selling homemade bread at his neighborhood farmers market in Bushwick’s Maria Hernandez Park. For Ruffler, it was incredibly special to be part of the market they’ve always frequented as a family, to be further woven into the fabric of the neighborhood through something made with his own hands.

The twin principles of community and sustainability have been baked into Starrlight’s philosophy from its inception. Like fermentation itself, the bakery’s work is rooted in attunement—a constant process of calibrating with care and responding to what’s needed. That same sensibility extends beyond the loaf, from partnering with food pantries across the city to running on 100 percent solar energy. Their bakery generates some of its own power through rooftop solar panels, and they’re also part of a community solar project. They’re right at home at the Coop, Ruffler says, because it is a community that values active participation and the natural development of their craft.



Baguette work by Clementine at Starrlight Bakery. Courtesy of Starrlight Bakery.

This April, Starrlight opened a pickup window on Bushwick's Starr Street, where the bakery is headquartered and after which it is named. If you find yourself in the neighborhood, they're open every day with a revolving menu of breads and cakes, with freshly made pizza on offer from Tuesday to Sunday. Meanwhile, at the Coop, you'll find their cinnamon raisin bread, sourdough batard, pfister loaf, sourdough focaccia and Earl Grey tea cake on our shelves. Take it as an invitation to participate in their exploration of culinary transformation—a little magic, from the Starrlight kitchen to yours.

LA BICYCLETTE BAKERY



The \$2 baguette from La Bicyclette Bakery. Courtesy of La Bicyclette Bakery.

In 2019, Florent Andreytchenko opened his artisanal bakery in Williamsburg, driven by a singular vision: to bring the breads and pastries of his native France to this corner of Brooklyn. He named it La Bicyclette, after the two-wheeler he'd ride to the French bakery where he learned to bake as a young man. Made using French tech-

niques, French flours and French butter, La Bicyclette's croissants and loaves quickly earned a loyal following. Seven years later, they've expanded to three other locations and a network of wholesale partners, including the Coop.

A CUSTOMER FAVORITE IS THEIR PAVÉ LOAF, MADE WITH A BLEND OF WHITE AND WHOLE WHEAT FLOURS, AND FERMENTED FOR 96 HOURS,

At the core of La Bicyclette is the belief that good bread should be available to everybody. Their stores are well known for their \$2 baguettes. "From the get-go, one of our principles was to have at least one bread item that essentially anybody could afford," shared General Manager Tone Voke. "We made the decision very early that the baguette would cost \$2 and would stay at \$2, no matter what."

Hand in hand with this belief is the idea that it should be made with the best possible ingredients—and what's best is often the simplest. La Bicyclette works directly with Moulin Bourgeois, an independent family-owned mill in France, for the flours they use. "A loaf of bread essentially only has to have four ingredients—flour, water, yeast, salt—and not 22," said Voke. "What that means in terms of your health and what you're eating, it's good that there's growing awareness of that you can have healthy bread and very unhealthy bread."

A customer favorite is their pavé loaf, made with a blend of white and whole wheat flours and fermented for 96 hours, which the Coop carries. Its long period of fermentation makes it a good alternative for people with digestive sensitivities. "The number of people who have spoken to me about being able to eat bread for the first time in years and not experiencing negative health repercussions from it is amazing. And it's such a simple equation to be able to achieve that."

Like the \$2 baguette, the pavé captures something central to the bakery's ethos: good bread should be something more people can enjoy. They're making it happen,

one loaf and one croissant at a time.

CREATURE BREAD

NEW ♥

CREATURE BREAD

We are a tiny, family bakery in
Berkshire County, Massachusetts.

We use only organic, East Coast
flours, and make each
slow-fermented, sourdough loaf
by hand from start to finish,
without the use of automation of
any kind.

Baked fresh every morning!

www.creaturebread.com

Creature Bread on Coop shelf. Photograph by Caroline Mardok.

Ask Travis Brecher how he became a baker, and he'll tell you it wasn't exactly planned. "I got started, honestly, completely by mistake," Brecher said. Fresh off a seven-year stint as a journalist in Egypt, working for Reuters, he came home with a desire to do something different and to work with his hands.

WHAT HE VALUES MOST IS NOT JUST THE PRODUCT ITSELF, BUT THE CARE THEY CAN EMBED IN IT.

He moved to the Berkshires, where his parents lived, and thought about starting a business that they could also be part of. At that time, breadmaking was a personal pursuit—he was teaching himself the basics through books, YouTube and, as he put it, "basically making every mistake possible until I got it nailed down."

He made his first loaf a year before he started selling at a local farmers market. When restaurants started calling, he took it as a sign to go all in. He named the business Creature Bread, after the little creatures he used to draw as a kid, the darkly whimsical world of illustrator Edward Gorey that he admired and the idea of sourdough starter as something alive.

What sets Creature Bread apart is its refusal to automate any part of the baking process. No machines. No mixers. All labor done by hand. For Brecher, this pace is the point. "It's what I needed after working in a newsroom at breakneck speed. I needed to slow down a bit," he said. Bread offered a different rhythm, a different life. What he values most is not just the product itself, but the care they can embed in it: "All of these little pieces are absolute intangibles, but these invisible things come together in ways that I find people really appreciate."



From left: Travis Brecher from Creature Bread in the Berkshires; Creature Bread open bag on the shelf of the coop; Louise, founder Travis Brecher's mother and partner in creating Creature Bread in the Berkshires. Left and right: Courtesy of Creature Bread. Center: Photograph by Caroline Mardok.

Just as Brecher envisioned, Creature Bread is a family effort. His parents, Ron and Louise, have learned the ropes of breadmaking alongside him, helping out with day-to-day operations; his mother handles deliveries to the Coop. "It's been rewarding, and I'm happy to be close to them. It's nice for them as well to have something to focus on and keep them young."

When he was starting out, Brecher says, people told him it was impossible to hand-mix bread at this scale. He took that less as a warning and more as a challenge. "It's really physical, but it's 100 percent possible," he said. "And that's part of the fun." It's a reminder that all good things take time—and it's worth taking the time to make them.

Liz Yap is an editor turned strategist with a focus on naming and verbal branding. She has been a member of the Coop since 2021. lizyap.com