



EPISODE #5 - THE MAKING OF A PASTRY CHEF

Andrea Shirey
Executive Pastry Chef
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ABOUT THIS EPISODE: Executive Pastry Chef Andrea Shirey of the acclaimed restaurant *Craft Los Angeles* dishes on the skills that helped build her career, insights on developing your own pastry style, and stories from the frontlines. Our shared history working together at the Penthouse Restaurant in Santa Monica, California set the stage for a fun and funny conversation that's equal parts inspiration and instruction for the home baker and budding pastry professional. This episode was going to be the first in a series called *The Making of a Chef*. Rather than wait to have sponsor money, I chose to celebrate Chef Andrea and her journey in an industry that I love and that is suffering great devastation in this time of COVID-19. Happy baking! XOXO – Nickie

 https://www.instagram.com/shirey_andrea/

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SHOW NOTES, RESOURCES & LINKS

TOPICS & TERMS DISCUSSED

- Chef Andrea pivots from Trader Joe's to culinary school and becoming a pastry chef. [9:52]
- Chef Seth Greenburg and the role of *mentoring* [55:51] and *collaboration*. [59:00]
- Chef Nick Erven and the role of inspiring creative collaboration. [59:28]
- A day in the life of a pastry chef. [11:15]
- Chef Andrea reveals her method for soufflés. [12:33]
- **Skills and influences** that helped build Chef Andrea's career.
 - **Mise en place** and setting yourself up for success. [16:55] [31:46]
 - **Understanding your recipe** before you start. [17:44]
 - **Sensory observation of phase transitions**. [13:05]
 - Knowing what to look for at each step in the cooking process makes baking easier.
 - **Baking in season** and sourcing the best ingredients.[36:05] [40:21]
 - *What grows together, goes together*. [40:48]
 - **Actively seeking inspiration** from chefs and writers.
 - [Chez Panisse Desserts: A Cookbook by Lindsey R. Shere](#) [41:55]
 - **Being a lifelong student** of ingredients, techniques and equipment.
 - **Good communication** with team members and leadership. [30:10] [31:59]
 - **Essential baking and pastry techniques to master:** [16:46] [18:30]
 - [Soft, medium, and firm peaks](#) [13:17] [18:54]
 - [Creaming](#) [17:47] [18:37]

- **Essential baking and pastry techniques:** [16:46] [18:30] *continued. . .*
 - Whipping [17:47] [18:45]
 - [Beating](#) [18:46]
 - [Folding](#)(article) ([video](#)) [17:48]
 - [Quick bread methods](#) [20:08]
 - [Scaling & weighing](#) [21:35] [21:55]
 - Basic knife skills ([Culinary](#)) [22:43]
 - Cut – core – peel fruit [22:56]
 - How to season [1:09:52] and use salt [1:07:03].
- **On developing your palate and aesthetic.** [32:44]
 - Approach to growth in a traditionally conservative craft and flavor combos. [1:01:49]
 - Criteria for designing new desserts. [1:02:35]
 - Mark of success of a great dessert. [1:04:05]
- **Sources of inspiration.** [34:02]
 - The Santa Monica Farmers Market. [33:22] [35:30]
 - [JJ's Lone Daughter Ranch](#) [35:50]
 - Persimons and
 - Pomegranates
 - [Rincon Del Mar Ranch](#) [35:53]
 - Passion fruit,
 - Cherimoya
 - [Cuyama Orchards](#) [36:32]
 - Arkansas black
 - Ashmead's Kernel
 - [Andy's Orchard](#) [39:14]
 - Stone fruit
 - Nectarines
 - Visual inspiration. [43:08.60]
 - Previous decades. [44:40.51]
 - *Hispanic* flavors of her childhood. [45:01.26]
 - *Middle Eastern* flavors discovered in adulthood. [47:26.83]
- **Favorite flavor combinations.**
 - Rosewater + stone fruit, and in jams or creams. [49:13.95]
 - Fruits + flowers [52:04.87]
 - How fruits + flowers combo made their way onto her palate. [54:47.90]
- **Techniques in modern pastry.** [1:05:44]
- On the role of salts [1:06:46] and acid [1:08:13].
- Chef Andrea's approach to **sorbet**. [1:08:43]
- On fine tuning flavor. [1:09:36]
- **Butter:** Salted vs. unsalted butter, which one is best? [1:11:01]
- **Sugar:** Tips on how to use it. Is it okay to use bleached, granulated white sugar? [1:12:38]
- **Vegan baking:** Creativity, science and the role of protein. [1:16:16]
- Why it matters that ingredients are cut the same size. [24:15]
- Chef Andrea's first job at the SLS Hotel in Beverly Hills. [28:40]
- Kitchen disasters. [26:00]
- Ice cream base recipe. [30:35]

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CLOSING QUESTIONS. . .

What chef Andrea is drinking. [1:23:33]

- **Breakfast power smoothie.** *"I go to the market and I have access to the most beautiful produce in all of California...it's a mix of whatever's in season...I have to have at least three vegetables and then however much fruit I want...as long as I have a banana, date or apple...it could be the color of something I scrapped off my shoe, but it will taste delicious."*

What is making chef Andrea happy in the world of pastry. [1:25:19]

- *"I feel that pastry is finally getting the respect it deserves...There's a little bit of a rivalry in the kitchen and it can be a healthy competition, the savory side of the kitchen can be looking down on the pastry world...but I don't feel there's that sentiment at all any more."*

Chef Andrea's favorite pastry world gift to give a friend or colleague. [1:27:38]

- *"I love to give chocolate. I love to find just really good quality chocolate...At the Row...I recently discovered a new shoppe 'Dandelion Chocolate' and they're amazing. I love their chocolate. At work we mainly use Valrhona. I've also worked with Letterpress Chocolate...I love Letterpress..."*

TERMS + CHEFS MENTIONED

- o **CRAFT** Los Angeles restaurant <https://www.craftlosangeles.com/>



New Jersey diner cheesecake

- o Your **life menu**.
 - o This is a concept I coined to encourage you to master your own favorite, *go to* recipes or flavors. It's intended diminish performance anxiety in the kitchen and give you permission to shine at what you do best!!
- o Chef Amy Pressman [6:50]



(Beloved chef gone too soon.)

- o [Longtime Southland chef Amy Pressman dies at 53](#)
(Los Angeles Times)

- o Chef Seth Greenberg [6:54] [55:51] [59:00]



- o [Chef Seth Greenberg and Pastry Chef Andrea Shirey of The Penthouse, Santa Monica, CA](#) (StarChefs.com slideshow)
- o [Citizen is solid in Beverly Hills](#) (BeverlyPress.com)

- Chef Nick Erven [7:05]



- COVER FEATURE: 30 Chefs to Watch (Plate Magazine)
- [Nick Erven Bio](#) (Entropy Collective)
- [Getting Fresh with Chef Nick Erven](#) (KCRW.com)
- [Working Class Outlaws Open Antihero with Chef Nick Erven at Helm](#) (FSRMagazine.com)
- *Chef Nick's new restaurant in Austin, Texas coming soon!

- [Chef Yotam Ottolenghi](#) [50:12.14]
- [Debjani Chatterjee Alam](#) [43:59.81] (Bengali Indian blogger I follow)
- [Archana Doshi – Archana's Kitchen](#) [43:59.81] (Bengali Indian food blogger I follow)
- [Chez Panisse Desserts: A Cookbook by Lindsey R. Shere](#)
- [SLS – Beverly Hills](#) [28:40]
- [Santa Monica Farmers Market](#) [33:12]
- [Buddah's hand citron fruit](#) [57:59.39]
- [Rosewater](#) (Amazon link)
- [Aquafaba](#) [1:20:24]
- [Riz au lait – French rice pudding](#) (David Lebovitz blogpost + recipe) [57:44.183]
- [Trimoline invert sugar \(about\)](#) ([Amazon link](#)) [1:21:45.74]
- [Dandelion Small Batch Chocolate](#) (Shop in Los Angeles) [1:27:48]
- [Valrhona Chocolate – Premium French Chocolate](#) [1:28:00]
- [Letterpress Chocolate – Small Batch](#)  [Bean to Bar](#) [1:28:04]
- [Chocolate Gianduja](#) (chocolate filling folded into her soufflé)
- Mexican vanilla beans ([Shop Surf as Los Angeles](#))
- Stone fruit ([AllRecipes.com article](#)) [39:22]
- [Tournée](#)
- [isi Bottle \(How to use\)](#) [26:00]
- [The Great British Baking Show](#) (USA/PBS) [1:26:59]
- [The Great British Bake Off](#) (UK) [1:26:59]
- [ROW DTLA](#) [1:27:45]
- [Buñelo](#) (MyRecipes.com) [46:42.14]
- Chocolate bouchon brownies ([recipe](#))

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INGREDIENT RESOURCES

FLOUR:

[Ultimate Guide to Flour](#) (Food Network)
[How to Choose the Right Flour](#) (King Arthur Flour)

BUTTER:

[Butter for Baking: Which Kind Should You Choose?](#) (King Arthur Flour)
[Salted butter is back – even though for some cooks, it never went away](#) (Washington Post)

INGREDIENT RESOURCES

continued . . .

SUGAR:

[The Ultimate Guide to Sugar: How and When to Use Each Kind](#) (Chowhound.com)

[The Ultimate Guide to Sugar Substitutes and Alternative Sweeteners](#) (Chowhound.com)

[Your Guide to Baking with Sugar Alternatives](#) (BonAppetit.com)

EGGS:

[The Definitive Guide to Eggs](#) (SeriousEats.com)

[Baking School Day 1: All About Eggs and Baking](#) (TheKitchn.com)

OTHER COOL RESOURCES + LINKS

FRUIT

○ [How to Cut Citrus Fruit Into Wedges, Slices, and *Suprêmes*](#) (SeriousEats.com)

○ [How to Segment Citrus Like a Pro](#) (Food52.com)

○ [How to Work with Apples](#) (CIAFoodies.com)

SPICES

○ [The Ultimate Guide to Spices](#) (CooksSmarts.com)

VEGAN BAKING

○ [3 Principles of Vegan Baking for the Beginner](#) (TheKitchen.com)

SORBET

○ [The Science of the Best Sorbet](#) (SeriousEats.com –this one does not promote using simple syrup)

○ [How to Make Sorbet with Any Fruit](#) (TheKitchn.com – this one uses simple syrup)

QUICK BREADS

○ [The Complete Guide to Easy Quick Bread](#) (Chowhound.com article with recipes)

DESIGNING NEW DESSERTS

○ [Elements of Developing an Original Dessert](#) (International Culinary Center)

MIXING METHODS

○ [Mixing Methods – Basics](#) (Craftybaking.com)

CHOCOLATE FLAVOR WHEEL

○ [The Consumer Chocolate Sensory Wheel](#) (Barry-callebaut.com)



BOOKS: (Includes Amazon links)

○ [Mastering the Art and Craft: Baking and Pastry by The Culinary Institute of America](#)

○ [BraveTart: Iconic American Desserts by Stella Parks](#)

○ [Huckleberry: Stories, Secrets and Recipes from Our Kitchen by Zoe Nathan](#)

○ [Tartine Bread by Chad Robertson](#)

BOOKS: (Includes Amazon links) continued. . .

- [The Flavor Bible by Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg](#)
- [All About Eggs by Rachel Khong and Lucky Peach Editors](#)
- [Jerusalem: A Cookbook by Yotam Ottolenghi + Sami Tamimi](#)
- [Sweet: Desserts from London's Ottolenghi by Yotam Ottolenghi + Helen Goh](#)
- [The Flavor Matrix by James Briscione with Brooke Parkhurst](#)

VIDEOS:

HARVARD UNIVERSITY: *Science & Cooking Public Lecture Series* on the intersection of science and cooking. The lectures start off a little wonky and academic but the guest Chef instructors make the topics fun and accessible. Here are a few to get you started.

- [Harvard University: Science & Cooking Public Lecture Series – YouTube Home Page](#)
 - [Joanne Chang: The Science of Sugar](#)
 - [Joanne Chang: Baking with Less Sugar](#)
 - [Christina Tosi \(Milk Bar\): Emulsions and Foams](#)
 - [Bill Yosses \(White House Pastry Chef\): How Phase Changes Causes: Deliciousness](#)
 - [Ramon Morató \(Barry Callebaut\): The Many Faces of Chocolate](#)

THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA: [Online Resources](#) and [YouTube Channel: Cooking Demonstrations](#)

ANDREA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



https://www.instagram.com/shirey_andrea/

FEEDBACK: Please share your feedback about the episode and the show notes. Your constructive thoughts and comments help me improve the show. You can reach me via email at – info@kitchensceneinvestigator.com

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