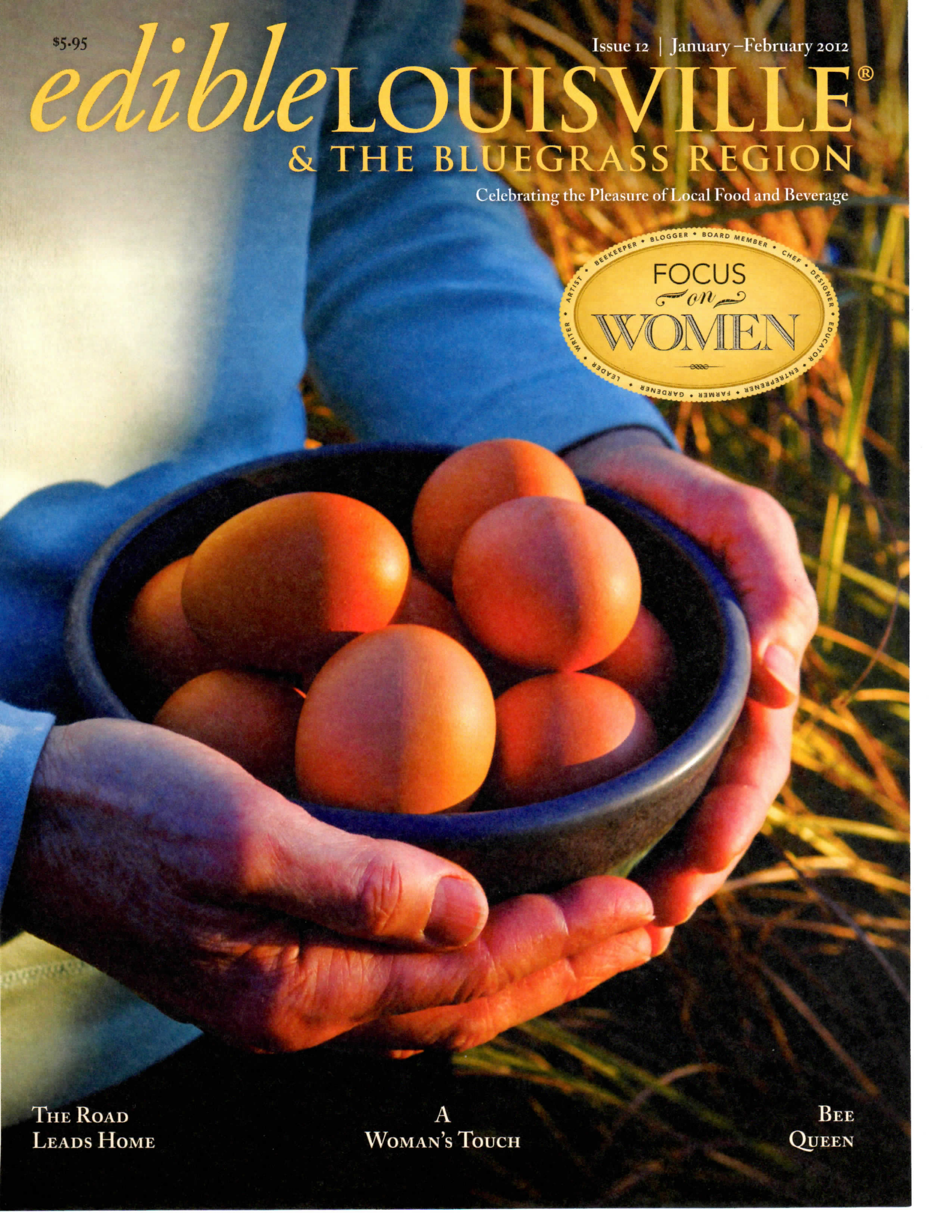


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Issue 12 | January-February 2012

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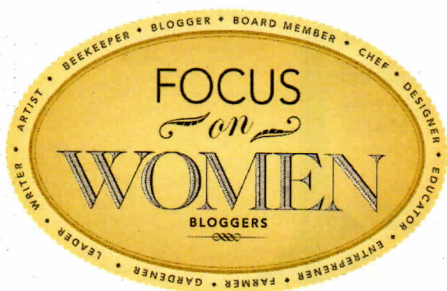
Celebrating the Pleasure of Local Food and Beverage



THE ROAD
LEADS HOME

A
WOMAN'S TOUCH

BEE
QUEEN



Kentucky Food Bloggers

Women Build Community in Virtual Kitchen Across the Bluegrass

By Jessica Pendergrass

What do a corporate attorney, a career counselor at Centre College, a nutritionist, a communications researcher, a pharmacy tech and an insurance company owner all have in common? They are members of the Kentucky Food Bloggers (KFB) Community, a group started earlier this year to bring together some of the best off-the-radar food writers in the bluegrass.

While the group includes some chefs and professionally trained culinary artists, the majority of the 68 members (as of mid-December) have a non-food-related day job but write about their food adventures with intense love and passion.

Blogging, for those new to the concept, is an online “web log,” similar to a journal, that creates an interactive experience between writers and their readers. Blog posts are updated on a regular basis and create an open forum for commentary and dialogue. Food bloggers write about recipes, restaurants, farming and food culture.

Some Kentuckians, like Rona Roberts of Savoring Kentucky, took up blogging to bring awareness to local causes: “I wanted to be more involved with food, and with championing Kentucky’s farms and farmers. Building a blog gave me magical powers to write and publish without having to win the favor of any editorial gatekeeper.”

In the spring of 2011,

Mindy Wilson of The World in My Kitchen and Lori Rice of Fake Food Free teamed up to create the KFB Community.

The two women met online through their blogs and built a friendship in the virtual food community while both were

living abroad — Mindy in France and Lori in Brazil. While neither of the women is native to Kentucky, in recent years fate brought them both to the Lexington area, where they started KFB.

Mindy hopes KFB creates a connection with its blog readers. “We hope that this group can act as a support system and a place of learning — in short, a community.” Lori and Mindy’s vision for KFB is quickly spreading across the state and inspiring new food writers and building a solid community for Kentucky foodies.

Peggy Labor, of My Fiancé Likes It So It Must Be Good!, says, “Blogging brought me into a community of amazing people ... The community is so supportive

of each other. It really amazes me.” Peggy started her blog as a place to share her voice while traversing the “ins and outs of domestication.” Perhaps the most powerful aspect of starting your own blog is the authority you have to speak with your true voice. That voice eventually translates into deeper involvement in the food, farming and local communities at large.

BraveTart

<http://bravetart.com>

Author: Stella Parks

Recipe Favorite: Bourbon Buttermilk Layer Cake



Joyce Pinson's nephew, Jacob Frantom, harvesting Appalachian Pole Beans on the family farm.

Friends Drift Inn

<http://friendsdriftinn.com>

Author: Joyce Pinson

Recipe Favorite: Pawpaw Cake



Autumn Fish Chowder with Kamut from Lori Rice.

Fake Food Free

<http://www.fakefoodfree.com>

Author: Lori Rice

Recipe Favorite: Ginger Chicken Pot Stickers



Catherine Pond prepares a simple Fall dinner.

GROW Casey County, Farmwife at Midlife

<http://GROWCaseyCounty.blogspot.com>

<http://FarmwifeatMidlife.blogspot.com>

Author: Catherine S. Pond

Recipe Favorite: Shepherd's Pie and Salmon en Croute

In recent years, the Louisville community has become a national model for the integration of urban and rural, and the KFB Community reflects that trend. The members of KFB run the gamut from city dwellers to rural Appalachian farmers. I started my own blog, Urban Sacred Garden, earlier this year to create a resource for reconnecting through food, travel and gardening when living a busy urban lifestyle. Joyce Pinson of Friends Drift Inn writes about cooking, food preservation, heirloom vegetable gardening, food culture and life in Appalachia. Joyce emphasizes, "I want people to come to understand Kentucky and Appalachia. And I want to do it all while wearing pointy-toed high-heeled shoes and sipping bourbon!" This city girl heartily agrees.

As you might expect, food writing in Kentucky is intrinsically tied to the agricultural community. Catherine Seiberling Pond (writer of numerous blogs including Farmwife at Midlife and GROW Casey County) and her family moved from New England to Kentucky in 2008 to gain access to

Meagan's First Kitchen

<http://meagansfirstkitchen.blogspot.com>

Author: Meagan Moughamian

Recipe Favorite: Cheoreg (Armenian bread)

My Kitchen Table (The Green Apron Company)

<http://greenapron.com/blog/>

Author: Maggie Green

Recipe Favorite: Oven-Baked Chex Mix

more open and arable land for farming. When discussing her work for GROW Casey County she remarks, "I see it as a public service for something that is important and that I care about: promoting local agriculture, related businesses and some of Kentucky's finest produce."

Her message rings true for everyone in the KFB Community, and we are inextricably linked to the local food culture of the bluegrass. We love Kentucky farmers, foods, chefs and products, and you will often hear us talk about being "Kentucky Proud."

The best part of following regional food writers is the attention to geographically based, seasonal cuisine. When you pull up the latest post



A beautiful Lamb Tangine made by Mindy Wilson.

The World in My Kitchen

<http://www.theworldinmykitchen.com>

Author: Mindy Wilson

Recipe Favorite: Arroz al Horno (Spanish baked rice dish)

Urban Sacred Garden

<http://www.urbansacredgarden.com>

Author: Jessica Pendergrass

Recipe Favorite: Cheesy Bison Quinoa Meatballs

Follow the Kentucky Food Bloggers Association on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/KentuckyFoodBloggers>



Peggy Labor crafts a tasty Blueberry Bourbon cocktail.

My Fiancé Likes It, So It Must Be Good

<http://mybflikeytoimbg.blogspot.com/>

Author: Peggy Labor

Recipe Favorite: Andy's Buckeye Birthday Cake

Savoring Kentucky

<http://www.savoringkentucky.com>

Author: Rona Roberts

Recipe Favorite: Mother and Dad's Saturday Night Rolls

from a KFB you will see some of the most popular cooking trends based on what is available in your local farmers market down the street. If you want to learn about local foods, local bloggers are an excellent resource. Recipes transition from spring greens to summer tomatoes to fall gourds to winter preserves and baked goods.

Eating local is increasingly at the forefront of people's minds when they are in the kitchen and at the market, and the movement is continually growing in communities across the South. The KFB Community focuses on local Kentucky foods from bourbon to sorghum to pawpaws (or "Kentucky bananas" as our resident expert Joyce at Friends Drift Inn reminds us). Many of us have also traveled and lived abroad, and we have brought international culinary trends home to roost with Kentucky-ingredient twists.

Our expertise in the kitchen sometimes expands beyond our blogs into the formal world of culinary publishing. Numerous cookbooks and kitchen-themed books have come from the pen of KFB members, including *Sweet, Sweet Sorghum: Kentucky's Golden Wonder*; *The Everything Guide to Food Remedies*; *The Kentucky Fresh Cookbook*; and *The Pantry — Its History and Modern Uses*. Many of us are working towards publishing a cookbook someday, but in the meantime our bookshelves are overrun with cookbooks (sometimes totaling over 150 per household). In food blogging, you

definitely read, research and test recipes as much as you write.

You can also find almost any type of recipe to fit your dietary needs in the myriad of blogs written by the KFB Community. The blogs include recipes for every taste, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, sugar-free and Southern. (That last one is my personal favorite.)

Lori at Fake Food Free studied nutritional sciences at the University of Kentucky and focuses on healthy eating. "My blog began as a platform to discuss food and health, but I became more interested in developing my own recipes," she says. "My blog is about eating more real foods and fewer processed ingredients while exploring food culture through cooking and travel."



Lori's goal is consistent with most food bloggers' including Mindy at The World in My Kitchen. "Now that I've returned to the United States, I have found I can't give up the habits learned in France: cooking with lots of fresh produce, shying away from pre-packaged foods and using meats for which I know the origins." I can attest that after a year of blogging and cooking more mindfully, I was saddened by the end of the summer and fall seasons and the mere thought of frozen vegetables. It is true that once you become accustomed to homemade, locally sourced foods, you cannot turn back.

At the end of the day, our community boils down to one commonality: love of food. As Rona of Savoring Kentucky says, "Doesn't everything relate back to food eventually? In my life, and in my blog, that's how things seem." I find the same to be true. Urban Sacred Garden has allowed me to build an online community with fellow food writers and my readers, all while cooking up a storm in my kitchen and sharing the love around the dinner table with my friends and family at home. And while I am a frequent traveler, my dinner table in Kentucky will always be home.

Joyce at Friends Drift Inn might sum it up best: "I believe in Kentucky, from Pikeville to Paducah. I have a strong sense of family, a strong sense of place. [A fellow chef] once said to me 'I am so proud of where I come from that it hurts.' I share that sentiment. I am not ashamed to live in the hills of Eastern Kentucky, and I cannot think of any other place I would like to be."

Jessica Pendergrass is the founder of Urban Sacred Garden and the Southern Food Bloggers Community, and a proud member of the Kentucky Food Bloggers Community.

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