

Calendar

Itinerant Loafers

Bread-Making Demonstration

It was troubling to read a recent biography of Elizabeth David. This reporter learned bread-baking about 20 years ago from David, the highly respected British food writer. That is, she learned from David's far-famed book, *English Bread and Yeast Cookery*. But Artemis Cooper's *Writing at the Kitchen Table: The Authorized Biography of Elizabeth David* reveals that David had a sharp tongue and that she was a smoker. It's hard to reconcile the smell of cigarettes with that of freshly baked loaves. The acidity of some of David's remarks leaves a bad taste as well.

LOCAL EVENTS

David's volume looks different on the shelf now — it's tarnished. And

the peek behind the curtain into her private life is regretted.

Of course, it's unfair. Just because David was as complex as the rest of us doesn't mean she wasn't a good bread-baker — or a good writer about the process, the latter being a talent unto itself.

Those who consult David will read this sentence: "It is axiomatic among serious bakers that the tiniest proportion of yeast to flour produces the finest bread." She is absolutely right. Novices are often tempted to add extra yeast to a recipe. The idea makes a certain sense. Those who cheat in that way will invariably be chastened, however. While their loaves may rise quickly and dramatically, they'll have an unpleasant, "yeasty" taste.

A slow rise is best.

Learning from books without a live mentor may seem the hard way to initiate oneself into the bread-baking

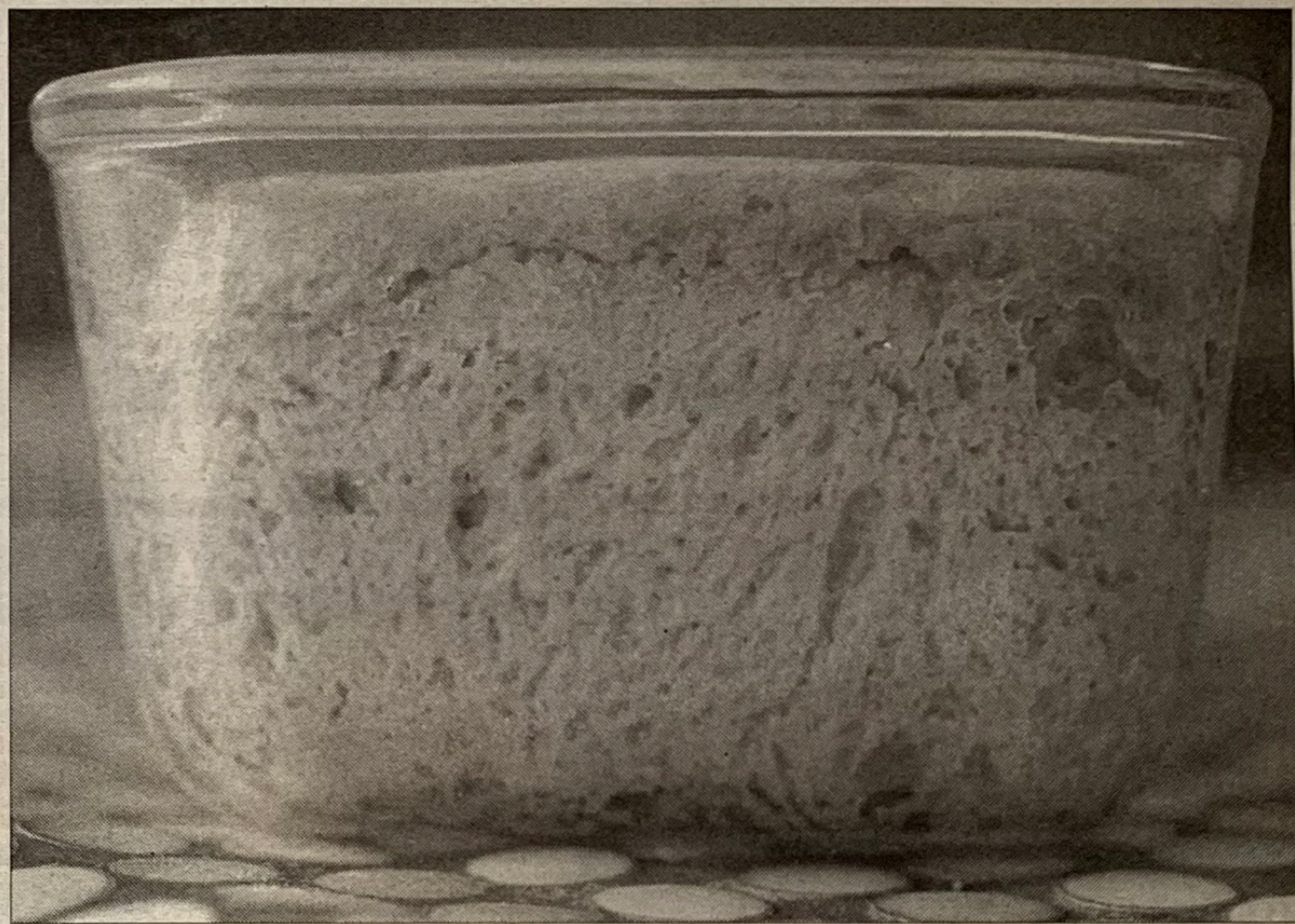
community. The approach does have a couple of advantages. First, you don't have to admit to books your false starts or previous sins. Second, they don't get frustrated by the pace of your progress. But being an autodidact takes an independent streak.

If you feel the lack of one, you may be pleased to know that on Monday, King Arthur Flour and Ralphs will be sponsoring free bread-baking demonstrations in San Diego.

"Cure your 'yeast anxiety' during these free and informative classes," the King Arthur website proclaims. "Produce the perfect baguette, mock braid, six-stranded braid, or epi in minutes."

Anticipating the skeptics and bread-baking failures in their midst, they go on: "Impossible, you say? Let us show you how. Beginners will leave feeling confident in tackling their new hobby, and even accomplished bakers will learn plenty of new tips and techniques."

King Arthur spokesperson Shannon Zappala explains the company's new concern for the bread-bakers and would-be bread-bakers of the region. On the phone from company headquarters in Norwich, Vermont, she says King Arthur is attempting to expand its market share in



Rising dough

the state. "We've been in Trader Joe's for a couple of years. We've been in Mrs. Gooch's with our white and whole wheat for three or four years. We just got into Ralphs, which is another 250 or so stores. It's giving us quite a bit more exposure. California is such a big state. Some people still hadn't heard of us, even though we feel like we've been there for quite a bit of time. We just need to pick up more stores."

These demonstrations will be conducted by senior baking instructor Michael Jubinsky. A 20-year "veteran" of King Arthur, he began to bake in his grandmother's kitchen while growing up in Lowell, Massachusetts, Zappala says.

"He'll be teaching it straight, by hand, starting with the flour in the bag that you buy in the supermarket. He takes you from an empty bowl to a finished product that you'd put in the oven, and quite a few shapes of the finished product, too."

Jubinsky's wife, Sandy, will be his assistant. Two other company employees will be on hand. "They do the setting up and the meeting and greeting and that kind of thing."

From San Diego, the foursome will travel north to Newport Beach, Sherman Oaks, Torrance, and Santa Barbara. "Typically they'll go into a state and do four days, usually Monday through Thursdays," says Zappala. "In this particular case, we had a request for Sherman Oaks." So they squeezed in the fifth stop on the California itinerary.

From California, they're scheduled to go to Texas, and then on to New York's Buffalo-Rochester-Syracuse area. "They go from city to city, and it's pretty tight and — fun," she adds tentatively.

What's unspoken is that such a whirlwind isn't quite in the spirit of baking bread. It's also disappointing to learn that there will be no actual cooking done at any of these demonstrations. The team stops short of putting the loaves into the oven, because too many permits are required, says Zappala. That means no samples can be given out, either. Equally disappointing is that audiences will have to forego the incomparable aroma of freshly baked bread.

"If people want the bread, they're going to have to go home and make it themselves," says Zappala as cheerily as possible.

— Jeanne Schinto

Bread-baking Demonstration by King Arthur Flour's Michael Jubinsky
Monday, February 12,
Sweet dough:
10:00 a.m.-12 noon
Rustic bread and sourdough:
7:00-9:00 p.m.
Marriott Mission Valley Hotel
8757 Rio San Diego Drive
Free
Parking: \$2
No registration required
Info: 800-777-4434 or
www.KingArthurFlour.com

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Classical Music
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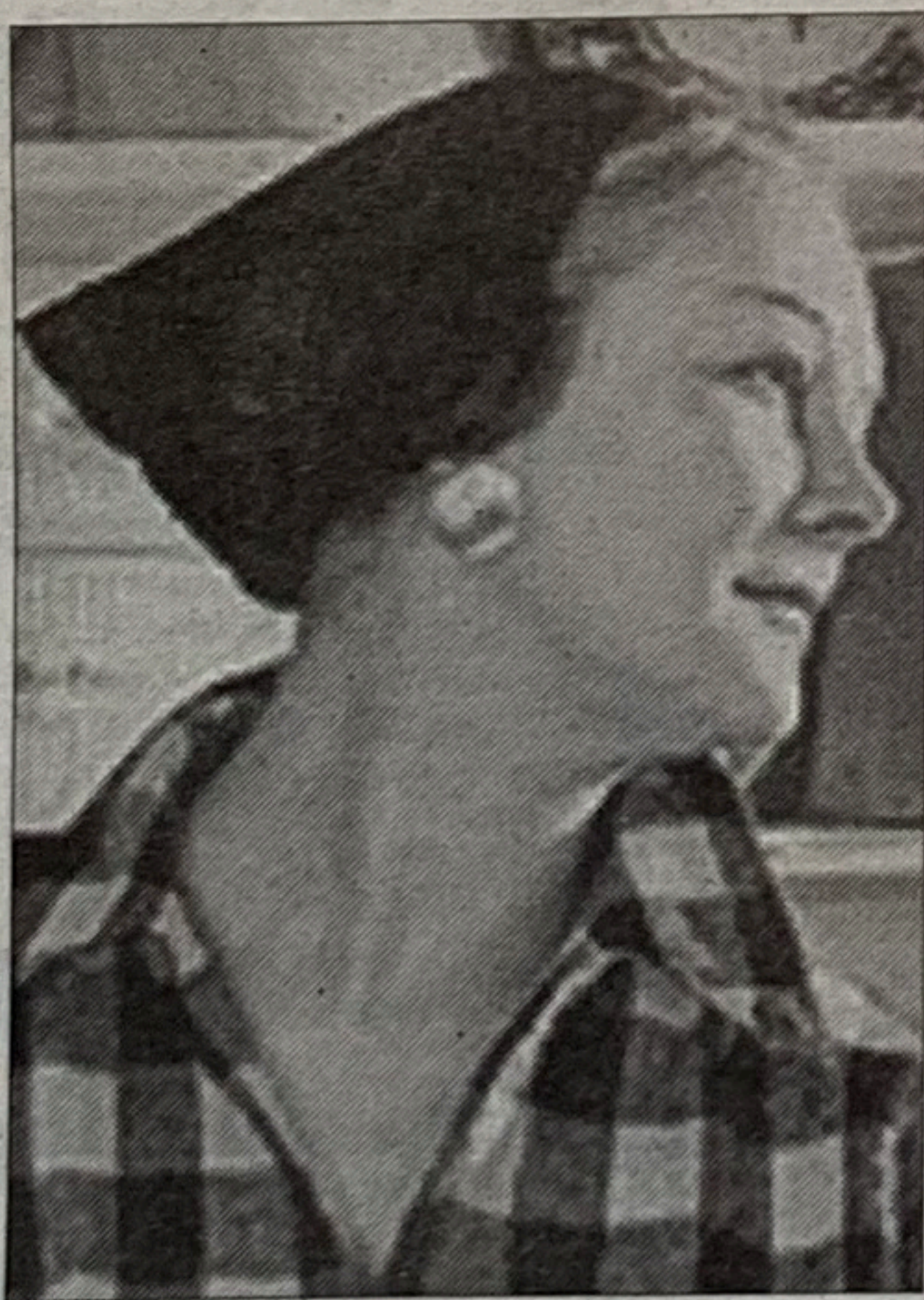
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Elizabeth David



Michael Jubinsky