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FOOD + HOME

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*This is
Bay Area
design*

*Tartine's new Manufactory
project encapsulates the
ultimate modern NorCal
aesthetic. Page 6*



The design of our time

Tartine's new project is the epitome of the Bay Area

By Allison McCarthy

From the floor of the Manufactory, there's the buzz of constant movement — a dynamic flow of bakers, chefs, waiters, and runners, each filing through the large open space with a distinct purpose. Through glass windows wrapping the dough room, common prep work plays out like mesmerizing performance art; the act of loading and unloading fresh loaves from a central oven becomes something of a spectator sport.

In the background, sun streams through large warehouse windows, and white marble counters sparkle in the cascading light. Paper lanterns, strung from high ceilings like floating helium balloons, soften the natural glow. Douglas fir millwork and furniture temper the otherwise stark interior, a gradient of whites and neutrals meant to draw one's attention to the space's main attraction: the food.

Whether they set out to do so or not, Chad Robertson and Elisabeth Prueitt of Tartine Bakery fame have managed to build a place that may be, at the moment, the perfect embodiment of the Bay Area's style — in architecture and design, food and ethics, all under one roof. Set to open August 16, the Manufactory is a bakery, along with an all-day eatery, coffee kiosk, wine bar and outpost for Tartine Cookies & Cream, Prueitt's brand-new line of frozen treats.



But foremost, the Manufactory is a completely Bay Area phenomenon: a personal project with a public mission, a creative hub fostering cross-industry collaboration, a center for innovation, a showcase for local artisanal talent. All in, it's a heady mix for something that is, on the surface, just a bakery.

The couple started thinking about such an undertaking a few years ago, after more than a decade of working in Tartine's cramped quarters at the corner of Guerrero and 18th streets. They'd gained fame — the little place has long been an international destination, never without long lines wrapping around the block. They'd published multiple cookbooks and participated in chef collaborations around the world. With all of this behind them (plus an influx of cash they lacked when first starting out), the time was finally right to think about investing in a larger production facility where they could also try out some of the ideas they were previously too busy to test. "To make it in this town, you have to be producing all the time," Robertson says. But that was getting harder and harder to do at tiny Tartine.

Heath Ceramics, meanwhile, had transformed in 2012 an old laundry facility in the Mission into a second factory and showroom for their iconic Sausalito-based brand. City zoning laws aimed at preserving industrial space designated the 60,000-square-foot building "PDR" (production, distribution, repair), enabling Heath to fill with other like-minded businesses.

Heath owners Robin Petravac and Catherine Bailey had been holding out for a major tenant who matched what they were trying to do with the campus on Alabama and 18th: build a community of makers that would reinforce Heath's tradition of meticulously handmade goods. "We really wanted to celebrate manufacturing and what it takes to make things, with a focus on craftsmanship and design," says Petravac.

With a little nudge from their shared book agent, the two cou-



Top, custom-made wood booths at Tartine Manufactory, a new bakery complex in the Mission. Above, the entrance as seen from inside the Heath Ceramics building.

The German-designed Heuft oven for bread baking is one of only two such ovens on the West Coast.



Photos by Michael Short / Special to The Chronicle



Above, an assortment of Heath's Tartine teal ceramics line, which will be used at the new restaurant and are sold at the Heath shop. At left, the new bread room.

Forging a modern S.F. look

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ples started talking, and soon the partnership was sealed. Tartine's original bakery would remain, but this new 5,000-square-foot space — with its great bones and open floor plan — would allow the company to test the new products and collaborations they had envisioned for years.

Similar to what Heath has done with its glass-walled factory, Robertson and Prueitt have opened up the kitchen in an effort to expose their craft. A state-of-the-art Heuft thermal oil oven from Germany is displayed front and center, dictating how the rest of the space functions around it. "People used to think kitchens should be hidden, but then places like Saison brought the open kitchen back in vogue," Robertson says. "I loved that way of looking at food production and decided I wanted to honor the

people working there as much as the guests."

Local architect Charles Hemminger — something of a low-profile savant and the driving force behind the design of such restaurant stars as State Bird Provisions, the Progress and Cala — and Los Angeles firm Commune Design, both of whom worked on Heath Ceramics, were commissioned for the Manufactory build-out so that the two spaces would reflect a shared vision.

Commune kicked off the design brainstorming with images of Japanese teahouses, alpine lodges and Danish cafes. "Chad and I both travel quite a bit, and he would send me detail shots of things he came across on his trips that inspired him," says Roman Alonso, founding partner and principal of Commune Design.

Since Robertson and Prueitt wanted the space to take a back seat to the food production, Alonso and team suggested a monochromatic color palette of whites and neutrals — a blank canvas that would put the emphasis on the breads, pastries and dishes being prepared there. "The color would come from the food and the dinnerware collaboration," Alonso says, referring to Heath's new

Tartine line of teal-blue plates and bowls. "Everything else would be as light as possible so that the space would literally recede into the background." Concrete floors, plaster walls, Calacatta gold marble and unglazed white Heath tiles would add tonal shades and textures to keep the space from feeling flat.

If this all sounds familiar, that's because it is. Shades of white, light natural wood, subtle pops of color and maybe even a living wall — these design elements seem to be de rigueur in the Bay Area, which begs the question: Are these just passing trends, or rather, are they emblematic of a broader regional aesthetic? Just like midcentury modern characterizes Palm Springs and disco symbolizes the '70s, a clean, modern look with an emphasis on craft has largely come to define a Bay Area style. So, where does this look have its roots?

"The Bay Area has a different vernacular, and we apply that to our work here," says Alonso. "I always think of handmade houses, à la J.B. Blunk, with cozy interiors that protect against the fog."

Blunk was a renowned Nor-Cal wood sculptor working

during the 1960s and 1970s who was greatly inspired by Japanese elegance and simplicity. "There is definitely a design relationship between the Bay Area and Japan that goes back a long way," says Robertson. Prueitt adds, "We're talking really broad strokes here, but in the same way that the East Coast might be more influenced by a European aesthetic, California's style probably falls more in line with Japanese design."

There's also the preference for natural materials over man-made. "There's a serenity, simplicity and reverence for natural materials that Chad and I are very enamored by," Prueitt says. Case in point: The plain, unadulterated Douglas fir (typically a construction-only timber) chosen for the furniture and other wood elements at the Manufactory.

"They wanted to do something that was humble but in a very elevated way," Alonso says. "This is what makes it singularly Tartine."

Much like the food being produced at the Manufactory, every detail in the space has the same kind of pure, simple, handcrafted touch — from the metal and wood to the tiles and textiles to the breads, pastries,

and other locally made treats — and is intended to underscore the collaborative nature of the project.

In this way, the Manufactory might just be the ultimate expression of what Northern California currently represents, both in terms of aesthetics and ideals. On a macro level, it's about process as much as product, bringing to the forefront a creative community of makers keen on collaboration. It's a place where global informs local, where travels abroad inspire what local artisans make and how they craft. It's an environment in which traditions are preserved and yet spun anew.

For Robertson and Prueitt, it's an ambitious space where they can put their beliefs and values into practice. But for you and me, it's a beautifully designed new bakery where we can linger over a morning bun and a cup of coffee while catching a glimpse of the bread-making action — without having to fight for a table. At least for now.

The Manufactory at 595 Alabama Street is scheduled to open August 16.

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An artisanal dream team

"The Manufactory is all about making things, so it was only natural to fill the space with all things hand-made by local artisans," says Roman Alonso of Commune Design, the design firm that played a major part in the look of Tartine's new Manufactory. "There's an honest, holistic idea behind the whole space."

Nearly every design detail was crafted by a California artisan, from the custom Ruth Asawa-inspired woven globe pendants by Robert Lewis to hand-stitched leather braids around the steel door handles by Cuban-born artist Llanae Alexis, all the way to the neon signs by Oakland's Jim Rizzo. Here are some of the more prominent contributors.

— Allison McCarthy

Robin Petravac and Catherine Bailey, Heath Ceramics

Custom Heath x Tartine serving ware

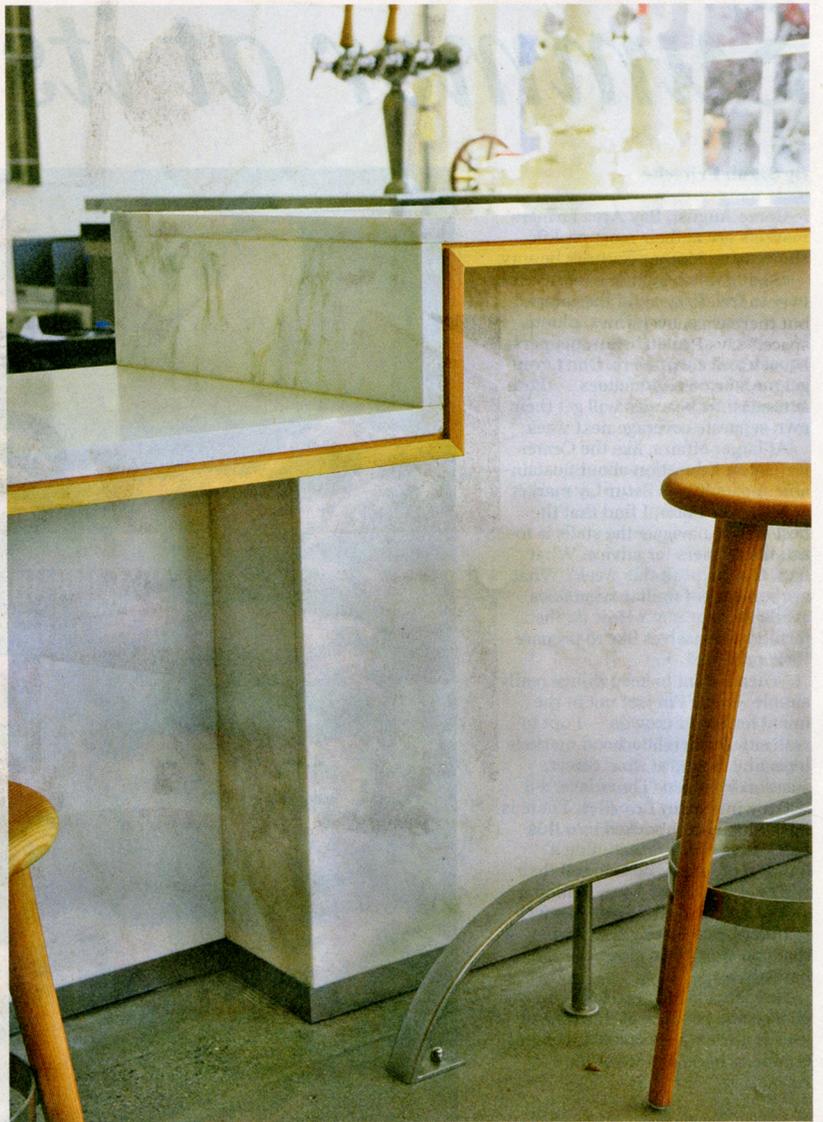
The opening of the Manufactory also marks the debut of the first Heath x Tartine dinnerware collaboration. Based on Heath's Rim line, originally designed in 1960 for use in the food service industry, the collection is a refreshing revival of a midcentury modern classic. "After Commune Design came up with the color palette for the Manufactory, we made suggestions for dinnerware styles and tiles that we felt would complement the look," Bailey says. Together, they created a new glaze called "Tartine Teal," which is now one of the defining hues of the restaurant. "It's a palette for the Rim line that we've never played with until now," she says. The serving ware (which also includes sand and cocoa glazes) is being used in the restaurant and is available for Heath devotees to buy both in their showroom and online. Heath also worked with Elisabeth Prueitt on a muted, candy-colored selection of bowls for Tartine Cookies & Cream and advised on the tiling for the Manufactory. "Chad (Robertson) and Liz were looking for a functional matte material that would work well with the plaster walls in the space, and Roman of Commune Design had this crazy idea," Bailey says. "He turned the Heath tile over and wondered how unglazed tiles would look. It's the first time we've done unglazed white and we liked it so much that we even have it in our house now."



Matt Dick, Small Trade Company

Uniforms

Matt Dick, whose name has become synonymous with high-end handmade, is the think-tank behind Small Trade Company, a collection of goods by artisans and makers specializing in varying techniques and crafts. He's known in the Bay Area (and beyond) as a great connector, with an uncanny knack for finding skilled artists and bringing their work to the public. He's the guy notorious for taking decorative elements away and stripping products down to their simple, honest materials. "My approach to work-wear honors the spirit of heirloom garments and quality construction," he says, as evidenced by the time-honored wares in his showroom at the Heath Ceramics complex. For the Manufactory, Dick designed aprons made of blue and white Japanese striped canvas, plus shawl collar bakers' jackets — in heavy gray linen and natural hemp canvas — for Robertson, Prueitt and their executive support team. He also consulted on Tartine's new bread bag, an appropriation of Komebukuro, or traditional Japanese rice bags.



Photos by Michael Short / Special to The Chronicle

In their Bayview shop, Mark Hamilton and his Hamilton Schwarzhoff team created the Calacatta marble countertops.

Peter Doolittle, PDX Productions

Wood (custom tables, banquettes, shelving, coffee kiosk, framing around the dough room, storefront window system)

Influenced by the visionary work of architect and theorist Buckminster Fuller, Peter Doolittle made the move from fine art to fine craft. After graduating with a degree in sculpture from U.C. Davis, he opened a design-build studio in Dogpatch in 1999 and never looked back. "I'm mostly self-taught and my designs are reflective of the principles guiding functional technology and responsible sourcing of materials," he says. With this philosophy guiding his work, it's no surprise that he's partnered with key players in California's local movement. Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard, Nopa and Bi-Rite Markets are just some of the projects he's worked on over the years — using mostly Northern California wood, of course. For the Manufactory, Doolittle hand-selected reclaimed Douglas fir from multiple West Coast locations for the millwork throughout the space.

Dan Greenberg, Conceptual Metalworks

Metals (first floor and mezzanine hand and guard rails, wine bar foot rail, wine bottle shelf)

For Dan Greenberg, finishes are everything. The metalsmith typically works in contemporary design with hints of mid-century modernism, but for this project, the stainless steel metalwork was inspired by Switzerland's Therme Vals spa resort. Built by architect Peter Zumthor in the mid 1990's, the spa's design is informed directly by its environment — specifically the Valser Quartzite stone slabs around which it was carved. "Loryn Napala at Commune Design sourced this as a starting point and what followed was a collaborative effort to produce a product that fit the overall aesthetic of The Manufactory," he says. The result: satin-finished stainless steel railings with custom-milled Douglas fir caps. "My hope is that this finish will transcend the average 'restaurant grade' stainless steel material, directing the eye more toward the form rather than the recognizable familiarity of the material."