

# WORD *of mouth*

NASHVILLE CONVERSATIONS

## **Lisa Donovan: Husk Nashville Pastry Chef**

By Lily C Hansen  
Nashville Word of Mouth  
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Lisa Donovan's smile lights up the room.



The Husk Nashville pastry chef is someone whose warmth immediately makes you feel at ease. From the first time we met at her East Nashville home, the soulful conversations easily flowed. Like myself, she constantly tries to find depth in every situation. Since the beginning of her unconventional culinary career, dessert has been the source of self-discovery. Butter and flour (or growin' food as she preferably calls them) have reconnected Lisa to her roots, and created a community of friends and family. This Southerner takes her pies seriously and Sunday suppers even more so.

We didn't see one another again until months later and it was as if no time had passed. Like most successful service industry folks, Lisa is an expert conversationalist. She has a serious knack for dynamite desserts and stimulating dialogue.



I was thrilled to run into her last week at a mutual friend's dinner party. While nibbling on roasted chicken thighs and clinking wine glasses (spirits + soul food = Nashville staples) we chatted about life, work, and the emotional upheavals of working for passion, rather than financial gain. Lisa is intuitive, thoughtful and a well of insight. Our conversation reminded me that the only thing we can rely upon is hard work and dedication from ourselves. In the "look at me!" social media age, there is power in quietly pursuing your passion. This chef is proof that one needn't flaunt their goods to finagle attention.

For the Husk Nashville chef, desserts are about the celebration of connection and Southern heritage. Her talent, work ethic and undying enthusiasm for knowledge have aided her in climbing the ranks from server to celebrated pastry chef. After reviewing our interview last night, I was gratefully reminded about the almost orgasmic ecstasy that comes from practicing one's craft. The visual artist and writer painted a picture I'll never forget about the "high" one experiences during peaks in the creation process. For me, that buzz comes from writing, painting and drawing. I know baking bestows the same bliss upon Lisa.

I hope that spark is always there for us both.

Photography: Danielle Atkins

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\*Photos are out takes from the forthcoming book Word of Mouth: Nashville Conversations