

TRAVEL

# This Martha's Vineyard inn owner cooks the 'best breakfast in the US' — with no culinary training

By **Lauren Daley** Globe Correspondent, Updated November 23, 2022, 8:00 a.m.



Annabelle Hunton and her husband, Simon. JEANNA SHEPARD

You won't find a menu on the Nobnocket Boutique Inn website.

But if you're a breakfast person, their waffles, baked eggs, and frittatas are worth the ferry ride to Martha's Vineyard.

For the fourth year, [The Nobnocket Boutique Inn](#) in Vineyard Haven just won the "Best Breakfast — US/Americas" from luxury travel guide [Condé Nast Johansens](#). It's one of the few spots in the country that made their Excellence 2023 list — and the only spot in New England.

Nobnocket has earned its share of buzz since opening in 2016. Last year, the inn was a Conde Nast Readers Choice pick for "Best Hotel in the Northeast." Yankee named it a Best Boutique Hotel in New England 2022 and a Yankee Magazine Editors' Choice for Best of New England 2019. There's been [other fanfare](#), too.

The plot twist? The award-winning breakfasts are created by a totally self-taught cook.



Peach and mango waffle KATE MCCULLEY

Annabelle Hunton, a London native who co-owns the inn with her husband, Simon, laughed when I asked about her culinary background.

“None. I need to make that clear to anybody who thinks I might,” she says with a chuckle. “I just learned a lot from my dad — he trained as a chef, but never was one — and my joy for cooking comes from him.”

ADVERTISING

 Replay

In fact, all of the Hunttons' hospitality skills are self-taught from their years as travelers and eaters, Annabelle says. "Simon worked in the pharma industry for 20 years. We met in Milan, where I was working as a translator," she said. The couple opened their first inn, on Cape Cod, in 2011. They sold that inn and opened Nobnocket in 2016.

I asked Hunton about her breakfasts, recipes, and how an English couple came to create one of the buzziest inns in New England.

**I'm intrigued by these breakfasts because, while I see [photos](#) on your Instagram, there are no menus on your website.**

So it's different every day, and I don't have any rhyme or reason. We always have a [fruit/yogurt/ granola](#). Then it's either a sweet or savory main course. I try and do something a little bit different, rather than things you'd normally find going out for breakfast. It's interesting — I think if we were to tell people what they were getting, nobody would choose what we serve, but when [they get it] they're like, "Oh, wow, this is great — I wouldn't have thought to order that." I think that's where [the buzz] comes from.





Cranberry muffins NOBNOCKET INN

### **What are examples of sweet and savory courses?**

For sweet, I might do homemade waffles with peach and mango with blueberry coulis, and a side of sorbet. So it's like a dessert breakfast. If I'm doing eggs, I might do poached eggs on a bread, but then hide underneath it some pesto and crispy prosciutto. I do a lot of prosciutto in the oven; it comes out crispy and salty. We make our own pesto. We use as much local ingredients as possible. The joy is we don't have a menu, so if the avocados look good that day, I have flexibility.

### **What did you make today?**

The main dish was breakfast burritos — scrambled eggs, onions, beans, roasted red peppers, cheese, and sausage wrapped in a tortilla, then baked in the oven for 20 minutes. Then for the fruit, I had blueberries, strawberries, and banana parfait done kind of layered with vanilla yogurt and [homemade granola](#).



Breakfast set up with bento box. CONOR DOHERTY

### **What dishes might you make in the summer when the Vineyard gets busy?**

I love to do [baked eggs](#) — that's grated cheese on the bottom, then whisk the eggs and milk, bake for about an hour. It's almost like a soufflé. Then I'll do chopped asparagus so you've kind of got a splash of green. I might do eggs with spicy sausage on the side. I defrost the sausage with chili flakes, fry them off in orange juice. They get this sticky-sweet outside with a spicy inside. I've got a baked-orange croissant. I soak croissants in a vanilla-egg mixture with orange overnight. Those puff up beautifully. I'll do that with marmalade-sugar syrup to pour over. They're slightly decadent, but they're not huge portions.

It's a bit of a different experience. I'm not a chef. So I'm not going to try and go up against the poached eggs Hollandaise that somebody orders from professionals — mine's never gonna be like that.





Breakfast burrito NOBNOCKET INN

**Your site says “signature egg dishes” — what are a few of those?**

[Baked avocado eggs](#) with chips and salsa. You scoop out the avocado [pit], put the egg in and cook it. We might sprinkle cheese on top. We’ve got [frittatas](#) — spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, feta. If I’m doing scrambled eggs, I might stir in a little feta to give it a bit more flavor. I might chop up rosemary, roasted potatoes [as a side]. There was a TikTok craze of grated eggs this summer, which I’d never even thought of, and was a treat. I like to do flattened roasted potatoes instead of toast on the bottom.

**What are some fan favorites?**

The waffles. One of the most requested recipes — other than our granola — is baked [blueberry French toast](#). Poached eggs with pesto underneath — people go gaga for that.

**What’s your personal favorite to eat?**

I’m not a breakfast person.

**What do you like to eat?**

I’m a dinner girl. I love pizza, Indian food, Thai, Greek, Italian. We’ll do trips to New York just to eat. Boston is, oh my God, fantastic for food. I could just spend an afternoon eating cold cuts in [Eataly](#). We got stuck off-island last year, one of the ferries canceled, and we just looked at each other like “Eataly.”

*Lauren Daley can be reached at [ldaley33@gmail.com](mailto:ldaley33@gmail.com). Follow her on Twitter [@laurendaley1](https://twitter.com/laurendaley1).*

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