

# Healthy & Organic LIVING

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# Sweet success

**I grew up** in a tiny village in the wholesome Danish countryside. I could open our front door and in two hops over my mother's organic vegetable and fruit garden be straight into the fir forests. My parents lived an organic lifestyle and raised their children in that way.

At 18 I boarded a train for Paris to join the École Lenotre (run by the inspirational Gaston Lenotre), where I did my apprenticeship as pastry chef, and learnt that pure, unadulterated baking craft skills can happily survive in a business employing 1,050 people.

He taught me there is no reason, regardless of how big the volumes, to do things poorly, or for cutting corners.

**I started up** our totally organic wholesale bakery in 1999 because I'd had a hard time finding any organic cakes at all.

By then I'd moved to London and was working in food and restaurant management, happily doing 15-hour days – I decided that if I was going to work that hard, it may as well be to follow my own dreams.

So I quit my job, and for two

**Lise Madsen, founder of Honeyrose Bakery, explains how she got started in the world of organic cakes, and why mediocrity should be avoided**



months locked myself at home in my small apartment, refining recipes in my tiny kitchen, only venturing out to exploit my friends as volunteer tasters.

When I felt I had nailed the perfect fudge brownie, the most delectable oat and raisin cookie and a few others, I spent another couple of months putting together a business plan, again with lots of input from friends and past employers.

**I started small** with one oven, a small baking mixer and a short lease. I did my own product development, production, sales,

and deliveries – all on my blue Vespa, zipping around London.

I remember gruelling months of working seven days a week, 12 hours a day – but you will hear the same story from most entrepreneurs, I guess.

Slowly I added key staff and expanded as our cashflow improved. Over the last three years we have expanded our facility space 300%, and employ a great team of people.

**Typical days for** me are a never-ending search for balance between running Honeyrose and looking after my family; we

are blessed with a three-year-old boy and a six-month-old girl. Both Honeyrose and my family could be my fulltime job, as many working mothers can understand.

**We are always** looking for ways to improve things. This past year we started our own registered charity, [www.yellowflowerfoundation.org](http://www.yellowflowerfoundation.org), to help people help themselves in the developing world.

**My worst bad** habit is my inability to be on time; and my fiery temper, which is stealthily disguised by a placid Scandinavian exterior. Mediocrity and incompetence make me cross – especially if I know that someone has the capability to do things much better.

**If I were** Prime Minister, I'd raise taxes to improve education – coming from Denmark, I have seen also the good side to higher taxes. I'd label all conventional food as 'chemically-treated'; make organic food compulsory in schools and hospitals; and ban factory-farmed animals.  
[www.honeyrosebakery.com](http://www.honeyrosebakery.com) \*

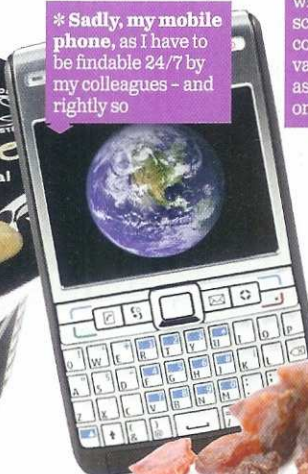
“For two months I locked myself at home in my apartment, refining recipes in my tiny kitchen, only venturing out to exploit my friends as tasters”

## My 5 life essentials

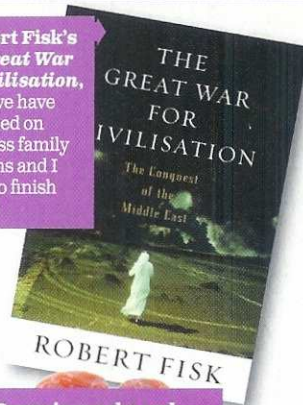
\* Rachel's Organic Creamed Rice, which we are addicted to as a family



\* Sadly, my mobile phone, as I have to be findable 24/7 by my colleagues – and rightly so



\* Robert Fisk's *The Great War for Civilisation*, which we have schlepped on countless family vacations and I aspire to finish one day



\* Organic snacks and raisins for the kids to keep them going



\* REN natural skincare products

