

HAMPTONS

Alec Baldwin PRESERVING THE EAST END'S ARTISTIC LEGACY

Plus:
ROSS BLECKNER
DYLAN LAUREN
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DONNY DEUTSCH
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Danyelle Freeman

Dylan Lauren paints a portrait of her friend, the author of *Try This*.

Danyelle Freeman first fell in love with the Hamptons the summer after our freshman year in college. I brought her to my family's house in Montauk, where she went head over heels for the wide stretches of beaches and sunsets at Duryea's Lobster Deck with steamers, lobster rolls and bring-your-own rosé, followed by homemade ice cream from John's Drive-In. She has been coming to the Hamptons on her own every summer since, mostly situated in Sagaponack or Bridgehampton, where she can paddleboard on the bay. We still spend plenty of time together out East, playing tennis, eating, swimming and savoring summer days and the beauty of the Hamptons.

Danyelle was born into a foodie family; on weekends their motto might as well have been, "Will travel for food." Her family field trips weren't so much about seeing the Statue of Liberty as they were about paper-bagged chestnuts or soft-shell crabs at the shore. She was brought up to cherish the simple pleasures of freshly baked bread, seasonal fruit pies and just-caught grilled fish.

She spent her vacations while growing up with her toes in the sand at beaches all over the world—everywhere from Hawaii to Monaco to St. Thomas—but nothing quite compared to the Hamptons with its many farmers' markets, cornfields, vineyards and dairy farms. She rushes at every opportunity to pick her own blackberries at Hank's farm stand in Southampton, drink this year's rosé at Wölffer Estate Vineyard, sample the cheddar and stinky blue cheese from Mecox Bay Dairy, and grill just-caught fish from The Seafood Shop in Wainscott.

She didn't graduate from Harvard with the intention of becoming a food writer, but she has been in love with food for as long as I have known her. When she launched her blog, Restaurant Girl, it became an overnight success, and quickly after, she became the restaurant critic for the *Daily News*.

Her book, *Try This: Traveling the Globe Without Leaving the Table*, was inspired by a lifetime of food adventures and, more importantly, the 21st-century dining landscape. "We speak a new language of food," says Danyelle. "We eat barbe-

"What a talented and eclectic group of writers gathered under one tent in support of East Hampton Library. I was honored to be among such esteemed authors."—DANYELLE FREEMAN

cue from all over the world. We don't just eat Chinese food anymore; we eat Szechuan, Shanghai, Cantonese or Hunan cooking, and that means things like sea cucumber, flowering chives and ma po tofu. You may not be able to travel to Cuba or Thailand, but that doesn't mean you can't eat like you're there."

When Danyelle discovered that no one had written a modern guide to dining out, she decided to write one herself. She wrote *Try This* for anyone who has ever had a question about a menu or a plate put in front of them and wondered what they were about to eat. She encourages people like me to treat dining out as an adventure, discovering new comfort foods and new favorites. The best part? She wrote the majority of *Try This* in the tranquil and inspiring setting of the Hamptons.



Try This author Danyelle Freeman

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Danyelle Freeman is best known for her popular food blog, restaurantgirl.com.

most of the company assembled preferred the real thing.
"The dinner was an original presentation and delicious, catered by the beautiful Andrea Correale seated to my right. When someone suggested the branzino needed a bit of salt, I acted quickly and removed the hari-kari knife from the caterer's hands before she could disembowel the offender. All in all it was a splendid evening."