

ASK THE EXPERT

What Breville Ultimate Baker's Oven, \$239.95

Who Michael Klausen, Brasserie Bread, Banksmeadow.

First impressions I do understand that breadmakers exist to make breadmaking easier but I can't comprehend why you would not prefer the enjoyment of doing it by hand and baking in a traditional oven.

Test The instructions looked daunting but it was easy to get started and they offered great tips and guidelines. I

followed the recipe from the booklet provided to make a simple loaf. The process took 3½ hours, was fully automatic and finished with that aroma of freshly baked bread. However, I found the bread was quite ordinary with a disproportionately large top and an overly doughy odour.

Next I made a dough with organic flour, sourdough starter (wild yeast), no bread improver, no fat and little fresh yeast. The process took 4½ hours using the breadmaker. In the meantime I did the same dough by hand and baked it in an oven. The result in the breadmaker was a lot better than the first test - the consistency and aroma were much more appetising - but the bread was still ordinary compared with my beautiful handmade loaf.

Verdict I'm sure there is a place for



Photo: Marco Del Grande

the Ultimate Baker's Oven in a busy world but it is not an overly inspiring substitute for handmade, traditional oven-baked bread. All this said, it is a fascinating piece of equipment that does work within its limitations. While I think it fails a little on the baking cycle, it is easy to operate and you will have the smell of fresh bread whenever you use it.

Tip Use good ingredients, be creative and don't use bread improver. Aim to use it for a smaller loaf (750g) and apply the slowest settings for the breadmaking process.