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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ COOKING

Cuisine St. Bernard: Recipes and Reflections from the Incomparable Mountain Inn

Jean Mayer
Marie-Pierre Moine
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"The art of French cuisine is the art of accommodating food to whatever you have on hand and making it savory, healthy, and an experience of good taste…You can cook in the French spirit wherever you are," declares Jean Mayer, chef, "French cowboy," and long-time Taos resident. Together with Marie-Pierre Moine (a Parisienne and now London-based author of over a dozen French cookbooks, including *Cooking School Provence*), he offers a careful selection of the ski lodge's favorites, creating menus of rustic elegance.

Recipes adapted for the home kitchen include French classics such as crème brûlée, lamb Provençal, salade Niçoise, béchamel sauce, ratatouille, and onion soup, among others; Southwestern comfort foods such as chili con carne and huevos rancheros; entries for the accomplished gourmand, from a multi-step paella to prime rib of buffalo; global fare such as quinoa and borscht; and brunch staples like spoon bread and eggs Benedict. The authors emphasize fresh, local ingredients, and do not shy from using heavy cream and butter, though healthier substitutions should not pose much difficulty.

The photographs are straightforward, close-up examples of dishes rather than stylized, garnished compositions, and an unusual, bold design complements the mountain setting: repetitions of triangular white space cuts across pages. Not all recipes are accompanied by a photo of the completed dish. Some pages feature instead the key ingredient, cookware, or snowy landscapes.

New culinary enthusiasts will appreciate the book's clever organization—one week's worth of breakfast, lunch, and dinner dishes, each presented on its own page—a welcoming, rather than overwhelming, approach. Experienced cooks will note the absence of extras (sidebars, nutritional data, serving recommendations, tables of weights and measures, glossaries, techniques, etc.), a choice that allows food to take center stage and reminds the reader of its restaurant origins.

Despite its strong ties to a particular chef, *Cuisine St. Bernard* is not, ultimately, a celebrity effort. Nor should it be mistaken as one more souvenir for patrons of the inn. Instead, it wonderfully captures the spirit of a family album, replete with staff bios and fireside insights from Mayer; a work of ample *savoir- faire*.
KAREN RIGBY (February 17, 2012)

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