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Foreword Review COOKING

Dining at the Ravens: Over 150 Nourishing Vegan Recipes from the Stanford Inn by the Sea

Joan Stanford
Jeff Stanford
BenBella Books (Feb 9, 2016)
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Married innkeepers Joan and Jeff Stanford gradually built a vegan pleasure dome at their California home, creating America's only vegan resort, complete with organic farm and restaurant, The Ravens. The Stanfords' philosophy evolved slowly since they started caretaking the seaside inn in the 1970s, changing from vegetarianism to veganism, amidst raising a family and layering on additional edible landscaping and renovation projects. Today, The Ravens is renowned as a fine dining and eco-friendly destination, though the many imaginative recipes that fit this high-end aesthetic easily translate into recipes one can make in a home kitchen.

Tucked among over 150 recipes for luxuriously healthy baked goods, soups, appetizers, main dishes, and more are descriptions of the couple's food philosophy, gardening advice and cooking tips. Recipe inspiration comes from various culinary traditions, including India, Latin America, Italy, and the American Southwest; the cookbook also shines a spotlight on some unusual ingredients which grow abundantly around their Mendocino coastal location, including sea palm, minutina, huizontle, and a variety of greens. As it comes from a resort, there are naturally a lot of recipes in the book for morning meals, but this section is not full of standard fare like pancakes and eggs, but sustaining plates of vegetable scrambles, enchiladas, chilaquiles, and The Ravens' bestseller, Citrus Polenta with Braised Garden Greens, slathered with Creamy Toasted Cashew Sauce.

While vegan cooking is rooted in the earth, this is a sophisticated cookbook. All recipes are beautifully photographed, with stylish and innovative presentations. Whether it's the riotously striped column of color of the Salad Napoleon, or the delicately browned and fragile Beggar's Purse stuffed with mushrooms, arugula and tofu, cooking from this book promises to be both a visual and gustatory delight.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (Summer 2016)

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