



The Reach of a Chef: Professional Cooks in the Age of Celebrity

By Michael Ruhlman



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The author of *The Soul of a Chef* looks at the new role of the chef in contemporary culture

For his previous explorations into the restaurant kitchen and the men and women who call it home, Michael Ruhlman has been described by Anthony Bourdain as ?the greatest living writer on the subject of chefs?and on the business of preparing food.? In *The Reach of a Chef*, Ruhlman examines the profound shift in American culture that has raised restaurant cooking to the level of performance art and the status of the chef to celebrity CEO. Bibliophiles and foodies alike will savor this intimate meeting with some of the most famous chefs in the kitchens of the hottest restaurants in the world.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

There's no rest for the restaurateur in Ruhlman's engaging account of a culinary world that's become even more frenetic in the wake of the Food Network's success and the rise of celebrity chefs desperately clinging to their stars. Ruhlman (*The Making of a Chef; The Soul of a Chef*) revisits some of the people he's worked with in the past and the school where he trained to see how things have changed since "chef branding, with its product lines, multiple name-recognized restaurants, and entertainment venues, has lured the chef out of the kitchen." Ruhlman points out the irony of such chefs as Wolfgang Puck, Emeril Lagasse and Anthony Bourdain becoming so successful that they no longer have time to practice the thing that brought them success in the first place. He solicits opinions on the phenomenon from an array of people in the business and also profiles some of those still shaping American cooking in the kitchen, from Melissa Kelly and her down-to-earth comfort food to Grant Achatz and his avant-garde, technical creations. Ruhlman has a light, unobtrusive style, and he brings considerable knowledge to the table when commenting on either individual dishes or the industry as a whole. (*On sale May 22*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Ruhlman continues his meticulous examination of the role of the restaurant chef commenced in his earlier books. As Ruhlman perceives it, the one great advantage to the celebrity chef's media ubiquity is access to a bully pulpit, a forum to help save Americans from total confusion over conflicting information on nutrition and obesity. He revisits the Culinary Institute of America and discerns how the passage of time and its success have changed its curriculum. Ruhlman profiles several chefs, among them Chicago's lionized Grant Achatz, trying to discern what makes his food truly inventive and a meal at his pricey restaurant an experience beyond the ordinary. He takes on the Emeril Lagasse phenomenon, rising to Lagasse's defense while others are apparently bent on dismissing television's most recognizable chef. Visiting Las Vegas, Ruhlman christens it "America's food Gomorrah." Fans of Ruhlman's previous volumes will relish all the insider "dish" here and will have a pleasant experience despite Ruhlman's rambling, confusing, and exhausting parentheses-within-parentheses sentences. *Mark Knoblauch*

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Review

[Ruhlman] has a wonderful sense of narrative and pace . . . an amazing visual and aural memory. (*The New York Times Book Review*)

IÆm sure [Ruhlman is] a pretty good cook himself, but I would urge him not to give up his day job, because heÆs a terrific writer. (*Newsday*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Glenn Flinchum:

The book The Reach of a Chef: Professional Cooks in the Age of Celebrity can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Why then must we leave the good thing like a book The Reach of a

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