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Toro Bravo: Stories. Recipes. No Bull.



Synopsis

At the heart of Portland's red-hot food scene is Toro Bravo, a Spanish-inspired restaurant whose small plates have attracted a fiercely loyal fan base. But to call Toro Bravo a Spanish restaurant doesn't begin to tell the whole story. For chef John Gorham, each dish reflects a time, a place, a moment. For Gorham, food is more than mere sustenance. The Toro Bravo cookbook is an honest look behind the scenes: from Gorham's birth to a teenage mother who struggled with drug addiction, to time spent in his grandfather's crab-shack dance club, to formative visits to Spain, to becoming a father and opening a restaurant. Toro Bravo also includes 95 of the restaurant's recipes, from simple salads to homemade chorizo, along with an array of techniques that will appeal to both the home cook and the most seasoned, forearm-burned chef.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've never been to Toro Bravo in Portland, but I have been to Spain many times. I've also been to numerous State-side restaurants that aim to serve their version of Spanish cuisine. With respect to the number of Spanish recipes in this book, I would give it an 8 out of 10; reading the Table of Contents parallels reading a menu in a restaurant in Spain, albeit in the mid- to southern region mostly. Almost all of the recipes in this book have an accompanying photo. In some cases, this is a picture of the prepared dish. In other instances, it's just a picture of the key ingredient (Padron Peppers, for example). In addition, all or most of the recipes have an entry paragraph or two, which I always appreciate in a cookbook. In some instances, the author shares his first experience of having the

dish. In other instances, some background/history on the recipe or food items is provided. For the most part, the ingredients listed are generally available, though advanced ordering will be needed for more complex items, like if you're going to make authentic Chorizo. When I received the cookbook, I started off reading the Foreword by Liz Crain. I'm not a prude, but I was a bit taken aback to read "... To put it plainly, John wasn't a dick" in the first paragraph. At the end of the Foreword, she makes reference to licking the backside of a goat (albeit in more colorful language). The Introduction to the cookbook is a lengthy--though somewhat interesting---biography by the author, primarily talking about his childhood and his progression into becoming a chef. Much of the content is perhaps better suited to a personal journal than a cookbook, but hey, it's his history.

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