



A TASTING ROOM

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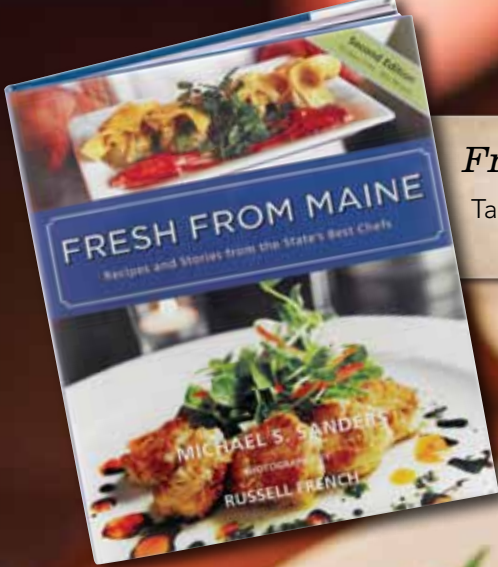
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OPEN YEAR ROUND

Fresh From Maine

Table Arts Media, \$32.50



Delicious in Print

Starving for the perfect holiday gift? **BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER**

Our best-selling cookbook during the holidays is *Dishing Up Maine*,” says Mariah Hughs, co-owner, with husband Nick Sichterman, of Blue Hill Books in Blue Hill for more than 25 years. “It’s not just a cookbook but a history of the state, food-wise. I’ve loved everything I’ve ever made out of it.”

Maine cookbooks, for many of us, are more interactive and deeply satisfying than coffee-table books. Not only fun to read, with gorgeous pictures of food and places we know, they draw us in with recipes to try.

FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS TASTY BOOK

Dishing Up Maine (Storey Publishing, \$19.95) is Brooke Dojny’s deft embrace of Maine’s best ingredients and classic recipes, spiced with her own tasty updates, contributed recipes from chefs, and lots of sidebars about people and places. For example, she provides an almost unnecessary recipe for a classic, barely garnished lobster roll, and then follows with her own bright and tantalizing fried scallop roll with “quick homemade tartar sauce.” And she gets around-to

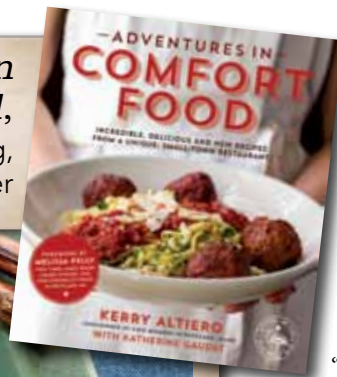


From top, Pete’s Paella at Pier 77; Harraseeket Inn’s White Chocolate Cherry Tuile Napoleon.

RUSSELL FRENCH

HUNGRY EYE

Adventures in Comfort Food,
Page Street Publishing,
2014, \$21.99, paper



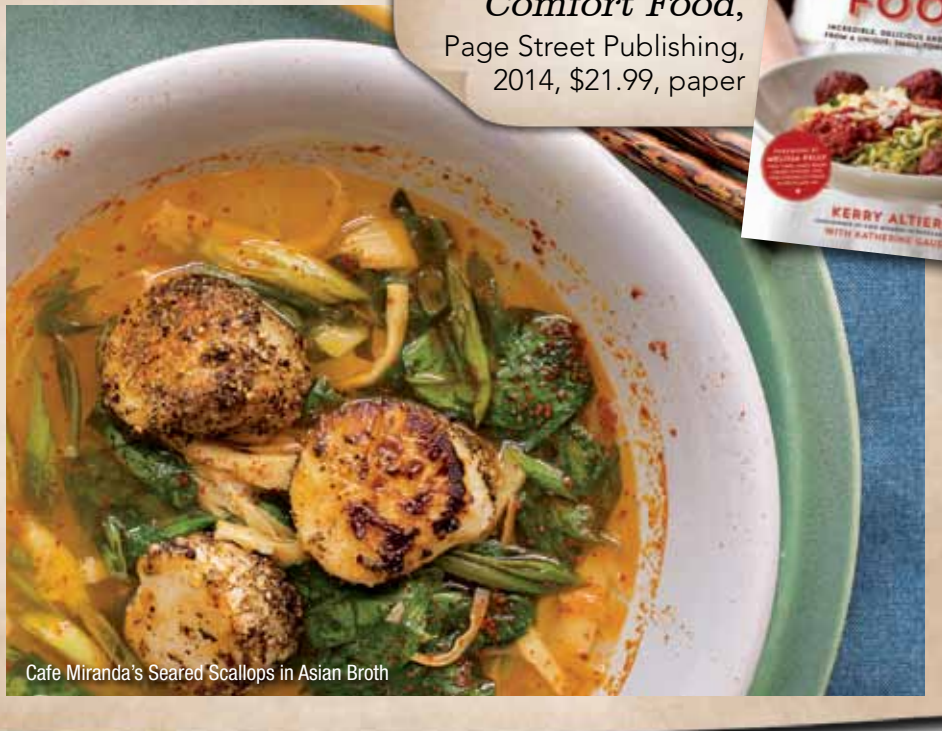
Books, \$15.95, paper]; it came out in hardcover in 2013, and the paperback “still turns up now and then on our best-sellers-of-the-week list,” Gersen says.

KITCHENS OF THE STARS

“Michael Sanders’s book does really well too.” Gerson points to *Fresh From Maine, Recipes and Stories from the State’s Best Chefs* [Table Arts Media/Chelsea Green, \$32.50] “People eat and buy their food in these places, so they want the books. And visitors want keepsakes.”

Local food and wine writer Michael Sanders and photographer Russell French have a hit on top of a hit with the 2012 second edition of 2010’s *Fresh From Maine*. “We’re actually talking about a third edition at this point,” says Sanders. “It’s turned out to be something people like to give as a gift.”

The second edition is a hefty hardcover structured like a meandering dream road trip from Kittery to MDI, with many chef interviews by Sanders. He and French do their own design and production work on the *Fresh From* volumes. The chance to snoop in the kitchens at spots like Fore Street, Caiola’s, Brunswick’s El Camino,



Cafe Miranda’s Seared Scallops in Asian Broth

the Fort Fairfield potato festival, to Sabbath-day Lake to purchase and praise “the quality and freshness” of Shaker dried herbs, to the A-1 Diner in Gardiner to pick up the recipe for “Spicy Chicken Big Mamou.”

Dishing was first published in 2008, but it’s apparently never going out of style. “I still do appearances and signings,” says Dojny, who lives in Sedgwick. “People send them out of state, to friends who have been to Maine.” She’s the author of 10 other cookbooks; *Chowderland* will be published in 2015 by Storey Publishing.

DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK

“This holiday season’s book is definitely the *Portland, Maine Chef’s Table* [Morris Books/Globe Pequot, \$24.95],” by Margaret Hathaway and her photographer husband Karl Schatz,” says Julia Gersen at Longfellow Books. “It’s done really well here.” It’s a colorful, thoughtful, photo- and recipe-filled trip through many of the city’s restaurants, from Ribollita to Schulte & Herr to the Green Elephant and Grace. The creative couple of Hathaway and Schatz has been collaborating since *The Year of the Goat*, their 2009 chronicle of their path from life in the Big Apple to their own Ten Apple Farm in Gray, a book they memorably launched with goat cheese canapés at Rabelais Books (then in Portland), to which Karl

brought a goat in his Subaru wagon.

“We wanted a mix of recipes,” Schatz says. You may or may not be up for Back Bay Grill’s Truffled Beef Tartare, with raw filet mignon; handmade semolina crackers; and deep-fried, hard-boiled egg yolks. But Hot Suppa’s Fried Green Tomatoes are a snap.

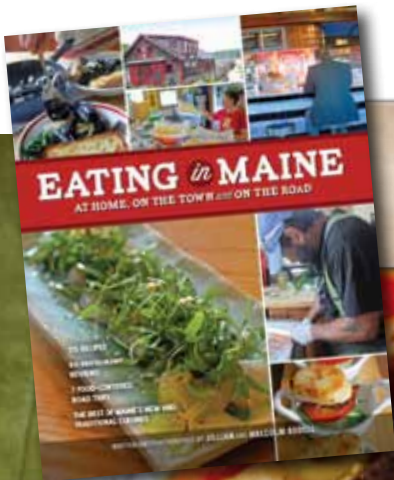
Julie Gerson says Longfellow also sells “a lot of *Standard Baking Co. Pastries*”—by the bakery’s own Alison Pray and Tara Smith—and the *Harbor Fish Market* book” by Nick, Rian, and Kathleen Alfiero. [Both from Down East Books, \$29.95.]

“We’ve sold tons and tons of *Blue Plate Specials*,” says Gerson. “It’s not really a cookbook, but Kate Christensen’s such a good writer that it’s the perfect cross-over food book.” Portland novelist Christensen’s memoir-with-food actually does contain recipes [Anchor



Steak au Poivre at Petite Jacqueline

Portland, Maine Chef’s Table
Globe Pequot, \$24.95



Eating in Maine,

Tilbury House, 2014,
\$22.95



Malcolm & Jillian Bedell's
Yankee Pot Roast

Fishbones Grill in Lewiston, and Slates in Hallowell is appealing. Most of the recipes are approachable for the home cook: Francine Bistro's herby, spicy chicken liver salad with bacon and prunes is sensational, and chefs Jonathan and Natalie Spak at the Oxford House Inn in Fryeburg conjure up a creamy, deep-dish, iron-skillet "downeast frittata." Sam Hayward contributes a gutsy sauté of pork belly, potatoes, and sauerkraut.

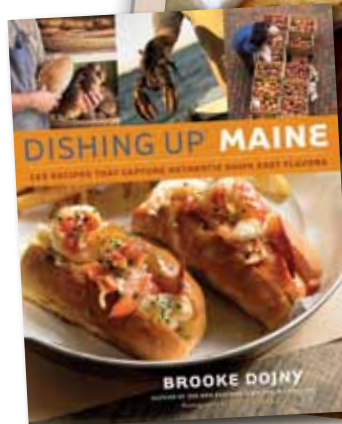
HOT OFF THE PRESS- AND ZESTY

Kerry Altiero's brand-new *Adventures in Comfort Food* (Page Street Publishing, \$21.99, paper) sizzles because it's a lot more fun than most cookbooks. If you've ever been to Cafe Miranda in Rockland you know his sense of humor extends to menu items named things like Sorta Kefta, Pol-

ish Hippie, and Lamb Shank Redemption. But the reason Miranda's been there for 30 years is because the food's delicious. "Kerry is rock and roll," declares Primo restaurant's superstar-chef Melissa Kelly in the forward to *Adventures*. She hails him as "the pioneer chef of Maine." As with the food at the cafe, these recipes have soul: pasta, sausages, heavy cream, heaps of local greens, and strong cheese share the pages with grits and shrimp, pierogies, a few Thai curry creations, and haddock enchiladas. The show-stopping photographs are by Stacey Cramp.



Brooke Dojny's
Snack Sandwiches



Dishing Up Maine

Storey Publishing
\$19.95, paper



DINING OUT IS IN

“Do you know this book? It’s a big seller,” says Josh Christie at Sherman’s Books on Exchange Street, pointing to *Eating In Maine—At Home, On The Town and On The Road* by Jillian and Malcolm Bedell [Tilbury House, \$22.95].

Do we ever. The Bedells are local food bloggers who use the online sobriquet “From Away,” and their reputation for curiosity and very tasty food photography precedes them. They love to cook as much as they enjoy dining out all over the state,

and it’s this enthusiasm that gives the book its personality. Malcolm provides a lively narrative to such mini-chapters as “Weekend Project: Eggs Benedict,” which starts with homemade English muffins. He leads a “Road Trip: The Curious Case of Authentic Latin American Cooking in Maine” that visits Portland’s Tu Casa and Zapoteca before heading north. Jillian brings the awe (she’s actually from away—Malcolm’s from Tenants Harbor) of first-time discovery of local dishes: “I learned its great and glorious name—haddock chowder!” And places: “We drove about 50 miles to have lunch in a barn [on

a desolate-feeling peninsula,” which turns out to be El El Frijoles in Sargentville—“the middle of nowhere and the center of the universe.” Recipes are excellent and make good use of local bounty.

“The Bedells and Michael Sanders have been big sellers from the summer onward. So were *Harbor Fish* and *Standard Baking*—people like the shops, and they like the cloth-bound spines,” says Sherman’s Josh Christie. “Kate McCarty’s book is popular, too.” McCarty teaches food canning classes and blogs as “The Blueberry Files;” her *Portland Food: the Culinary Capital of Maine*

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[History Press, \$15.95, paper] is a look at the restaurants, food trucks, farmers, producers, and purveyors that make the city a great place to eat.

“But you know what the best-selling cookbook is, hands down, in all Sherman’s stores?” asks Christie. He hands over a cheery red hardcover, *Maine Ingredients—Fresh & Fabulous Recipes from The Junior League of Portland*, 2004 edition [Wimmer Cookbooks, \$5.99]. Don’t write it off as just a quaint souvenir for cruise-shippers, either: recipes in the 300-plus pages—that open nice and flat thanks to the spiral binding—are more with-it than you might expect, for things like carrot soup with dill pesto, spinach and cheddar soufflé, lemon saffron swordfish, and Nubble Light nut bars.

Christie himself is the author of the *Maine Beer Brewing in Vacationland* [The History Press, \$19.99, paper], which has undeniable holiday gift appeal in this suds-crazy town.

TREASURE HUNTING

Some of the great Maine cookbooks are out of print but hardly out of sight in a

city and state with such a good used-book network of stores and used sections within stores. “*Saltwater Seasonings* is one of the very few that really catches the spirit of Maine,” says Don Lindgren, owner of Rabelais Books in Biddford, probably the center of the universe for vintage and rare cookbooks. Chef Jonathan Chase of Brooksville and his sister Sarah Leah Chase published *Saltwater* in 1992, but the recipes hold up—a very precise recipe for poached salmon with dill sauce still gets raves. Lindgren has a copy in stock; he also has several editions of John Thorne’s lovably subjective, all-over-the-place *Simple Cooking*, first published in 1980 and long out of print. “Thorne’s books are fabulous—simple, readable, with a sense of food history.” Open it anywhere and find him quoting everyone from Elizabeth David to Gunter Grass. Rabelais also has assorted old copies of the frugal-yankees he calls “the Marjories”—Standish and Mosser. Mosser was the niece and secretary of Kennebunk historical novelist Kenneth Roberts, who

provides the narrative that makes *Good Maine Food* a perpetual classic.

Lindgren’s persnickety about his Maine cookbooks. When told that Sherman’s bookstores are selling the Junior League compilation like hotcakes, he rolls his eyes.

“Most Maine cookbooks are created for the tourist industry; they’re just souvenirs. A good cookbook has to have a point of view.” So which ones *does* he like?

“Kathy Gunst is good, and Kate Gooding’s *Black Fly Stew* game books are the real thing. Sandy Oliver’s the best, she’s a true food historian. I love Nancy Harmon Jenkins’s books, but I wish she’d write about Maine.” (Jenkins is a Camden native; her culinary turf is the Mediterranean.) Lindgren hands over *Maine Mapmaker’s Kitchen* [written and published by hand-drawn map aficionado Jane Crosen and available in bookstores and from mainemapmaker.com, \$27.95, paper]. It includes recipes designed for “home, camp, and afloat” among how-to instruction on growing, harvesting, and preserving.

“It’s a good one,” he says. Nothing like a book as a present for the future. ■

We won!
 Abbiamo vinto!
 (ahb-YAH-moh VEEN-toh)



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