



# California Dish: What I Saw (and Cooked) at the American Culinary Revolution

*Jeremiah Tower*

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Widely recognized as the godfather of modern American cooking and a mentor to such rising celebrity chefs as Mario Batali, Jeremiah Tower is one of the most influential cooks of the last thirty years. Now, the former chef and partner at Chez Panisse and the genius behind Stars San Francisco tells the story of his lifelong love affair with food -- an affair that helped to spark an international culinary revolution.

Raised in the United States, Australia, and Great Britain, two-time James Beard Award-winner Jeremiah Tower was a man without a country -- until he immersed himself in the borderless world of great cooking and set out to create the "serious simplicity" that would change our notions of fine dining. Stumbling almost by accident into Berkeley's then-unknown Chez Panisse in 1971, he dazzled the San Francisco Bay Area -- and then the rest of the country -- with his dedication to fresh, local ingredients prepared simply. Eager to fulfill his own dining vision, he embarked on his quest to build the ultimate high-style "democratic" brasserie, San Francisco's Stars, where blue-jeaned rockers mixed with tuxedoed operagoers and political figures from around the world. With the expansion of Tower's empire into Hong Kong, Singapore, and Seattle, he became one of the first and most glamorous of the eighties "super chefs."

In this sparkling and candid memoir of his life with food, Tower tells the story of his rise and fall and rise again -- all intimately tied to the state of the culinary arts. More than a brilliant chef, Tower is an engaging storyteller who shares with wit and honesty the real dish on cooking, chefs, celebrities, and what really goes on in the kitchen. He exults in the exotic romance language of menus; the philosophy of brown sauce; the inner workings of a super restaurant; the drugs and sex that fueled the revolution; and culinary tours of Brittany, Morocco, and other glamorous ports. You'll get glimpses of such kitchen greats as the legendary James Beard, Chez Panisse's Alice Waters, renowned critic Craig Claiborne, plus Elizabeth David, Richard Olney, Julia Child, Paul Bocuse, Jean Troisgros, Paul Prudhomme, and Wolfgang Puck -- not to mention luminaries like Rudolph Nureyev, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sophia Loren.

Above all, Tower rhapsodizes about food -- the meals choreographed like great ballets, the menus scored like concertos. No other book reveals more about the seeds sown in the seventies, the excesses of the eighties, and the self-congratulations of the nineties. No other chef/restaurateur who was there at the very beginning is better positioned than Jeremiah Tower to tell the story of the American culinary revolution.

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