

RESTAURANT HOSPITALITY

Who Moved Your Cheese? Hopefully, Your Waitstaff

His appearances as a keynote speaker at RESTAURANT HOSPITALITY's Concepts of Tomorrow conference convinced us long ago that **Clark Wolf** knows more about restaurant trends than anyone in the business. And his James Beard Award this year tells us that the rest of the world agrees. But few knew of his passion for, and encyclopedic knowledge of, cheese until the publication of his first book: *American Cheeses* (Simon & Schuster, \$25).

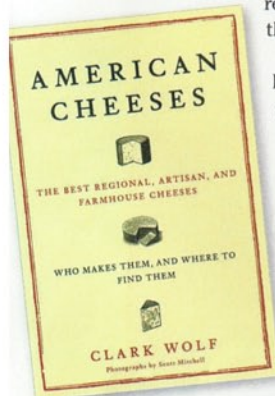
What he's come up with here is a handy guide for restaurant operators who are wondering which specific types and brands of fine cheese might fit on their menus, either as part of a standalone cheese course or incorporated into one or more menu offerings. Yet the book is pure Wolf—witty, concise, loaded with relevant ideas and more entertaining than you thought the topic would allow.

He's not a full-time cheese guy. Wolf spends most of his time as a restaurant consultant to a platinum-level client base that includes Mandalay Resort Group and Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. So how did he become such a cheese wiz?

A native of California, Wolf had the good fortune to be present at the creation in 1980 of the legendary Oakville Grocery in San Francisco, a seminal gourmet food store that helped define the genre. Hired on as cheese department manager, he quickly moved up. "Two weeks after we unlocked the door, I was doing all the buying and selling," Wolf recalls. "Two months later, I was running the store." The gig gave

him unending exposure to the burgeoning world of artisan-class foodstuffs, and what he learned about cheese there and since is on display in this book.

The opening chapter gives readers a tutorial on how cheese is made and the broad differences among various styles. From there, Wolf hits the road for some on-site reporting. He visits and learns from some of the finest cheesemakers in the country. A few are already well-known; others are emerging stars you'll want to get to know. Then he throws in a few dozen recipes that are optimal vehicles for the types of cheese he's just introduced the reader to. Who else but Clark Wolf could pack so much valuable information into a 274-page book and still make it a breezy read?

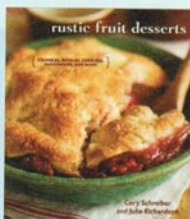


FOODIE BLING: The multitasking Wolf nabbed a James Beard award this year.

Rustic Fruit Desserts

By Cory Schreiber and Julie Richardson
Ten Speed Press, \$22

Just in time for the arrival of berries, stone fruit and other seasonal delicacies comes this gem from Schreiber, a Beard Award winner when he cooked at Wildwood Restaurant



in Portland, and the CIA-trained Richardson, an artisan baker. He provides the fruit knowledge,

she supplies the 72 recipes, most of which are old-school in the best sense of that term. The focus: items with such menu-worthy names as crumbles, buckles, cobblers, pan-dowdies and dumplings. If you need a couple of fruit items on your dessert menu right now, there are plenty to try in this book.

Ma Gastronomie

By Fernand Point
Overlook/Rookery, \$40

Out of print since 1974, this seminal work had nevertheless become a cult classic among chefs, being the favorite of both Thomas Keller (who penned the



introduction to this reissue) and Charlie Trotter. It's easy to see why. Point was a culinary genius who

could provide not just recipes (although there are plenty of fine ones here) but also inspiration to those who spend their professional lives preparing them. Given the current popularity of throwback French bistros, Point's book is timely, and his take on the cooking life timeless. Give this one a try for both information and inspiration. You'll quickly discover why it's a classic.