



# the Culinary Mistress

a love affair with food

BY GERI WOLF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS BOHNHOFF

FORWARD BY ANDREW ZIMMERN



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To all of those who contributed to the publishing of this book... in both the small ways and the big ways... thank you for helping cross a life-long goal off my list. And thank you for saying “Yes, you're nuts to try to get this done in seven weeks, but do it anyway.”

Any errors in the book are mine and mine alone.

As a three-year-old Korean adoptee, I arrived in America at a mere 20 pounds suffering from malnutrition. I remember hearing the comment that if you gave a piece of fish to any of the three adopted children in our family, there wouldn't be a speck of flesh left on the bones.

I haven't stopped eating since.

Growing up on a farm with access to the freshest produce and meat, I learned how to butcher chickens and milk goats and harvest honey — which in turn gave me a true appreciation of food.

In my early twenties, I was set up on a blind date. For our first meeting, the man cooked dinner — including lobster bisque.

It was love. For the man and his soup.

I became ferociously interested in chefs, food and restaurants. An addiction to the Food Network led to a surprise birthday trip to Philadelphia for dinner at then-celebrity chef Philippe Chin's restaurant, Chanterelles.

It was the first time I'd ever heard or sampled French Vietnamese cuisine and my initiation to tasting menus. Tasting menus are developed to expertly pronounce the harmony of certain flavors and textures.

Close to a hundred tasting menus later, I've become a chef groupie. I don't have crushes on movie stars, professional athletes or musicians. No, I have crushes on chefs. Fortunately, they don't seem to mind me stalking them in their restaurants.

The idea of writing a book about chefs was triggered from a message I received from Chef Asher Miller upon finding out I was ill. "What can I do for you? Can I send you some food?"

As I ate the pho he had sent, I felt a deep sense of comfort that I could never fully explain. As long as I can eat, I'll be okay.

Through their recipes and stories, I hope you get to know these chefs as the amazing people and artists that they are.

Incredibly passionate.

Incredibly gifted.

Incredibly generous.

It becomes obvious after spending time — or even cooking with them as I've been lucky enough to do — with chefs that cooking and restaurants are the other women in their lives. *The Culinary Mistress, a Love Affair with Food* was written to tell the stories about these chefs and their love of food. You will notice that this is not a typical cookbook, as each recipe is written in the respective chefs' voice.

Chefs give their heart and soul to their food as it is a way to touch people at the most basic level and many times in the most intricate way. Overwhelmingly generous, they give of their time and talent to the community's numerous charity events.

Every time I dine in a restaurant, I remember that someone put a little of themselves into that plate of food.

I appreciate it. I hope you do, too.

Geri Wolf



## Chris Damskey | Chef de Cuisine, Market by Jean Georges | W Boston

Pudding held a special fascination for Chef Chris Damskey when he was nine. Whenever his parents were away, he would spend hours in the kitchen making boxed pudding.

After mastering pudding out of a box, Damskey began experimenting with pudding from scratch, making his siblings taste-test his creations.

Don't judge the chef on his pistachio pudding with red food coloring. Granted, it looked like a poinsettia gone terribly wrong, but great chefs are made while experimenting in the kitchen.

Starting at a very young age, every Sunday was spent with his grandmother cooking Sunday night's family supper. Damskey's favorite childhood memories are filled with the hours his grandmother would spend with him teaching him how to cook.

While Damskey is now living and cooking in Boston at Market by Jean-Georges in the W Hotel, he left his culinary imprint on Minneapolis during his tenure as chef de cuisine of the now-closed Chambers Kitchen.

Working under restaurateur Jean-Georges Vongerichten keeps Damskey challenged to offer exceptional, yet attainable fine dining experiences. In a high profile foodie city like Boston, Market by Jean-Georges fits right into the environment.

The restaurant's philosophy puts an emphasis on fresh, locally-sourced ingredients and a menu offering comfort and creativity.

A lot like grandma's philosophy.



# Organic Carrot Broth with Farro, Radish and Celery

## CARROTS

2 pounds	organic carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
5 ¼ cups	distilled water, cold
2 ounces	granulated sugar
1 ounce	kosher salt

Combine above in a pot and bring to a fast boil, covered with a lid. Remove from heat and add:

14 ounces	carrot, peeled and thinly sliced
5 ounces	parsnip, peeled and thinly sliced

Mix ingredients well, and allow to cool covered at room temperature. Place in a blender and purée until completely smooth. Transfer to a fine mesh strainer lined with a coffee filter and allow to filter overnight in the fridge. You should have 35 ounces of carrot broth. Season with:

1 tablespoon	sugar
1 teaspoon	kosher salt

## FARRO

3 ounces	farro, toasted until golden and nutty
2 quarts	distilled water, cold
2 tablespoons	kosher salt
	herb sachet (½ ounce rosemary and ½ ounce thyme, broken, plus 1 ounce lemon peel, with no pith — placed in a cheesecloth)

Rinse toasted farro 2 to 3 times, combine with water and cook until farro is completely tender. Remove from heat and add herb sachet and salt, then cool in a flat pan in the cooking liquid.

## TO SERVE

4 ounces	carrot broth, heated to simmer
1 tablespoon	farro, heaping, heated in a little cooking liquid
	French breakfast radish, thinly sliced, seasoned with salt, lemon juice and minced tarragon
	yellow celery leaves

Arrange farro in the bottom of a bowl and scatter seasoned radish slices and yellow celery leaves on top of farro. Heat soup to a simmer (do not boil). Pour on top of farro for tableside presentation.

