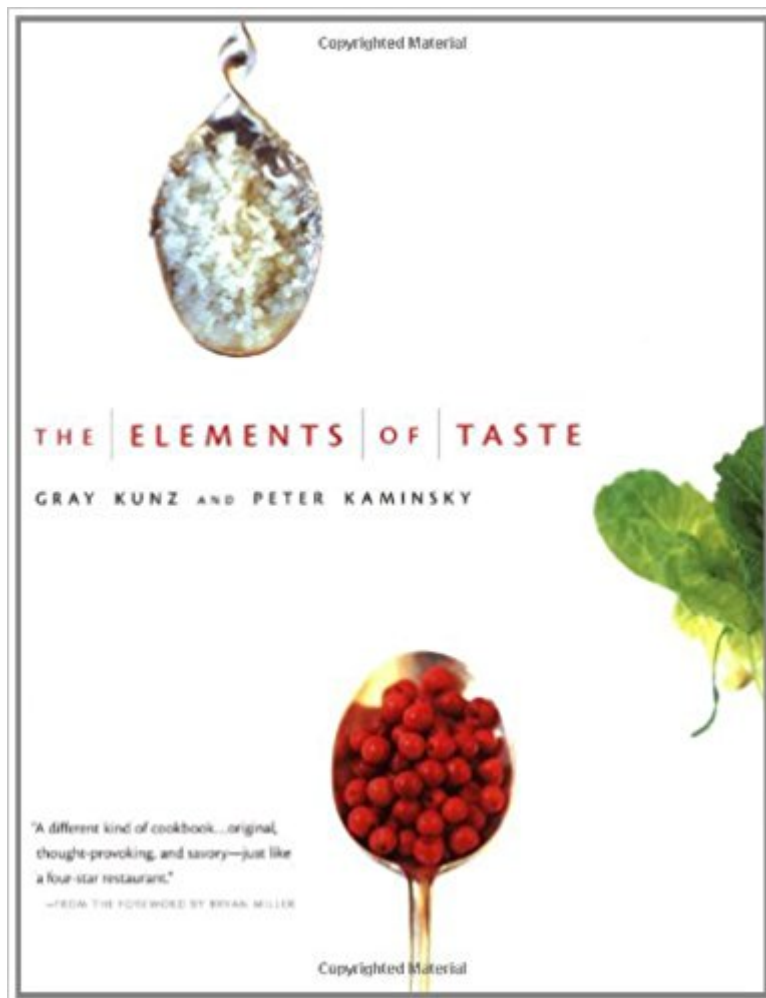


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The Elements Of Taste



Synopsis

Four-star chef Gary Kunz has teamed up with food writer Peter Kaminsky to put together a cookbook that looks precisely at what taste is. From "aromatic" to "floral herbal" to "picante", they have identified the 14 basic tastes in the chef's palate. Each of the book's 130 recipes teaches the reader how to use these fundamental building blocks, establishing basic principles so that the reader will have not only the means for creating his or her own masterpieces, but also the language to describe what the inner dynamic of flavour is. Wine lovers have long had a vocabulary to describe the complexity of wines, but gourmands have had no such lexicon - until now!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kunz (former four-star chef of New York's Lespinasse restaurant) and Kaminsky (New York Times food writer and author of *The Moon Pulled Up an Acre of Bass*) team up for a cookbook variation. Instead of arranging food by course or primary ingredient, they identify 14 basic tastes (salty, sweet, floral herbal, "funky," meaty, etc.) then groups them into four categories: Tastes That Push, Tastes That Pull, Tastes That Punctuate and Taste Platforms. The resulting recipes are, understandably, high-concept chef food. Explaining how they layer and balance tastes, the authors conclude each recipe with Our Taste Notes, which take an oenophile's approach to flavor description. Sweet Scallops in a Pink Lentil Crust with a Hot-and-Sweet Bell Pepper Reduction ends thusly: "The taste comes through first as crunch, then salt, and then heat. Next you get sweetness from the scallops.... The celery leaves provide a final garden note with some bitterness to close down the taste." Components are combined fearlessly. Green Onion Fondue includes scallions, tomatoes, dates, cornichons, mint and ajowan. Lady Apples with Gruyere Celery Pork Pockets are stuffed pork chops

tweaked with cumin, mustard, prosciutto, turnips and quartered lady apples. As complicated and as multi-ingrediented as many recipes are, the directions are admirably clear, and some recipes, such as Oysters and Cabbage and Two-Tomato Coulis with Three Basils, are quite simple. While some readers may initially find the concept to be contrived, most will welcome this unusual means of creating and characterizing food. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Kunz, who earned four stars as the chef of Lespinasse in New York City, and Kaminsky, a food writer, have written an unusual cookbook. Kunz is known for his innovative recipes; having trained in Europe and worked in Singapore, he was one of the first young chefs to combine Asian and French flavors and cooking styles. He and Kaminsky have come up with a vocabulary of taste, comparable to the vocabulary of winespeak, based on 14 basic tastes they identified, from "Tastes That Push," or heighten the other flavors in a dish salty, sweet, and picante to "Tastes That Punctuate" sharp, bitter tastes like that of horseradish. They have grouped their 130 recipes according to these tastes, e.g., Seafood Casserole with Floral Aoli falls under "Spiced Aromatic" and Gratin of Sweet Peas, Tarragon, and Pistachios is under "Garden," one of the "Taste Platforms." Each recipe is followed by Taste Notes, descriptions similar to wine notes; many of the headnotes describe the ideas and experimentation that led to the recipe. This is certainly an interesting approach, though some readers will find it unbearably esoteric. In any case, their book is full of delicious, imaginative recipes and gorgeous photographs of the sophisticated presentations. Highly recommended. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I am a chef and even at my advanced level of training, I found a lot to learn from this book.

The Kindle version is filled with typos and poorly scanned images. It looks like you are reading an early draft.

This is a must have in your cookbook collection! This is not just an ordinary cook book, it explains the flavors profiles. I love how Chef Kunz categorized the flavors into limited categories. That way it won't be too confusing.

Gray Kunz is awesome. This is a must have for anyone who buys cookbooks.

Thanks

classic

I was excited to first see this book, because there is so little in the way of serious yet readable analysis of taste and flavor experiences. Unfortunately, this turned out - against my expectations - to be long on recipes and short on analysis. Mostly, it's a book of recipes with an interesting organizational twist. Kunz's classification of taste is just that, a classification, and little more. I don't feel that he has unearthed any new principles or theories that help chefs create new dishes, because it offers only superficial "rules" about what flavor combinations do or do not work. Beyond being a clever filing system, it offers little more than a language for discussing food, and not a very good one at that. If you want a book of interesting recipes, this is a reasonable source. However, my kitchen is full of such books, and I don't find recipes very useful. If you want new food ideas, check out Charlie Trotter's series, which is more imaginative, has fabulous photographs, and is filled with detailed and evocative writing that is probably more valuable than what you'll find here.

The thousands of typographical errors in the electronic version of this book render it virtually unintelligible. Do not waste your money on this.

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