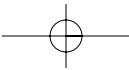
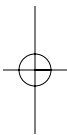
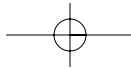


# The TSUNAMI Restaurant Cookbook

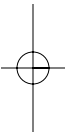






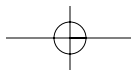
# The **TSUNAMI** Restaurant Cookbook

By Ben Smith



PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY

GRETNA 2005



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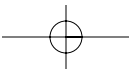
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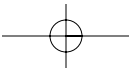
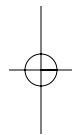
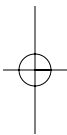


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*For Colleen*





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# acknowledgments

The success of a restaurant depends on many people. One of my most important accomplishments in opening Tsunami was to surround myself with individuals who make me look brilliant. That is a monumental task, I know, but they have done it. My staff has unquestioningly and unflaggingly assumed the responsibility of promoting my food philosophy. They have never failed me. I respect, love, and admire them all more than I can express in words. Thank you all.

My wife, Colleen, deserves individual recognition, as she is charged with the tiresome responsibility of dealing with me both at work, where she is my general manager, and at home, where she is also my general manager. She does a tremendous job on both fronts. Thanks, babe.

I want to thank my two sons, Brendan and Ian, who have learned to keep half of their toys at the restaurant, because they know full well that when Daddy says, “We need to stop by the restaurant for a minute,” it usually means they will be stuck there for hours. Don’t worry—before long you’ll be washing dishes and doing prep work, and at least you will be getting paid for all those hours. Thanks, guys.

Thanks to my family, who has encouraged and supported me throughout the years, never once suggesting I “get a real job.”

I appreciate that I have learned a lot about the business end of the restaurant from my business partner, Thomas Boggs. I thank him for putting his trust in my concept, even when it was sometimes at odds with his business sense.

My literary agent, Linda Konner, was able to see my vision for this book and encourage me in spite of my nearly nonexistent verbal skills. I thank her for that.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to those folks, too numerous to mention here, who have supported my restaurant with their continued patronage since we opened in 1998. Thanks to all of you, especially those who send a glass of wine back to the kitchen once in a while.



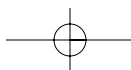
# introduction

I have always been good about listening to the advice of people I trust and respect. Then I go off and do something completely different. This has done nothing to instill any sense of satisfaction in any of my many advisors. Nor, to the credit of said advisors, has it slowed them down in their advisory proclivities. However, when I opened my own restaurant, I may have given rise to some hope that I had finally done something with all that advice.

The truth is that I took that step simply because I could no longer work for anybody else. “Creative freedom” is an oxymoron as long as somebody else is the boss. As a chef, I grew weary of the endless stream of suggestions from restaurant owners, some of whom were very good businessmen, but none of whom were very good menu planners. I came to a point where I refused to make any more recipes clipped out of *Southern Ladies’ Home Kountry Kitchen Garden Journal*, or ensure that all my dinner specials have “sauce, and plenty of it,” or create a “romantic dinner for two” including a bottle of wine for under twenty-five dollars (with coupon). All of that went against my principal belief that a restaurant should clearly represent the chef’s philosophy on food. I wanted to cook for people who came in for the food, not for people who came in for the “two-for-one” deal.

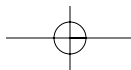
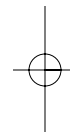
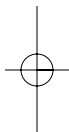
Tsunami opened in Memphis in July of 1998. This book represents a portfolio of my work since then. Like any body of work, it reflects influences and interpretations from my travels, work experiences, and interactions with numerous people along the way. Opening a Pacific Rim-inspired restaurant in the heart of the “barbecue belt” has not been without its challenges. From the very beginning I decided that Tsunami would serve the kind of food that I enjoy cooking and eating. I did not want to compromise my vision of food and ambience in order to appeal to a broader group of diners. I have stuck with that principle and, as a result, have achieved my dream job. Tsunami has attracted a staff and a clientele that are motivated by the same flavors and presentations that I enjoy.

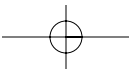
I prefer clean, uncluttered presentations. I like crisp, identifiable flavors. I believe that ingredients should be allowed to speak for themselves. A good chef is merely the catalyst that helps transform a combination of ingredients into a dish that is greater than the sum of its parts. Presentation is a very important part of the dining experience. A plate consisting of only



three elements speaks more to me than a plate towering with food and garnishes. Perhaps I have been overly influenced by my artist father, but I believe in *negative space* on a plate. In other words, what *isn't* there is just important as what *is* there.

Most of the photographs in this book were taken with a fifty-year-old Rolleiflex TLR camera using natural light in the dining room at Tsunami. All of the dishes were photographed directly out of the kitchen within minutes of being plated. No team of food stylists had their hands on any plate. No smoke and mirrors were utilized to produce these pictures. What you see is what you get. My point is that by following these recipes, there is no reason why you cannot get the same results at home.





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