



Relæ: A Book of Ideas

By Christian F. Puglisi

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Chef Christian F. Puglisi opened restaurant Relæ in 2010 on a rough, run-down stretch of one of Copenhagen's most crime-ridden streets. His goal was simple: to serve impeccable, intelligent, sustainable, and plant-centric food of the highest quality—in a setting that was devoid of the pretention and frills of conventional high-end restaurant dining. Relæ was an immediate hit, and Puglisi's "to the bone" ethos—which emphasized innovative, substantive cooking over crisp white tablecloths or legions of water-pouring, napkin-folding waiters—became a rallying cry for chefs around the world.

Today the Jægersborggade—where Relæ and its more casual sister restaurant, Manfreds, are located—is one of Copenhagen's most vibrant and exciting streets. And Puglisi continues to excite and surprise diners with his genre-defying, wildly inventive cooking.

Relæ is Puglisi's much-anticipated debut: like his restaurants, the book is honest, unconventional, and challenges our expectations of what a cookbook should be. Rather than focusing on recipes, the core of the book is a series of interconnected "idea essays," which reveal the ingredients, practical techniques, and philosophies that inform Puglisi's cooking. Each essay is connected to one (or many) of the dishes he serves, and readers are invited to flip through the book in whatever sequence inspires them—from idea to dish and back to idea again. The result is a deeply personal, utterly unique reading experience: a rare glimpse into the mind of a top chef, and the opportunity to learn the language of one of the world's most pioneering and acclaimed restaurants.

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Editorial Review

Review

“On a tiny street in Copenhagen, *Relæ* is casually overturning every convention of fine dining. With its naked oak tables, bistro-style service, and humble index of ingredients (you’re more likely to eat cod skin than caviar), nothing about the setting speaks of exclusivity. And yet the restaurant is unmistakably among the finest in the world. Christian Puglisi is meticulous in his technique, rigorous in his thinking, and—even more impressive—humble in his delivery. The result is exactly what you see here: food that is artful, challenging, understated. This cookbook, like its namesake, is a delicious revolution.”

—Dan Barber, chef of Blue Hill and author of *The Third Plate*

“With this book, Christian Puglisi demonstrates why he’s one of the most influential contemporary chefs in the world. Since *Relæ*’s inception, we’ve seen his ideas and aesthetics emulated in kitchens from New York to the very north of Sweden. Now we have the definitive document of his accomplishments, a book that shares his modern, daring, and singular concepts. An instant classic—and, dare I say, a masterpiece.?”

—René Redzepi, chef of Noma and author of *René Redzepi: A Work in Progress*

Copenhagen chef Christian Puglisi turns the cookbook form inside out with his first cookbook. Named after his restaurant, *Relæ* is more a series of philosophical essays than a standard cookbook (although it does have recipes). If you’ve got a restaurant aficionado on your list, this is the glossy chef book they’ll want this year.

—Eater.com

About the Author

CHRISTIAN F. PUGLISI is the chef and owner of *Relæ*, which holds a Michelin star and was ranked one of the top 100 restaurants in the world by *Restaurant* magazine. *Relæ* and its sister restaurant, *Manfreds*, are both located in Copenhagen, Denmark. Puglisi has worked in the kitchens at *elBulli*, *Noma*, *Røgeriet*, and more, and is a contributor to the Danish newspaper *Politiken*. *The Wall Street Journal* selected him as one of the top ten chefs in the world under thirty.

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Introduction

When I opened *Relæ* in 2010, the last thing I wanted was for it to be just another fine dining restaurant. Our entire philosophy is grounded in the idea that conventional fine dining—with its big round tables, waitstaff showing you the way to the toilet and constantly scraping the crumbs off the thick tablecloth, jazz music piping through the speakers—has little to do with the way people actually want to eat. Rather, we want the dining experience at *Relæ* to be simple and unpretentious, focusing solely on gastronomy. Everything else—all those unnecessary details—is stripped away. We describe our restaurant’s philosophy as “cut to the bone.”

Similarly, when I sat down to write this book, I didn’t want it to be a conventional cookbook that readers were expected to page through from cover to cover. I could have written it the easy way: line up fifty to one hundred recipes and scatter some pictures throughout. But my goal was not just to give you an introduction to the food we do and make it possible for you to cook it yourself. I wanted to show you the creative process behind our work and the ideas that inform the fundamentals of our kitchen.

As I was thinking about this book, I realized that all our dishes are interconnected by the ideas behind

them—the practical ideas, theoretical ideas, and technical ideas. The dishes themselves are the most superficial expression of our work. Rather than just list the ingredients and step-by-step methods for each dish, I felt it was more useful to actually articulate the concepts that underlie them.

To be honest, I rarely read cookbooks, though I love to buy them. I have shelves and shelves lined with colorful covers emblazoned with big chefs' names writing about everything from nose-to-tail cooking to German fine dining. That said, I rarely have time to read them, and whenever I do grab one, I impatiently open it up, flip through a few pages, and then close it again. Maybe I'll pick it up later and take another peek. Admittedly, I never cook from others' recipes; I want to put my imprint on everything I do. I might be interested in how Fergus Henderson cooks trotters, but ultimately I will use his work as inspiration and find my own way of cooking them.

I want you to use the recipes in this book in the exact same way. Feel free to look up a dish and cook it exactly as it is written on the page. But I would be even happier if you plunged into this book just to see how we pickle mackerel, how we plate that dish with cauliflower, and then have a go at it yourself. I want you to grab this book, open it like a deck of cards, and flip to whatever attracts you. Once a dish has captured your attention, take a look at the handful of ideas listed at the bottom of the page; hopefully *that* sparks your curiosity and leads you to another spot in the book with another list of interconnected dishes and ideas. Each dish in this book is grounded on a set of ideas—and each idea is the basis for several other dishes, dishes you can then jump to and have a look at. Everything is connected in a sort of web in which one thing springs out of another in a big hot pot of inspiration, hard work, and craft. I want you to mix and match all these ideas and thoughts. Take what you can use, throw away what you don't like, and make it your own. That is what the cooking at Relæ is about, and I hope that that's what this book inspires you to do.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Galaviz:

The book Relæ: A Book of Ideas make one feel enjoy for your spare time. You need to use to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting pressure or having big problem using your subject. If you can make looking at a book Relæ: A Book of Ideas to become your habit, you can get advantages, like add your current capable, increase your knowledge about a few or all subjects. It is possible to know everything if you like wide open and read a guide Relæ: A Book of Ideas. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or others. So , how do you think about this e-book?

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