



edible
VINEYARD



MADE FOR FAMILY

WORDS Heidi Sistare

The Pollan Family Table (Simon & Schuster, 2014) includes 21 family members spanning three generations. To start, Michael Pollan sets the stage with a foreword that reflects his signature blend of anecdotes, politics and values. He talks about the food that shaped him, the meals prepared by his mother, Corky Pollan. Corky, along with her daughters Lori, Dana, and Tracy, have produced a cookbook that welcomes readers to

the Pollan's multi-generational family table.

Although Michael Pollan may be best known in the food world, his mother and sisters hold their own claims to fame. Corky has worked for New York magazine, Gourmet magazine, and the Cooking Channel; Lori and Dana are co-founders of the Pollan-Austen Fitness Center; and Tracy is an accomplished actress who is married to Michael J. Fox and serves on the board of the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

The cookbook includes 100 recipes, divided into ten sections.

The images are rich in color and texture, and the dishes accompanied by John Kernick's photography are at a clear advantage. Red, green, and yellow heirloom tomatoes; lively fresh mint; and colanders of artichokes sell these recipes.

But this cookbook really is more than pretty pictures and famous names.

The recipes live up to real life kitchens, in small apartments, under



“All the dishes can be made with ingredients available at any American supermarket”

Left: The Pollan family, photograph by John Kernick. Top right: Cover design by Scribner.

the execution of busy cooks who rarely (okay, never) set their mise en place. Setting the mise en place is a tip that shows up in a section of the cookbook called “sage advice.”

It’s a useful set of lessons, covering everything from meat cooking tips to measurement advice, and including every cooks favorite: “Taste! Taste! Taste!”

As for tasting, this collection of recipes falls into a category that’s comforting, simple and fresh. The techniques and ingredients are accessible.

In Michael’s introduction he outlines The Pollan Family Table mission: “All the dishes can be made with ingredients available at any American supermarket; most can be put on the table in less than an hour (some in half that time); the recipes take nothing for granted and never assume lots of prior experience in the kitchen; and they all appeal equally to kids and adults.”

This isn’t a book for stretching a cook’s skills or introducing new tastes to a guest’s palate. It’s tried-and-true

cooking for families who want to cook and eat healthily together without too much fuss.

With that in mind, there are some real recipe gems to be found in this book. The kale salad is perfect. Currants and a homemade balsamic vinegar glaze tuck sweetly around lightly cooked kale, salty salata, and blanched hazelnuts.

A comfort food, baked ziti, is cheesy and filling, made with homemade sauce and meatballs. This recipe is a perfect example of a meal that will entice even the pickiest younger eaters.

One section of the book, titled “it’s easier than you think,” offers recipes for frequently used condiments and additions that can be made from scratch and then stored. It’s a practical list of items: salad dressing, marinara sauce, croutons, and others.

The recipe notes are charming and useful, inviting readers into the lives of the Pollan women and their families.

By the end of the book you realize,

that’s the point: to give families a picture of how to create a healthy, connected, family table. It’s about more than just food. ■

