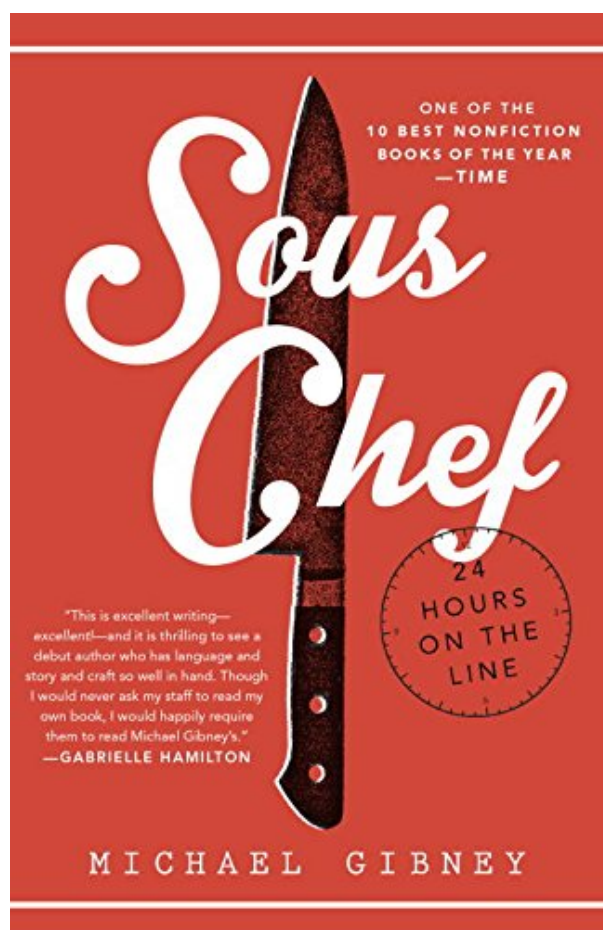
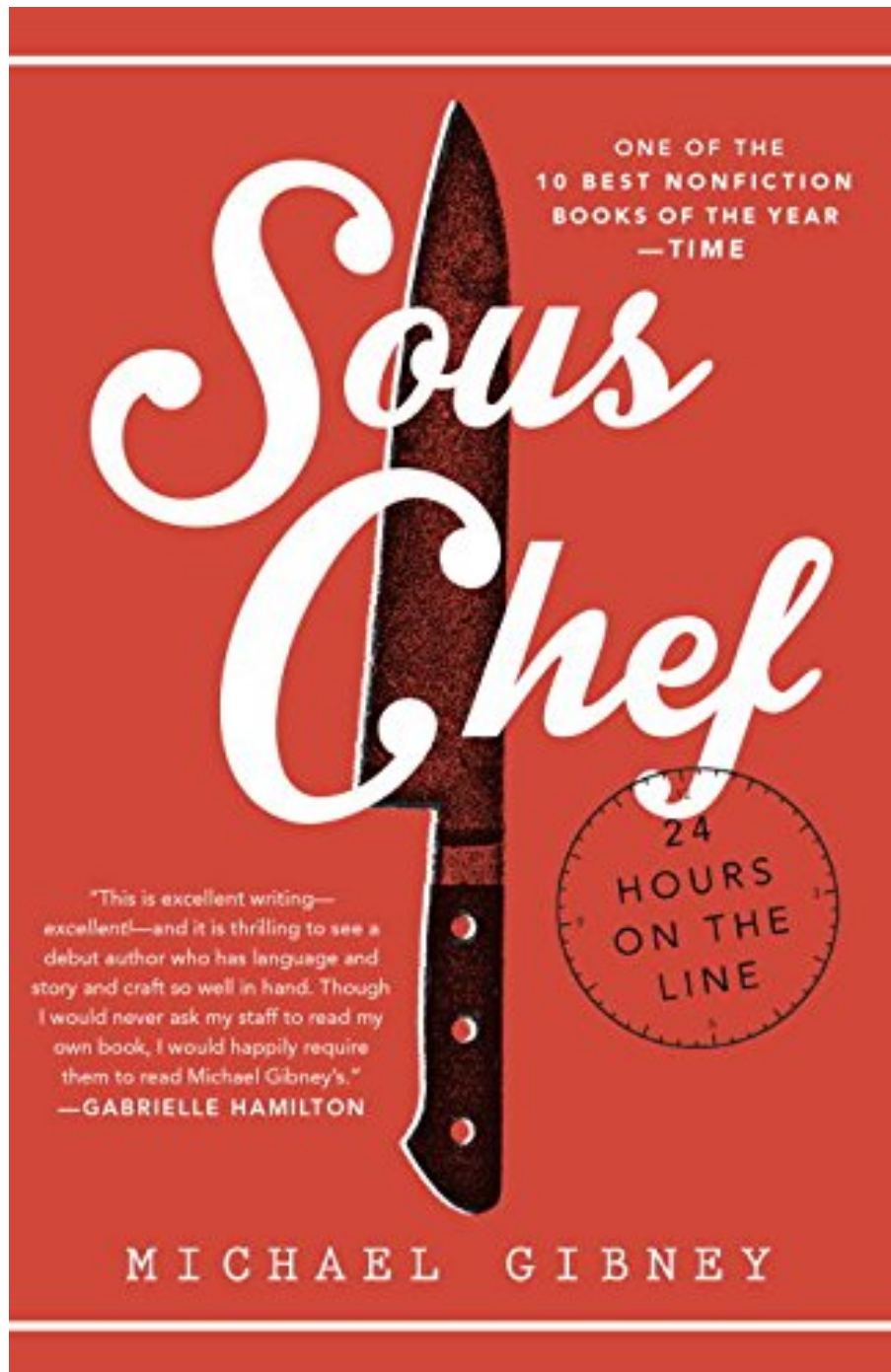


SOUS CHEF: 24 HOURS ON THE LINE BY MICHAEL GIBNEY



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NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST NONFICTION BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY TIME

The back must slave to feed the belly. . . . In this urgent and unique book, chef Michael Gibney uses twenty-four hours to animate the intricate camaraderie and culinary choreography in an upscale New York restaurant kitchen. Here readers will find all the details, in rapid-fire succession, of what it takes to deliver an exceptional plate of food—the journey to excellence by way of exhaustion.

Told in second-person narrative, *Sous Chef* is an immersive, adrenaline-fueled run that offers a fly-on-the-wall perspective on the food service industry, allowing readers to briefly inhabit the hidden world behind the kitchen doors, in real time. This exhilarating account provides regular diners and food enthusiasts alike a detailed insider's perspective, while offering fledgling professional cooks an honest picture of what the future holds, ultimately giving voice to the hard work and dedication around which chefs have built their careers.

In a kitchen where the highest standards are upheld and one misstep can result in disaster, *Sous Chef* conjures a greater appreciation for the thought, care, and focus that go into creating memorable and delicious fare. With grit, wit, and remarkable prose, Michael Gibney renders a beautiful and raw account of this demanding and sometimes overlooked profession, offering a nuanced perspective on the craft and art of food and service.

Praise for *Sous Chef*

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From the Hardcover edition.

Most helpful customer reviews

27 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

THE AUTHOR HAS A WAY WITH WRITING. I'M WAITING FOR A MEAL

By Schuyler T Wallace

In his illuminating book SOUS CHEF, Michael Gibney grabbed both of my vulnerables, reading and eating, and I enjoyed every minute of it. Who knew of the wild rumpus I created in the kitchen when I placed my food order. I didn't know my arrosor from hot pomes until I read this book that describes a busy night in a starred NYC restaurant. Bravo to a true artist and thanks for inviting me to dinner. Incidentally, an extensive glossary is included in the book to acquaint the reader with culinary terms in case you're not familiar with your own pomes.

Behind that swinging door to the kitchen is a community of white clad lunatics. The only redeeming feature

they all share is their dedication to providing quality food to the customers gathered out front. Unlike Denny's, where a couple of gum chewers grill hamburgers, fry hash browns, and dip soggy spaghetti, the fine restaurant has a strict hierarchy of many employees with a myriad of complex tasks. The failure of a single duty spells disaster with the possible downgrading of the restaurant's standing. But the back staff is highly individualistic and slightly paranoid about their presence, making cohesiveness a real challenge.

So the big time cooks and chefs start planning, prepping, chopping, and slicing early. Fragile fish, unwieldy raw meat, temperamental fruits and vegetables, and fragile herbs and fungi must all be prepped. Delicate pan sauces, complicated confits, and large quantities of house-made pastas must be concocted. This entire bee-like bustle is aimed at making the evening dining rush manageable and smoothly accommodated. On a busy Friday night five hundred people will receive their orders and gasp at the looks and taste of the specially prepared meal set in front of them. In spite of the wild scene behind the doors, the patron is served calmly and speedily in his or her haven of pleasure.

Behind the austere dining room there is shouting, arguing, crude commentary and fighting for position. Hung-over kitchen staff members have been known to puke in a trash can, an act that does not bode well for the unfortunate miscreant's future. Occasional kindness and helpful assistance is offered through the veil of bad behavior. After the last order is sent to the dining room and clean up time has arrived, an atmosphere of brotherhood and togetherness descends and post trauma arrangements are made for drinks, a little snack, and reflective conversation. As staff members stumble home after an exhausting day and heavy drinking night, the new day soon arriving is ill-prepared for with the few hours sleep they will get. An occupational hazard, it seems.

Michael Gibney has been there. He has worked his way through the stations to the position of sous chef, second in command, of the restaurant he describes and also has a MFA in writing from Columbia University. He is an excellent writer with great instincts about what a reader likes and what details need to go into a readable memoir. He has parlayed all this knowledge and training into *SOUS CHEF*, a great book that will catch the reader's attention. I loved it.

Schuyler T Wallace

Author of *TIN LIZARD TALES*

26 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

An Intimate Look at Life on the Line

By A. Silverstone

Although there have been an effusion of chef autobiography's as of late, Michael Gibney's fictionalized account of a single day in the life of a sous chef at a high end NYC restaurant is a fresh view of life in the kitchen. Gibney takes the reader into the tumultuous underbelly of the restaurant. Employing the uncommon the second person narrative style, Gibney places you, the reader, in the middle of the kitchen.

An amalgamation of people and restaurants, *Sous Chef* captures perfectly the stresses and triumphs of the eponymous role. Fortunately, for those of us not familiar with restaurant kitchens, Gibney maps out the landscape, people, and roles, both graphically (with diagrams), and with text descriptions. He also, helpfully includes an extensive glossary for equipment, people, food, and terms used in the kitchen, from cook to stagiaire and from *LOI* to *Wondra* flour.

This behind the scenes portrayal of a restaurant kitchen is both a fun and educating read.

17 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Fast paced! Full of great tips and belly laughs!

By Richard Sutton

I cut my earliest employment chops in a catering hall, doing every kind of support job in a kitchen you can imagine. It was one of the hardest physical jobs I ever had, but also, the feeling that came at the end of an event, or a dinner rush, was a satisfaction like no other. High fives all around for the team! The restaurant business is like that, and so much more, as detailed in this great memoir. The author Michael Gibney, is writing from the heart and from an incredible range of experience. He's also a gifted writer. Who knew that cheese could be so alarmingly sexy, or that knives could inspire such devotion? From a sequence of situations where he's called upon to not just execute amazing culinary dexterity, but incredible forbearance and courage, the pages just kept turning. I was taken on a riotous ride through the most amazing kitchens filled with every kind of co-conspirator, high technology equipment and doubtful raw materials, to watch from the sidelines (where it's much safer) while the collaborative efforts produced fine art. Highly recommended to anyone who eats food, wonders how to prepare a salad Nicoise, or what the heck a Santoku knife is used for. A glass of wine on the side table is recommended. This book is gonna make your mouth water!

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