

# ‘Kitchen & Co.’ by Rosie French and Ellie Grace

By **T. Susan Chang** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT APRIL 30, 2013

ARTICLE

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UK food bloggers and restaurateurs Rosie French and Ellie Grace (they own French & Grace restaurant in Brixton Village, London) have a devoted following across the Atlantic. Their vision of elegant rusticity brings to mind a slightly deconstructed, Canal House kind of cooking — dishes caught mid-delectation on sunlit tabletops, splatters and crumb-strewn forks only underscoring the pleasures of the table.

The book eschews the usual cookbook structure, organized by menu and with recipe headers that put whimsy in the foreground (“A hearty brunch for another working weekend,” “Kettle on, muffins in the oven”). Most of the recipes are not-quite-finished sketches of some very good ideas, which is fine if you’re the kind of cook who reads a recipe and then shuts the book and takes off running. For those of us accustomed to following instructions to the letter, it’s not a foolproof book.

For example, there is nothing not to love about a creamy asparagus, shallot, and feta tart (coupled with a leek and Gorgonzola tart, and called “A couple of tarts”), but don’t use a removable-bottom pan, as the custard will run right onto the oven floor. (I congratulated myself on having the foresight to put a sheet pan on the lower rack in case of drips, right up till the point when I had to scrub off the baked-on egg.)

Creamy chicken with leeks tastes springy and fresh with peas and tarragon. For the “crunchy new potatoes” that go with them, you’ll need to bake them another 20 minutes or raise the heat, if you want the golden crust you see in the picture.

Eggplant stuffed with ground lamb (“A frugal lunch with friends”) starts with a question right off: Should I roast the eggplant cut side up or down? I vaguely remembered down was more usual, but I wasn’t sure and would have liked it spelled out. Eventually, the roasted eggplant melts beautifully with the spices and lamb in this very traditional Middle Eastern dish. For the record, the answer is: cut side down.

Smoked paprika pork chops come out ruddy and flavorful on the surface.



LAURA EDWARDS

**Bloggers/restaurant owners Rosie French and Ellie Grace, authors of “Kitchen & Co.”**

**Kitchen & Co.: Colorful Home Cooking Through the Seasons**

**Author:** Rosie French and Ellie Grace

**Publisher:** Kyle Books

Celery root and butternut “rosti” (a sort of pan-cooked haystack usually made with potatoes) doesn’t even begin to hold together, rendering moot the pancake-flipping motion the authors claim they can pull off. But it tastes good, the celery root cutting through the sweetness of the butternut.

A sweet potato, fennel, and bacon gratin (“Weeknight Comfort”) pulls off a nice balance of warm and yielding versus chewy and salty. Beef, ginger, coconut curry didn’t look appetizing on first glance. The beautiful short ribs I’d saved in my freezer started turning gray through a long and watery bath in coconut milk, the coconut milk separating with an oily film on top. It’s a humdrum braise, at least the first night, but the leftovers redeem the recipe.

Chocolate and hazelnut swirls are too easy not to try: puff pastry, spread with Nutella and chopped hazelnuts. That’s it. Just how good they are depends on whether you spring for the pricey puff pastry or the generic supermarket brand, but it’s like pizza: Even when they’re bad, they’re basically good.

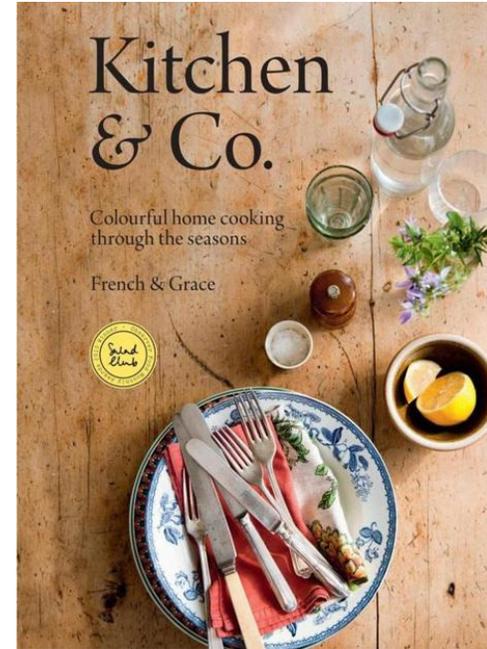
The book asks you to do a lot of guesswork. The one universally disliked dish was wet, cold Jerusalem artichoke slivers with a thick sesame remoulade, which felt like a joke in another language; I just didn’t get it.

Taken as a whole, this slightly unfinished work certainly offers at least the 1 percent of inspiration we all need to go off and create delicious memories. Just remember, the 99 percent perspiration is still yours to provide.

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