



A BOOK
PROPOSAL
FOR
**UNCORKING & FORKING:
IT'S BEEN A GOOD LIFE**
BY
BILL STEPHENS

AN EPICUREAN MEMOIR that spans a lifetime dedicated to good food, great wine and close friends, *Uncorking and Forking: It's Been a Good Life* is the laugh-out-loud trip of food and wine writer Bill Stephens through all things culinary from gourmand, to passionate amateur cook, to bon vivant, to chef, to restaurateur, to caterer, to employee feeder, and, finally, to restaurant consultant and culinary journalist.

From his first catastrophic culinary attempt at age six through feeding the people, popes, and princes, he never lost sight of his mantra, "Great meals are prepared for enjoyment – not as an exercise in esoterica. Good food and great wine lift us to a higher plain of spontaneity, creativity, and adventure."

The vast majority of the millions of reader that buy food and wine books annually and the millions of TV viewers watching culinary shows migrate away from "How, What and Where" and toward real life experiences. The Food Network's followed its own mantra, "So Much More Than Just Cooking," and relegated the "how to" shows to daytime and Saturday. They even dropped the "Emerald Live" cooking show. Their hugely successful new format has every celebrity chef hosting one or more travel shows where they compete, go somewhere, eat and drink something, and/or talk to the locals, trying to create a human real life drama with which viewers will connect. Why do this? Bill Stephens would tell you because the same God that gave us poverty, disease, fire, famine, floods, wars, petulance, social and political injustice, also gave us a respite. He gave us a time to refresh and rejoice away from the cares of the world. He gave us good food and great wine to celebrate everything that's good in life. That's what the public yearns for – not "How to, Why to, What to."

The release this summer of *Julie & Julia*, the movie starring Meryl Streep, is based on the book, *Julie & Julia, 365 Days, 524 Recipes, 1 Tiny Apartment Kitchen* by Julie Powell Little Brown, 2005. This is just the most recent of a string of successful culinary movies. *Tortilla Soup, Sideways, Ratatouille, Bottle Shock*, and *A Good Year* all prove that the public (both male and female) are ready to move up the epicurean ladder to enrich their own lives. *Uncorking and Forking: It's Been a Good Life* maps the trail blazed by the author for those seeking that good life. The time is right to share the wisdom gained from a lifetime of uncorking and forking with a national audience.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Bill Stephens started My Place Restaurant in 1972, and his food service empire grew to include a leading San Antonio, Texas, white tablecloth restaurant, three airline in-flight kitchens, and three employee-feeding facilities. He catered a dinner train, and his company was the third largest off-premise caterer in South Texas. His notable catering clients included Texas governors, presidential candidates, the family of the King of Saudi Arabia, The Prince of Wales, Pope John Paul II, Tom Jones, Neal Diamond, Willie Nelson, and many others

During these three decades he wrote over 1,000 weekly food and wine columns for Harte-Hanks, Murdoch, and Hearst newspapers. His features appeared in *Wine News, Wine Enthusiast, Wine Spectator, Food & Wine, Chef*, and *Field & Stream*. His short story, "The Decanter- A Christmas Story," is the only fiction ever published in *The Wine News*. Texas A&M University recently published his short story, "Toby Tire and His Erratic Curve Ball" in their English Department "Big TEX(t)" Ezine. He is the owner of Bill Stephens Associates Restaurant Consultants.

Visit his websites: www.billstephensassociates.com and www.heyrestaurantguy.com

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Selected Chapter Outline

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Chapter 4 – You killed it. You cook it – At sixteen I am allowed back in the kitchen to cook wild ducks

A Baptist Boy Goes to College

Chapter 8 – A Loaf of Bread, A Jug of Wine, and a Skoda – Driving and camping around Europe

Chapter 11 – Starving in Itzeho's Krankenanstalten – Second Class hospital patient food is inedible.

Marriage – Culinary Boot Camp

Chapter 14 – The Big Leap From Liebfraumilch to Beaujolais – Our \$1.14/ bottle weekly luxury

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Lifting Pot Lids Around the World

Chapter 18 – The South American Shuffle – Traveling Latin America and learning to cook.

Chapter 21 – I'll Cry for You Argentina – Your wine's great, but where's the beef

Chapter 23 – Breakfast at Marshal Tito's – I am feted at breakfast at Yugoslavia's Mratinie Dam

Chapter 25 – Good Fortune (Cookies) -- Fortune cookies change my life.

I've Always Wanted a Restaurant

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Chapter 28 – Peanut butter for the Prince – The heir to the throne flies away with peanut butter and jelly.

Chapter 29 – No Pork for the Saudi King, but Why Not Some Goat – Lamb, goat, whatever.

Chapter 31 – The Unending Saga of the Pope Train – The faithful suffer for their sins.

Chapter 33 – A Hog's Breath From Clint – Movies mess up my mind at the Hog's Breath Inn

Chapter 36 – “I Have No Friends and Nobody Loves Me” – Introducing fine wine to the hunting camp

Chapter 37 – What Wine Goes Best With Red Man Chewing Tobacco?

A Tequila for My Buddy and One more for the Road

Chapter 39– *Vamanos a Mexico!* -- 12,000 miles, hundreds of meals and lots of tequila below the border.

Chapter 40 – Don Julio, He is a friend of Mine – Tequila Don Julio, and the phrase, “Give ‘em a hunnert,” is born

Chapter 43 – The Great Shrimp Boat Blockade – “Yertle the Turtle” focuses on a dilemma

Writing About Food and Wine is More Fun, Right?

Chapter 45 – Why Have My Clothes Shrunk? – My clothes begin shrinking as a food and wine writer

Chapter 47 – Escape from Malaga – Take us “where the seafood is great and no one speaks English.”

Chapter 52 – Christmas Under the Bridge – Christmas returns with The Cordon Blues Brothers

Comfort Food

Chapter 54 – Pussy Was a Gourmet – A gourmet cat deserves a special tribute

Why Do So Many Great People Make Wine and So Many Assholes Drink It?

Chapter 56 – “Winespeak” and Other Crimes Against Society,

Chapter 59 – The Order of Original Zin – Chanting for the return of red Zinfandel

Chapter 60 – A Flower Blooms in Gallo's Vineyard – My unrequited “love affair” with Gina Gallo

From The Ending to the Beginning

Chapter 62 – A Window Toward Tomorrow -- A new life doing exactly what I've always wanted – to write.