

Indulge

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Most Wanted | Ottawa Cooks!



In the world of restaurant critics, working with chefs is equivalent to crossing the floor. This change in allegiance for Ottawa's Anne DesBrisay marks the start of a new chapter — literally. DesBrisay has shed almost 30 years of critic anonymity and collaborated with the same chefs from whom she once hid her identity to pen *Ottawa Cooks*.

Cookbooks in this city series, published by Figure 1, have been landing with a satisfying thud in Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, and now Ottawa.

"I wanted the book to feel very much like Ottawa. It's hard to put into words exactly what that is ... but I think Chris [Lalonde], in his photographs, has really captured Ottawa," says DesBrisay.

Where restaurant reviewing is mostly solitary work, the book is a collaboration between DesBrisay, 40 chefs, and photographer Christian Lalonde of Photolux Commercial Studio.

"It's very much Chris's style ... where food doesn't just look pristine but looks messy, like somebody stuck their fingers in there and had at it. It was interesting to watch some of the chefs relinquish their food to Chris."

The book offers a snapshot across Ottawa's restaurant scene, mixing high-end restaurants with food trucks, coffee shops, and diners. It also combines recipes that chefs cook in their restaurants with ones they make at home.

"It's a book that for some people will live on their coffee table and for others will be splattered on in their kitchen," says DesBrisay.

While her reviews are relevant only so long as the dishes remain on menus, DesBrisay's first cookbook has longevity. "A chef or a restaurant can come and go, but these recipes aren't going anywhere."

Get your copy of *Ottawa Cooks* (\$35) at the eateries it profiles, in bookstores, and online. —Emily Kennedy

Local talent: (clockwise from top) Bob's Kickass Lobster Roll and kettle chips from the Elmdale Tavern; apple walnut butter tarts with caramel ice cream from The Village House; the cover of DesBrisay's book; North & Navy's farfelle with mushroom and tomato ragu

