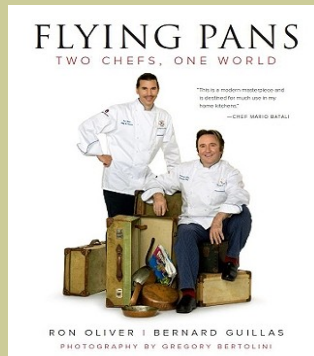




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Review

Bernard Guillas and Ron Oliver, *Flying Pans: Two Chefs, One World*
by Alison Herman | La Jolla High School

Bernard Guillas and Ron Oliver may be behind one of the finest and most critically acclaimed restaurants in San Diego—the Marine Room—but according to them, some of the best food in the world isn't found in a fine dining setting. Instead, it's located in the kitchens of everyday chefs and in the authentic, fresh foods they've encountered on their travels to over forty countries. So, two and a half years ago, the executive chef (Guillas) and chef de cuisine (Oliver) decided to combine those two concepts into an international cookbook. Two hundred and fifty pages, one thousand recipes, and a great deal of editing later, the two discussed the result, *Flying Pans*, in an intimate setting at Warwick's bookstore in La Jolla Wednesday night—but not before presenting the audience with a Moroccan-inspired lemon tart infused with hibiscus.

As Oliver explained, "Traveling is a way to connect with people; the best way to do that is through their food." Together, the chefs recounted both their extensive travels and the process of creating the book they inspired. Explaining that they wanted to make the recipes durable, interesting, and easy to follow, Guillas and Oliver narrated the creation of *Flying Pans* from their decision to self-publish the book through the twelve-hour photo shoots and detailed choices required to create it. Unwilling to relinquish their opportunity to have free rein over the contents of the book, Guillas and Oliver chose to finance and distribute the book themselves, a choice that came with some unintended consequences. "We learned a lot about paper," remarked Guillas as he showed off some of the book's stunning photography—all of which was created using only edible food, with the exception of some shots of vanilla ice cream.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of the chefs' discussion was their reflection on how cuisine allowed them to connect with the culture and people of the countries they visited. Oliver recounted an instance where he met and dined with a complete stranger he had met online—in rural Turkey. Guillas described his first experience cooking in a tandoor with a master chef in Bombay (he left with all of the hair on his right hand scorched off.) And both rhapsodized about the fresh, exotic ingredients available in cities across Asia and Europe. The two channeled their incredible variety of international experiences into such vibrant dishes such as steak with chocolate mole or shrimp bisque that are nonetheless simple and easy to prepare at home.

Guillas and Oliver aren't only concerned with food found abroad, however. Both are ardent fans of the local food scene in San Diego as well as the availability of produce and fish found relatively close by. After giving shout-outs to several other pillars of the San Diego fine dining scene—Nine Ten, A.R. Valentien, and George's, among others—Guillas urged members of the audience to look to smaller restaurants for some of the area's best food. Oliver's favorite local restaurant, for example, is an Ethiopian restaurant in Normal Heights with spices imported directly from Africa and food prepared by the owner's grandmother; the two also pointed out that many locals fail to take advantage of the remarkable Indian food to be found in Rancho Bernardo, Convoy's excellent Asian food, or the Mexican food eateries located all over the city. After all, Guillas and Oliver's central message was that delicious meals don't have to be found on a five course tasting menu: instead, great food can be made in anyone's kitchen and is available to everyone, young and old.

This author event was hosted by Warwick's Books
<http://www.warwicks.com/>