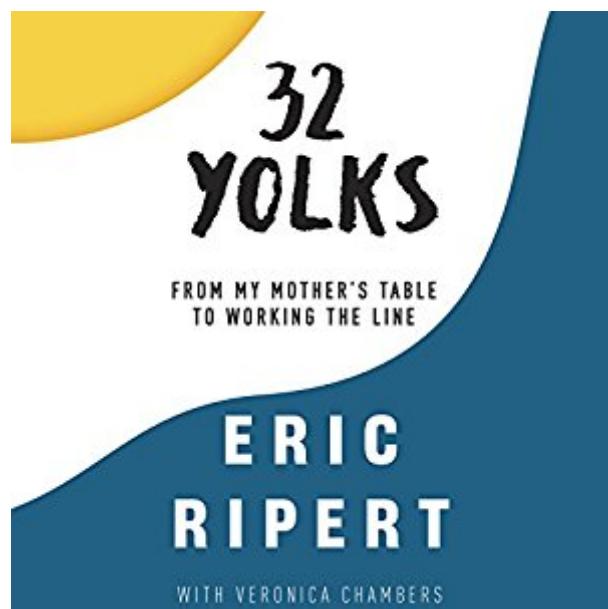


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32 Yolks: From My Mother's Table To Working The Line



Synopsis

Hailed by Anthony Bourdain as "heartbreaking, horrifying, poignant, and inspiring", 32 Yolks is the brave and affecting coming-of-age story about the making of a French chef, from the culinary icon behind the renowned New York City restaurant Le Bernardin. In an industry where celebrity chefs are known as much for their salty talk and quick tempers as their food, Eric Ripert stands out. The winner of four James Beard Awards, co-owner and chef of a world-renowned restaurant, and recipient of countless Michelin stars, Ripert embodies elegance and culinary perfection. But before the accolades, before he even knew how to make a proper hollandaise sauce, Eric Ripert was a lonely young boy in the south of France whose life was falling apart. Ripert's parents divorced when he was six, separating him from the father he idolized and replacing him with a cold, bullying stepfather who insisted that Ripert be sent away to boarding school. A few years later, Ripert's father died on a hiking trip. Through these tough times, the one thing that gave Ripert comfort was food. Told that boys had no place in the kitchen, Ripert would instead watch from the doorway as his mother rolled couscous by hand or his grandmother pressed out the buttery dough for the treat he loved above all others, tarte aux pommes. When an eccentric local chef took him under his wing, an 11-year-old Ripert realized that food was more than just an escape: It was his calling. That passion would carry him through the drudgery of culinary school and into the high-pressure world of Paris' most elite restaurants, where Ripert discovered that learning to cook was the easy part - surviving the line was the battle. Taking us from Eric Ripert's childhood in the south of France and the mountains of Andorra into the demanding kitchens of such legendary Parisian chefs as JoÃƒÂ© Robuchon and Dominique Bouchet, until, at the age of 24, Ripert made his way to the United States, 32 Yolks is the tender and richly told story of how one of our greatest living chefs found himself - and his home - in the kitchen.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book chronicles the early life of chef Eric Ripert, and as with most books of this format I found the first half to be much more engaging than the rest. Something about troubled childhoods and rotten step-parents just strikes a sympathetic chord, at least with me, and I was drawn into the world of a small boy who did not understand why he was to suffer so at the hands of his loved ones. Monsieur Ripert paints an intelligent and self-assessing picture of his youth, overlaying his adult understanding on his childhood unhappiness. It is inconsistent, as strong emotions often are, in its descriptions of his fluctuating feelings for those close to him. At times you think he hates his mother, but then shortly thereafter he is extolling her virtues and placing her as the reason for his success. The same can be said for other persons in the book, but the most erratic emotional responses are to his mother (again, completely realistic IRL). After the childhood portion ended, I was less engaged but it was still an interesting read. I learned far more about the inner workings of restaurants than I ever thought possible, and have firmly decided against becoming a chef when I grow up (whenever that will be). The hard work and dedication of these men and women in the kitchens of world class eateries almost feels exaggerated because it is so extreme, but I never actually got that impression. It is just, unfortunately, among the many industries where one is required to forego life in pursuit of career. The book largely feels honest and not self-promoting, though there are times I felt that certain subjects or incidents were glossed over or perhaps even edited from Monsieur Ripert's memories altogether.

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