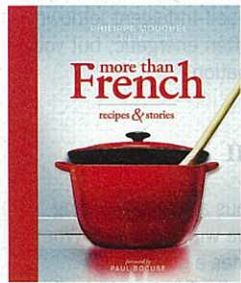


# BOOKS\ CORRIE PERKIN APPLAUDS THE BUDDY SYSTEM



**MORE THAN FRENCH: RECIPES AND STORIES**  
by Philippe Mouchel and Rita Erlich  
» \$65 (Slattery Media Group)

## GREAT CHEFS

do not always make great writers. Finding the time to sit in a study and tap at a laptop is also a challenge.

Melbourne publisher and former restaurant owner and food critic Geoff Slattery understands this. But as the author of two cookbooks and the owner of hundreds more, Slattery also knows that a recipe captured in print is one of the greatest gifts we can pass on to others, whether in a recipe folder, an email or a luscious and lavish cookbook.

For years Slattery has wanted to do a project with French-born Paul Bocuse-trained chef Philippe Mouchel. One of Melbourne's most respected food practitioners, Mouchel is typical of the time-challenged chef. Why not, then, offer him a writing buddy with whom he can share his thoughts and recipes and then, with a bit of luck, the Mouchel food philosophy will be recorded.

The pairing of Mouchel with Rita Erlich – food writer and critic and a very handy cook herself – was a clever idea. The result is a beautiful and affordable publication that celebrates the traditions of French cuisine and the fresh tastes of local Australian produce.

For many months, Erlich became Mouchel's right-hand cook, recorder and memory collector. Her journey through Mouchel's past and current food



(MICHAEL WILLSON)

PHILIPPE MOUCHEL & RITA ERlich

**Win**  
» *More Than French* – page 5

experiences, her cooking in the kitchen and working through the recipes becomes our journey, too.

"The recipes were a pleasure to cook – sometimes easy, sometimes challenging," she writes. "But throughout there was always communication through food."

Mouchel grew up in Normandy and started working as a kitchen apprentice at 16. While cooking at Roger Vergé's Provence establishment Moulin de Mougins, he was discovered by Bocuse, who invited the young chef to join his famous Lyon restaurant.

"Monsieur Bocuse was tough, but he was also fair,"

Mouchel recalls in his book. The days were long and the food preparation was often tedious, but "I never regretted it, never complained. I was just so happy to be working in the legendary kitchen. I learnt so much."

Over the next few years Mouchel became Bocuse's international Mini-Me, representing him at Bocuse ventures in Asia, the US and Australia. Mouchel's recent venture, The Brasserie at Southbank, has also been one of the foodie destinations, and later this year there will be another new Mouchel restaurant in the CBD to visit.

In his foreword, Bocuse describes Mouchel as a "well-natured man, who has walked a remarkable path as a chef and continues to do so to this day".

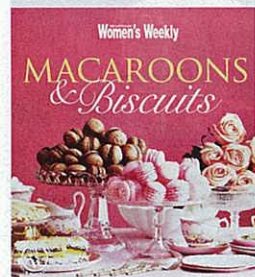
But don't let the intimacy between these two great chefs frighten you off. Mouchel's club is one we can all join. It is for people like me who harbour unfathomable fears of French cooking but who can take comfort from the fact that Erlich has tried all the recipes and succeeded, and that the publisher – a man who has always believed that food, cooking and food writing should be accessible to all – has guided the project.

When will the food memoir genre bubble burst? And why do food specialist publishers such as Penguin and its imprint Lantern, Murdoch Books, ABC Books, Hardie Grant and now Slattery Media continue to focus on the personal story as a way to entice readers into cooking?

Perhaps *More Than French* signals a gentle shift away from the chef as celebrity, to the chef as part of a team that creates a quality book. In recent years there have been some truly silly celebrity chef books that lack honesty and commitment to the writing process. Happily, Mouchel and Erlich's new work is not one of those. We look forward to more cook books like this one.

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## baking



**MACAROONS AND BISCUITS**  
by The Australian Women's Weekly  
» \$32.95 (ACP Books)

Still on the cooking theme, it is worth pausing to pay tribute to *The Australian Women's Weekly* cookery team that has provided us with many quality publications over more than two decades. This new one includes the usual AWW triple-tested recipe guarantee – comforting for those of us who fear macaroons and shortbread baking. Divided into two sections – macaroons and biscuits – this little hardcover is the perfect resource for those moments when ladies are asked to "bring a plate". Swoon over the chocolate almond macaroons, hedgehog slice or the brandy snaps. And we can highly recommend the melting moments recipe.

## fiction



**AUGUST**  
by Bernard Beckett  
» \$23.95 (Text)

A car crash, two people trapped waiting for help. It is a gripping start to a thriller that revolves around relationships, power and love. The injured and trapped Tristan and Grace try to make sense of their lives and the rigid society in which they live. How did Tristan become the subject of a terrible experiment? What is the cause of Grace's disillusionment with the teaching of the nuns, and how did she survive alone and on the streets? How did Tristan find her, and what caused the accident? New Zealand writer Bernard Beckett weaves a challenging and fascinating story for older teenagers and adults alike.

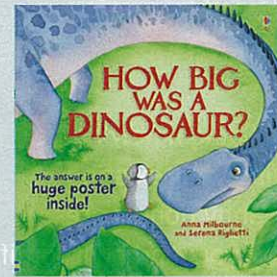
## facts



**LIFE OF PEE: THE STORY OF HOW URINE GOT EVERYWHERE**  
by Sally Magnusson  
» \$29.99 (Aurum Press)

What do you do when your entire cattle herd suddenly start to urinate at the same time? Grab a spear and prepare for the arrival of a lion, of course. "A hyena doesn't make them do that," Scottish broadcaster and pee expert Sally Magnusson tells us. "An elephant doesn't make them do that ... For the Maasai, urine will always be the sound of terror." These and other extraordinary toilet-related facts can be found in this unlikely gem, *Life of Pee*, an (unexpectedly) attractive hardcover resource book. The perfect gift for any friend who has an inquiring mind and a sense of humour. Helpful, also, if they live in Africa and own cows.

## kids



**HOW BIG WAS A DINOSAUR?**  
by Anna Milbourne and Serena Riglietti  
» \$19.99 (Usborne)

This cute padded-covered children's book has three things in its favour: beautiful illustrations of cute penguins; and scary dinosaurs with sharp claws and big teeth. The improbable story of Pipkin, the curious baby penguin who wants to know the size of dinosaurs then travels back time to meet a few, will have adults scratch their heads at the improbability of it all. But your young bookworm will love it, so take a deep breath, go on the journey from pre-history and share the fun together.