



## SHELF LIFE

## QUEEN OF COOKBOOKS

**THE PUBLISHING HOUSE** Phaidon's recent ascent in the food world began with a cold call to Spain's Ferran Adrià, perhaps the world's most important chef. The year was 2006. Then Editorial Director Emilia Terragni had just overseen her first cookbook, the English-language edition of the Italian classic *The Silver Spoon*, and it had become a surprise best seller. Though the company had been focused on the visual arts, suddenly food held great promise.

"If we were going to enter this extremely competitive segment," Terragni recalls, surrounded by art books at her London office, "we thought we should start at the top." And so Adrià received a pair of proposals, for both a cookbook and restaurant deal—Phaidon's owner at the time had purchased a Tokyo sushi bar and was looking to hire a marquee chef to run it. Never mind that Adrià never, ever cooked outside of his restaurant, El Bulli, or that he self-published all his own cookbooks. "He laughed a lot and was quite amused by our call," she says, "but then he invited us to come and see him."

Phaidon has since become a prandial powerhouse, matching top photographers and designers with some of the biggest names in modern gastronomy.

Adrià signed on to do a book with the company, *A Day at El Bulli*—following 20 hours in the life of the restaurant—and then another, *The Family Meal*, chronicling the food served to his vast crew of *stagiaires*. This spring, he'll headline Phaidon's most ambitious food project yet, a \$500 seven-volume set breaking down every single dish served at El Bulli in the last six seasons it was open (the restaurant shuttered in 2011).



Terragni knew virtually nothing about high-end dining before diving into that first El Bulli book. "I had never been to a Michelin-starred restaurant," she says. Adrià helped make introductions to his peers and suggested up-and-coming talent. "There's this guy in Denmark named René Redzepi," she remembers him saying during one early discussion. "You might want to check him out."

Redzepi had already begun work on a book. He presented the mock-up to Terragni. "I had to tell him it was really, really bad," she says. "It didn't reflect his personality. I said, 'Let us have a go.'"

*Noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine* was published in 2010, the year Redzepi's restaurant became number one in the world. By then Terragni was attending intimate chef confabs, like the annual forage-fest Cook It Raw—the subject, last year, of a Phaidon book. When she traveled, she found herself collecting restaurant suggestions. "That's a book," she thought, before turning it into one—*Where Chefs Eat*, also released last year.

Under her stewardship, Phaidon has signed Andoni Luis Aduriz, Alex Atala, Magnus Nilsson and Daniel Patterson. This fall, Italy's Massimo Bottura joins the family with *Never Trust a Skinny Italian Chef*. In the spring of 2015, San Francisco chef Corey Lee will follow.

"It's not only about their food, their restaurants," says Terragni. "It's the attitude, the story, what they bring to the industry." —Jay Cheshes



## FLAVOR PROFILES

Terragni (far left), now Phaidon's copublisher, is responsible for the company's growing library of art books on cutting-edge chefs, including, clockwise from left, the seven-volume *El Bulli 2005–2011*; René Redzepi's *A Work in Progress*; Ferran Adrià's *The Family Meal*; the English-language issue of the Italian classic *The Silver Spoon*; California chef Daniel Patterson's *Coi*; and the dining guide *Where Chefs Eat*.

