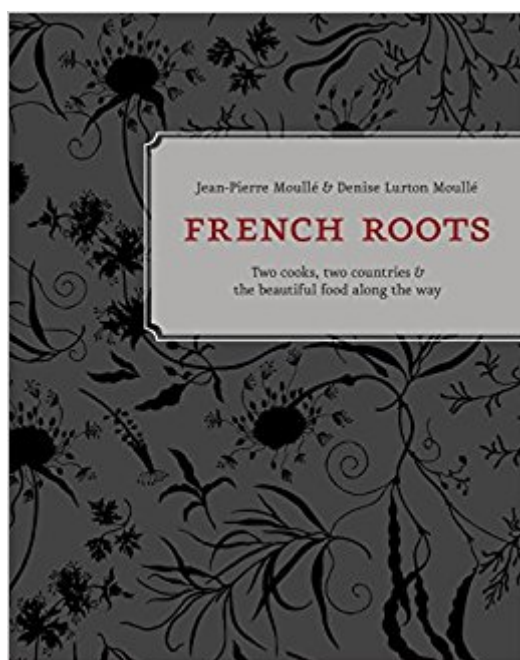


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# French Roots: Two Cooks, Two Countries, And The Beautiful Food Along The Way



## Synopsis

A narratively rich cookbook of French and Californian recipes from longtime Chez Panisse executive chef Jean-Pierre Moule and his wife, Denise Moule. Jean-Pierre and Denise Moule met on a street corner in Berkeley, California, in 1980; six months later they were married. *French Roots* is the story of their lives told through the food they cook, beginning with the dishes of old-world France--the couple's birthplace--and focusing on the simple, pared-down preparations of French food common in the postwar period. The story then travels to the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1970s, where Jean-Pierre was appointed executive chef at Chez Panisse when California cuisine was just emerging as a distinctive and important style, and where Denise began importing French wine. Finally, the journey follows the couple to their homes in Sonoma, California, and Bordeaux to revisit the classic dishes of the Moule's native country and hone the forgotten skills of foraging, hunting, and preserving. Exquisitely written, with recipes that are innovative and timeless, insights on cooking and thinking like a chef, and an insider's guide to the wines of Bordeaux, *French Roots* is much more than a cookbook--it's a guide to living the good life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This book and its exquisite pictures bring back so many memories of the beautiful way Jean-Pierre and Denise cook and live. We had a dinner at their home in Peyraut that I will never forget: Eels freshly caught from the river, wrapped in bacon and grilled over the open fire, that was perfect in its

simplicity. My time with them in France was a revelatory experience, and an extraordinary education. The Moullé's rich cultural heritage and unique sensibility are both thoughtfully captured in this book through their evocative stories, recipes, and images. Jean-Pierre has a rustic yet elegant style in the kitchen—a rare combination—and I have always admired the graceful way he approaches food. Whether he is effortlessly filleting a fish or boning a leg of lamb; assembling a beautiful, seasonal four-course menu, or preparing a special lunch for friends with a wild duck he hunted himself; cooking is second nature to him. This book is a delight to read, and perfectly captures the values that matter most: gathering with family and friends around the table and living attuned to the rhythms of the land with a deep respect for season and place.

—Alice Waters, proprietor of Chez Panisse and author of *The Art of Simple Food*

“That Jean-Pierre and Denise Moullé curated such a stunning collection of recipes is an inevitability. That they managed to animate each recipe with feeling and memory is a supreme act of generosity. *French Roots* lovingly narrates the places, times, and tastes that shaped their marriage—it's a vivid reminder of the transcendence of good cooking.

—Dan Barber, chef and co-owner of Blue Hill and Blue Hill at Stone Barns

“Count yourself lucky to own this book, a collaboration by one of the most magical couples I know. My husband and I spent a week with them, and it was an inspiration to watch them in action, so relaxed and intuitive about food, wine, hospitality, and life.

—Bette Midler

Until his retirement in April 2012, JEAN-PIERRE MOULLE was the executive chef at Chez Panisse, where he began working in 1975. DENISE MOULLE comes from the Bordeaux wine-making empire of the Lurton family. She worked as a wine distributor in California for many years before starting Two Bordelais in 1987, which offers guided tours through France.

Readers looking for a fine French cookbook for beginner-to-journeyman home use need look no further than 'French Roots.' The book includes several recipes for every course of a meal and for meat, game, poultry, seafood and shellfish, vegetables and desserts. The recipes do not require fancy equipment or hard to master culinary techniques. The vast majority of them do not call for hard to find ingredients. The emphasis in this book is on 'fresh and local' ingredients as Jean-Pierre Moulle is an avid gardener. Equal attention should be given to Denise Lurton, Jean-Pierre's wife: she offers perfectly delicious recipes for the dishes Jean-Pierre liked to eat at home, where she did the cooking! Denise Lurton also has an exceptional background in fine French wines, including

leading the U.S. marketing effort for her famous father's wines. It would not be wrong to view this couple as high-achievers but what comes through on the page is the story of two individuals who made a very practical and dedicated partnership in life. So yes, this is more than another cookbook from a masterful chef. It is also the story of a couple who followed an aesthetic that aimed to harmonize earth, food and culture and who lived a balanced and 'rooted' life in California and in France. There are also fabulous photographs that convey the atmosphere of their life in both places and that show their food to fine advantage without being 'precious' or over-styled. From the early history of Chez Panisse, Alice Waters' iconic restaurant through 2012, Jean-Pierre Moule was one of two head chefs who alternated six-month stints in leading the kitchen. He was the restaurant's first classically-trained chef and it was Jean-Pierre who is credited with rationalizing a kitchen that was begun almost in the haze of California Dreaming and the counterculture. The recipes he offers in this book reflect the demands of that cuisine...and the style has worn well. I found a good many dishes from both Jean-Pierre and from Denise that I would like to try as improvements on French dishes I have done. I received a free e-book copy of this work to review and it was the best cookbook I have read in several months of reviewing so I jumped at the chance to pre-order a hard copy. This is a book to read and to re-read as well as a book to cook from!

My husband and I took a week long cooking course with Jean-Pierre and Denise several years ago. It was the best food and wine adventure we have ever had. Excitedly we opened the French Roots book and were thrilled to see that it was reminiscent of our Bordeaux experience with them. This lovely book is about story, it is about a couple's way of life between two continents, it is about respect and appreciation of food, and it is filled with thoughtful and delicious recipes. The beautiful pictures add an intimate element to the reader's experience as we join these two cooks in their passions for cooking, for the land, and for each other.

Enjoying this book so much. The stories are fun and a great starter for friends at the table as I cook the recipes

Not many usable recipes. I was disappointed

A superb and beautiful story of a real French duo adapting to the US and staying totally French at the same time. I worked with Jean-Pierre many years ago, he was the easiest chef in the world with whom to get along. The menus are easy for the non chef to follow and the artwork and photos are

lovely to look at! Good Job JP!

A clear insight as to the expectations of "class" in french elite society and the substance of french cuisine - the ingredients that make food special. Perhaps a secret as to why the French eat very little and are rarely hungry...duck confit and fat.

Beautiful writing, stories, photos, recipes and advice from folks who love life and are happy to spread their joy with others.

Very interesting cookbook and lots of stories as well as recipes. Nice addition to my over 2,000 cookbook library.

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