



FLASH IN THE PAN: LIFE AND DEATH OF AN AMERICAN RESTAURANT

David Blum

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An amusing, cautionary tale about a New York restaurant, from the dawning of the idea to the day the lights went out forever. For a brief, shining moment in the early '90s, The Falls was the ultimate hangout--sparkling with the presence of movie stars and models, written about in all the gossip columns. In this chronicle of its meteoric rise and fall, Blum captures the dreams, routines, and nightmares of life in the restaurant business.

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Details

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From Reader Review FLASH IN THE PAN: LIFE AND DEATH OF AN AMERICAN RESTAURANT for online ebook

Russell Baylis says

Flash in the Pan recounts the opening of a restaurant in NYC. I decided to pick this up after reading Anthony Bourdain's Kitchen Confidential. I had high hopes for this book but was overall let down.

I think it was because of a few reasons:

For one, the author had a bit of a snide attitude towards the proprietor of the restaurant, which came through in the writing and made it hard to get invested in the restaurant or the employees. It also felt like the author was writing from a distance, which can make it hard to get really into any book.

Another big thing was the name dropping. So much of this book just talks about celebrities coming to the restaurant, or talking about b-list actors the restaurant owners are hanging out with. Who cares? I'm sure even in the 1990s when this book came out no one cared. It adds nothing to the book but a huge distracting tangent.

I was really hoping this book would get into more of why the restaurant failed, or get into the logistics of what running a restaurant is like. I'm sure the author is very talented, but for me this was a big flop. I struggled through the last few bits.

Nicholas Aune says

From a biography about the rise and fall of a chef to a novel about the rise and fall of a restaurant. I would love to recommend this book, but I think I have the only copy in the tri-state area.

To the reader of this review:

Have you ever worked in a dying restaurant? Have you ever eaten in one?

If so, something in this book will make you laugh out loud.

Blum tells the story of a poorly conceived restaurant for the stars with a half baked menu and an always baked owner. When the supermodels stop coming and the bills start to stack up, well... things get a little crazy.

Does a restaurant have crazy gimmicks like Sinatra night or free food for anyone who orders alcohol? Is the owner always missing? Did it take 45 minutes for an order of corn on the cob to get to the customer? This book is full of warning signs any cautionary cook or diner should look for when they go out to eat.

Neil says

A pretty fascinating book. The beginning was a little slow but really helps you to understand the principal players. Once the restaurant starts it's fully of interesting anecdotes and weaves a tale of a lovely place that never found its footing, down to its demise.

Mike Zyskowski says

An airy if overlong behind the scenes look at the birth and death of a HOT NYC restaurant in 91/92

Blum's style is interesting . . . SmartAss-ian, sarcastic, playful, biting and informative. And every once in a while he slips into a Chuck Palahniuk mode with lines like "On graph paper, the customer-per-night chart of The Falls looks something like a Black Diamond slope in Aspren". Lots of punches, but seems like lots of punches were pulled as well . . . I get the feeling LOTS of dirt was held back. It's told in a manner of "I spent a couple years at this restaurant, it was HOT. The food sucked, the service was abysmal, management was non-existent, but it was HOT! for awhile . . ." as if you were talking to somebody at a bar

Steven Tomcavage says

The topic of this book was fascinating, but the style was very tough to slog through. I only made it halfway through the book before I couldn't take it anymore. It's written with the same style as a voice-over in a crime re-enactment. It's a true story, but it's written in the present tense which I find very odd. I wouldn't recommend it.

craig says

Recommended by Bourdain in Kitchen Confidential.

Jan Brooks says

An account of the rise and fall of a New York City restaurant describes how The Falls became the ultimate downtown hangout in the early 1990s, going behind the scenes to introduce its owners, investors, chefs, waiters, and others. As it turns out the restaurant is a flash...

I think maybe interesting if you're a restaurant foodie...

elizabeth bodine says

Great read

Great reading for any New York foodie of the 70s. Funny and ironic. You had to be there. Big fun.

Hank Stuever says

Immersion journalism, with some singe. Read it 20 years ago -- and notice now that it's back in print. A great study of what makes a restaurant bad. Sort of old hat now that we have all these reality shows about hotheaded chefs and clashing egos in the kitchen. But a real eye-opener back then.

Lauren Little says

Hard to find, but it was very enjoyable to read.

Kimberly says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was well-written and researched with as many details as the author could bring together to show the rise and fall of a NYC restaurant in the early 90's. The personalities at play - and at odds - with each other were fascinating to try and figure out. This is high on my list of good books about restaurants.
