

# Book review: Michael Caines at home

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## Michael Caines at Home

**Michael Caines**

**Century, £25**

While many chefs at the top of the culinary tree aspire to write a coffee table bound anthology of their work, they are neither practical nor approachable.

*Michael Caines At Home*, from the two-Michelin-starred chef Michael Caines, who last week topped *The Sunday Times* Food List, differs by distilling the very essence of his food.

In the autobiographical two-page introduction, Caines outlines his life and how it has shaped his culinary approach, including major events – some of which would have been nigh-on impossible hurdles for most people to overcome. Yet the measure of his modesty is clearly shown, as there is no mention of his MBE in 2006.

At 320 pages, *Michael Caines At Home* has something for everybody. There are the day-to-day recipes, such as guacamole and caramelised cauliflower soup, juxtaposed with more involved dishes such as crab tortellini with lemongrass and ginger sauce, langoustine cannelloni and roast partridge with braised chicory and quince purée.

This is the key to the Caines tome – it's much like the chef himself. Yes, there is the two-Michelin-starred Gidleigh Park, the epitome of refinement and luxury, but there are also the more accessible Abode properties, and it's pleasing to see that both styles of operation are boldly represented in his book.

The recipes reinforce Caines' philosophy of seasonality and keeping it local, and there are nice touches to help the reader build suitable alternatives within dishes and accompaniments. Each recipe is accompanied with a season indicator, helping cooks to make more informed choices.

Although aimed at the domestic cook, some dishes are descendants from Gidleigh Park, such as salt cod with lemon purée and chorizo foam, which would take an accomplished chef some time to pull off correctly.

High-quality images are provided by food photographer David Griffin, who counts some of the South West's finest chefs, such as Nathan Outlaw, Rick Stein and Paul Ainsworth, as previous clients. Every dish is captured in an enhancing context, whether they are restaurant-style or the more homely variety – and each makes you salivate more than the previous.

As a reference point, *Michael Caines At Home* will receive repeated visits for inspiration and guidance, but mainly for the ease of use in its informative style.

I recommend it.

*By ChefHermes, author of the blog ChefHermes.com*

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The Gilbert Scott Book of British Food, Marcus Wareing with Chantelle Nicholson

Saturday Kitchen Cooking Bible

