



# Alinea

*Grant Achatz*

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## **Alinea** Grant Achatz

The debut cookbook from the restaurant Gourmet magazine named the best in the country.

A pioneer in American cuisine, chef Grant Achatz represents the best of the molecular gastronomy movement--brilliant fundamentals and exquisite taste paired with a groundbreaking approach to new techniques and equipment. ALINEA showcases Achatz's cuisine with more than 100 dishes (totaling 600 recipes) and 600 photographs presented in a deluxe volume. Three feature pieces frame the book: Michael Ruhlman considers Alinea's role in the global dining scene, Jeffrey Steingarten offers his distinctive take on dining at the restaurant, and Mark McClusky explores the role of technology in the Alinea kitchen. Buyers of the book will receive access to a website featuring video demonstrations, interviews, and an online forum that allows readers to interact with Achatz and his team.

"Achatz is something new on the national culinary landscape: a chef as ambitious as Thomas Keller who wants to make his mark not with perfection but with constant innovation . . . Get close enough to sit down and allow yourself to be teased, challenged, and coddled by Achatz's version of this kind of cooking, and you can have one of the most enjoyable culinary adventures of your life." --Corby Kummer, senior editor of Atlantic Monthly

"Someone new has entered the arena. His name is Grant Achatz, and he is redefining the American restaurant once again for an entirely new generation . . . Alinea is in perpetual motion; having eaten here once, you can't wait to come back, to see what Achatz will come up with next." --GourmetReviews & Awards  
James Beard Foundation Cookbook Award Finalist: Cooking from a professional Point of View Category  
James Beard Foundation Outstanding Chef Award! "Even if your kitchen isn't equipped with a paint-stripping heat gun, thermocirculator, or refractometer, and you're only vaguely aware that chefs use siphons and foams in contemporary cooking, you can enjoy this daring cookbook from Grant Achatz of the Chicago restaurant Alinea. . . While the recipes can hardly become part of your everyday cooking, this book is far too interesting to be left on the coffee table. As you read, a question emerges: Is Alinea's food art? . . . I go a little further, describing Achatz with a word that he would probably never use to describe himself: avant-garde, as it defined art movements at the beginning of the last century--planned, self-conscious, and structured attempts to provoke and shake the status quo. Just as with those artists, the results are not necessarily as interesting as the intentions and concepts behind them. In this sense, this volume constitutes a full-blown although not threatening manifesto."—Art of Eating

## **Alinea Details**

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Author : Grant Achatz

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## From Reader Review Alinea for online ebook

### **Sarah Kate says**

Yes, I'm reading a cookbook. Yes, it's wonderful. First, the essays: a history of the restaurant, and thoughts on what food can be--Alinea is like dinner as theater and contemporary art. There's an exploration of all the high-tech ingredients and techniques, used to push the boundaries of food preparation and presentation, not just as gimmicks. Then, the recipes. They are astonishing and playful and beautiful and unbelievably complicated. I will almost certainly never attempt any of these at home, but holy hell, I want to go to there.

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### **John Bozlinski says**

i'm someone whose basic knowledge of the subject is one recipe with just three ingredients, a pinch of bar, a dash of ba, and a smidge of cue. i wanted to read this book because i always wondered how some people could get so jazzed about cooking.if you're looking for a book about restaurants and the driven people who run them, this is for you. if you're looking for recipes, not so much. now i'm not talking about the kind of places you go to, "too give mom a night off." this is about the kind of restaurants dad took her to so she would someday become your mom. the kind where when all is going well, "the push" as chef achatz calls it. when from the chef on down, all are pulling on the same end of the rope and the experience is unforgettable. this book is about grant achatz and the others in his life who influenced him.first let it be said, if there's a cooking award out there he hasn't won, you don't need it.he mastered a great art all the while going through the big "c", the big "d" and several other capital letters which i won't divulge (read the book). he speaks of his battle with cancer, which reminded me of a saying my father use to say when i was a kid, "it's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog." the book follows chef achatz's life from his early youth where his love of cooking began,to his formative years where he began not only to master the art of cooking but to change in many ways the foundations of how it is done. it shows how hard it is to run any restaurant let alone one of the most famous, alinea, which he owns.the book also shows that every butch needs his sundance, in this case nick kokonas. nick is grants close friend and was there to provide the nuts and bolts part of the equation to the building of alinea. but just as importantly for someone who hears "yes chef" all day, nick was there to say that idea sucks. so the next time you walk into a fine restaurant and you can feel the push, the crackle in the air, tuck your napkin under your chin and prepare to be amazed. oh, one last thing, if you're lucky enough to meet chef achatz, ask to see his pit(might be a tenner in it for you). i hghly recommend this book.

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### **Ricardo Marcos says**

In my opinion, this is the best book to learn not only about the famous chicagoan restaurant, but also the menu items as well as the molecular gastronomy recipes of the menu items. It is definately what you want to read if you do not want to get into the details of the techniques but learn a little about the business model, the design of the restaurant, etc., and the menu items, ingredients and recipes. The pictures are amazing and inspirational for culinary readers. Worth every single penny paid.

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### **???? says**

My attempt at reproducing Alinea's Surf Clam dish. I made some replacements - I used a scallop, mustard seed cress for the soup and a watercress leaf as a bed for the scallop and garnished with baby coriander.

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### **Nikki says**

This is a fantastic cookbook, but not for the faint of heart. The photography is beautiful, though occasionally I wish for a clearer shot of a dish's presentation. Those moments are far between however because multiple shots of elements are usually given. Do not expect to go into this book and bookmark half the entries. Rather, expect to be inspired. The average home cook who does not own agar agar or an antigridle is not catered-to. That being said, there are changes that could be made to incorporate a lot of the basics in spirit if not body. Achatz's flavor combinations are, sorry to use this word again, inspired. I made many notes through the reading of this book and it gave me enough insight into molecular gastronomy that I'm hooked. I have no desire to build any foams or scented air pillows, but the construction of that one, perfect bite seems like a worthy goal to me.

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### **Chuck says**

As a coffee table book, Lara Kaster's photographs are some of the most stunning food photography I've ever seen. As a cookbook, the over 300 recipes included in this monolith are as addictive and all-consuming as any I've tried recreating.

My issue with the book is with the essays. Given the writing talents of the food writers involved — Michael Ruhlman, Jeffrey Steingarten, Mark McCluskey and Michael Nigrant — the essays are mainly rehashes of better articles each has written about the Alinea dining experience and Grant Achatz's evolution as a chef. With Achatz's much-publicized recent battle with tongue cancer adding a necessary humanizing element to the aloof and overly serious chef, I expected more of Ruhlman's essay than the standard parallels of Achatz's culinary awakening to a existential journey.

The book could have been a chance to break down the barrier separating Achatz the presumed mad genius and Achatz the man. The Alinea team saved that for the complementary Alinea Mosaic website. There, owners of the book can participate in forums and engage in discussions with members of the Alinea team. I wished that this informality transferred onto the page, but understand the rationale for keeping the two separate-but-equal.

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### **pianogal says**

Loved this one. The recipes are basically worthless due to the high-end ingredients and tools, not to mention techniques. But this may be the closest I get to actually ever eating there - all the food looks amazing!

Maybe I can make it if I save up for the next 3 years and he doesn't close...

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### **Katherine says**

I almost wanted to add this book to my "Art," "Fantasy," and "Science Fiction" Goodreads shelves, but restrained myself. But this book is totally all of those things!!

This is most definitely not an instructional type cookbook; I do not think any of these could possibly be recreated in the average person's home. Maybe if you had a scientific laboratory in your home...

For example, each individual dish recipe contains 4+ component recipes in order to make the dish. (The "Tomato" dish had 12 component recipes to it!! Plus an additional step for putting it all together!! And we're not talking simple steps, here!)

Other dishes have component recipes that use ingredients like "Ultra-Tex 3" and "Louis Francois Super Neutrose Gallia Stabilizer" (\*&\$^#???!).)

Also, how do you EAT this stuff?! Do you just swirl it around on your plate and go at it, or does someone provide you with eating instructions prior to your start?

Oh, but the photography of the food! And the art and science and fantasy of the food! It's very, very neat. Elements like smoking cinnamon/maple leaves to give that added smell element to the act of tasting the food... It's so cool.

The whole thing is very cool.

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### **LorCon says**

As a foodie who is more interested in rustic foodways, I'm almost offended by molecular gastronomy. Why? Why? is my attitude. Nevertheless, this is recommended for the essays on "how to think about food," flavor combinations and also for the fabulous photography. Lots of ideas for food presentation and style in here, even if you never try the recipes. Plus, Grant Achatz is a Chicago Hero. It would make a great gift for any food snob and it is a high quality product, which is getting to be unusual in cookbook publication.

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### **Monica says**

For being a beautiful coffee table book of food porn, this book gets five stars. Its lovely to see the large scale photographs of the restaurant and gorgeous food.

But as for the practical/DIY aspect of the book (which is substantial)... I don't mean to sound like a bumpkin since I know that this is what the Molecular Gastronomy style is all about, but this the whole thing goes a little over my head. Everything is posted in grams, which I assume keeps everything as precise as possible but it makes it difficult to visualize and requires a super accurate scale. The food is divided by season, but ingredients are nearly all prohibitively expensive and hard to find. The equipment seems well beyond the reach of most home setups. And some of the recipes are for things like "juniper berry skins". Which means, take an exact amount of juniper berries, skin them with a paring knife, and set those skins aside. I can see where this would be great fun in the restaurant, but at home something like this seems pretty over the top.

Though (admittedly) I haven't been yet, I think the joy of eating at Alinea isn't something that could be easily replicated in your kitchen - even for the most seasoned foodie. So get the book as a way to visually experience what could happen at Alinea but don't expect to take any of that experience home.

### **Jorge Camara says**

Alinea is an inspirational book, from one of the most avantgarde Chefs in the world, Grant Achatz.

If you are pursuing to find inspiration and take your culinary skills to the next level, you have to own this book. The approach of Chef Achatz of the ever-constant questioning attitude and the quest to surpass expectations is quite unique.

Chef Achatz quest to make every culinary creation a holistic experience is reflected across the book: the extreme attention to detail, the art-inspired presentation and the importance of the senses (from the immediate and varied sense of smell to the and textures is mesmerizing.

Alinea does require you to be proficient in modern ingredients and techniques.

My only critique is to the graphic designer of the book: the font is quite small and, in the introduction, the font is black against a dark green-half-olive-greyish background color, making it difficult to read.

Apart from that, I consider Alinea as an essential advanced culinary book.

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### **Ofer Yakov says**

Comprehensive and fantastic, one of the best out there.

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### **Adella says**

An AMAZING book. Beautiful photography and detailed recipes by one of America's greatest chefs. Achatz holds nothing back and the reader is treated to an incredible array of modern cuisine recipes and presentations.

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### **Ragallachmc says**

Besides the El Bulli books by Ferran Adria (which are hard to come buy and very expensive), this is the first real cookbook dealing with molecular gastronomy by a well known chef. The recipes are precise and easy to follow, although finding some of the ingredients and equipment is going to be hard for a home chef. Achatz and company demystify MG cooking and show that it's really not that different from more traditional cooking.

The essays offer insight into the process and feel of Alinea and were interesting to read.

The book itself is laid out beautifully, with some great 'food porn' photography.

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All in all, I think this is one of the most important cookbooks to come out in recent memory and is definitely worth picking up.

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## **Dan says**

Oh boy. Where to go with this one. It's gorgeous. It really is. It's a beautifully photographed book. It's laid out professionally, and it's simply stunning to flip through and look at the pictures. The narrative is interesting, and well written, both Achatz' autobiographical stuff and the history of his restaurant, Alinea. It does get a bit, hmmm, whiny, at times, as he indulges in a sort of "poor me" about how badly he was treated as an up and coming cook, starting out relatively young. He manages to badmouth a few icons of the food world along the way.

Haven't we had enough of chef autobiographies telling us how hard it is to come up through the ranks, how there were chefs who were meanies that yelled at them and made them chop onions or peel potatoes instead of promoting them to second in command at age 15 when all anyone had to do was look at them and know that they were destined for greatness? We got it. Both those of us in the industry and those outside it. Working in restaurant kitchens ain't a picnic, and you gotta earn your chops.

Back to the book - the recipes, and there are many, are carefully written out and thought out - though, for the majority of readers, including myself, they're pretty much non-starters, as they involve equipment and processes that most of us will simply never bother with. I realize that the book isn't an attempt to teach "how to cook modernist food at home", it's the way they do things in the restaurant, so I can't fault him for that, and I don't count it against the quality of the book. At the same time, that sort of relegates the book to a pretty coffee table ornament.

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