Sure to excite lovers of the best Italian cooking, Mario Batali Simple Italian Food: Recipes from My Two Villages reenvisions classic home cucina with enticing results. Batali, known to fans as Molto Mario from his Television Food Network shows, and as chef-owner of Manhattans much-loved Po and Babbo restaurants, presents nearly 250 of his favorite recipes, traditional and innovative, for delectable salads, pastas, grilled specialties, ragus, and desserts, among others. The collection, inspired by the cooking of Borgo Cappene, a hillside village in northern Italy, and Greenwich Village, where Batali culls exemplary ingredients for his restaurants, reflects Batalis commitment to simple cooking--impeccable ingredients sensibly combined and properly prepared. Cooks seeking deeply flavored, smartly presented dishes will embrace Batalis recipes for everyday meals and for entertaining. Arranged by courses, antipasti through formaggi and dolci (cheese and sweets), the uncomplicated dishes include White Bean Bruschetta with Grilled Radicchio Salad, Baked Lasagna with Asparagus and Pesto, and Roasted Porgy with Peas, Garlic, Scallions and Mint. Gorgonzola with Spiced Walnuts and Port Wine Syrup with fresh fruit would make a lovely conclusion to any dinner. Throughout, Batali provides advice on dish preparation; there are 32 pages of color photos and dozens of black-and-white shots of life in Batalis two villages. Batalis reliance on the best ingredients simply prepared, rather than on fussy restaurant techniques, places his dishes squarely in the realm of home cooks. Theyll find his book a keeper. -- Arthur Boehm

My Personal Review:
What can I say, It is Mario Batali! Mario Batali and Lidia have been truly inspirational to me as a fairly new cook. After visiting Italy I was looking for someone to provide real Italian recipes. What I like most about the way the recipes are presented is the honesty. Mario makes it very clear as to whether the recipe is Italian or Italian with an American twist. I've only had the book for a short time but have had a lot of success with the recipes I've tried.

Molto bene!

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