Instead of bringing food to guests in a traditional restaurant setting, Jim Denevan brings diners to their food, creating what Alice Waters has called “the restaurant I always imagined.” His innovative organization, Outstanding in the Field, sets up dinner tables in fields, ranches, dairies, vineyards, and community gardens across the country for alfresco meals that truly reconnect us with the land and people that produce our food.

In Outstanding in the Field, Denevan presents a cookbook full of seasonally inspired dishes from his farm-fresh dinners, sharing more than one hundred recipes with home cooks and food lovers everywhere. Celebrating local ingredients at their height of freshness, favorites include Haricot Vert and Early Girl Tomato Salad with Summer Savory; Burrata Cheese with Nectarines, Mâche, and Hazelnuts; Sea Scallops with Sugar Snap Peas and Chervil; Pure Maple Syrup–Braised Short Ribs; Green Tomato Marmalade; and Upside-Down Fresh Fig Cake. All of the recipes present opportunities to use the most flavorful produce, meats, and cheeses in the area where you live—and suggestions for substitutions when necessary.

America's appetite for organic and local food has never been stronger and there is no better guide to this growing movement than Jim Denevan. With inspiring recipes, beautiful photographs throughout of farms and food across the country, and information on finding local ingredients and helping Community Supported Agriculture and community gardens, Outstanding in the Field is a cookbook that celebrates the pleasures of raising, preparing, and enjoying good food.

Features:
My Personal Review:
Many years ago, I ran across an amazing artist who does fantastic land pieces. I loved everything about his work... the scope, the method, the impermanence.

What I didn't know at the time, but have since learned, is that Jim is also a chef. He was the chef at Gabriella Café (Santa Cruz) who instituted Farmer Dinners. He would invite local farmers, foragers, and artisanal producers in and create special dinners from their products. The producers would dine along with the paying guests, thus allowing each end of the chain - the farm and the table - to interact with the other, the net result being that the diners gained a greater appreciation of where food comes from, and the producers had a new understanding and involvement with how their food is used creatively to nourish and nurture the final consumer.

What a great concept!

But, as Jim says, "It dawned on me that while Farmer Dinners were good, Farm Dinners would be better." And so began, in 1999, what has turned into a passionate undertaking: the roving Farm Dinners put on by Jim's organization, "Outstanding in the Field."

This book is a series of snapshots of that journey, told through beautiful photographs and delicious-sounding recipes created for those dinners, with a nice mix of story told in Jim's engaging conversational style.

Each recipe includes a small prefacing note, sometimes about a particular dinner where it was made, and sometimes just about the recipe itself. Just glancing through it last night, I have already found several things I can't wait to try, and specifically purchased ingredients for them at this morning's Farmers’ Market.

A true celebration of the idea of local and seasonal, the mostly-simple recipes range from Wilted Dandelion Salad with Pancetta and Poached Egg to Smoky Sturgeon and Potato Ravioli, from Blueberry Granita to Pickled Wild Mushrooms, from Caramelized Carrot Salad to Upside Down Fresh Fig Cake.

Jim gives substitutions when it won't change the spirit of the dish, because not everything is available everywhere. However, sometimes he doesn't, because as he states, "The salad of Santa Rosa Plums, Red Cabbage, Purslane, and Sunflower Petals, for example, really cannot be made with anything besides purslane and sunflower petals, so it is definitely a height-of-summer dish."

Sprinkled throughout the book are several one and two page spreads about a particular producer, or dinner, or larger topic such as "CSAs" or...
"Wineries Across America." Jim manages to be both interesting and informative without much preachiness creeping in. And that is indeed rare among those dedicated to the local food movement!

Highly recommended.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:

Outstanding in the Field: A Farm to Table Cookbook by Marah Stets - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!