Tom Douglas loves Seattle and Seattle loves Tom Douglas. The owner of and force behind three popular restaurants (Dahlia Lounge, Etta’s Seafood, and Palace Kitchen), Douglas has made an in-depth study of Pacific Northwest foodstuffs and culinary influences—basically the man has happily eaten his way through the city for the past 25 years and then, to Seattleites delight, has applied his knowledge to his restaurants. With this book, we hope to communicate our experience of Seattle, says Douglas. We want to share our thriving food scene with you—you can get on a plane and come see us or you can use this book to create your own Seattle in your kitchen. Douglas focuses on using fresh, in-season ingredients in all his recipes. My philosophy is: eat it when you’ve got it, enjoy the harvest when it’s here, he says. In Seattle, that means Grilled Asparagus with Hazelnut-Star Anise Mayonnaise in the spring, Sake-Steamed Sockeye Salmon with Sake Butter with Oregon Pinot Noir Raspberry Sorbet on a summer evening, or the year-round favorite, Dungeness crab. Try Crab Salad with Asparagus, Avocado, and Lime Vinaigrette or Wok-Fried Crab with Ginger and Lemongrass. Use Washington State apples in Parsnip-Apple Hash or Maple-Cured Double-Cut Pork Chops with Grilled Apple Rings and Creamy Corn Grits. Douglas offers plenty of savory vegetarian dishes such as Potato Gnocchi with Roasted Tomatoes and Gorgonzola Cream, Wild Mushroom Ravioli with Arugula Salad, and Tuscan Bread Salad with Fresh Mozzarella and Basil (a perennial favorite at the Dahlia Lounge). Like a walk through the fish and vegetable stalls at Pike Place Market, Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen is fresh, inspiring, and filled with aromatic ideas. His prose is relaxed, colloquial, and encouraging—cook, eat, and enjoy are his basic tenets—and the book is filled with photos of Seattle life and institutions. Whether you live in the Emerald City or the Windy City, Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen will spark your imagination and enliven your palate. --Dana Van Nest

My Personal Review:
I have owned my copy of Seattle Kitchen for over a year now, as do two of the other families on our block. We regularly get together for dinner parties and inevitably, one of Tom Douglas dishes shows up on the menu. Although many if not most of the recipes are time-consuming (much chopping, sautéing, caramelizing, etc. is involved) they are all worth it in the end as long as you are a patient person who enjoys cooking. This is not a good beginners cookbook! The sweet butternut soup with thyme creme fraiche is beyond compare and I make it all fall and winter long. The lobster and shrimp potstickers with sake sauce take a long time to make but are simply divine (I have learned to make huge batches and freeze them for later when I need an appetizer.) Pair them with the sweet-and-sour red cabbage for an impressive presentation. I just made Etta’s cornbread pudding last night for the first time after visiting Seattle and eating it at the restaurant a few weeks ago, and I have to say mine was just as good if not better since it was fresh out of the oven. It was inhaled at the dinner party and it prompted me to get online now to order Tom’s other cookbook. I find that sometimes the ingredients are difficult to hunt down here in Montana, but I usually find most of what I need, or at least an acceptable substitute. I just wish there were more photographs of the beautiful food. I look forward to trying many more of Tom’s recipes.

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