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NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DQ 104 is the first in a series of design anatomies, to be published by the Art Center. These anatomies, or environmental design studies, will analyze the tools and working methods of professionals in fields that involve design either directly, as would be true in the case of an architect, for example, or indirectly, as in the case of Julia Child.

Many activities lend themselves to this kind of study. Those we are considering for later examination include architecture, photography, stage design and graphic design—activities generally carried out in contained spaces that permit analysis. The selection of the ideal professional in each field is critical to the success of this endeavor. In each case we shall look for a person who, like Julia Child, has demonstrated a profound understanding of how to approach a task in order to produce results of superior quality. The person who undertakes the analysis of each anatomy will have design experience and a working knowledge of the special area being studied.

Bill Stumpf, who has researched and written much of this issue, is an industrial designer who recently developed a desk chair that provides real support for the long-suffering office worker and he now has thoughts on the boards about the total office environment. His long-time interest and participation in cooking led him to Julia's kitchen, and with the assistance of Nicholas Polites, Jean Beirise and photographer Dick Swift, he has dissected the working spaces of one of our great professional cooks.

The hundreds of tools assembled in the Child kitchen are the result of years of trial and selection. Their locations and relationships to each other in the kitchen are based upon experience and a hypersensitivity to the tasks to be accomplished. Included in this issue is a detailed bird's-eye view drawing of Julia's kitchen with her comments and Stumpf's on the elements that constitute the various kitchen work areas. This poster, printed on washable stock, includes, on its reverse side, a series of photographs of many of the tools in Julia Child's *batterie de cuisine*.

The purpose of this design anatomy is not to proclaim this kitchen "the model" to be replicated in homes across the land. Rather, this careful analysis of a particular working environment is meant to reveal the broad philosophy and flexible attitudes behind the evolution of its design. It is these qualities and the ability to articulate them clearly that we propose for emulation.

Our study of the best "tools of various trades" could not have been initiated so auspiciously without the generosity of Julia and Paul Child who spent many hours with our authors and permitted us to take countless photographs and to develop this issue of *DQ* at our discretion. Our thanks to Dean Swanson and Lynn Alpert who gathered the source listings for the Twin Cities and to our authors, who compiled similar listings for Boston, New York and San Francisco.

MSF

JULIA'S KITCHEN

A DESIGN ANATOMY

by Bill Stumpf and Nicholas Polites

with photographs in Julia Child's kitchen by Dick Swift

DESIGN QUARTERLY 104

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WHEN YOU WANT AN ORANGE ,
YOU DON'T WANT SOMEONE ASKING YOU
..AN ORANGE WHAT..?

Andy Warhol

PART 1

THE KITCHEN - A 20TH
CENTURY PERSPECTIVE



In preparing this issue, the authors taped about nine hours of conversation with Julia and Paul Child. Direct quotes from those interviews and other statements of the Childs' appear in italics throughout this publication.

More sense, and nonsense, has been uttered about the kitchen than about any other room in the 20th century house. Everything that has been written, talked about, fantasized, schematized, promoted and actually constructed by builders, manufacturers, housewives, designers, editors, cooking experts and food critics is part of these utterances. But what is a good kitchen? A hygienic clinic for food preparation? A warm, nurturing family and social center hearkening back to the 19th century farm kitchen? A technological whiz-bang push-button sci-fi marvel? An avocado green, fashion-conscious conceit? A chic collection of appliances and gourmet gadgets stamped with a museum's seal of approval?

These questions are not value free, and what follows inevitably reflects our own and like-minded others' values, assumptions and biases. In our view, the subject of cooking and eating is so intimately bound up in the physical, practical, social, psychological, aesthetic, creative, spiritual and romantic needs of mortal creatures in the earthly here and now that any attempt to reduce it to rules and formulas is doomed to failure. Nor can it be divorced from cultural and technological change. Agri-business, fast foodism, modern packaging, and convenience foods affect our subject profoundly. Some of the grand old ways are irredeemably lost, but we can reduce our dependency on the standardized denomination if we try, and if we know how.

We agree with Andy Warhol. "When you want an orange, you don't want someone asking you. . . an orange what?"

So the first question is, how did we get here?

Up from Drudgery: 1900-1930

Middle-class life began to change dramatically in the first decades of the century, especially during and after World War I. The urbanization of America was far advanced and the great waves of immigration were subsiding. Middle-class women were gaining their first access to the out-of-home job market, and women were finally enfranchised. The servantless or one-servant-only household became the norm and the mistress of the house moved into the kitchen and assumed the role of chief family cook.

Planning and equipping the kitchen became a topic of wide interest. Women's magazines, home economics bulletins and advertisements of appliance and utensil manufacturers all served to instruct the housewife in the kind of kitchen she ought to have. Key kitchen phrases

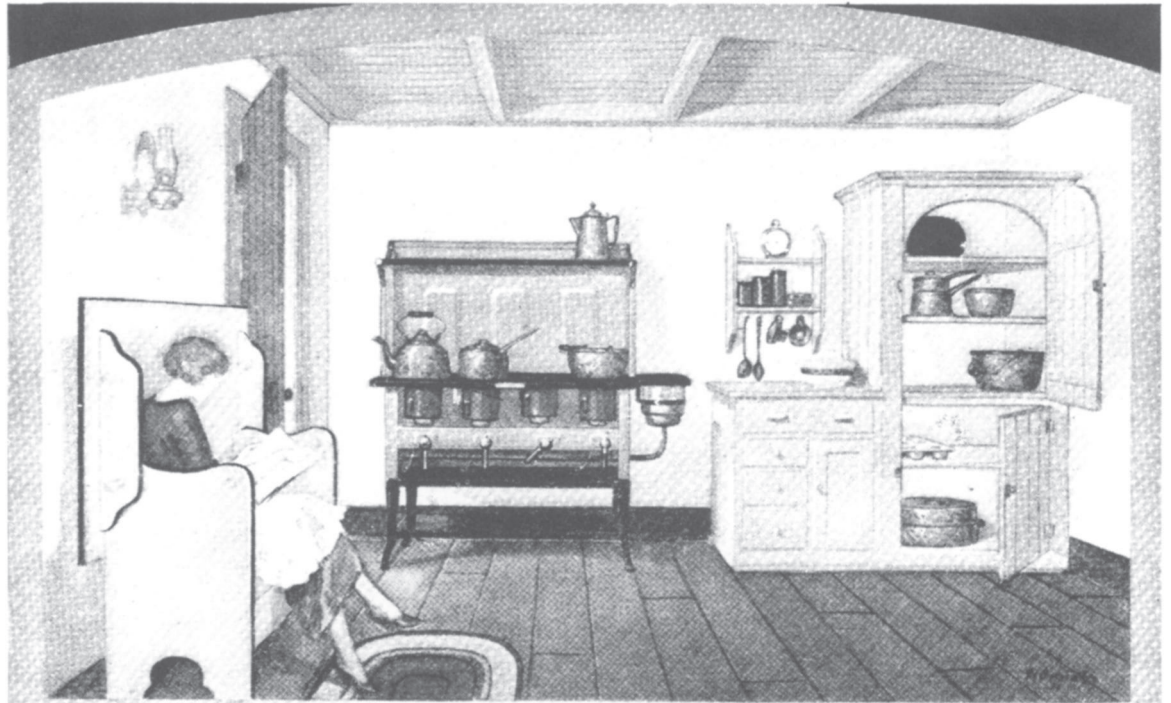
of the day were "convenient," "efficient," "labor-saving," and "step-saving."

Studies were undertaken to determine the kitchen's ideal size, its location in the house, the arrangement and proper height of its fixtures, the materials and finishes of work surfaces, floors, walls, ceilings. The efficiency of the factory was often invoked. An architect writing in the *Garden and Home Builder*, March, 1926, advised: "Since the kitchen is the principal workroom of the home, it should in design and equipment be governed by the efficiency principles that regulate the conduct of a well-organized office or business."

Though attractive and well-ordered kitchens were built during this period, many were truly squalid or ruthlessly clinical and efficient, betraying an only thinly-disguised resentment many women harbored toward housework. The modern young flapper woman found kitchens and their associations distasteful. The headline of a typical ad of the time read: "Go Away, Kitchen Drudgery!" Daughters stopped learning how to cook from their mothers and a serious decline in the domestic arts set in. As Waverly Root and Richard De Rochement observed in *Eating in America: A History*, "Whatever you think of the level of gastronomy in the last century, you are not likely to disagree with the statement that it began to sink when housewives stopped making bread at home and accepted the professional product. The quality of the professional product has been declining ever since, and it may be that it will reach the point where it can no longer be tolerated."

Reaction to the grimly efficient kitchen set in soon enough. In August, 1929, a home management booklet published by Iowa State College Extension Service admonished: "Pleasant surroundings and a cheerful atmosphere add much to the joy of the homemaker. Sunshine, color, attractiveness in the design of cupboards, tables and floors, furnishings easy to clean all pay their dividends in good health, time saved and family contentment." And further on, "The day of the white laboratory-like kitchen is past. The glare of the white walls and woodwork was tiring to the eyes and monotonous to the soul of the worker."

Manufacturers, meanwhile, were turning out scores of new appliances: electric and gas refrigerators and ranges, ready-made kitchen cabinets (unknown before 1905), sinks in a variety of colors, washers and driers. But these were merely a prelude to the innovations that were to follow.



Go Away, Kitchen Drudgery!

The cheerful summer kitchen!
 Out you go, Dull Drudgery—no room here for the Foe of Household Happiness!
 Come in, Contentment! Make this your permanent abode, Good Friend!

Ideal Summer Stove and Cooking Utensils

At home or in vacation cottage you will enjoy a summer kitchen with bright colors and convenient arrangement; with a Nesco Oil Cook Stove which combines beauty with ideal summer cooking service; with complete equipment of Nesco Royal Granite Ware utensils which are serviceable and strikingly pretty in their blue-grey mottling.

The Nesco Oil Cook Stove burns a blue gas flame that contacts with utensil. Fries, bakes, broils, toasts clean and can simmer. The non-burnable Rockweave Wick needs no trimming. No priming—no smoke—no odor.



Ask your dealer to show you the features of the Nesco Oil Cook Stove—the Rockweave Wick; the Burner; the Leg Leveling Screws; extra shelf room, sturdiness and beauty. You'll like every feature. Have him send a Nesco to your kitchen—prove it yourself.

Send for Refrigerator Bowl and Free Book

Send 15c in coin for a handy Refrigerator Bowl with cover in Nesco Royal Granite Ware. Use it for safely storing foods, warming up, etc. In addition you will receive, free, a copy of our new book, "Nesco Better Kitchens," containing many expert, practical suggestions for re-furnishing and re-decorating, or for planning new kitchens.

NESCO Oil Cook Stove

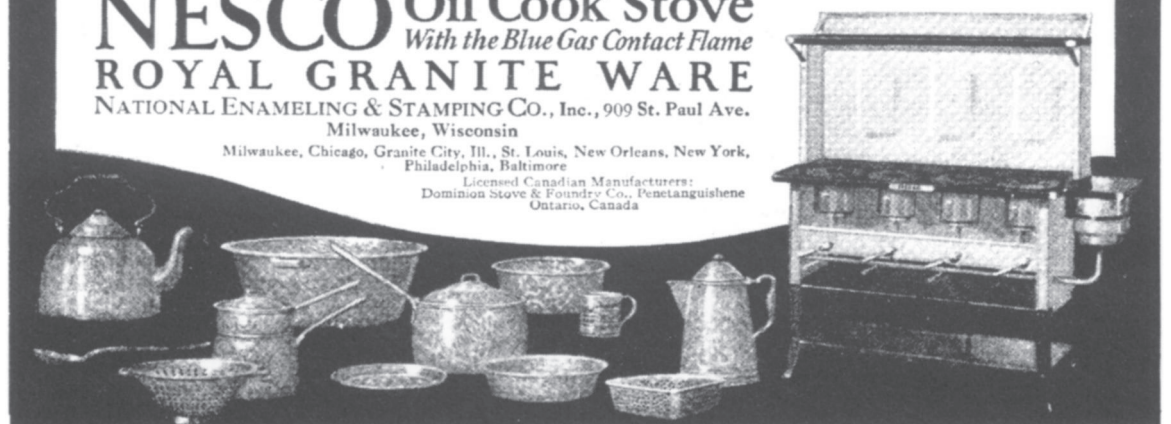
With the Blue Gas Contact Flame

ROYAL GRANITE WARE

NATIONAL ENAMELING & STAMPING CO., Inc., 909 St. Paul Ave.
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Licensed Canadian Manufacturers:
 Dominion Stove & Foundry Co., Penetanguishene
 Ontario, Canada



Industrial Design: the 1930s

If the late 1920s ushered in the founding of the industrial design profession in America, the 30s witnessed its full flowering. The appearance of almost every consumer product was transformed in a few short years by industrial designers. (The professionals acknowledged themselves proudly as men who could not leave well enough alone; they wanted to redesign everything, and they almost succeeded in this aim.)

Designers flattened ridges, eliminated dust-catching crevices and rounded corners for safety. They abolished open floor space under stand-up appliances by bringing panels down to the floor, thereby in one fell swoop doing away with the favorite sleeping quarters of Fidos and Tabbies across America. In general, they “streamlined” (some say entombed) the appliance. While these changes were applauded as progress, the character of much kitchen equipment from the pre-industrial-design era was lost and function was not necessarily improved.

Nonetheless, the designers’ most important contribution to the kitchen was not so much the imprint they left on individual appliances. Rather, it was how they seized on the spirit of the times and captured the popular imagination with their vision of things to come. Industrial designers reached the peak of their influence and power in the New York World’s Fair of 1939-40. Its theme was “The World of Tomorrow.” All the leading designers played major roles in shaping the concept, plan and architecture of the Fair, as well as the content of its futuristic exhibits. Soon after the Fair, World War II intervened, and the actual realization of the world of tomorrow had to wait. After the War industrial designers never quite recovered their previous glamor, but the vision they had promoted took deep root, and much that was to follow in the postwar era and afterwards grew from it.

Postwar Deflowering

The postwar 50s was a period of massive changes in American living patterns. Pursuit of the American Dream with a vengeance was signaled by a new, broadly based affluence: the baby boom, the middle-class exodus to suburbia and single-family dwellings, the self-service supermarket revolution and shopping center development, the application of sophisticated technology to packaging, bottling, convenience foods and disposable products.

In addition, that decade produced the wildest fantasies and most delirious clichés ever to be perpetrated about the kitchen. Everywhere it was referred to as the “kitchen of tomorrow,” the “dream kitchen,” the “pace-setting kitchen,” or the “miracle kitchen.”

House Beautiful was in the vanguard. Its account of “The Pace-Setting Kitchen of 1949” was still fairly sober, but by 1952 the prose was warming up. In the January issue of that year an article titled “Something Is Happening in the Kitchen” inspired this effusion: “As kitchens get more modern and efficient, they look less like kitchens and more like living rooms or dining rooms. What for centuries has been regarded as an ugly duckling is turning into a beautiful swan. The postwar kitchen is a new kind of room.”

The copywriter might have been well-advised to read an article in the same magazine published 16 years earlier, “How Is Your Kitchen,” by Birdaline Bowdoin. Much more sensibly, and accurately, she recalled the old-time kitchens, and “. . . how they were the centers, not only of the household, but of the neighborhood, the seat of all that was best in living and hospitality . . . the huge fireplace and the friendly seats about it, and the big oven, and the atmosphere—that is entirely lacking in our kitchens, even those with costly white tiling and glittering fixtures.”

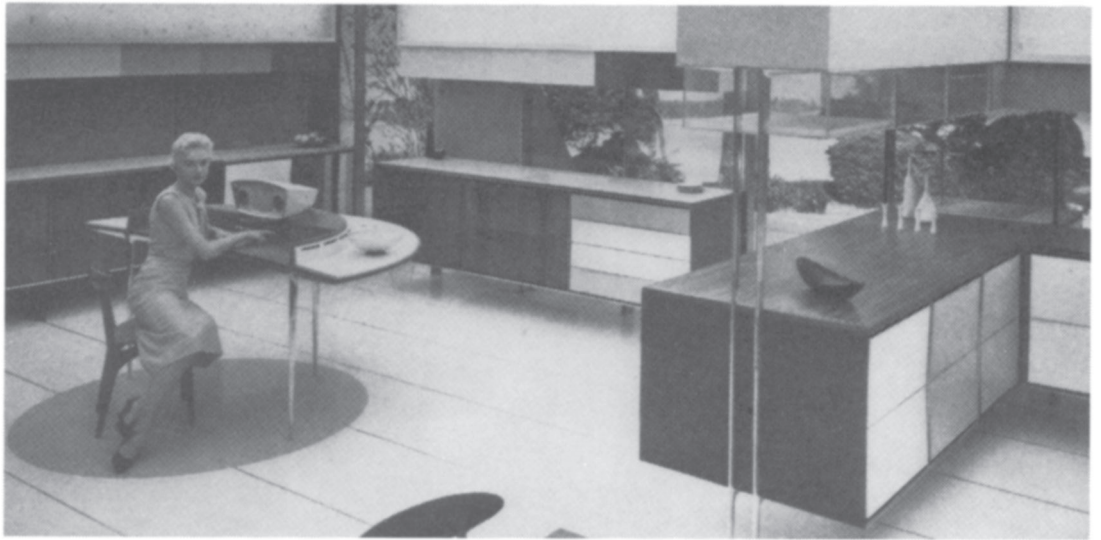
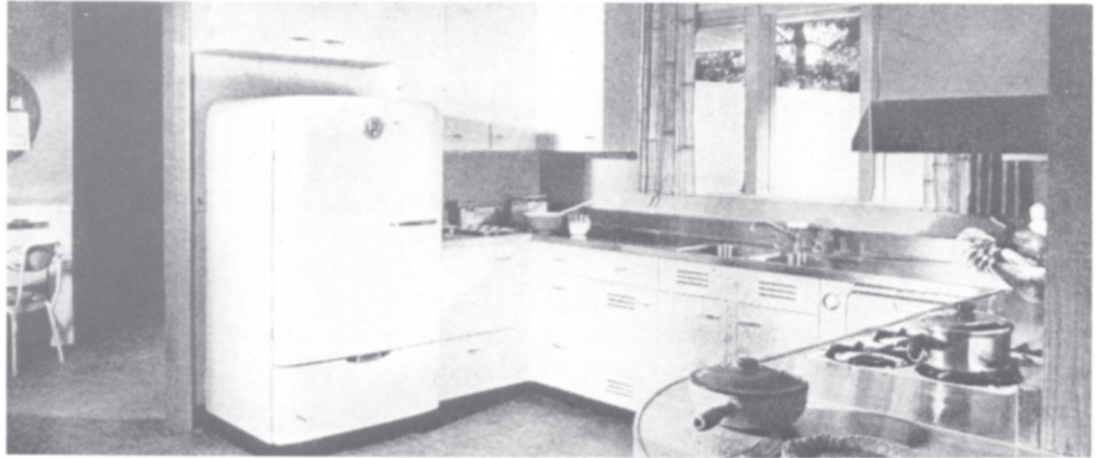
In the early 50s, frozen blintzes and precooked turkey dinners were introduced, and appliance manufacturers were developing the gadgetry to totally eliminate personal involvement from cooking. By 1957, *American Home* was able to report the ultimate inanity (“Kitchens and Our Changing Lives—1957”) in appropriate purple prose. It concerned a new prototype invention of General Electric, a combination freezer and electronic oven called XPC-1, which at the push of a button would send food from freezer to oven to table. The magazine showed two pictures, one of a well-dressed woman pushing a button on an impressive-looking console, and another of the woman sitting in her living room having a drink with her husband. The subhead above the pictures read: “In 197X They Are ‘Imagineered’ For Even Less Work,” and the caption below said, “Push a few buttons. . . RELAX!!!”

Present Trends

Having survived that earlier postwar era, where do we stand now? Are we in the grip of more industrialization of the food production, distribution and preparation processes, both at

(from top)
House Beautiful's "pace-setting"
kitchen of 1949

In 1957, *Industrial Design*
magazine published this "dream
kitchen" equipped with remote
controls for scrubbing the floor,
supplying icecubes and opening
drawers



home and in restaurants? Are there counter-
forces at work that may swing the pendulum
the other way?

A recent piece of investigative reporting published in the January 24, 1977 issue of *The New Yorker* answers part of the question. Beginning innocently enough under the title "Tomatoes," Thomas Whiteside tells an astonishing tale of how agri-business and food breeding technology have transformed one of the most delectable fruits in the American diet, *Lycopersicon esculentum*, into an almost unrecognizable synthetic substitute. His story documents how the major growers, packers and distributors have suppressed foreign (mainly Mexican) hand-picked tomatoes and, with the technical help of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, bred new varieties of thick-skinned tomatoes that can be picked when green by mechanized equipment, gassed with ethylene (called "degreening" by the industry), loaded on trucks to ripen *en route* to the place

of sale, usually thousands of miles away. His description of the latest triumph of the industry, the all-but-indestructible MH-1 tomato, is the funniest and saddest part of the article. He calculates that it can withstand a six-foot fall to a hard tiled floor at an impact speed of 13.4 mph (almost three times the speed mandated by federal bumper safety standards). He concludes:

"And thus the original humble, delicate, fragile South American tomato has been transformed by American agricultural science into tough stuff—genetically manipulated and crossbred for high yield, engineered to resist the inroads of soil disease and the mangling of sorting machines alike, rendered responsive to a vast variety of pesticides, fungicides, and artificial fertilizers, bred specifically for uniform maturing and destined for coloring in gas chambers, and provided with a hide to withstand the endless shocks of shipping and repacking and the vicissitudes of supermarket display racks. . . . And, instead of the simple fragrant, tender, juicy and glorious

tasting fruit we once knew, we see stacks of transparent sealed boxes containing sets of three or four pinkish globes, still pallid after their stay in the gas chamber, resting peacefully in their plastic tubes, each of them embalmed in a thin coat of wax for cosmetic effect, and all uniformly dry, mealy, and insipid.”

The inferior quality proffered by the fast food chains is, like the tomatoes, a response to similar market and technical forces motivating mass standardization in the food business.

If much that is offered in supermarkets and fast food stands is designed—we use the word advisedly—for eye appeal rather than quality, today’s newest model home kitchens evidence the same syndrome. Though the extravagant excesses of the postwar era have abated, kitchens usually featured in magazines continue to be “imagineered” in a shotgun wedding of dubious eye appeal and questionable gadgetry. Or the media treat us to visions of \$40,000-plus kitchens equipped with professional-quality appliances installed in the homes of celebrity cooks.

If all this seems unrelievedly gloomy, we are happy to say that there is another side to the story. We are encouraged to hear Americans protesting the technological debasement of food. We are heartened to know that middle-class women and men of all ages are taking up cooking as a hobby, even when they work at regular jobs, showing they are obviously disabused of the notion that good living can be equated with push-button relaxation. We are cheered to see people signing up for cooking classes, attending wine tastings, buying books about food, raising their own vegetables. These things indicate to us that a healthy grass roots movement is growing across the land. We disagree with those who view it as a fad, and instead regard it as an expanding awareness about food.

Fortunately, good food and good cooking have never entirely disappeared from America. Even at the most bleak moments there have always been good cooks, good restaurants, gifted food writers and people who enjoy the discriminating tasting of it. While we are all besieged by forces beyond our control, and undoubtedly will continue to be, the greatest sign of hope is that we can do more with what is at hand, and we can encourage the prospering of alternatives. At least in our private lives we can eat intelligently.

It is at this point that we turn to Julia and Paul Child for guidance. Julia, of course, holds a

unique position among her peers. Besides being a passionate cook and a high spirit, she is imbued with plenty of common sense. She is also a dedicated and inspiring teacher, her greatest contribution to cooking in America. She discovered her interest in cooking while living in Paris and attending the Cordon Bleu school, and later established the Ecole des Trois Gourmandes with Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle, who collaborated with her during the next ten years on *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Hers was the idea to make it a *real teaching book*. When finally published—Julia and Paul were living in Cambridge—it was considered both monumental and revolutionary, in that it was “like having a teacher right there beside you in the kitchen,” as Judith Jones, an editor at Alfred Knopf (who published the book), put it. All of which led to “The French Chef” series in 1962 on Boston public television station WGBH, and then to the launching of Julia’s national TV career.

Millions of Americans have taken courage from Julia to attempt their first serious cooking. Some have acquired more than a passing interest in the subject. The inside cover of a book about food that she recently received from a grateful author contained an apt inscription:

Julia—
Without you—
the program
the books
I would never have
known what
food was or what
the equipment was
for

This publication is an effort to discover how and why the design of Julia’s tools and kitchen spaces plays such a critical role in her remarkable cooking lessons. We hope these pages also convey something of the Childs’ creative and expansive attitude toward living—which is as important to their personal success as the possession of the tools and the techniques. Julia’s own words in an article in *Architectural Design* (July/August, 1976) sum up that attitude perfectly: *The kitchen proper was our major concern because, to us, it is the beating heart and social center of the household. Although this was our ninth kitchen, we never before had the luxury of a well-proportioned room. We intended to make it both practical and beautiful, a working laboratory as well as a living and dining room.*

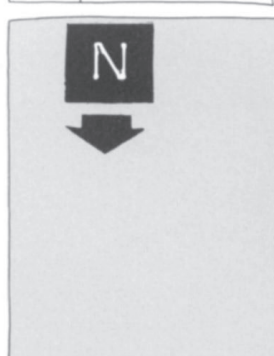
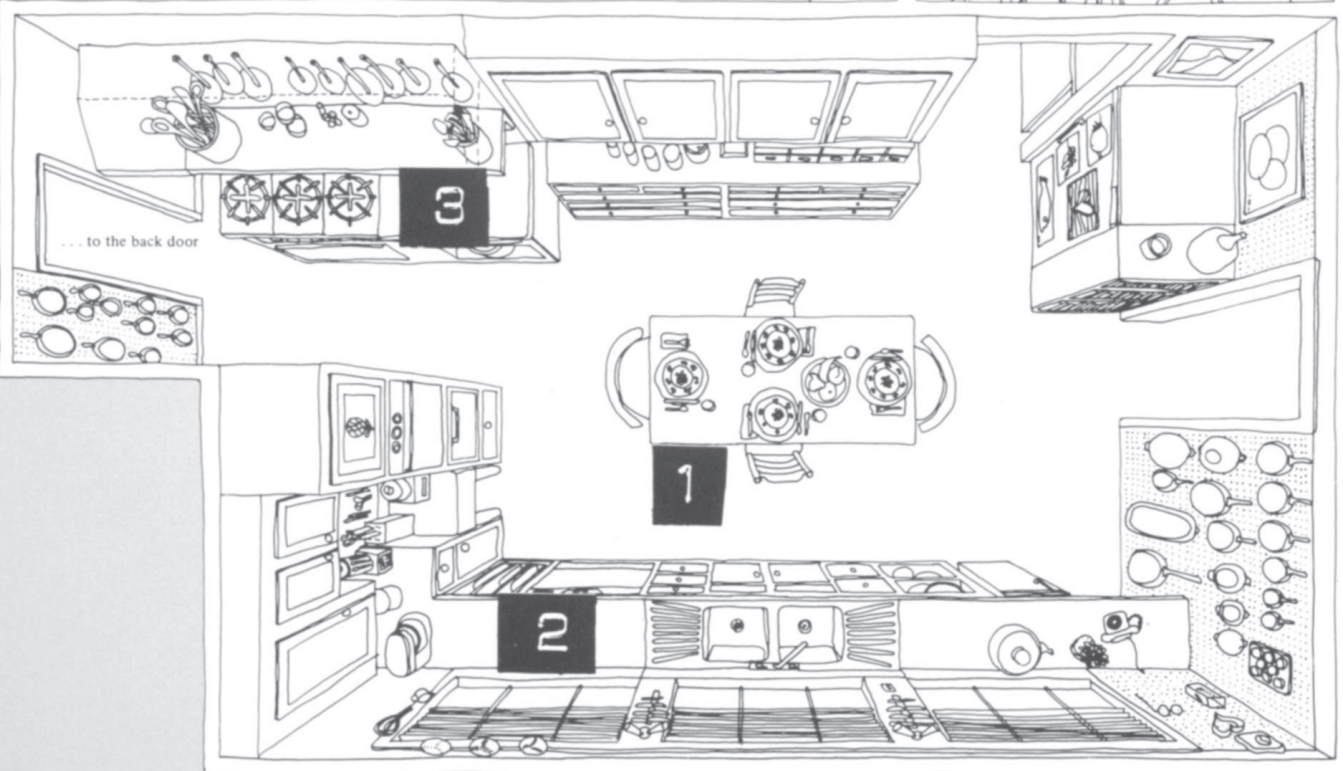
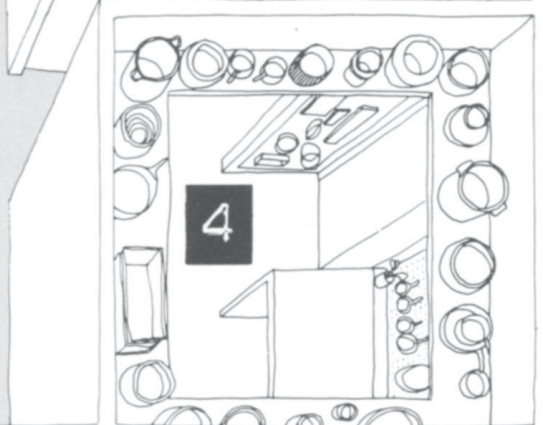
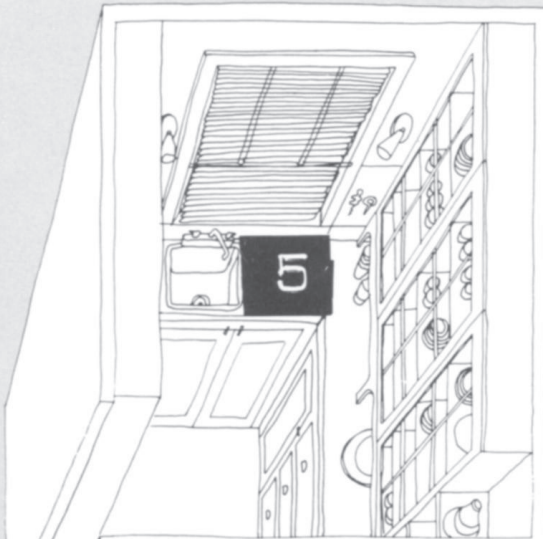
1 Kitchen Dining

2 Cutting/Mixing

3 Cooking

4 Pastry

5 Pantry



INTRODUCTION

Design research into the why and how of working environments has always been a sporadic and difficult process in America. The best research intentions of corporations, government, universities and designers are all too often sabotaged or circumvented by a host of economic and ideological counterforces. Industry has a tendency to pander to immediate market interests, seeing research narrowly through product eyes; government has a fixation on consumerism and regulation; and, designers rarely have the time, motivation or

money required to carefully analyze a philosophical question. Dangerous generalizations, to be sure, yet easily defended in the terms of our discussion about the deteriorating quality of food, its preparation and distribution in America.

Julia Child's kitchen provides an excellent design research model because in addition to its function as a working environment for a renowned chef, it is:



A partial view of Julia's Cambridge kitchen

Artless

Julia's kitchen is a representation of her quest to learn how and what to cook. It is an ongoing experiment that expresses more evolution than innovation in form and substance. Julia's kitchen is not a monument, but a place that reveals process and personal involvement, failure and success.

Easily Perceived

The information is "ready-made" and can be easily observed and described.

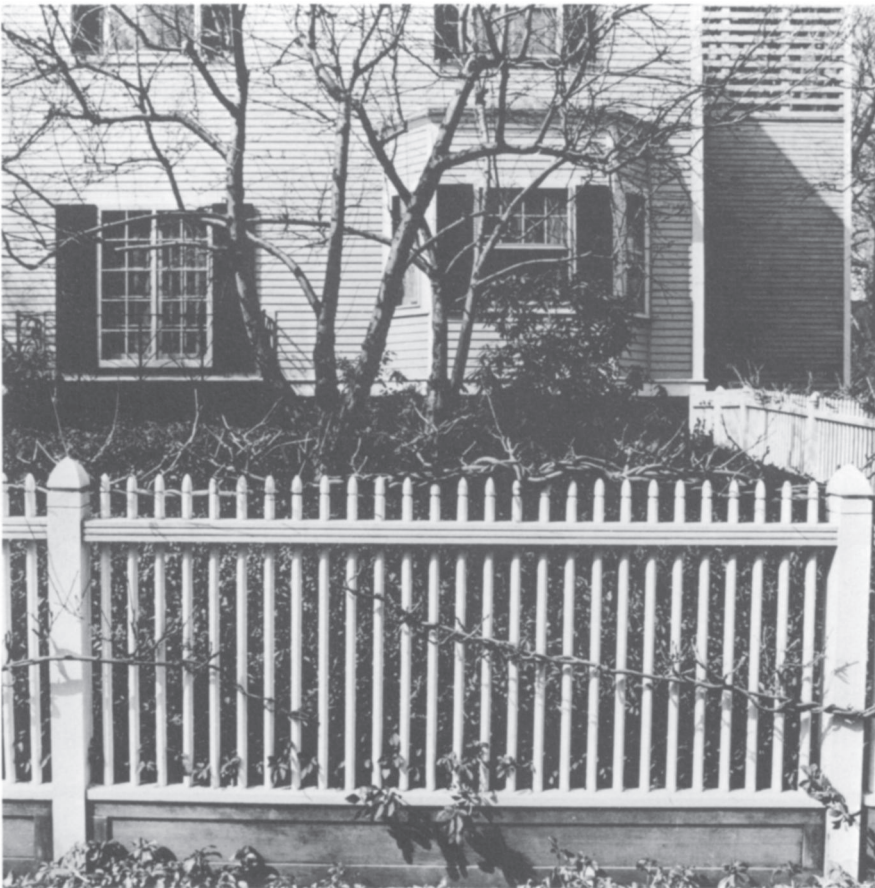
Small Scale

Julia's kitchen evolved through personal initiative, unblemished by commercial commitments, or by the American reverence for technology and over-consumption.

Productive

Her kitchen expresses results as well as process. Julia Child not only can talk about her kitchen, in it she actually cooks truly good food.





A Studio House

Julia's kitchen is literally in the midst of the "Ivy League," yet the house and its owners seem very much a part of "heartland America." The centuries old Cambridge, Massachusetts house was purchased some 15 years ago as a place to settle down after the mobile days of Paul Child's foreign service career. This house allowed Paul and Julia the spatial freedom to expand their mutual interests in art and the art of cooking. The house is truly a studio in its dedication to Julia's cooking, teaching and writing and to Paul's work as painter, wood-carver, photographer and designer of Julia's kitchen.

Julia's Kitchen: An Attitude About Food, Cooking and People

Although her kitchen is quite large, 18 x 24 feet with two generous adjacent pantries, and houses an arsenal of the "tools of the trade," or as she refers to them *le batterie de cuisine* (enough to outfit two medium sized restaurant kitchens), it remains an appropriate element in a total household.

It is not prepossessing. In fact, the first impression is more social than culinary or technical. Guests, friends and students enter the house via the "back" door and are immediately ushered into the kitchen. The "front" door seems as ornamental and unused as those on every farm house in America. This kitchen, like the classic farm kitchen, is friendly, open and it is the core of the Childs' household.

Guests walk about, then sit at the table, and we have aperitifs and talk while I am finishing the dinner. It is easy and pleasant, and I am one of the party the way I like to be. Food is better, too, infinitely better because the cook is in the kitchen, the way a chef is in his restaurant. No fresh green beans sit to warm up, losing their texture while I am in a dining room; no sauce will boil away nor custard curdle. Furthermore, nobody minds a bit of public stirring, tossing and tasting; in fact, most seem to enjoy being witness to the affair. (Julia Child, New York Times Magazine, May 16, 1976.)

It is apparent that the kitchen is a part of Julia and Paul's life but *not* the whole of it. Our conversations quickly revealed broad interests and a sensitivity to current social and political concerns.

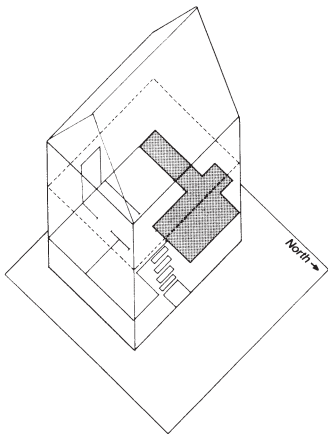
Julia is quick to debunk any sense of loftiness or snobbery about food or her recognized position as one of America's foremost culinary



artists. Though she is known primarily for her expertise in things French, she and her kitchen are distinctively American. Her new television show will focus upon American cuisine as well as French. What's more, Julia is taking Chinese cooking lessons. She has no time for so-called "gourmet" cooking and never uses the word. In spite of some who have of late criticized her for "taking a less than puritanical view of classic French cooking," she remains steadfastly *informal* in her attitudes about French cooking in America. Wholly aware of the superiority of farm fresh ingredients, Julia is also aware of the necessity to deal with the reality of the supermarket, which for most Americans is the only source of food supply.

rather than stimulated to ripeness, cooking that preserves and emphasizes flavors rather than concealing them. There are millions of ways of doing it, potentially, and authenticities matter only if one wants to duplicate the past. No one has to eat less than splendidly for ignorance of the foundations of French cooking, and Americans are ready only for rudimentary new beginnings." (Seymour Britchky, *New York Times Book Review*, January 23, 1977.)

Her sensitivity to this condition is reflected in the careful step by step cooking lessons on television, in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, and in her creative use of ordinary foods and cooking tools.



This diagram illustrates the area devoted to Julia's kitchen in the Child house

"Julia has taught many nervous Americans to make better food than they made before, and to relax about it. If American food is evolving toward mud, squabbles about what is French-correct will only help mire us in it. Americans must be taught basic principles—the importance of fresh, unsullied food stuffs that are raised



A Profound Organization

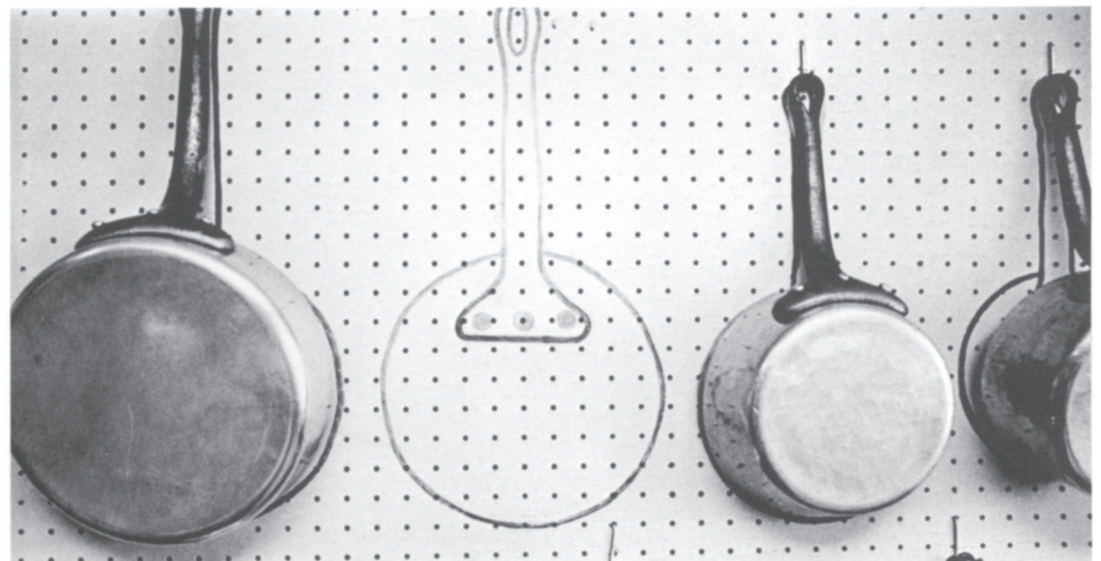
The superficial appearance of Julia's kitchen is quite casual, yet beneath it lies a profound, complex organization. Julia and Paul co-designed each area of activity, Julia setting the functional criteria and Paul dispersing the specific elements. (Paul laid all the utensils on the floor and made various trial arrangements before permanently mounting and storing the objects.) The kitchen's plan was not determined purely by ideas of convenience: it was planned around the prevailing constraints of the architecture and several *activity areas*. These activity areas are interlinked by *putting down* space or counter tops. Based on her understanding of the orchestration of meals, these areas all relate to one another. Adamant about the importance of adequate horizontal work surface, *I want as much working and putting down space as possible; there can never be enough for me.* She uses the perimeter walls for counter tops (39 inches high to suit her tall figure). Each counter section is especially suited to its activity—metal near the stove for hot pots, marble in the pastry area for rolling out pie crusts and pastry dough, solid maple in the cutting area for food preparation and stainless steel near the sink for washing large skillets and draining off wet vegetables. All of the counters have an overhang of 2½ to 3 inches so that a plate or bowl can be held under the counter to scrape off crumbs, chopped vegetables and the like. All the counter tops are well lit by daylight and/or by spot illumination under the cupboards. *Work tops need good light of course, not only general illumination but specific light over every surface. In our kitchen we achieved this with a combination of ceiling spots, wall swivels and strip lights, so placed that the cook's hands cast no shadows.* (*New York Times Magazine*, May 16, 1976.)



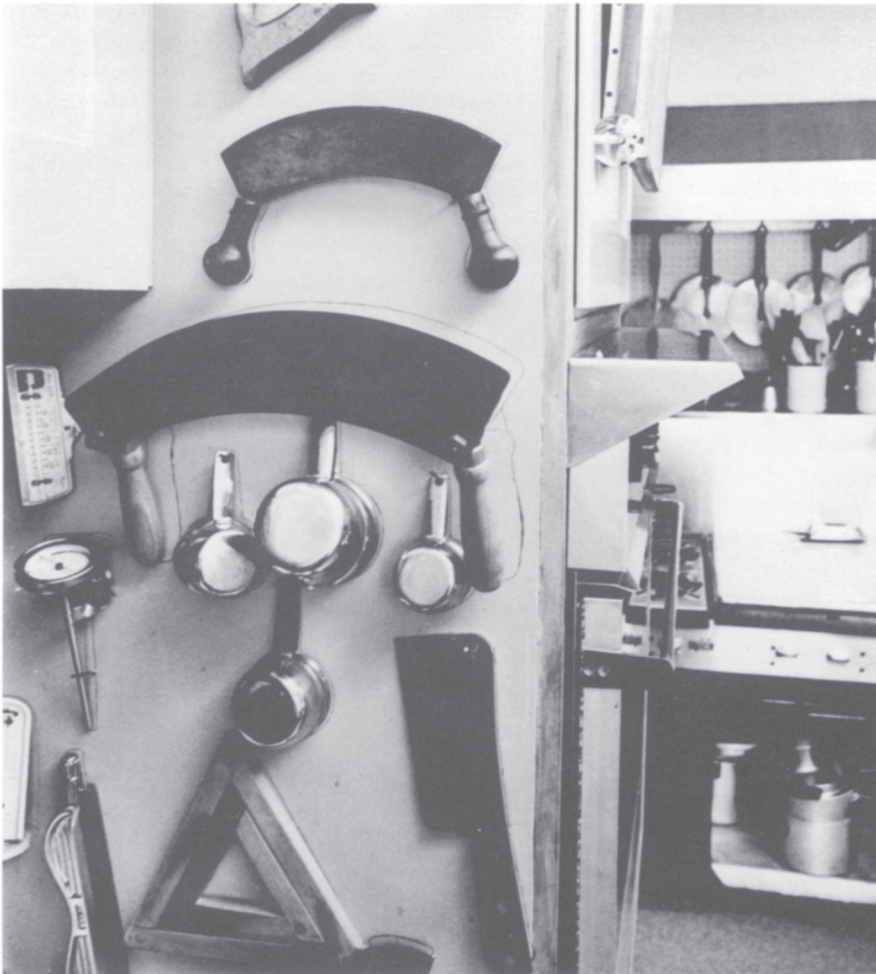
A Rightful Place To Be And Be Seen

The principle “out of sight, out of mind” is fundamental to the success of Julia’s kitchen. *The harder the utensils are to see, the less you will use them.* Many objects remain on display that are not used often, as she feels they are beautiful and it’s fun to have them around; but the majority are in serious readiness. Each object has a *rightful place to be and be seen*, so much so that Paul has outlined the silhouettes of key tools to insure their safe return after use.

Knives are placed on heavy duty magnetic strips above the cutting area in descending order of size, pots are displayed on pegboard, with corresponding lids above the stove, labels are applied on opaque drawer fronts and doors to identify unseen items. Even the spice containers are arranged on steps inside the cupboards like a chorus on risers. Each spice is labeled with the first letter of its name, to give her a hint of where it belongs—the A’s to the left, the S’s to the right. Spatulas, spoons and forks are held in widemouthed jars adjacent to their areas of use.



Typically more than one person works in a kitchen. In a tool rich environment such as Julia’s kitchen visual reminders of where things belong is both practical and downright necessary.



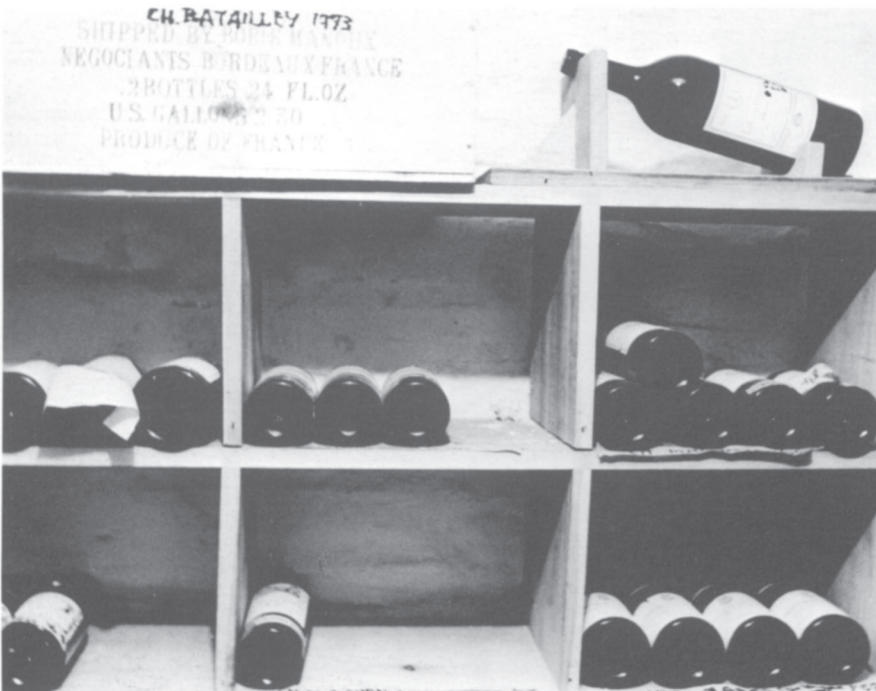
The Juxtaposition of the Elegant and the Common: An Affordable Kitchen

Julia's kitchen is remarkably affordable. This has been achieved by applying four principles. The first deals with a feeling for what is elegant and common and the fact that these qualities are *not* mutually exclusive in an environment or object. Julia hangs her array of fine French skillets and pots on common pegboard. The cupboards are of pine, yet the drawer slides are of commercial quality, the wine collection is racked on common pine wood shelves and labeled with masking tape. Good quality china-ware is set upon an oilcloth table covering, and so on.

The second principle deals with the long term value of tools. She will buy the least expensive if it works well and endures under heavy and prolonged use.

The third principle focuses upon sources of supply that deliver good value. Julia's stove was purchased used, and she shops for utensils in professional shops and hardware stores, not design conscious boutiques. In short, Julia loves her tools but is not dominated by them. First, she loves good food and is a good cook. That perspective is never lost on the best of everything kind of environment.

The last principle deals with the gradual acquisition of good quality objects. One doesn't buy a collection of cooking tools and then hope to cook with them. One learns slowly, adding tools to suit new recipes and processes. Only by knowing how to cook can a cook truly evaluate the worth of a tool. . . particularly a new tool.



THE WORK AREAS

1

Kitchen Dining

The kitchen table is the focus of the idea of kitchen dining. Certainly not invented by Julia, but an American tradition, it is basic to her concept of people, food and cooking. The table has the dual function of extra work surface for cooking, discussions and teaching. *The advantage of entertaining in the kitchen is, of course, that everything does not have to be ready,* says Julia. This idea hits at the core of much of the trauma in formal dining. Her notion is that cooking is entertaining . . . a performing art, and not a dreary, cloistered exercise saved for a lonely “house person.” *The capital point about kitchen dining, I think, is not to make a ‘thing’ about anything. Keep the place neat and professional looking, be informal and unhurried and above all, be firm in requesting your guests to remain seated throughout the meal. You do not want people leaping up to help you, since it disturbs the conversation flow which you, the cook, are participating in while performing your chefly functions.* (*New York Times Magazine*, May 16, 1976.) Cooking as well as eating is of course a “social idea” to Julia and Paul.

Julia does recommend the pre-preparation of appropriate food materials before guests arrive. *The zucchini can be steamed in the morning, or*

even the night before, and if you are serving hardboiled eggs as a garnish or mayonnaise, they too can be fixed ahead. When the green vegetables are done the French way, they are lightly precooked and need but a tossing in butter for serving, and the dessert elements are at least readied if not finally assembled.

What gives Julia the poise to “perform” in front of her guests? A simple concept. . . good planning of the phases of a meal and a well-organized kitchen. From the glass of sherry to dessert she is in control of events. Even the *clean up* is somehow managed along the way instead of *at the end*. Our nice lunch of salad, dark bread, fruit, cheese and wine was prepared, eaten and the messy dishes were out of sight without a single disruption in our interview. She cleans off the knives by hand, immediately after using them and puts them back in their *rightful place*, and so on. The wood table will seat six people comfortably, and is of sturdy construction with a thick solid top.

Julia prefers six or less guests for dinner and doesn’t like cooking for more than eight. *Above that number the quantity of food becomes a larger concern than the quality.*





Marshalling yards of sorts, these primary work areas are where all the ingredients in Julia's cooking begin their journey to the table.

The most used of her cutting/mixing areas encompasses the north half of the kitchen, extending along the wall, astride the double stainless sink and drain boards. A lovely view of the garden enhances the many hours she spends here, washing, trimming, peeling, skinning, slicing, chopping, cutting, grinding, grating, mashing, blending and otherwise processing everything from mushrooms to salmon. Large windows above the countertop provide north light and frames for hanging knives, peelers, mixer parts and the various cutter parts used in her French manufactured food processor. Of this tool, Julia says, *The food processing machine is the single most important invention since the electric mixer, it literally liberates the cook from hours of chopping and grating.* The mixer, blender and food processor reside on the counter but otherwise it is free of objects. Julia's work tops are free of *all* but frequently used tools, no canister sets, radios or purely decorative objects allowed. To the right of the work top is a heavy duty butcher's chopping block and its associated meat knives, poultry shears, cleavers, saws, fish scalers and a twine dispenser (for binding poultry and roasts). Under the chopping block sits a heavy duty mortar and pestle.

Dual Function

At the end of the meal this area also serves as a work space for stacking and unloading dishes, large pots and pans. The dishwasher is under the work top along with open tray storage and cleaning supplies. Julia says, *The stainless double sink is a necessity, so that you can wash tools in one side and vegetables in the other.* She also temporarily *hides* dirty utensils in the sink, covering them up with a metal tray, during dinner. The area to the left of the sink is for similar use and made of the same materials, solid maple work top extending from the sink to the wall. Under the counter top, open storage bins hold extra large mixing bowls, a dish dryer and vegetable dryer. Why a vegetable dryer? Julia says, *The drying of the vegetables is as critical as the washing. Wet greens remain limp in the salad and dilute the dressing. Oil and water have never been compatible.* In Chinese cooking, wet vegetables will also cause excessive grease splattering when placed in a wok for stir frying.

Also under the counter is one of three refrigeration units. They are decentralized throughout the kitchen, with a small five cubic foot refrigerator in the kitchen and the same size freezer in the pastry area. These small yet inexpensive units allow for *greater subdivision of food in relation to the areas of use*, says Julia. One holds breads, ice, nuts, cheese, butter and

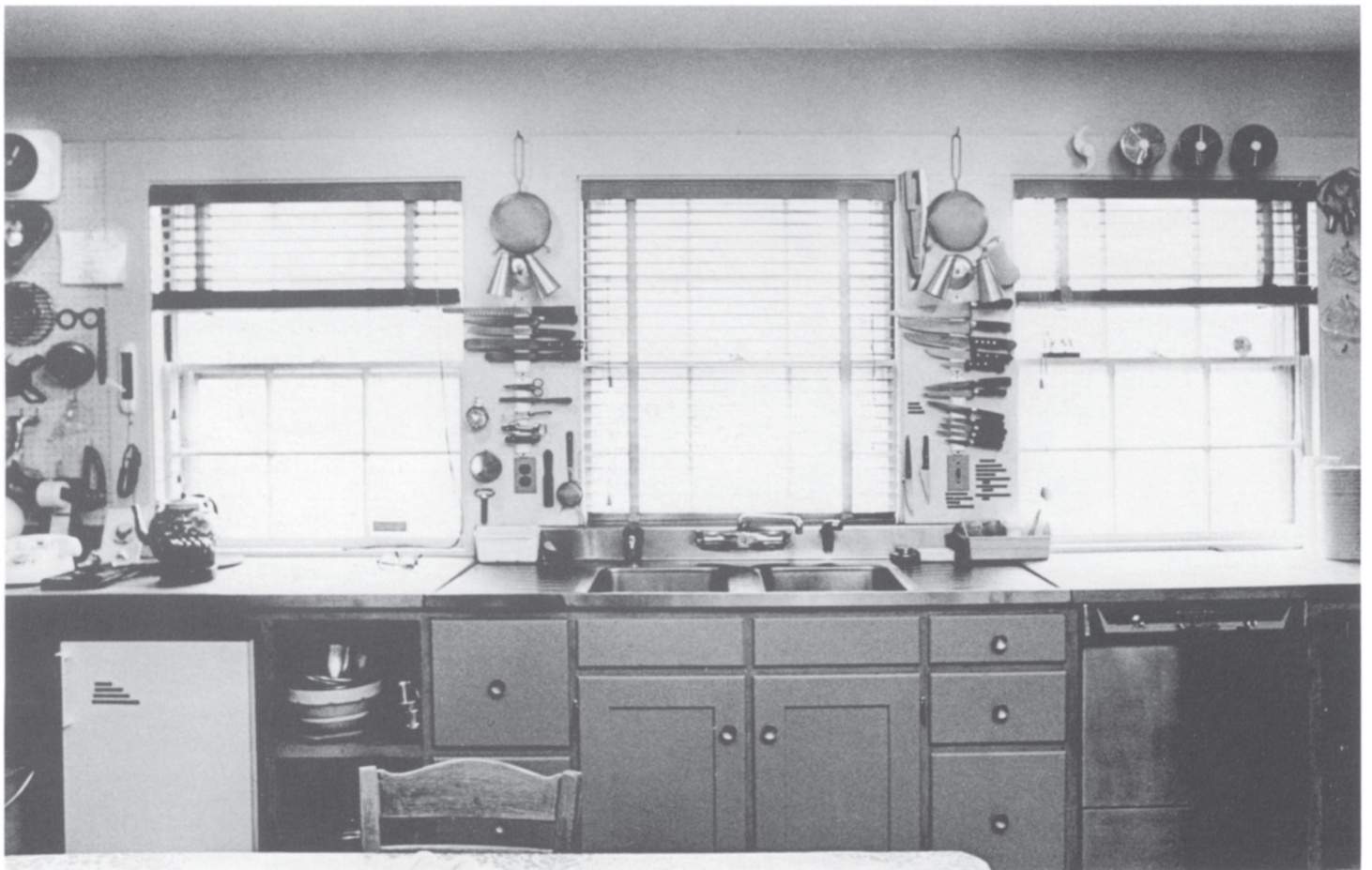


BREADS

NUTS . MISC

BUTTER . CHEESE

COFFEE . ICE . MISC





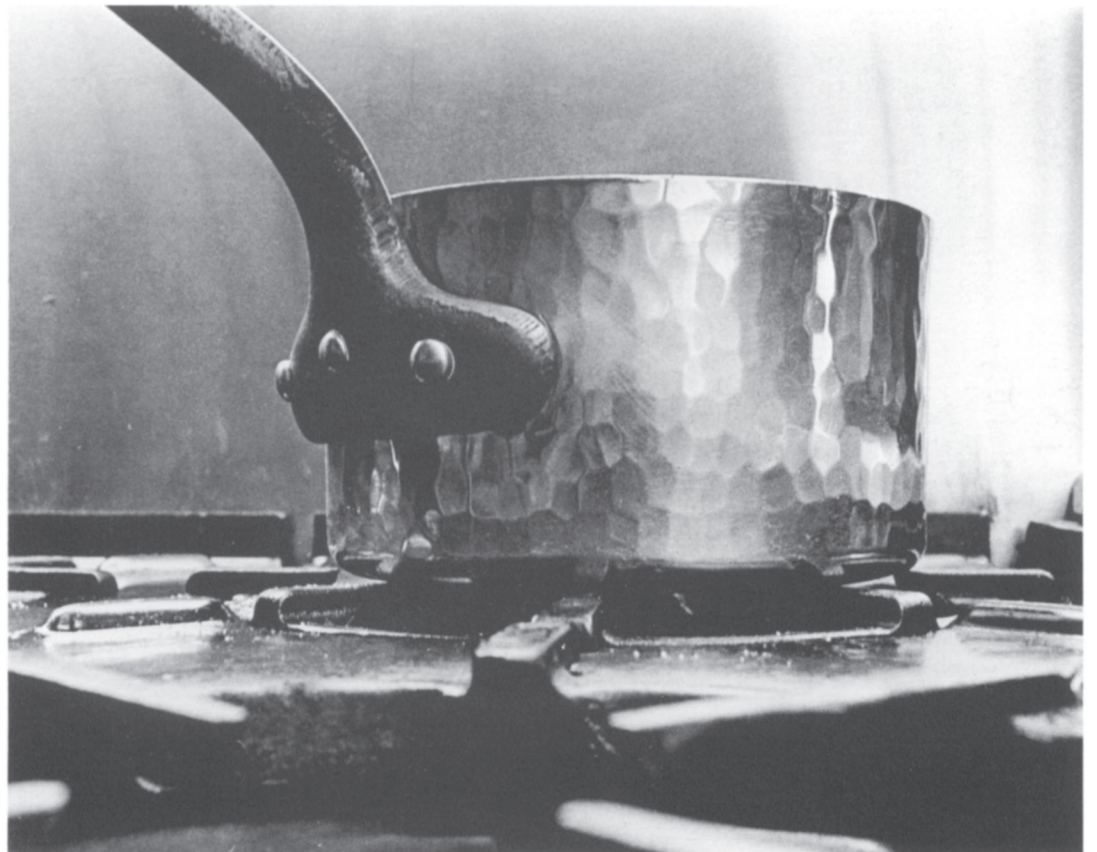
coffee; and is so labeled. Centrally located on the west wall near the book case (containing often used reference books and cookbooks) is a standard refrigerator for more generally used food materials. Painted black by Paul, the refrigerator provides a backdrop for art work and photos of Julia's creations. Of refrigerators and freezers Julia says, *They should be simple storage cabinets free of complex gadgets.* As with stoves, she is skeptical about automatic temperature controls, favoring instead simple thermometers. Temperature variance is critical in cooking and refrigeration. In freezers the food quality is closely linked to the proper temperature.

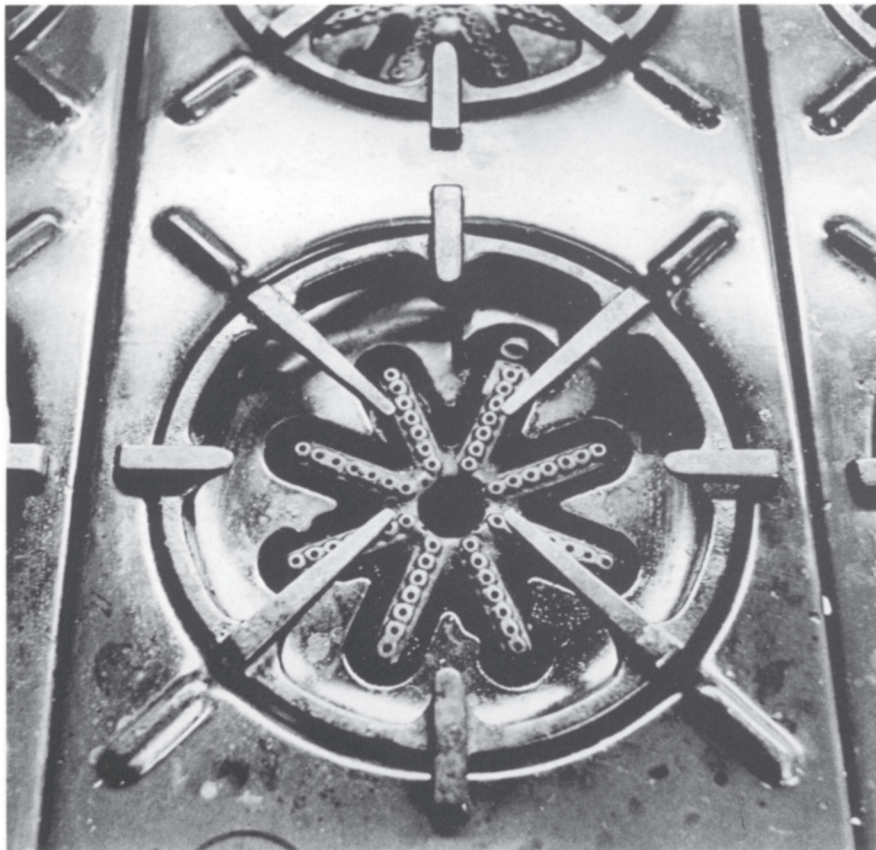
"Above 4 degrees Farenheit, or so, enzyme action within the frozen food will alter its flavor, color, and texture. A piece of meat or a container of peaches held for a year at zero will be of the same quality as food stored for 5 months at 5 degrees Farenheit, for one month at 15 F., and for one *week* at 25 F." (*The Cooks' Catalogue*, Beard, Glaser and Wolf, 1975.) Typical consumer refrigerators are simply too undependable about temperature control. *Rely on a visual audit of the actual temperature*, says Julia.

Finally, this area is used as Julia's telephone place. A great deal of the time she needs to talk on the phone and still *keep things going in the kitchen.* A long cord helps her *cook and talk* when necessary.



Cooking





Julia is very clear in her condemnation of stove products manufactured and sold in America. *They are obviously not designed by people who cook, she says. There are terrible, just terrible domestic stoves available. . . I think that they just feel that people don't know what they are buying.*

Manufacturers focus upon gadgets and chrome trim that give the illusion of quality. Although she has a microwave oven, she uses it primarily as a “thawing” machine for frozen food. Clocks, built-in thermometers and timers add useless cost to a stove and wear out much like the clocks in automobiles to say nothing of their grease-catching character. She uses wind-up timers that are easy to read, set and hear. Sometimes more than one is at work during the simultaneous preparation of meats and pastry. Distrustful of built-in controls she recommends separate meat thermometers which are easily replaced. . . and directly inserted into the meat. The only thermostatically controlled units used in her kitchen are a wall oven and warming drawer. Both are domestic and built-in.

The Cook Top

The typical 30 inch stove available to most consumers is *not designed for cooks who cook*, says Julia. Small cook tops with low exhaust hoods, or overhead ovens physically cramp the use of deep pots and the stirring of their ingredients. Large pots should be used on the rear burners so as to leave the front burners free for skillets and saucepans both of which require close visual observation.

Cook tops made of smooth glass-ceramic materials and their mandatory ceramic pots represent a marketing concept laughed at by serious cooks. Their spotless appearance defies the inevitable mess of good cooking. By contrast her *big black monster*, as she calls it, is a dark charcoal grey—a color that looks better with age, that doesn't say don't touch or spot me.

The cook top is one of the major kitchen work zones. Julia says, *It should be extremely sturdy and capable of supporting continuous physical activity. In French and Chinese cooking, the cook is constantly stirring, shaking skillets and flopping ingredients in large pots or woks.* Slippery, high gloss enamel or sheet metal stove tops will not sustain this activity without chipping and corroding.

Much like a woodcraftsman's workbench, the stove requires a generous horizontal work area

and a sturdy top that will welcome heavy use. Julia's cook top is made of modular castings that are removable for cleaning. Moreover, they have sustained over 30 years of "culinary battles" in her kitchen. The cook top features six burners, two deep and three across. The stove measures 27 inches deep, 58½ inches wide and has 34 inches devoted to the burners. The height of the cooking surface is 33 inches, not the 36 standard for consumer stoves. The lower height is better for working with skillets and enables the cook to see into high-walled pots. To the right side of the burners is a necessarily generous *putting down* space for hot pots and utensils used while cooking. Immediately above the cooking surface is a stainless shelf and back splash that guards against grease and steam splatter. Strip lights mounted under the shelf illuminate the surface. The top of the shelf holds a variety of pepper mills, salt shakers, and widemouth jars containing spatulas, whisks and spoons. An array of lids for the skillets and pots is within easy reach on the same shelf.

Heat Quality

Although Julia prefers gas to electric heat she uses an electric cook top on her television show "The French Chef." The key criteria for heat is its quick availability and quality of adjustment from fiercely hot to low temperatures. If you must use an electric cook top (which is increasingly the case because of dwindling gas supplies) then select one that features a 30-second heat up burner or burners. Julia is hopeful that propane gas used only for cooking would not drain the nation's energy reserves.

Ovens

Julia uses two ovens, one wall-mounted and the other in the stove, the latter is *wonderfully insulated* and large enough to hold two 25 pound turkeys. It and the burners are fed by a two-inch diameter gas pipe. Although the wall oven is self-cleaning (*a useful idea*), she speaks more fondly of the larger oven. This stove which she openly *adores* was purchased over 30 years ago in Washington D. C. for less than 400 dollars. It has never required repairs and it will probably last another 30 years. With that kind of obsolescence it was worth three times the price. As used commercial stoves frequently become available because of the rapid failures in the restaurant business, these well-made stoves are a bargain for the serious cook. Appliances of this quality could well be passed on from one generation to another.

Warmers

Julia is very much in favor of warmers, an appliance rarely found in residential kitchens. *They are marvelous for warming plates, raising yeast and holding things like leg of lamb.* Unfortunately, Americans have the habit of serving hot food on cold plates, or letting one course cool off while the other is served. *The warming oven allows the stage to be set for a complex of courses while simultaneously using the ovens for cooking.*



4

Pastry



Whether or not people do more or less pastry cooking these days is a moot point. Assuming pastry is still a vital part of a good cook's food repertoire it deserves a facility expression equal to the task. It is the rare kitchen that has a special place, like Julia's, for pastry preparation.

Efficiently situated in a *pantry like* hall space between the kitchen and the *old butler's pantry*, the pastry area resembles a mini-kitchen in itself. A white marble work top (35 inches wide, 26 inches deep, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick), recommended for serious pastry cooks for its special dough cooling qualities, is surrounded by white pegboard appropriately filled with a host of pastry tools. Under the marble is the small five cubic foot freezer containing fruits, vegetables, stocks, ice cream, sweets and meat. A set of graduated puff pastry cutters, a rolling French croissant cutter, oval and round cutters are nicely arranged amidst small pegboard supported shelves holding molds, measuring cups, sifters and fancy dough cutters. On the opposite wall is another solid maple work top. Situated here is the microwave oven, a food scale, and a variety of small and large rolling pins. Shallow baking dishes, pie plates and an assortment of small cutting boards, drawers of flan molds and baking tins are under the work top. The area above the counter and slightly below the ceiling shelves form a lovely perimeter display of molds, earthenware pots, casseroles, terrines, crocks and large baking dishes. These containers are all related to a variety of dishes, some having pastry crusts. Sometimes the outer design on these wonderful terrines imitates what is to be put inside i.e., a duck's head for a duck pate. Again, Paul Child has artfully arranged this complex inventory into a wonderfully usable composition.

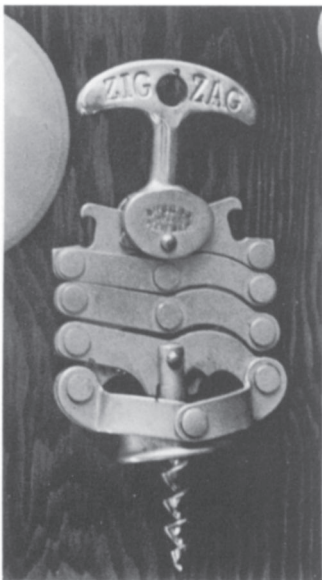


5

Pantry



WINE	CAIS		1967	1	2	3	4	5
FRANCE	MAIS "Clos des Gammets" (Almer)	1964	1	2				
FRANCE	CH. L'ÉTOILE	71	1	2	3	4	5	
CALIF.	CLAS DU VAL (NAPA)	72	1	2	3	4	5	
FRANCE	CH. Bouchardelle	77	1	2	3	4	5	
FRANCE	CH. NEUF DU PAYS	61-71	1	2	3	4	5	
BURG.	CHAMBERTIN	62	1	2	3	4	5	
FRANCE	Beaujolais-Villages	73	1	2	3			
BURG.	GRAND CHAMBERTIN	66	1	2	3	4	5	
BURG.	Gémeaux-Chambertin (Cognac)	62	1	2	3	4	5	
FRANCE	CH. de Pichon-Langeville (Bordeaux)	53	1	2	3	4	5	
FRANCE	Pinard (Bordeaux)	700	1	2	3			
FRANCE	CH. Palmer	65	1	2				
FRANCE	Ch. de Vougeot	64	1	2	3	4	5	
FRANCE	Ch. de Vougeot (Cognac)	62	1					
FRANCE	CH. L'ÉTOILE (Bordeaux)	62-64	1	2	3	4		
FRANCE	Grande Schézeaux	1964	1	2	3	4	5	



All of Julia's china and stemware is stored behind glass-paned doors in what was, in the original house, a butler's pantry. This segregation from the kitchen proper is due to the commitment of storage space in the kitchen to the work areas, food storage and cooking tools. Of china and stemware, Julia maintains a simple philosophy. . . . *It is nice to have your guests eat off Limoges or Wedgwood, but not necessary for a successful party. More important is the overall aesthetic effect of how the meal smells, looks, and tastes; the visual integration of the whole table setting, not individual pieces.* Julia insists on stemware for wine. *Drinking wine is a matter of some romance and elegance. Stemless glasses may associate the smell of onions or garlic on your hands and spoil the flavor of the wine. A stem keeps your fingers away from the wine. I'm all for stems.*

Speaking of wine, Paul maintains his well organized wine inventory chart in this area, and religiously marks off what is consumed and on hand in the two small wine cellar rooms in the basement. Formerly used as coal bins, these rooms are kept at the customary 55 degrees. One room is dedicated to red wines and the other to white. Paul's association with local wine merchants is casual but sophisticated. He says, *It's very good to personally know someone in the wine business who loves good wine.*

The butler's pantry is also used to mix aperitifs and other drinks. A small stainless sink, beverage recipes and related implements are openly displayed here. *The preparation of drinks is an obvious interference with meal preparation and therefore, it makes sense to set this function aside if space permits,* advises Paul Child.



Paul Child has lovingly illustrated all of Julia's cookbooks

Although Julia maintains a compact, quick reference library in the kitchen it represents only the tip of a *cookbook iceberg*. The office on the second floor above the kitchen is replete with three walls of floor-to-ceiling cookbooks. Continuously studying the art, Julia says, *That's what is fun about this as a profession, you are never through, there's always something new to learn. The French cooking vocabulary is so immense you can never know it all.* Constantly adding to the collection to keep up with innovations and trends she finds it necessary to weed out the less valuable books once in awhile. Recognizing the avalanche of new cookbooks available in America she feels they represent a tremendous *back to the kitchen movement*. For an older generation that temporarily lost sight of cooking, the younger generation is re-establishing cooking and good food. *Cookbooks and cooking classes are necessary, as part of a conscious, studied approach to a lost art.*

She cautions that many of the new books are *poorly done*, particularly *those big fancy ones, those done by a consortium of food editors aren't as helpful as those written by one person.* Her four published cookbooks—*Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, Volumes 1 and 2; *The French Chef Cookbook*, and *From Julia*

Child's Kitchen—all possess a strong teaching intention. *My recipes are long. They teach. I start from scratch, and assume the reader knows very little—my books are primers.*

Conclusion

Julia's kitchen, the wine cellar, the office, the library, Paul's photography and painting studio, the music room, all combine to form a unique household. A dedication to the creative pursuit of their interests defies the inevitable boredom of consumption and possession. *We could be perfectly happy in a home that consisted of just a kitchen and a studio for Paul.*

Julia's view is that cooking and the kitchen should be of equal importance to the other daily functions, like leisure, working or sleeping and that the kitchen requires an expansive expression.

Can a conventional small house or apartment be converted into a studio house? Julia believes it can, if the desire is there to live creatively. *Living in an apartment with a small cramped kitchen is no excuse for not cooking good food. It's possible to cook a good meal on a hot plate.*

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



It is beyond the scope of this presentation to analyze all the qualities of all the tools to be found in Julia's kitchen. Instead we have tried to identify the inherent qualities of a small number of important tools, and their role in the household.

Good Tools And The Household Economy

In an era of unprecedented world wide resource depletion and inflation it is timely as economist Scott Burns puts it, ". . . to reconsider the economics of the household." In colonial America the household was truly a "do-it-yourself" arena; a tool rich environment capable of *producing* appropriate amounts of food, clothing and home furnishings. The colonial marketplace, miniscule by present-day standards, was utilized to buy hard goods (tools, weapons, glassware, kiln-fired brick) and luxury goods, (fine fabric, silver plate, chinaware).

Industrialization and the necessity to sell large amounts of goods to large numbers of people brought with it the paranoia of conspicuous consumption, as well as the necessary tools for a new nation. The notion that consumption stimulates demand for more goods, more jobs and a bigger and better America, filled the hearts of the new consumer. Material obsolescence and all the rest (pollution, waste) was seen as a degrading but necessary by-product of the ever expanding G.N.P. This process destroyed the traditional household economy of colonial America. The economic power shifted from the household to the marketplace itself, to industry selected notions of need and quality. The inertia of our market dominated economy will no doubt remain with us indefinitely but, as Julia points out, *There is in America, in significant numbers, I think, a sophisticated consumer who largely rejects this domination in favor of such things as good food and the acquisition of the good tools necessary for its preparation.*

This consumer she speaks of, by raising or buying decent food and tools, supports individual well-being—or—household economy. A good stove, a few durable pots, pans, knives and a few cooking lessons enhance, in a "capital goods" sense, one's *own* economy.

Instead of reheating industrial food (banal TV dinners, frozen prepared entrees) in the microwave oven of a "kitchenless" house highly dependent on industry selected food varieties, or patronizing inventory food restaurants (Julia and Paul rarely eat out), the consumer, properly

equipped with the good tools of the trade, a farmers' market, or a garden, can "end run" Madison Avenue. Julia goes on, *There is no excuse for eating poorly in America. . . difficulty comes only when traveling.* Using the household economy as the basis for the acquisition of good tools, we shall discuss the fine points of her tool related philosophy.

Tool Selection: Megalomania

It is somewhat typical of us all to *over estimate* the need for and productivity of a new tool. Falling prey to advertising claims, a designer's or fashionable store's name and our own visions of greatness, *we have a tendency to amass the things before we learn the process. It's like buying a \$1000 Nikon camera and getting your film developed at the drugstore.*

Admitting to a degree of megalomania herself, she suggests to the novice cook: *Exercise puritan restraint in selecting kitchen tools; consult such things as The Cooks' Catalogue by Beard, Glaser and Wolf; seek out, and talk to the good cooks you know; discuss the good and bad points of every object; read the consumer magazines.*

The Sources For Good Tools: Unique Availabilities

Julia says, *As consumer tools are rarely designed for cooks who cook, shop for tools in professionally oriented shops—not in gourmet boutiques.* Professional tools are designed as *capital goods*, they have to survive the rigor of the heavy use one finds in a restaurant. In short, seek the next or highest level of use for which a tool is designed and produced, avoid the department-store-like mentality and the marketing mentality that "blatantly reduces" the cooking competence of the average consumer to moronic levels. Nearly every city in America has restaurant supply stores and some like Cross Imports of Boston have a brisk mail order business, and an informative tool catalogue. *Seek them out, says Julia, get something good and solid, which will last forever. Rather than three cheap pans, invest in one good one. Also, good knives that will permit sharpening and a hand sharpener. Not too easy to find in department stores, so try a cutlery store, ask your butcher, or look through the Yellow Pages for hotel and restaurant supply equipment.*

Good Tools Are Obsolescence Free

For Americans nurtured from childhood on toys that become premature junk, short-lived automobiles and countless other disposables, it remains a problem to acquire tools that last. One wonders if the present generation will have any objects of value to pass down to succeeding generations. Many of the tools in Julia's kitchen escape the problem of periodic self-destruction and other forms of obsolescence.

Good Tools Are More Evolutionary Than Innovative

Many of the classic tools in French and Chinese cooking—the copper, tin-lined saucepan for example—have changed very little in form and function over the last 75 years. Countless attempts by industry to make the saucepan obsolescent via “crock pots,” skillets and so on, fail the test of acceptance in Julia's kitchen. Electric pots take up counter space, waste too much electricity, and are more difficult to clean than a simple saucepan.

“It's a safe rule of thumb, that given the choice, you are almost always better off using a really good pot and your stove rather than electrical appliances designed for a special and often limited use.” (*The Cooks' Catalogue*, Beard, Glaser and Wolf.)

Moreover, attempts to re-style basic pots are generally a failure. Julia says, *I have two excellent aluminum saucepans of American origin that were dropped by the manufacturer and replaced by a cutely styled new design that does not work.*

Vitally interested in new utensils Julia tries out everything. She is only opposed to convenience or time saving tools if they detract from the cooking process and quality food results. When asked if manufacturers or designers approach her when designing a cooking tool or appliance she replied. . . *rarely, if ever, and if so to use my name only.*

Good Tools Are Boredom Free

Most of Julia's tools engage one's total consciousness in their use. They are hand tools, not designed, as Raymond Sokolov says, “. . . to support the 'doctrine of convenience,' a concept prevalent in America that eliminates the cook from all forms of work and aesthetic involvement in food preparation.” (From a speech at the Aspen International Design Conference 1976.)

Like musical instruments awaiting the musicians, Julia's tools are well worth just looking at. The warm glow of copper contrasted against the dark enamel of the stove top, the flame of the gas stove reflected upon the gleaming stainless back splash are visual qualities absent from most “modern kitchens.” There is an obsolescence built into most residential kitchens and kitchen tools that has to do with the limited way they perform and their insistence on banal food preparation.

Good Tools Are Durable

There is a deep empathy at work between Julia and her tools. The kitchen is heavily used, the maple chopping blocks have thousands of cuts in them, the stainless has scratches and the enamel has spots. The kitchen and the tools are durable enough to withstand constant use. Many of the tools never require repair, and those that do are eminently renewable. The knives can be sharpened and the copper pots can be relined with new tin. *When buying copper bottomed pans make sure the copper is 1/8 inch thick—copper spreads heat evenly. If a pan does not feel thick or heavy at the base don't buy it.* The cupboards can be repainted and the maple tops refinished. *Scrub maple counter tops once a year with a heavy brush and a barely diluted standard brand of liquid ammoniated soap. I let the surfaces dry, rub with olive oil, which I leave overnight and give a final rubdown in the morning with clean paper towels.* Rarely do things deteriorate to the point of complete breakdown in Julia's kitchen. The “life consciousness” of these tools keeps them fit for years and years of use. They are solid, satisfying and durable. It is an irony of sorts that American industry insists upon manufacturing heavy automobiles and lightweight, cheap household goods.

Good Tools Are Functionally Fit

Using kitchen knives to illustrate the functional fitness of most of her tools, Julia says the following criteria for cutting tools is important: *Dull knives are a safety hazard—a dull knife can slip when you are de-boning a chicken much more easily than a sharp one.*

Never put a sharp knife in a flat drawer—it is dangerous, to say nothing of its being nicked or dulled by contact with other utensils.

Always keep knives on magnetic strips or in racks.



Clean knives after each use by hand, sharpen them using a sharpening steel for daily use and a whetstone for periodic honing.

Do not use electrical or mechanical devices for sharpening.

Buy knives made of high carbon steel, they take a sharper edge than stainless knives. Many stainless knives are impossible to sharpen.

Never put a good knife in the dishwasher or leave it to languish in water.

Wipe vegetable oil into the knives' wood handles periodically to keep them from splitting.

In addition to these criteria, Julia says, . . . every kitchen should have one good chef's knife, one paring knife, a basic slicing knife, a semi-rigid de-boning knife and one serrated blade for slicing tomatoes and bread.

Conclusion

Sets of brand names mean little in terms of selecting good kitchen tools—more important is first-hand knowledge of the criteria for the design of a good knife, saucepan or baking dish. In the case of knives it is important to know the metal composition of the blade, the durability of its handle, and its susceptibility to cleaning and sharpening. Rarely does a brand name in and of itself guarantee quality of these properties. Matched sets of pots and pans or knives are irrelevant in the terms of professional use, more important is how well a specific knife suits a specific use. Julia's kitchen is an ensemble of tools, very few of which form matched sets.



A popular theme of "Whole Earth" consciousness is "less is more" in terms of material objects. Taken to its extreme, this philosophy is questionable in the kitchen. Spawned by resource depletion fears, this dictum oversimplifies the question of tools in the kitchen. In terms of resources used to make one complete set of good quality tools, even of the scale used in Julia's kitchen, the actual material used would be less than that used in the manufacture of one mid-sized American automobile. These tools of the quality used in Julia's kitchen would last, on the average, 30 years. Some could be passed on to younger generations. Compare this to the waste of other objects, namely automobiles and cheap appliances which turn into junk every three to five years. Inherent in any craft is a degree of specialization which joyfully increases the number, quality and variety of tools.



These Rochester, New York elementary school youngsters produce, on a daily basis, enough fresh bread to supply the needs of their school's lunchroom.

By blatantly reducing our food needs to their most simplistic terms, industrialization has made possible the selling of standardization demanded by modern technology and marketing. Delivery of the real and the unadulterated, in this context, means trouble.

A catch of fresh fish may taste too fishy, hence we have fish “sticks” comprised of leveners, fillers and tasteless, unnamed varieties of fish; a truck load of apples of an odd species may be too tart, hence we see only one or two Delicious varieties in the supermarket; good cheese is sometimes malodorous, so we have processed, artificially colored substitutes. In order to manipulate product resources, the resources must conform to industry or government standards of taste and performance. In terms of food this form of control frequently spells banality.

● The state of Wisconsin recently (1976) legislated against the use of those grades of milk that produce the tastiest cheeses in favor of a single grade that can be closely controlled and delivered under strict sanitation rules. This grade of milk produces bland, chalk-like cheese.

● The MH-1 or hard ripe tomato and banana (see part 1).

● One of our children’s young friends reacted to a freshly squeezed glass of orange juice with a frown and refused to drink it. When asked why he didn’t like the taste of it, he replied, “. . . it tastes good, but I don’t like all the stuff [pulp] floating around in it. Do you have any instant orange juice?”

The orange juice substitute he referred to includes the following ingredients:

sugar, syrup, water, corn syrup, orange pulp and rind (in tiny flakes), citric acid, gum arabic, vegetable oil, potassium citrate, calcium phosphate, vitamin C, cellulose gum, natural and artificial flavors, artificial color, vitamins A and B. (*Eating in America: A History*, p 479)

Examples of this form of “reductionism” are legion and are chronicled in an avalanche of books, TV essays and newspapers.

Multi-national corporations that sell bread and bullets pay little attention to the nuances of taste; they are not interested in gastronomy or quality. Quality is okay as long as it does not interfere with profits and growth. Today, only the most provincial, hard-headed businessperson will profess the old economic myth that the consumer, through dollar votes, passes judgment on goods delivered by industry. Quite the contrary, the consumer has little or no sovereignty in the marketplace with regard to design, taste or quality decisions.

John Kenneth Galbraith observed in his recent book, *The Age of Uncertainty*, “This myth disguises but does not reassure. It leaves those who head large corporations unhappy in the knowledge that they are not loved, wondering why newspapermen, politicians and intellectuals do not share their sense of their own virtue. In this age of uncertainty the corporation is a major source of uncertainty. It leaves men wondering how and by whom and to what end they are being ruled.”

Duane Hanson’s classic sculpture *Supermarket Shopper* is easy to laugh at, but the laugh is on us all. Blatant reductionism effects the poor, the educated, the elite, the rich—in short, it discriminates against no one—it demeans all our lives. It is the Disney dream come true, a general substitute for experience that sells.



Duane Hanson
Supermarket Shopper 1970

TOWARDS A WHOLESOME GASTRONOMY

What does Julia think about synthetic food, agri-business, consumer reductionism and all the other forces acting against a wholesome gastronomy? She admits the omnipresence of these forces, but she sees many hopeful signs and takes a somewhat optimistic view of the future. *It may be unpopular these days to say anything good about America and its food problems, but I think you just can't generalize so much about how people eat. There are too many young people buying cookbooks, attending cooking classes, growing their own food, and starting new restaurants to say it is all bleak and terrible. We must get on with what we know is good.*

We propose three concepts that could, in the aggregate, form a national culinary alternative to the horrors of the technological food industry.

Concept No. 1 Kicking The Habit: The Decline of the Doctrine of Convenience

Many of us have either kicked the fast (trash) food habit or are trying very hard to do so. Faced with meager alternatives while traveling, in the office cafeteria, the school lunchroom and other inventory food sources, we find it necessary to forego their offerings in favor of the contents of a brown bag. Unfortunately, industrial food is ever present and it takes fortitude to refuse it. A Gilroy, California school superintendent has thrown out all soda pop (it contains six teaspoons of sugar per 12 ounce can), potato chips, ice cream, candy and other forms of junk food from the school's cafeteria. In its place, fresh fruits, juices, milk and home-made pastry are being offered. This move has met some serious student opposition; it's not easy to kick the habit.

Whether we are "hooked" on the millions of tons of sugar-impregnated, greasy foods we eat (Americans consume 100 lbs. of sugar annually versus 73 lbs. for the French), or are simply imbued with Ray Sokolov's "Doctrine of Convenience" is hard to say. Convenience food is not an American invention. It began in earnest with the industrial revolution in England where, over 100 years ago, "fish 'n chips" was invented, packaged in rolled up newspapers and eaten on the run by factory and office workers. Unlike many American convenience foods, "fish 'n chips" provides a decent nutritional meal at a reasonable price.

Eat and run is of course part of the habit that must be kicked. Eating should provide a relaxed, pleasant interlude devoid of the impositions of our manic life style.

"Day in and day out, Mr. Henry Ford eats exactly the same lunch—a ball of cottage cheese, over which he pours a small pitcher full of A-1 Sauce, a sliced onion or a quartered tomato, and a small helping of butter pecan ice cream. 'Eating and sleeping,' he says, 'are a waste of time'." (*The Taste of America*, p 9)

Is it true that many Americans prefer non-convenience food to the offerings of the inventory food chains, microwavism and disposable junk food? Some say no, yet many young Americans are beginning to adopt the notion that eating should be a rewarding, nutritional experience.

As Paul Child says, . . . *making good food is hard but highly satisfying work.* The shopping, growing, preparing and cooking of good food entails work, not convenience. Finally, it is a pity to slosh down, in eight to ten minutes, what has taken two hours to prepare. Good food requires an experiential ethic that transcends mere feeding.

Examples of Americans' renewed food interest abound.

- Mothers are rejecting the excessive sugars, salts and preservatives found in canned baby food in favor of pureeing or chopping the same food eaten by older family members.

- Sales of vegetable seeds, rentals of city garden plots, gardening tools and demand for food preserving utensils is reaching boom levels.

- Of cookbooks, and cooking classes, Julia says, . . . *there are so many cooking classes in Los Angeles, the food editor of the L. A. Times cannot keep track of them. There are over 125 weekly cooking classes featuring Chinese, French, Mexican, Greek, Italian and other cuisines.*

- The concept of kitchen is changing from a decorated, housewife-imprisoned, convenience parlor to a tool-conscious facility of social, culinary and nutritional significance. The interest in tools is profound. As George Nelson has stated, "A reasonable conjecture as to what is going on is that there is an emerging distinction in the consumer's mind between possessions and tools . . . the difference is that a possession tends to enhance status, while a tool enhances existence."

A kitchen capable of providing a variety of international cuisines, preserving food, and re-establishing a focus for communal living is, by virtue of scale and function, a major economic commitment.



● Many communities like Davis, California, are planning urban landscape schemes that include food-bearing plants and trees. Fruit trees are being planted along with purely decorative varieties.

● When seasonal produce is available consumers support the local farmers' markets. Less grand than were the great Covent Garden in London and Les Halles in Paris, but significant in American terms, are St. Louis's Souard Market, Detroit's Outdoor Market, and many small town farmers' markets.

● Middle class people are turned on to good food albeit it may be gourmandism which can be merely faddish. *Never mind that*, says Julia, *at least it's a start in the right direction*. So-called gourmet groups are everywhere; some are snobbish, others are earnestly pursuing the craft of cooking.

A dentist friend invited us to a Chinese dinner including Peking duck. Upon arrival we were greeted by a naked duck, "twisting and turning" in the wake of an electric fan, suspended from an aluminum ladder in the middle of the living room—an impromptu solution for drying the duck's skin and separating it from the carcass. It was delicious.

Extensive menus, too much for individuals, are being attacked by participative cooks. Everybody works and eats well, too.

● Perhaps the most important trend today is that of including children in the cooking process, sharing with them the larger reality, pleasure and responsibility of family life.



Concept No. 2 The Return of the Merchant and the Marketplace

Only a few great merchant cities remain in the world—Amsterdam, London, Venice and Bruges. These cities have traditionally symbolized trade and exuded an atmosphere of noble mercantilism.

“The merchant had to be a man of style and taste because these cities were primarily concerned with trade, and therefore fashion; these cities remain fashionable as well as functional.”

John Kenneth Galbraith.

People by the millions travel to see the great mercantile architecture of European cities. Places like Les Halles in Paris and Covent Garden in London (both recently torn down) were important tourist attractions. The demise of these great marketing centers was due primarily to the desire of developers and governments to transform these old areas into higher revenue producing districts. Questions of their viability were focused around the problems of accessibility to them with modern transport and warehousing techniques. In terms of food, these marketplaces were the heartbeat of these cities, the crossroads of all varieties of gastronomic wonders.

Covent Garden in London was an architectural monument to food. Each commodity had its own building. Even the workers in these markets seemed to embody the qualities of what they were selling. The fishmongers, dealing in the highly perishable, were fast moving, almost nervous in their hurried carting and bargaining sessions. The men of the meat market were, by contrast, more placid, slower moving. The vegetable and flower market men and women were high spirited and friendly amidst all the color and fragrant flowers. Birds inhabited the upper reaches of the iron work. . . it was a delight.

Small restaurants ringed the perimeters of these great markets performing as a culinary interface between customers and the market. Great associations were established there. . . the farmer and the food shopper with the merchant and his colorful selling style, the smell of fresh food and cooking and the excitement of seeing the larder of an active city exposed. Visitors could see exotic game, crates of garlic from Spain, trout from Scotland. Compare that experience to the plastic wrapped, blister pack environment of today’s supermarket. What a loss!

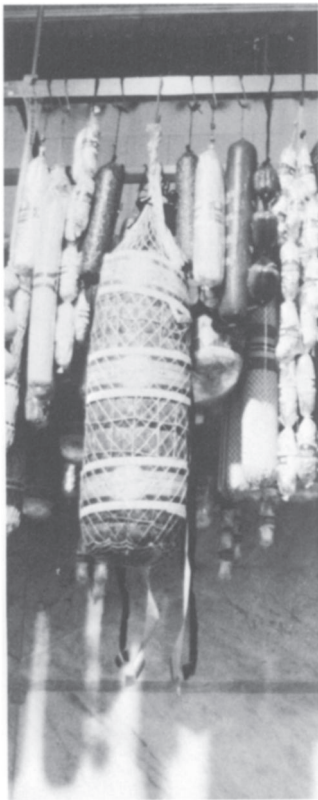
In part as a rejection of the high prices and banal offerings of the supermarket, many food co-ops began to appear in large and small communities across America in the late 1960s. Seen as “radical” by the established business community, many of these same businessmen have been astonished at the style and variety of goods these shops offer. Everything from oriental cookware to homemade pasta is available in traditionally conservative middle American towns. People respond favorably to the passions these new merchants expose. Their connoisseurship matches the needs of people concerned with the goodness of their food and the ambience of their shopping streets.

Concept No. 3 A Renewed Interest In Regional Food Variety and Production

It is obvious that the effort to nationalize and standardize the public palate will fail as a result of skyrocketing costs of distribution, if not from gastronomic boredom. It makes little sense to ship food thousands of miles when the same commodities can be fruitfully produced within a local region. At one time Wisconsin was noted for its fine beers, there were 107 breweries scattered throughout the state before World War I. Today there are less than seven and four of these are giant national producers. We observe such absurdities as a local Wisconsin cheese shop advertising local cheese and a brand of beer shipped in from Colorado. The cost of this beer is two and one half times the cost of the best local brands. A price not based on a better quality product, but on the costs of trucking it 1,500 miles.

Contrary to this national beer distribution practice, a tiny brewery in San Francisco produces what many west coast beer drinkers believe to be the finest brew in America—Anchor Steam Beer. A 36 year old descendant of the Maytag Appliance Company family revitalized the old Anchor Steam Brewery some nine years ago. It was the last of 27 steam beer breweries in San Francisco. Since Mr. Maytag began his tiny operation, employing 8 people in a single shift, he has raised production from 600 barrels per year in 1965 to well over 7,800 barrels in 1976.

He doesn’t advertise. His beer sells for a healthy price (\$3.10 a six pack), and it sells in the face of a national trend towards light, tasteless beer. What is steam beer? “Mr. Maytag says it is the only beer made in America that is brewed with the traditional beer-making ingredients: barley



Sausages displayed in the white-tiled market of Harrods’s food department in London

(opposite)
London’s great Covent Garden, home of Eliza Doolittle and friends seen here selling fruits and flowers



malt, hops, water and yeast. It contains no preservatives or additives or ingredients like corn or rice that other brewers use to lighten the color and taste of their beers. Steam beer uses a full pound of hops per barrel—four times the industry average; and where some brewers make a big thing of their water, Mr. Maytag uses ‘good old San Francisco City Water.’” (*The Wall Street Journal*, June 1975.)

Or there is Steve’s Ice Cream store in Somerset, Massachusetts. Steve is a drop-out high school teacher who makes high quality, homemade (twice daily) ice cream. He researched old recipes, installed a vintage ice cream maker in the window of his shop and proceeded to make only four flavors. In addition to the delicious ice cream he added a fine condiment counter where “do-it-yourselfers” can design their own extravaganzas with fresh fruits, nuts and real whipped cream. This is not Howard Johnsons!

What all of these exemplary people have in common is a commitment to the offering of not just good food, but a decent milieu in which to produce and sell it. They are, in short, true merchants, not just businessmen.

If every region in America could re-establish its natural food varieties and its ethnic heritages, this country could equal the quality of the foods that distinguish the gastronomic capitals of the world. This is not to limit or reject the idea of international cuisine—on the contrary, it could enhance it. Many U. S. regions are capable of producing European or Far Eastern food materials. A French owned company is producing Brie cheese in Le Sueur, Minnesota, and Kikkoman, a Japanese firm, is producing soy sauce in a factory in central Wisconsin. Each region should look into its prevailing climate, soil, water and game, and produce on a regional basis those international food varieties that belong in their areas. Certainly, we won’t completely forego the citrus fruits, produce and shellfish of the coastal areas in mid-western climates, but we could reduce our dependence on these expensive items by enhancing our regional food larders. Regional food variety may make visiting another city in another state worthwhile again. The ubiquitous “steak and lobster,” washed down with rosy rosé, followed by industrial cheese cake served over insipid game board place mats has gone too far. Oh, for some genuine Boston baked beans in Massachusetts, some real Milwaukee Polish sausage in Wisconsin, and fresh oysters on the Georgia coast!



SOURCES

All sources on these lists have been visited and checked for quality and fair prices either by the authors or by DQ staff. Not meant to be definitive, this selection could be developed and expanded to include many additional resources in these and other cities.

Boston Area

Cooking Utensils/Housewares

The Brookstone
27 School Street
Boston
(new and unusual hardware and kitchen tools; mail order catalogue)

Cross Imports Inc.
210 Hanover Street
Boston
(small hand implements; mail order catalogue, includes recipes)

Fresh Produce/Specialty Foods

Bailey's of Boston
26 Temple Street
Boston
(specialty is handmade candy; also ice cream)

Gruffries Fish Market
50 Salem Street
Boston
(Italian District)

Legal Seafood Market
237 Hampshire
Cambridge
(also a restaurant)

Sanborn's Fish Market
28 Merchants Row
Boston
(old and established)

Savener's Supermarket
92 Kirkland
Cambridge
(excellent meat and fresh produce)

Steve's Ice Cream
191 Elm
Somerset

Tony's Pasta Shop
Hanover Street
Boston
(Italian District)

Wine Cellar of Silene
Waltham
(recommended by Joseph Moreno, wine connoisseur, and Julia's friend)

Minneapolis/St. Paul Area

Cooking Utensils/Housewares

Maid of Scandinavia
3244 Raleigh Avenue South
(Highway 7 & 100)
St. Louis Park
and branches
(specializes in baking equipment)

TD 2
2945 Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis

Fresh Produce/Specialty Foods

Carbone Bros.
335 University Avenue East
St. Paul
(Italian and Greek food)

New York Tea Co.
818 Vandalia
St. Paul
(features an extensive tea selection and their own roasted coffee)

Raess Quality Store
1783 St. Clair Avenue
St. Paul
(imported groceries, mostly French)

Delmonico's Italian Foods
1112 N. E. Summer
Minneapolis
(features homemade Italian meats, anise cookies, peccorino, baked bread sticks and doughnuts)

Ingebretsen Meats
(Ingebretsen's Scandinavian Center)
1601 East Lake Street
Minneapolis
(features Swedish sausage, lamb rulle, sylta)

International House of Foods
29 W. Island Road
Minneapolis
(Oriental, Arabic and Indian)
Stanley and Marvel Chong, prop.

Farmers' Market
312 Lakeside Avenue
East of Lyndale Avenue, between
Glenwood Avenue and Highway 55
(seasonal produce)

Swanlund's Berry Fields
Cottage Grove, Minnesota
Contact Martin Swanlund
2212 Hastings Avenue
Newport, Minnesota 55055
(pick fresh strawberries, melons, sweetcorn in season)

Baked Goods

Just Desserts
Florence Leighton (Mrs.
Arthur Leighton)
1722 Oliver Avenue South
Minneapolis

Le Take Out at L'Hotel Sofitel
5601 West 78th Street
Minneapolis

New York

Cooking Utensils/Housewares

Bass and Bass
265 Park Avenue South
(features professional kitchenware, china and glassware; cooking ranges, dishwashers and other heavy-duty equipment are on view and may be compared with consumer appliances)

Bazaar de la Cuisine
1003 Second Avenue
(utensils geared more to the home cook rather than the restaurant or institutional user)

Bridge Kitchenware Corporation
212 East 52nd Street
(hotel supply/retail store specializing in imported and domestic cooking utensils, e.g. copperware, stoneware, kitchen gadgets, glassware, china)

H. Friedman & Sons
18 Cooper Square at 5th Street
and The Bowery (Third Avenue)
(professional quality equipment, e.g. heavy-duty restaurant appliances, glassware, china)

Pottery Barn
10th Avenue near 24th Street
(three warehouse-size floors of kitchen utensils, china and glassware)

The Well-Tempered Kitchen
2080 Broadway near 72nd Street
(cookware, glassware from many countries; china discounted at 20% off regular price, handcrafted pottery and ceramics for the table)

Neighborhood Marketplaces

Chinatown
Main shopping on Mott, Pell and Canal Streets and The Bowery
(stores feature Chinese foods, hardware—a good place to purchase woks, cleavers, teapots)

Greenwich Village
1st Avenue on the Lower East Side
(Polish and Ukranian foods, sausages, bread)

Little Italy
South of Houston Street

Ninth Avenue between 36th and 42nd Streets
(Greek, Italian, Puerto Rican specialty food stores, also greengrocers)

Spice Market
Canal Street
(features close-out items including imported and domestic foods of all kinds)

Yorkville German area around 86th Street and Third Avenue

San Francisco

Cooking Utensils/Housewares

Thomas E. Cara Ltd.
517 Pacific
(specializes in copper pots, espresso machines, pastry decorating equipment)

Fresh Produce/Specialty Foods

Fantasia
California Street
(Middle European baked specialties—particularly Austrian and German delicacies)

Farmers' Market
Highways 280 & 101
(fresh produce sold daily; particularly good selection on Saturdays when small farmers offer their produce for sale)

Hans Speckmann
1550 Church Street
(German delicatessen with many in-house specialties)

Swan Oyster Depot
Polk Street
(fresh fish daily)

Wine & Cheese Center
205 Jackson Street
(excellent selection of both—domestic and imported)

Neighborhood Marketplaces

Chinatown
Grant Street Area
(Chinese groceries and vegetables)

Northbeach District
(Italian groceries)

CREDITS

Our team: seated from left—
Julia Child, Paul Child, Bill
Stumpf; and standing, from left—
Nicholas Polites, Dick Swift and
Jean Beirise



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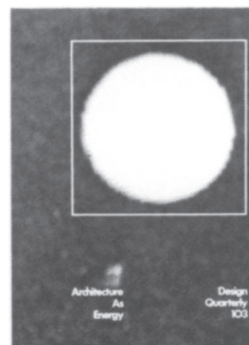
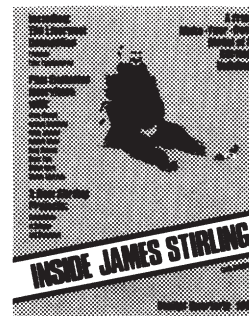
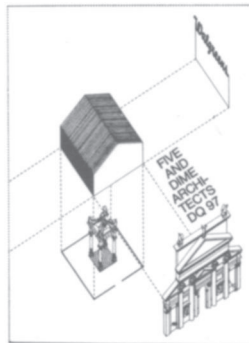
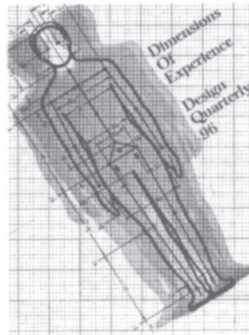
Bill Stumpf: pp 24, 25 (bottom),
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