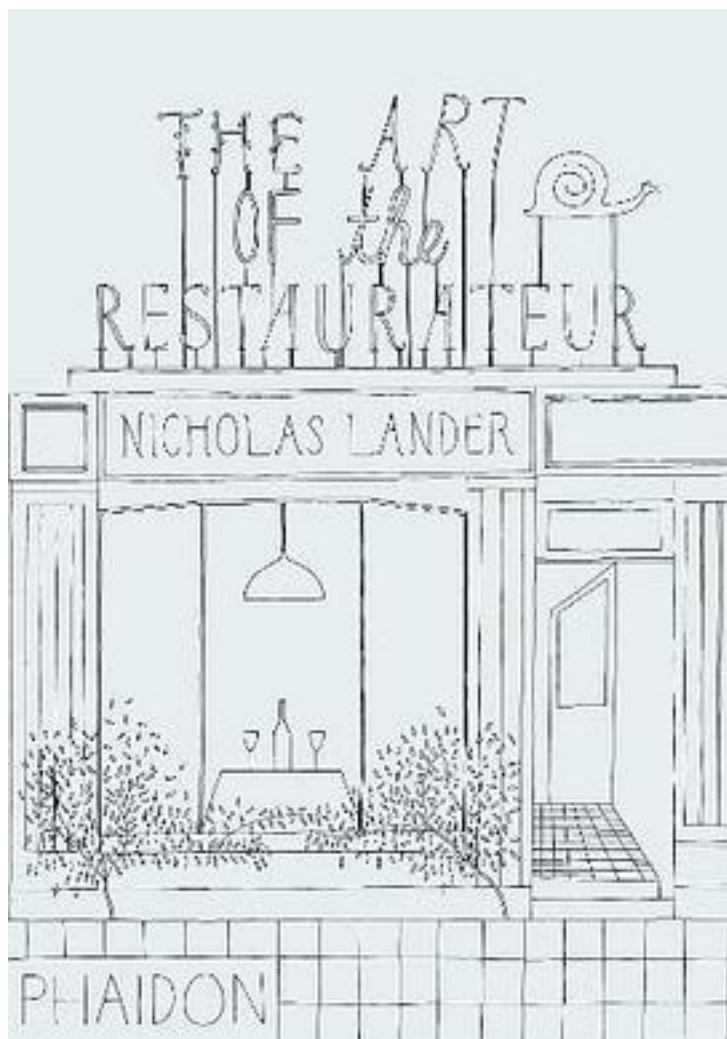


The Art of the Restaurateur



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Until 30 years ago, restaurateurs were considered the most important figures in any

restaurant's success, with chefs consigned to the kitchen. This process began to change with the elevation of chef-patron Paul Bocuse in the late 1970s, and has continued with the rise of the celebrity chef. Restaurateurs are hugely important but rarely written about and significantly under-appreciated. The profession, other than its commercial and social aspects, has a fundamental human appeal: restaurateurs derive their name and profession from the French verb restaurer when their role was to restore the health of travellers battered by the potholes of French roads in the early 19th century. The role has changed a lot since then, and continues to evolve in fascinating ways. Despite the interest and increased professionalism of many restaurateurs, however, the restaurant business is still one of the most financially risky. In the UK only the construction industry sees more liquidations. Brands and chains have also made life difficult for the independent restaurateur. But these individuals all have an extraordinary story to tell, stories that will appeal to those disenchanted with a corporate world, give inspiration for the next generation of would-be restaurateurs, and provide a compelling read for anyone interested in the modern restaurant. Learn how Alan Yau lost control of Wagamama in a family feud and how Danny Meyer, with two hugely successful restaurants behind him (Union Square Cafe and Gramercy Tavern) opened Blue Smoke, a barbecue restaurant, without appreciating that all New Yorkers consider themselves barbecue experts, so they all thought he was doing everything wrong. Behind each of these successes is an equally dramatic story of something that went very badly wrong. When they got the tricky recipe right, they succeeded in creating some of the world's landmark restaurants. Covering subjects as diverse as finding the right location and the importance of getting the design right; to choosing the best chef and deciding what food to serve; to managing staff and dealing with difficult customers, every story is fascinating, different, and has something to tell about the creation of a successful restaurant.

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