

DELIGHT FOR THE PALATE, A SIGHT TO BEHOLD | Eddie Goldfine

Avital Sebbag's cookbook "Five Seasons in the Kitchen" – *Things You Never Knew*.

In parallel worlds, gathering the right ingredients, processing and serving them to a guest or a reader, is dealing with color, shape, texture and composition, which very carefully and gently balance into a complete work – a delight for the palate, a sight to behold.

Avital Sebbag and I have been childhood friends since high school. Both of us are well aware of the commonalities and similarities in our professional activity; both of us take care to see the many details that compose a whole picture, on one hand characterized by certain unique culinary features and on the other hand, creating visual expression and design for products and packaging. In the present case it was Avital, who invited me to design her new book "Five Seasons in the Kitchen", vegan cooking in the Zen spirit, which turned out to be a long, enriching, unusual and intriguing collaboration.

During the design of the book we found corresponding similarities between the recipes, their design and visual interpretation. The page layout is similar to the setting of a dinner table, food shots like plates, typefaces like seasoning and color choices are but textures reflecting flavors - sour or hot, salty or sweet. Fifteen seasons were invested in what began as Avital's vision of documenting a healthy vegan way of life, cooking and food preparation based on Zen and ancient nutrition principles. A way of life she's been teaching for years at her "Domain of Change", as well as at workshops in Israel and abroad.

The book is indeed a fascinating journey, as well as its artistic adaptation. Design is different from art in that the designer is dependent on the subject chosen for him, someone else's idea, a topic he has to explore and express using his toolbox (pantry), with raw materials and components from relevant worlds to prepare the picture (the dish). This comparison was well understood by Avital when the book was being designed and she immediately became an active partner in formulating its unique look-and-feel, contributing her own special style.

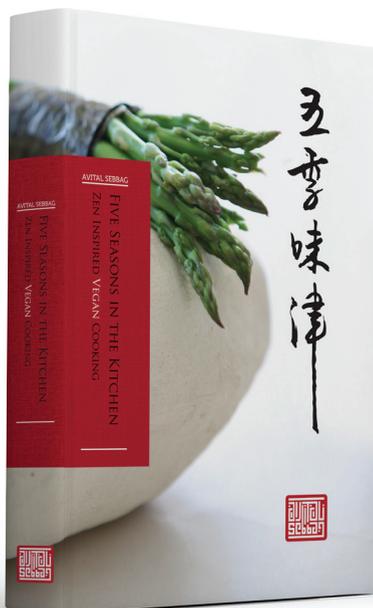
Nonetheless, we knew how to keep ourselves disciplined and remember that eventually it is, after all, a product (indeed a book is first and foremost a product); as such, we had to meet functional and commercial criteria, so that size and readability, division and careful editing (Tamar Mor-Sela) became the arena, in which we allowed ourselves to play.

The book is a sort of personal diary. The recipes are *told* and do not fall under the title *instructions*; tips and anecdotes are nonchalantly placed on vertical tags, the comfortable size of the book is hand compatible and even the paper was carefully chosen, to give the reader a velvety, inviting sense. The photographs (Michal Lenart) are not regular food shots, they seem more like documentary reportage photos of a crime scene. Michal perceived the food as something transient, though seasonal, which is about to vanish from the world within seconds. Most of the photos were taken in Avital's kitchen, with the light naturally coming in through the windows, with just a bit of artificial light – certainly vegan photography. Everything was created in a familiar work environment, resulting in the very relaxed and calm result. This was reinforced by the design of the dishes (Ingrid Kutner), in a domestic arrangement and everyday look, with Avital's handmade tools and pottery. Black calligraphic titles (Elsa Puiyin), stain the pages like the artist's signature. "Five Seasons in the Kitchen" is a book with a precisely defined personality, the result of an encounter between different worlds, yet identical in the passion for creation.

Eddie Goldfine is the owner and designer of Studio Expressions in Tel Aviv, which specializes in design and visual branding, book and packaging design in the retail food market. He has been a design lecturer for the past 20 years.

GOOD TO KNOW

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