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KENVIN

AN ARTIST'S KITCHEN

FOOD, ART & WISDOM OF A BOHEMIAN COWBOY

This elegant book is part memoir and part cookbook. It is centered around growing, preparing, and eating locally with family and friends, highlighting the author's western farm and ranch culture in Utah. Lushly illustrated with stunning original paintings and artwork, and accompanied by bits of rural wisdom and lore, this is a book to be used as well as savored.

Kevin Lyman (1942–2011) was a cook, wine maker, organic farmer and gardener, author, international illustrator, fine artist, and singer/songwriter. He worked with some of the leading creative figures and prominent companies in many fields, including John Cage, The Grateful Dead, Carlos Santana, Led Zeppelin, Stevie Wonder, Earth Wind and Fire, CBS Records, CBS Television, NBC Television, ABC Television, Levis, Coca-Cola, Paramount Studios, and Columbia Pictures.

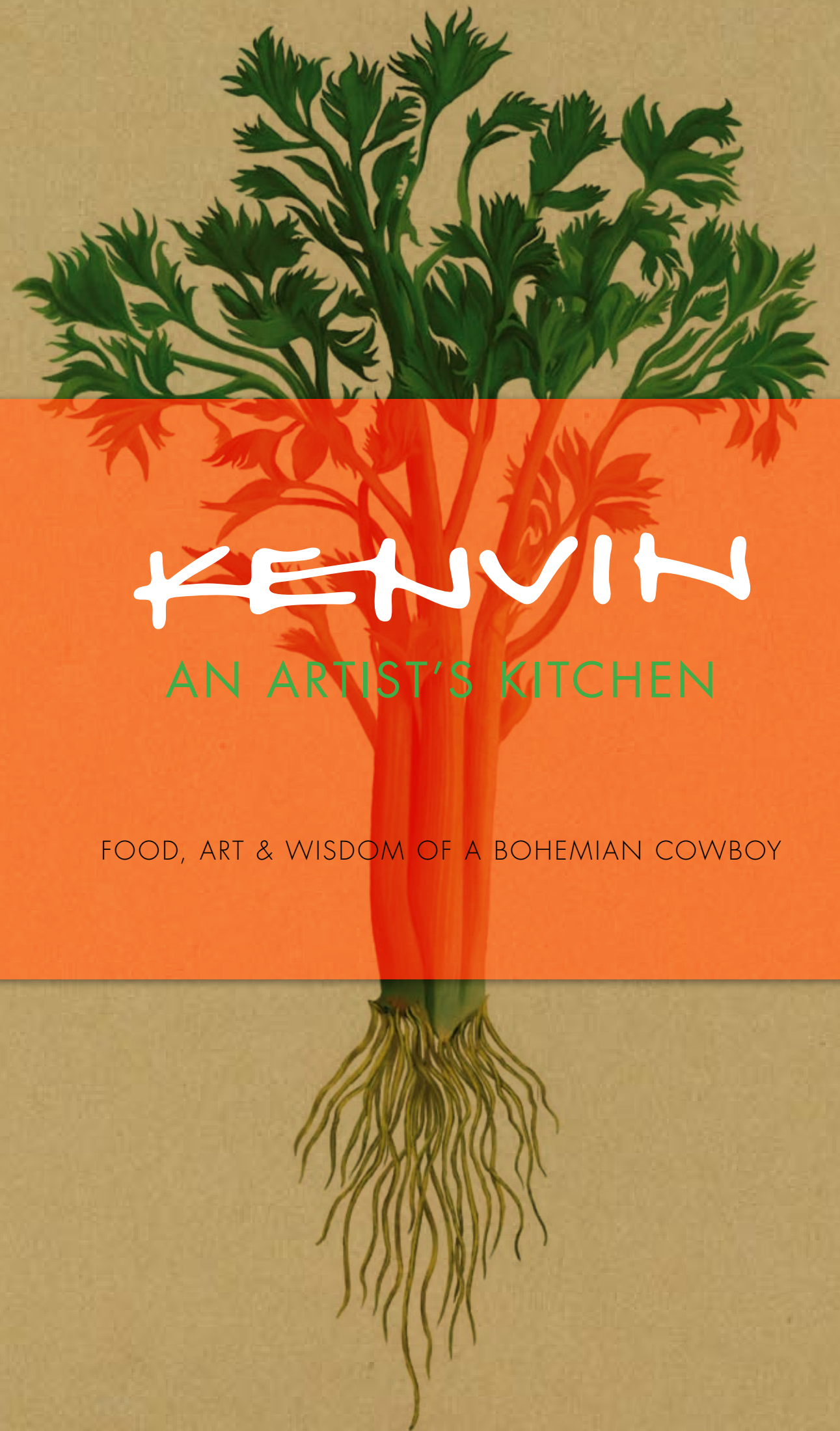
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In 1963 for \$8—the price of a good meal including tip in those days—we purchased an unusually fine old kitchen stove, in a thrift store. It was in excellent condition and has been working quite admirably ever since.

SIMPLE TOMATO SOUP

This is a very simple soup and one of the best. It completely depends on using excellent tomatoes. It is good with nothing more than a drizzle of olive oil. For extra flavor garnish it with a little minced fresh sweet marjoram.

2 or 3 vine-ripened heirloom tomatoes such as Brandywine or Black Krim, chopped

Sugar to taste

Salt to taste

Extra-virgin olive oil

Minced sweet marjoram

Put the tomatoes in a small saucepan, cover and simmer for a few minutes. Gently mash with a potato masher, cover and continue to simmer for another minute or two. Push through a medium strainer until the remaining pulp is quite dry. Discard pulp. Place tomato liquid back in the pan and correct with sugar and salt. Allow a minute for both to dissolve and retaste. Divide into serving dishes and drizzle the soup with a little olive oil. Garnish with sweet marjoram.

BEVERAGE RECOMMENDATION

A young fruity Zinfandel or a chilled sparkling wine.

SERVES 4





THE ANNUAL RANCH PARTY

Our Family Ranch was like a movie set except more real – no matte paintings, no cameras, no scripts. In its heyday it was a vibrant, working ranch with a herd of Hereford cattle, sheep and a band of working horses. It was, as dad preferred, a self-contained operation, meaning we did everything ourselves. We raised a garden, grew wheat and milled our own flour, overhauled our own tractors, poured our own concrete, did our own welding, broke our own horses, bred our own animals, grew our own feed and built our own houses. It was a place of active dreams where a lot of hard work and personal growth took place.

“The Annual Ranch Party” always took place in the autumn on Labor Day weekend. The main course was a pit-roasted lamb prepared the same way our ancestors had for generations. The pit was first filled with fire wood, lit and fed through the entire night. In the morning the lamb was cut into manageable pieces, wrapped in wet burlap, placed in the tin-covered bottom of the pit, covered with another layer of tin, then a foot or so of hot coals, then earth. By dinner time it was cooked in the rancher’s favorite way with the meat falling from the bone. We served it with Extra Classic Mint Sauce (p. __) and a Brown Sauce (p. __) made from stock based on the local wild porcini and bones and trimmings from our meat

processing house. Buttered corn on the cob and sliced tomatoes were served with homemade bread and butter, country-style potatoes, pickles of various kinds and an array of beverages including soft drinks for the youngsters and beer and red wine for the adults. Dessert starred local seasonal fruit – usually peaches and red raspberries. The peaches were peeled, cut, sliced and macerated in sugar; the berries were left plain so as not to lose their shape and color. Then both would be scattered over homemade ice cream. Fantastic Almond Shortbread cookies (p. __) were offered along with an assortment of cobblers and pies (p. __).

THRASHING WHEAT

At the tail end of the horse-drawn era when I was growing up in the country, farmers still used binders to cut and bundle grain after it ripened in the late summer sun. Like so many farm machines from that era, it was a wonder of innovation – a kinetic, metal beast evolved from the imagination of man. Behind the straining triple team its silver teeth chewed a swath through the shimmering grain with mechanical precision.

After the late summer grain had been bundled, men would go through the fields with pitch forks and make “shocks” from six or seven bundles, creating what looked like miniature straw stacks. The shocks would then dry for a couple of weeks. Then on horse-drawn wagons they hauled the bundles into the thresher, which traveled from farm to farm, and the grain was separated from its straw and chaff.

While the men worked themselves into a state of ravenous hunger, the women prepared one of the great, bygone food spectacles of rural America – threshing day dinner. It took place at noon and what a meal it was! Spread across the table

would be a variety of fine glass dishes filled with all kinds of pickles: pickled beets, sweet pickles, dill pickles, bread and butter pickles and two or three pickled relishes. The main course had one or two substantial dishes such as mutton stew with garden vegetables, roast beef with mashed potatoes and made-from-scratch brown gravy or stewed chicken with homemade noodles and thickened broth. There would always be hot yeast biscuits with homemade butter and an assortment of jams. There could be any combination of blanched vegetables such as string beans, corn on the cob or small sweet carrots. There was always a summer salad of whatever was ripe in the garden such as lettuces, English peas, lush tomatoes and scallions and for dessert a variety of pies, cakes and a hand-cranked freezer of ice cream.

Thrashing grain, in those days, was an intoxicating experience — full of excitement, wonderful aromas, laughing, joke-telling, story swapping, hard work and good food. It was a communal ritual of necessity done with great enthusiasm and as full of life as an Ernest Hemingway novel.

