

Scars of a Chef

 *Rick*

Tramonto is a highly respected professional in the culinary world. He owns several restaurants and has been featured in USA Today, The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and has appeared on Iron Chef America and was a contestant on Top Chef Masters. He is also a Christian, and he shares his story in his new book, Scars of a Chef.

You've

written cookbooks, but this is a different kind of book for you, isn't it?

It is.

It's an extremely personal book of my journey, really just kind of a memoir and the wonderful journey that my life was taken over the last 30 years in the restaurant industry.

What's

it like working in the restaurant business?

It's an

extremely aggressive field as far as competition these days. People are striving now, coming out of culinary schools to not only become chefs, but then to obtain their own restaurants or multiple restaurants, and it's become such a multimedia world with Bravo and the Food Network and the Cooking Channel and

all these multimedia outlets, having your own television show or books or multiple books, so it's very competitive. It's really become extremely popular and turned into something that I never thought it would become. Back in the day when I was growing up, there was Julia Child and the Galloping Gourmet.

**Can
you tell us about your restaurants?**

For the last 10 years I've had a restaurant called Tru in Chicago, which is a fine dining restaurant, high-end restaurant. I also have a place called Tramonto Steak and Seafood and the R.T. Lounge on the north shore of Chicago. And the last year I've been in New Orleans getting ready to open up a new restaurant in the French Quarter in the Royal Sonesta Hotel called Restaurant R'evolution with my partner, Chef John Folse.

**You
started at Wendy's and worked alongside Dave Thomas on
occasion.**

It was the first Wendy's in Rochester, N.Y., that had opened when my dad went to prison when I was a kid. I left school and was getting into trouble and my mom was a lunchroom lady during the day and a cleaning lady at night, and I needed a job. I needed to help out. I've always grown up in a family that loved food. My

grandparents had both lived with me at one time from Italy, so at least I got my arms around it.

You

were aiming to reach the top of that “kitchen ladder.” To what do you attribute your overall success?

There was just this dedication, of relentlessness of wanting to learn this trade and wanting to do this regardless of the obstacles, and then I think the bigger piece was God. ... Now that I may have a culinary stage to be able to be respected on, I think that was the purpose of my life and my journey now, to be able to be used by God, to be able to speak into my industry because my industry still has a lot of excess and darkness. There is a lot of darkness in my industry because it has such high alcohol and drug and divorce rates and just so many things that are negative and dark.

You

suffered a divorce yourself and used drugs, so you can relate, can't you?

Yes, very much so. We serve the God of the second chance, and I think the message of this book is God loves us so much that He'll continue to bring light into our life and second chances to help us to draw [closer] to Him.

How

would you like to encourage the Christian retailers in selling this book?

It just continues to show the God of the second chance, the love of God, the hope that is in Christ, and it's certainly a great snapshot of the behind-the-scenes of the restaurant industry, of being in the kitchens—a different take on *Kitchen Confidential*, if you will, but from a Christian viewpoint and from somebody who has spent his whole life in professional kitchens.

Click here
to purchase this book.