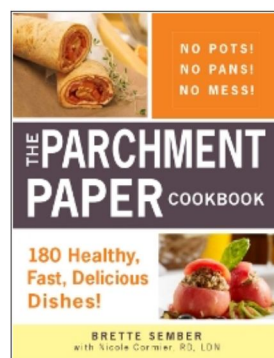


Winged Snail

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2011

Guest: Brette Sember with The Parchment Paper cookbook



Brette Sember, author of "The Parchment Paper Cookbook: 180 Healthy, Fast, Delicious Dishes" is here to participate in a Winged Snail Q&A, as part of her November Blog Tour.

Q1: You have an impressive publishing resume. Was publishing always a goal for you?

A1: My mother has "books" I wrote before I could write, so books have always played a huge role in my life. I was editor of my school newspaper and literary magazine in high school and majored in English in college. I probably would have pursued that path if I hadn't been discouraged by my parents (I went to law school instead). When I was practicing law and dreaming about leaving my practice, my husband would ask me "What would you do if you could do anything?" and the answer was always "Write."

Q2: The majority of your books have been published using traditional publishing houses. Why did you choose this route? What advice do you have for fledgling authors with respect to dealing with publishing houses?

A2: I started out 13 years ago, when no one was self-publishing. A publisher approached me to write my first book, so it just kind of happened for me that way. I think that if you don't have a big platform then self-publishing is a great way to approach writing. Even if you work with a traditional publisher, you still have to do much of the legwork when it comes to promoting the book, so it really isn't that different of a situation.

Q3: You are also a freelancer. What is the most difficult thing about freelance work? What is the most valuable piece of advice you have received with regard to freelancing?

A3: The worst part about freelancing is the unreliable income. Not only can you not count on the work in any predictable way, but you can't count on anyone paying you when they say they will.

I think the best way to build a career as a freelancer is to find a niche for yourself and then build upon it. Find something you can write about with knowledge or experience and you are an instant expert. Once you make a name for yourself with that, it's easier to branch out into other topics.

Q4: You have published non-fiction in other areas so how did you get started in food and recipe writing?

A4: Cooking has always been a huge part of my life and I was raised in my grandmother's and mother's kitchens. I like to write about things that matter to me personally, so food was a natural progression. Three years ago, I started a blog called MarthaandMe.net, where I unofficially apprenticed myself to Martha Stewart for a year. I blogged every single day for a year, cooking her food, doing her crafts, buying her products, and basically submerging myself in all things Martha. It was quite an education. I'd always loved cooking, but this one year "apprenticeship" changed everything for me. I learned new techniques, tried new ingredients, gained confidence, and come into my own as a cook. I think it helped me understand who I am as a cook. After the year was up, I continued the blog, still trying Martha's recipes, but I began to post some of my own and I've built upon that in the ensuing years. I enjoyed it so much I started a new blog, with a completely new type of cooking, called NoPotCooking.com, where I cooked in parchment paper packets. The Parchment Paper Cookbook grew out of this blog. I went on to sign for two more food books.

Q5: The Parchment Paper cookbook is about "healthy, fast and delicious" meals. It's not difficult to see where the motivation to write this book comes from. What is a meal that is laborious to make that you enjoy?

A5: When I was doing the Martha project I cooked tons and tons of things that were ridiculous. We're talking about cakes that cost \$60 in ingredients, dinners that used 6 pans and 5 bowls and every kitchen tool in the house. Serious, crazy, over the top cooking. I loved it, but it was also exhausting. I don't know anyone who is a fan of doing dishes and I really reached my limit with that. This book grew out

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of my search for good food that did not require hours and hours of clean up.

There are lots of things I like to make that take a long time and make a huge mess - brisket, Thanksgiving dinner, yeast donuts, poppy seed cake, stuffed shells, my grandmother's unbelievably difficult sugar cookies - it's a long list. What I love about [The Parchment Paper Cookbook](#) is you can make many, many delicious dishes with layers of flavor without having to make a huge mess!

Q6: What inspires you to create recipes?

A6: I just love to make food that tastes good, so I'm inspired by tons of things - dishes I remember from childhood, restaurant meals, things I stumble on in the supermarket, magazine articles, food TV shows, and food I enjoy while traveling.

Q7: What is the most surprising/exciting thing you have discovered that you can cook in parchment paper?

A7: Gnocchi! I really don't like scrubbing that sticky, gooey gnocchi pot and it cooks so well in parchment that you won't believe it.

Q8: You seem to have a lot of different sites relating to your work. How do you manage it all? What is the role of social media/networking sites for your writing career?

A8: I have my main site, [BretteSember.com](#). I also have a site relating to plus-size pregnancy ([YourPlusSizePregnancy.com](#)).

[NoPotCooking.com](#) is my blog for parchment cooking; [MarthaandMe.net](#) is where I still do some Martha recipes, as well post many of my own; and [SolveDivorce.com](#)

Q9: What's next for you - in terms of food?

A9: [The Organized Kitchen](#) comes out in January. That's all about getting a grip on your kitchen and making it work for you, with organizing and cleaning tips you can use to make life easier. [The Muffin Tin Cookbook](#) comes out in April and is a really fun book about recipes for everything (breakfast, entrees, sides, desserts, and more) made in muffin tins. You wouldn't believe the great things you can cook in muffin tins! I have some other projects that I'm working on as well. I plan to continue writing about food and sharing my recipes!

hey --- that's the same plan I have here on Winged Snail! :)

Posted by Sarah at [Wednesday, November 16, 2011](#)

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