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Bite Me, sisters tell their readers

Badwy book serves up fun meal ideas

Tags: Bite Me, cookbook, Julie Albert, Lisa Gnat

By Kelly Gadzala

November 4, 2009

Neighbourhoods: Forest Hill

Originally published in our Forest Hill print edition(s).



KELLY GADZALA/TOWN CRIER

SWEET TREATS: Sisters Julie Albert and Lisa Gnat munch on cookies from their first cookbook, *Bite Me*, during its launch at the Indigo in the Manulife Centre.

Two Forest Hill Village sisters have a mouthful to say about cooking: *Bite Me*.

Julie Albert and Lisa Gnat aren't just being lippy. The self-styled "not-so-sweet, tiny-bit salty sisters" have recently self-published their first cookbook, *Bite Me: A Stomach-Satisfying, Visually Gratifying, Fresh-Mouthed Cookbook*.

Though there's a serious and practical side to the cookbook — to provide easy home-cooked meals for families — the sisters say they wanted the book to be fun and refreshing.

"I like bawdy humour," says co-author Albert, a statement that's substantiated by cheeky chapter headings like "Grab Me" (for appetizers), "unDress Me" (salads), and "Gobble Me" (poultry).

"It doesn't have to be drudgery cleaning a chicken breast," she adds.

A Ryerson journalism grad, Albert penned the book. Gnat, who graduated from the George Brown pastry chef program and ran a dessert catering business before having children, devised all the recipes in the book, some of which were adapted from her mother's creations.

Growing up in Forest Hill Village, the sisters say their mother loved to cook and their father loved to eat. Gnat always helped her mom in the kitchen, but Albert was always the one yelling, "What time do we eat?"

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When Albert found herself with a family of her own, she struggled with ideas for dinner. That's when she enlisted her sister's help and the idea of the cookbook grew from there.

"I was on the noodles and butter plan," Albert says.

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Part of the ease of the cookbook is that all the ingredients can be found at any big grocery store, they say.

“It’s really home cooking for families,” says Albert. “It’s just straightforward cooking.”

Describing the book as a multi-sensory smorgasbord and feast for the eyes, the sisters show their humour through the book’s art. A photo on page 8 by Gulliver Theis featuring two old ladies is meant to represent the pair, both mothers of young children.

They even had food shots taken using plastic figurines they picked up at a dollar store.

“We wanted to challenge the shellac-chicken look,” Albert says.

The siblings initially approached a publisher but the person they met with wanted them to become celebrities and get a TV show before publishing the book. So they self-published and approached Heather Reisman, CEO of [Indigo Books and Music](#), who loved the concept.

The book now sells exclusively at Indigo, Chapters, Coles and Indigospirit locations across Canada, and has recently made Resiman’s Heather’s Pick list — the first cookbook to do so.



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