



Buns in the Oven

Informative books offer tips on hospitality, pregnancy

I Like You: Hospitality Under the Influence

by Amy Sedaris; Warner Books, 2006; \$27.99 hardcover

Allow me to confess that I'm a little bit biased before I review Amy Sedaris' new hospitality tome.

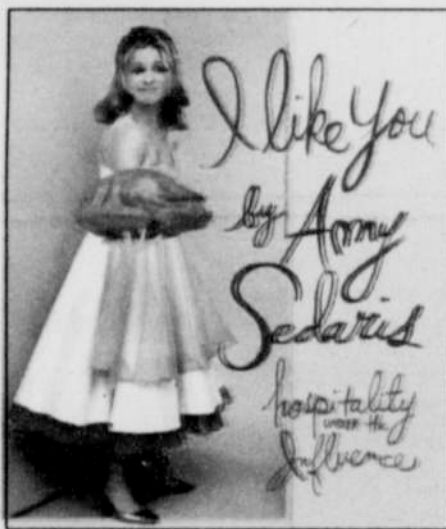
David's little sis has rocked my world ever since I first watched *Strangers with Candy* three years ago and saw her ingenious, ass-slappingly hilarious portrayal of Jerri Blank. (If you've never seen the show or the movie version, Jerri is a 46-year-old high school freshman with a debilitating overbite and a history of drug abuse and streetwalking).

Since then I've taped all of Amy's talk show appearances, printed a snapshot of Jerri on my personal checks and slutted myself up with cheap makeup and a gold lamé turtleneck so I could be Jerri on Halloween.

Thanks to *I Like You: Hospitality Under the Influence*, Amy is now a permanent resident in my kitchen. A psychedelic sendup of 1960s cookbooks and Martha Stewart, *I Like You* is a colorful and deliberately tacky explosion of recipes, kitschy arts-and-crafts projects, party-hosting tips and musings on personal hygiene. Need the recipe for the scrumptious Lady Baltimore Cake? Just turn to Page 138,

and while you're at it eyeball the next page for illustrated instructions on how to give your vagina a "spirited scrubbing."

Gay fashion designer Todd Oldham captures Amy in a multitude of hilarious guises, from a raven-haired Greek vixen to bong smoker in a vintage floral print dress. Remove the book cover and on the flip side you'll discover a giant pinup photo of Amy slathered with whipped cream and rainbow sprinkles, joyously kicking her legs up in the air.



In the "Hospitality in Action" section, Amy teaches us how to handle every conceivable kind of guest, from

out-of-towners to lumberjacks to gypsies. She prints the "Entertaining the Elderly" chapter in a gigantic font, spiking the text with politically incorrect digs: "I don't mind pointing out some of the failings of old age, because we are all headed in that direction, unless of course we take our own lives."

So far all of the recipes I've tried have turned out great, although I must say that Amy's minimalist instructions keep me guessing a little more than

I'd like. I paired a vegetarian version of the meatloaf with the tomatoey Greek Beans. Both were delicious, albeit a tad overseasoned thanks to the ambiguous directions.

I also recommend Captain's Mouthwatering Bite-Size Blue Ball Cheese Balls, a surefire hit at any holiday soiree. Just don't forget the Ritz.

—Stephen Blair

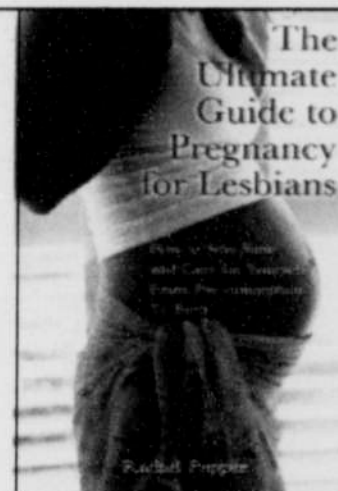
The Ultimate Guide to Pregnancy for Lesbians

by Rachel Pepper; Cleis Press, 2005; \$16.95 softcover

As more and more American women decide to raise families without a husband, more and more American women are deciding to raise families in partnered relationships that don't involve a man.

The second edition of Rachel Pepper's groundbreaking *Ultimate Guide to Pregnancy for Lesbians* is perfectly designed to make the increasingly common lesbian pregnancy process less solitary and more celebratory than ever before. Already packed with an impressive amount of common-sense and not-so-common insights, the latest update truly brings the book into the early 21st century.

Pepper says she's added information throughout the book, even to chapters that served readers well in the book's previous incarnation. Now, in addition to practical advice about improving the chance of conception and selecting a sperm bank or proper personal donor, several particularly tricky elements of



daily living and loving are addressed, as well. For instance, Pepper intelligently and sensitively explores the complex emotional

and societal landscapes that both single and partnered lesbians will need to consider before making the final decision to conceive. Age, education, overall health and the ability to lovingly raise a special-needs child are among the less-than-warm-and-fuzzy but unquestionably essential issues that she presents for consideration by her Sapphic momma hopefuls.

Once an affirmative decision has been made, readers of the second edition will have a greater understanding of the changes their bodies can expect and what the process of pregnancy and childbirth feels like—and what it means to the rest of their life—than did their first-edition sisters. Because much has changed legally for lesbians and lesbian parents during the past seven years, Pepper includes information about what rights, responsibilities and challenges new mothers should anticipate, as well as how to determine the most appropriate distribution of parenting activities and make sure everyone is getting the support needed. The resource guide has been expanded and includes a number of recommended clinics, on and offline publications and childbirth practitioners.

—Theresa "Darklady" Reed 10

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