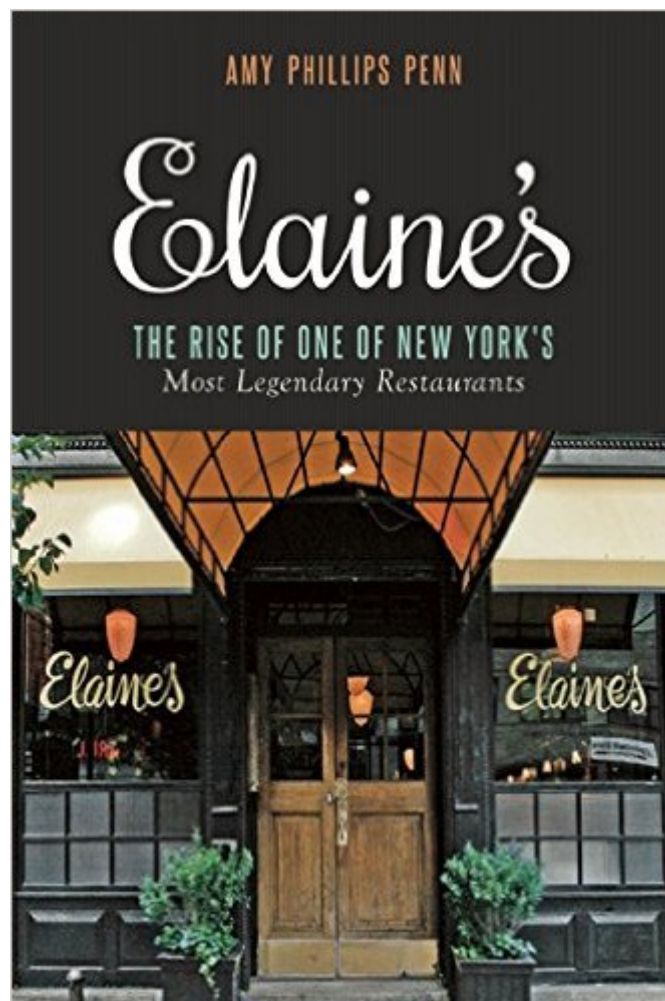


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Elaine's: The Rise Of One Of New York's Most Legendary Restaurants From Those Who Were There



Synopsis

A tribute to legendary restaurateur Elaine Kaufman and her renowned Manhattan creative melting pot. Elaine's was a world-famous New York restaurant that became home to writers and celebrities. Owner Elaine Kaufman was known to be 'New York feisty,' controversial, often rude, always blunt, with the flare of Gertrude Stein and Dorothy Parker. Elaine was highly respected and also frequently feared, and Elaine's the restaurant received the public's love and praise time and time again. Woody Allen held a regular table there, and Elaine's was even featured in Allen's Manhattan and Billy Joel's song 'Big Shot.' Throughout the years, Mick Jagger, John Lennon, and countless celebrities, politicians, socialites, private eyes, athletes, artists, and the biggest names in Hollywood became Elaine's regulars. Most emphatically, Elaine's raison d'être was to nourish 'starving writers' with encouragement, introductions to Pulitzer Prize winners, and free food and alcohol. These struggling authors responded to Elaine's support with profound gratitude. Elaine passed away in 2010, forcing the restaurant manager to close shop shortly after. 'There is no Elaine's without Elaine,' she decreed. However, the memories remain and are recalled by a variety of Elaine's regulars in this moving, oftentimes amusing, collection of personal essays. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Arcade imprint, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in history--books about World War II, the Third Reich, Hitler and his henchmen, the JFK assassination, conspiracies, the American Civil War, the American Revolution, gladiators, Vikings, ancient Rome, medieval times, the old West, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

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Customer Reviews

Did you ever make it to Elaine's restaurant in New York? Elaine was a formidable, much loved, much feared matriarch who ran her watering hole for writers, cops, celebrities, gangsters and assorted other luminaries from the 1960s to the 00s. When she died, Elaine's died, as it must without her ample prevailing spirit. Amy's book is a romp through that charmed time and place, a fun and poignant riff down memory lane (the tables along the wall were known as the Elaine where the Woody Allens, Norman Mailers, Kurt Vonneguts, George Plimptons, Jackie Kennedys (and later Os) and all sat. ELAINE'S is a trip: to the remarkable alchemy of a fabulous joint that Elaine Kaufman created on 2nd Ave. and 88th. Amy and her fellow sharers evoke the madly unique experience and character that was Elaine. I'm particularly struck by the strong sense of family that people who were a part of it all felt in her establishment, in her presence—one and the same, I guess--and the many mentions of how she changed people's lives. Elaine had a habit of encouraging writers and running tabs for them while seeing that the very well-to-do paid their fair share. Not a bad legacy for a tough broad who was able to punch guys in the face, give beautiful women the cold shoulder and expel the likes of Geraldo while sticking up for the little guy. The place was glamorous as hell, but also a neighborhood haven for the brilliant and gifted...and the rest of us. It was the Democratic Republic of Elaine's. Amy Penn, with considerable insight and pizzazz, brings the magic to us on a platter.

What Truman Capote did for Tiffany's, and Woody Allen for Manhattan, Amy Penn has done for Elaine's. With impeccable literary alchemy she transforms a cultural--and oh, so social-- landmark into a witty, engaging, hilarious, touching, resonant, star-studded yet gloriously human work of art to savor and enjoy over and over as an armchair feast. Elaine should be beaming from the Other Side of Paradise, her amazement and gratitude laced with tart, four-letter exclamations of amazement and joy. We may read and share in this feast for all seasons.

If I could stand and applaud.... It wouldn't be enough. I'm old enough to get Elaine's but never entered there, more of a West Coast guy than NYC which I can take only in small doses. Those doses getting larger as I age and slow down. First introduced to Elaine's through readings of Stuart

Woods whose fiction I loved most of the 90s and always with a scene or two in Elaine's. So I knew it was an eclectic group of people, many famous. And I later thought of stopping by certain to be sent to Siberia. The next I know of Elaine's is reading of her and its death. The NYT had great articles of this iconic saloon/eatery. But NOTHING truly captures the spirit of Elaine's like this book. Of course there is one HUGE drawback: while right sized for most of my reading, it's half of what I would like to read by the inhabitants of Elaine's world in this essay based chapter by different writers. Where to start: Keith Hernandez in the restroom? No that's too sensational. How about the patron who Elaine helped through the death of his wife. No, not humorous enough even though it does show the true Elaine. How about Elaine in Europe? NOW we're talking!!! Total comedy, pandemonium and shenanigans much to the chagrin of travel companion Jessica Burstein. Still Elaine Madsen probably encapsulates it best with Elaine's quote, "I'm a f'ing legend". Yes, she knew it. Read this book to know a flavor of NYC, the culture of famous writers, the 60s through the 90s, celebrities. No, no, no. Read this book to receive a touch of Elaine and Elaine's. THAT is the gift and well worth it where this book and these writers try to convey their luck at being invited to Elaine's party. Even if she did eat off their plate and then charge them.

Having never been to New York, my only knowledge of this legendary restaurant is from the Billy Joel song, and having always thought that the artistic salons of Paris and any gatherings of artists always sounded so romantic, I figured that Elaine's would have been my kind of place. Except I probably couldn't have gotten in. Which would have made me want to go there even more. The essays in the book paint a woman who was brash and took no s***, but knew virtually every writer, director, and actor (that was worth knowing) in The Big Apple. This book is (I assume) a wonderful compilation of nostalgia for anyone who had the privilege of meeting Elaine and had the honor of participating in the wonderful going-ons of the restaurant, but for the person who had no such luck, it is the next best thing. Elaine's transports a reader through time and space to New York in the sixties through the aughts, from Club 54 and Andy Warhol to Chris Noth and the Sopranos, we get to be part of the "in" crowd and hear great stories about the cool kids and the woman they all adored, Elaine Kaufman.

As an essay(s) contributor to Amy's Penn's book, as well as having my image of Elaine's restaurant used as the book's cover shot, it might seem as if I'd be naturally prejudiced in her favor. The reality, however, is that what was the spirit of Elaine's is truly an intangible and I didn't have high hopes that this spirit could be captured by anyone. I was wrong. Amy's book not only captures the spirit of what

was a remarkable place, but does so with essays that are, at once, fascinating, funny, weird, poignant and anything and everything that ever was, in fact, Elaine's. And its value goes way beyond reliving what once was, by those who, like me, were there. It deserves to be viewed as a kind of anthropological study of a slice of NYC life, which, sadly, will never pass our way again.

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