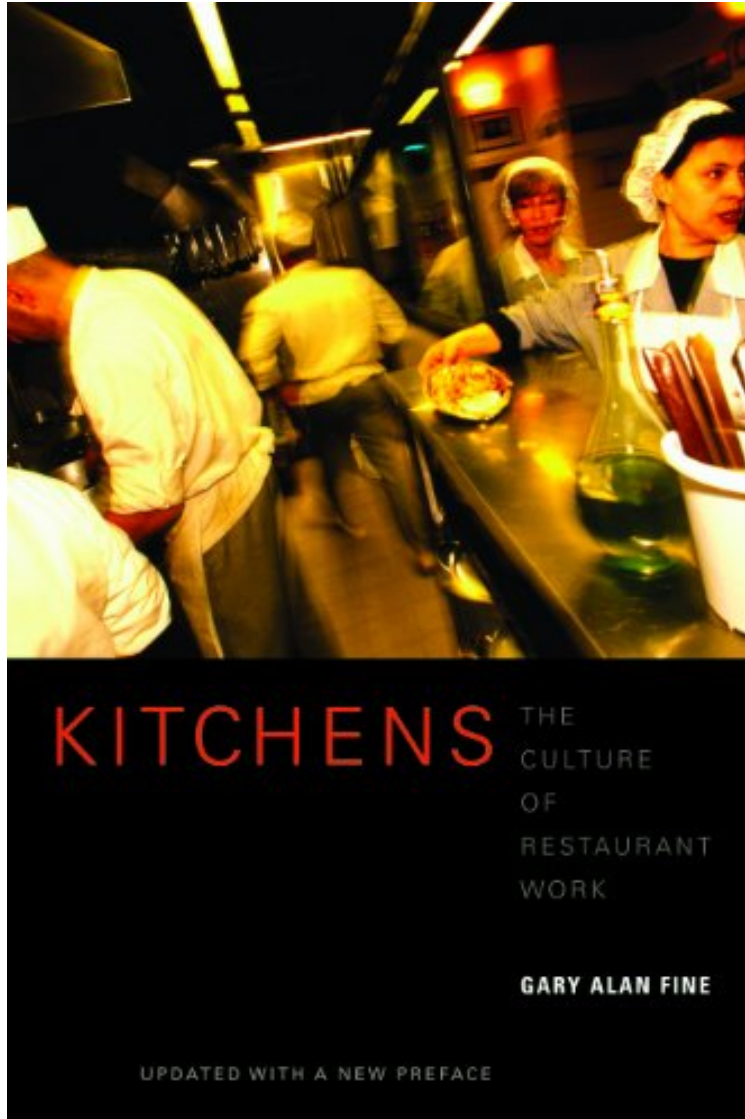


## Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work

*Gary Alan Fine*

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**Gary Alan Fine : Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A Review of Fine's "Kitchens" By Toby A. Ten Eyck There are two reasons to read this book. First, Fine offers an in-depth analysis of the restaurant kitchen life by studying four restaurant kitchens in the St. Paul-Minneapolis area. In a society which is enamored with eating out, this can help us understand what really takes place behind closed doors. Fine has taken the time to understand the kitchen life through the study of the trials and tribulations of chefs, as well as enrolling in cooking classes at a vocational college to understand the training process that many of these individuals have experienced. Second, Fine offers an in-depth

analysis of organizations through his study of these restaurants. While this is often lost on those not steeped in the social sciences, scholars interested in the study of organizations and/or the symbolic interaction approach will find it both entertaining and challenging to follow, interpret, and critique this perspective. Overall, this is a lively read that is hard to put down.

*Kitchens* takes us into the robust, overheated, backstage world of the contemporary restaurant. In this rich, often surprising portrait of the real lives of kitchen workers, Gary Alan Fine brings their experiences, challenges, and satisfactions to colorful life. A new preface updates this riveting exploration of how restaurants actually work, both individually and as part of a larger culinary culture.

From *Library Journal* In contrast to recent behind-the-scenes narratives describing the realities of the restaurant business (e.g., Irene Daria's *Lutece: A Day in the Life of America's Greatest Restaurant*, LJ 11/15/93), *Kitchens* is social analysis. Sociologist Fine (*Talking Sociology*, Allyn Bacon, 1989) uses the "negotiated order" approach, coupled with a methodology of interviewing and participant observation, to examine how internal and external interrelationships have created the current food industry—including its workers, organization, economics, and aesthetics. While written in an accessible style with a cogent introduction and helpful summaries at the end of each chapter, this ethnography will probably be most useful to those with a knowledge of or an interest in sociology. Nevertheless, the descriptions of the interplay between the micro and macro—kitchen work vs. market demands—make for fascinating reading and a more critical understanding of this cultural force. Wendy Miller, Lexington P.L., Ky. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Oozes with first-hand accounts of pranks and mishaps. . . . Fine's book entertains as it enlightens."