



La Bonne Table

Ludwig Bemelmans

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Here is the best of Bemelmans on the subject he loved most: la bonne table. The entrancing memories and charming pictures assembled here transport the reader behind the scenes of the great hotels of Europe and America--including the immortal "Hotel Splendide"--and such restaurants as the *Tour d'Argent* in Paris and Le Pavillon in New York. Memorable dishes, the eccentric geniuses of the kitchens who created them, the opulent and often astonishing patrons who ordered them, the legendary wines and the occasions they toasted, are all evoked in rich and piquant flavor.

The gifted and exuberant Ludwig Bemelmans was trained as a boy for a career as a restaurateur, and *La Bonne Table* is in effect his gastronomical autobiography. The high--and sometimes riotous low--points of his life with food, from Austrian cafes to the late, lamented Ritz of New York, are narrated with delight and zest as he celebrates beer and sausages, pressed duck and caviar, and the chefs who cooked for him. He remembers with decidedly mixed emotions the ways of the busboy and the waiter, and the qualities that make up the perfect *maitre d'*. He muses over great menus and great eaters--and soon makes the reader very hungry. Here, truly, is a feast of reading, as a lost world of luxury and elegance is brilliantly evoked and savored. Bemelmans' extraordinary charm captivated all who met him; it glows through the pages of *La Bonne Table*.

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