



# My Nepenthe: Bohemian Tales of Food, Family, and Big Sur

*Romney Steele*

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"A very special book about a very special place." --Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*

"What a world Romney Steele has given us in *My Nepenthe*! This personal tale is as tender and bright as a bite of Nepenthe Cheese Pie and will transport me--and you--to Big Sur and the days and nights of this magical place. *My Nepenthe* serves a big, gorgeous slice of American culture that I loved visiting through words and memory." --Deborah Madison, author of *What We Eat When We Eat Alone* and *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

"Romney Steele grew up in the lively bohemian milieu of Nepenthe on the Big Sur coast and knows all the stories worth telling. In *My Nepenthe*, an intimate, richly illustrated memoir with recipes culled from the restaurant's 60 years, she writes marvelously about her "crazy stew of a family" and especially her beloved grandmother, whose kindness and hospitality were legendary. --Caroline Bates, contributing editor, *Gourmet* magazine

My Nepenthe weaves together stories and tales about the famous California restaurant perched on the majestic cliffs of Big Sur. It celebrates the magic and history of place through food and the Fassett family who started Nepenthe.

A lyrical feast written by the owners' granddaughter, Romney Steele, who grew up at the restaurant, *My Nepenthe* is as much about a family enterprise as it is about the Fassett family and their legacy. It recounts stories about the family's more than sixty-year history on the coast, the arts and architecture, and the colorful people who were the genesis of this legendary restaurant.

*My Nepenthe* marks the restaurant's vibrant past as a gathering place and noted bohemian haunt, and its foray into the film industry during the shooting of *The Sandpiper*, featuring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. It also explores the lively scene that played out into the '70s, and onward through the current decade where it showcases Nepenthe's unique relationship with Pisoni Vineyards, owned by the renowned winemaker family. *My Nepenthe* includes more than seventy-five special recipes from the Fassetts, the restaurant, and the cafe, along with spectacular photography that completes the tale.

Ultimately, *My Nepenthe* is a story about food, family, and the culture of place, and how it all unfolds around the table and why that matters.

### About Nepenthe

Located on the Big Sur cliffs 808 feet above the Pacific Ocean, Nepenthe Restaurant boasts sweeping views of the rugged Santa Lucia Mountains and the wild south coast of Monterey County. Angular mountains plunge into the crashing surf below, and on a clear day there is no limit to the scenery, unspoiled and immense in nature. Opened in 1949 by the Fassett family, the restaurant is nestled among native oak trees and a historic log cabin (now faced by brick) that was once owned by Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth.

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