



ecstatic applause. Yamuna very graciously accepted the plaque at the lectern, thanking everyone for their votes and support.

Of course, everyone was anxiously waiting for the Book of the Year Award to be announced. Chosen from among the winners of the thirteen categories, it was the jewel in the crown award that everyone coveted.

Yogesvara das: The President of the IACP then gets up to the dais and says, “This year we have another surprise. For the first time in our history we are awarding our best Cookbook of the Year Award to a non-Western cuisine.” We were looking at each other [questioningly]. He says, “The winner of the Book of the Year goes to *Lord Krishna’s*....” That’s as far as he got. We began screaming like banshees at that point.... Yamuna then graciously floats up, tears streaming down her face. She’s up there shaking, receiving this Award and thanking Prabhupada, thanking Krishna, thanking everybody. We were looking around, and there’s Julia Child, Jacques Pepin, Pierre Franey looking at each other like, “What world have we just entered?” We literally went screaming and dancing down Park Avenue chanting “Haribol! Haribol!” 🍷



After the Book of the Year Award was announced, virtually every news organization used the phrase “surprise winner” in their coverage. One of the judges, Iris Bailin of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, eloquently expressed her reasoning in an article on April 27:

When the large cardboard box arrived at the food department, I knew I was in trouble. A couple of weeks earlier, I had agreed to be a judge for the IACP/Seagram’s Awards for the best food and drink books of 1987.... Well, it’s an honor, I thought. It’s not often one shares a panel with food writers like Mimi Sheraton,

Florence Fabricant and Phyllis Richman. I’m glad I didn’t have to test recipes from the bad books; there were some real losers in there. But some were quite appealing. And when I started leafing through Yamuna Devi’s *Lord Krishna’s Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking*, I knew I had a rare book in my hands. Here, slightly paraphrased, is what I wrote in my notes: “An astounding book, extraordinary for its depth, precision and complexity. It has everything I look for in a great cookbook. A personal voice. Respect for its subject. A sense of a cuisine and the people who cook it. It adds something new to the literature and stimulates me mentally and sensually. I couldn’t wait to try the recipes and—hurrah—they work! Instructions are detailed. The section on panir is amazing, and I’ve never seen such thorough directions for making ghee, dal (legumes) and buying and preparing rice.” I knew this was a special book. I knew it had a chance to win the Asian category (I wasn’t the only judge). But when I learned it had been named the best Book of the Year, I was shocked and delighted. This was, after all, a highly specialized volume with presumably limited appeal. It didn’t even have pretty pictures. It’s nice to know that sometimes excellence beats out pizzazz.

—IRIS BAILIN, CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, APR. 27, 1988



Some of the other judges mentioned the book’s scholarship and attention to detail, while others noted its unique voice and “presentation of its thesis.”

Each year hundreds of cookbooks are published by large and small publishing houses. This year, 200 books were nominated to compete in 13 categories, the most cookbooks to be judged since the competition began 12 years ago as the Tastemaker Awards. Each category was judged by three judges in different cities, none knowing who the others were. Books were sent to judges’ homes along with scoring questionnaires. Some categories were large....