

# FOOD & WINE

NOVEMBER 2009

70 classic & creative  
thanksgiving  
recipes

**BONUS**  
PULLOUT  
WINE PAIRINGS  
BOOKLET  
INSIDE

## Self-Guided Study

's editor, **Dana Cowin**, sets out to u  
is soon impressed by how modern  
*photographs by Lucy Schaeffer*



Dana Cowin,  
pre-slurp.

### *understanding kaiseki*

For my final assignment, I chose a *kaiseki* restaurant, perhaps the highest order of Japanese cuisine. Developed to accompany the tea ceremony, the meal features a series of exquisitely conceived and crafted small plates. I'd been introduced to *kaiseki* at Soto, where F&W Best New Chef 1997 Sotohiro Kosugi prepares exciting, magnificent meals, and I was ready to learn more.

At Kyoya, my tutors were Rick Smith and his Japanese-born wife, Hiroko Furukawa, who own a sake shop called Sakaya. (Rick and I worked together years ago, when he was F&W's associate publisher.) Hiroko diplomatically took charge. "If there's one word you should learn," she told me, "it's *oishii*—delicious." The food was beautiful; chef Chikara Sono had clearly considered every color, texture and shape—decorating sea bream sashimi, for instance, with a white shiso flower, a green chrysanthemum leaf, a red plum flower and a curl of daikon. The meal reminded me of tasting menus I'd had at Le Bernardin and Jean Georges: small portions, visually arresting, *oishii*. As I ate, I felt as if I was absorbing Japanese aesthetics and philosophy. In Japanese cuisine, it was clear, nothing is left to chance, and it was all a part of history.

This purity is the strength and the challenge of Japa