



POWER ENTERTAINING

Secrets to Building Lasting Relationships,
Hosting Unforgettable Events, and Closing Big Deals
from America's 1st Master Sommelier



EDDIE OSTERLAND, MS

Praise for *Power Entertaining*

“It’s not overly dramatic to say your professional destiny can hang on the impression you make. If you are meeting or hosting prospective clients or employers at a reception or business meal, read this book first. Its “I didn’t know that” insights and page-turning stories show how to handle yourself with *savoir faire* so you’re the one they relate to, respect, remember, and want to work with.”

—**Sam Horn**

The Intrigue Expert;
Author of *POP!* and *SerenDestiny*

“Finally, we have a book on how to cement business relationships that last. Eddie Osterland shares the rare entertaining insights that can create a memorable experience for those you care about in your life and work. It is not only an art, but a defined strategy for growing your business or organization. This is a must-read for every business owner, executive, and professional in the marketplace!”

—**Mark LeBlanc**

President of Small Business Success;
Author of *Growing Your Business* and *Never Be the Same*

“Master Sommelier and outstanding Vistage speaker Eddie Osterland notes that most people ‘treat wine as a beverage, not as a true partner to good food.’ CEOs and executives should understand that if they treat wine as more than a beverage, it can be the perfect complement to cultivating and strengthening their business relationships. Eddie shows us how, as his book expands our knowledge, sensibilities, and opportunities.”

—**Rafael Pastor**

Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer,
Vistage International, Inc.

“Edmund Osterland is not only America’s First Master Sommelier, he is a brilliant businessman who understands the principles of how to make occasions special. He can show you how to make any meeting or event a more memorable and impactful event. His mastery is matching the elements to the intended results. He has toured the

world training senior executives in the finer touches of leadership and gracious business practices. Let him show you how to make your business dealings more fun and more creative. I learn from him and admire him. You will, too!”

—**Jim Cathcart**

Past President of the National Speakers Association;
Author of *Relationship Selling*

“Eddie Osterland is one of the most dynamic, entertaining, and knowledgeable wine experts in America.”

—**Kevin Zraly**

Windows on the World Complete Wine Course

“Eddie has a finely honed palate and a special knack for creating exciting wine and food pairings. His enthusiasm when sharing his knowledge about wine and wine tasting is infectious, informative, and very much down to earth. Not only does Eddie know his subject like few others, he knows how to communicate his vast experience and ideas in a fun and easy-to-understand manner.”

—**Jeffrey Davies**

Signature *Jeffrey M. Davies* Selections

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Foreword

The old adage, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know,” has been a popular business maxim for many years. Unfortunately, this statement misses the mark, and we need to add an element to it that makes it all worthwhile.

It’s not what you know.
It’s not who you know.
It’s *how* you know them, and
It’s how they *feel* about you that matters.

The marketplace has changed dramatically in the past few years, and loyalty seems to be a thing of the past. Forging new connections and establishing and cementing key relationships with prospects, customers, and your advocates can make you successful. Failure to take the strategies and ideas offered in this book can break your success.

Every once in a while you meet someone who has a certain something about him or her. It’s the way that person thinks, talks, and interacts with others. You know something is different, but you can’t put your finger on it. I believe these special people have a sense of clarity and expertise that cannot be denied. Eddie Osterland is one of those rare people you not only want to know but want to know what he knows.

Eddie has captured the essence of what it means to live life and to create an experience that transcends the norm of entertaining for business or for pleasure. Not only does he provide you with what you need to know, he also provides you with what you need to do to get your groove on and improve your odds in the game of business.

His enthusiasm is infectious, and his commitment to helping others is clearly evident in how he serves others, both personally and professionally. This may be the one book you read this year that can have the most impact on your career.

The best piece of advice I can give you is to devour this book. Keep it within arm's reach and refer to it often. Take action on what you learn, and you will have a greater likelihood of succeeding by design, not by accident.

We're often judged by the company we keep. We're respected for the company that keeps us. Start reading now and you will find out how simple this can be and how fast you can experience the rewards of relationship building. You will discover that a life you can taste is a life worth living and sharing with others.

—**Mark LeBlanc**

Small Business Success;

Author, *Growing Your Business* and *Never Be the Same*

Preface

Have you taken a colleague to lunch lately? Why not invite him or her out today—and include a few other people from different parts of your company or business network. Soon, you'll have an ever-expanding web of friends and contacts.

—Keith Ferrazzi
Author, *Never Eat Alone*

Why I Wrote This Book

You're at a fancy downtown restaurant for dinner with a new client. A million-dollar business deal is on the table. The waiter hands you the wine list. Now what?

You wonder, “To make a good impression, should I spend \$350 on the Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 Hillside Select? Or, do I go with something half that price that the client will like *just* as much—maybe more?”

The problem is you don't know what makes a good Cabernet, much less the Hillside Select. After all, you went to business school, not bartender's academy!

“What if I order the wrong wine?” you say to yourself. “I'll embarrass myself and might lose the deal!” For all you know, your client is a passionate wine collector and connoisseur, with a trove of 1,000 bottles of vintage Bordeaux gathering dust in a wine cellar.

Your forehead begins to break out in a cold sweat. You *have* to make the right decision.

Who would have thought that your shiny Ivy League MBA, powerful business connections, and past successes doing big business deals would help so little now? What matters right now, at *this* moment, is your wine IQ—and your ability to entertain this client in a way he or she will never forget. In a way that will cement your relationship with him or her for years to come.

So, what do you do?

That's where I come in. I'm Eddie Osterland (known to my friends as "Eddie O"). I'm a Master Sommelier (MS), and if I may say so, one of America's foremost wine and food coaches! I was the very first American ever to earn this title (of MS), and I can help you make the right choice of wine on this occasion and in countless other business situations as well. For the past 25 years I've been giving advice on business entertaining to CEOs and companies all over the world. I even coined a term, *power entertaining*, to describe what I do. And it's the title of this book!

I love my job. It's actually my passion and my mission in life. Or, as the wine-loving French might say, mon *métier* and *mission*—to educate people about fine wine and food and how to put them together in enjoyable combinations.

In *Power Entertaining* you'll see me display my passion for wine, food, and entertaining as I outline dozens of ways that you can entertain others with flair and confidence, be it at business dinners, client appreciation events, sales meetings, conferences, team retreats, business receptions, retirement functions, or office parties.

Become the Ultimate Business Host!

For example, when it comes to hosting business dinners, banquets, or important client events, I'll show you how to:

- Entertain clients with ease, class, and confidence, using good wine and food as the ingredients to build strong and lasting business relationships.
- Delight colleagues and friends by serving delicious pairings of wine and food that they'll remember for years.
- Transform boring business meetings and sales functions into memorable social events that people will *want* to attend again and again.
- Use business entertaining as a business development and client relations *strategy*.

Impress Clients When You Take Them to Dinner!

But wait; there's more—as all those late-night infomercials always say. I'll also show you how to entertain clients and business associates with style when you take them out on the town or to dinner at a nice restaurant. You'll learn how to:

- Impress clients and colleagues with your intimate knowledge of fine wine and food.
- Order with confidence from restaurant wine lists.
- Select, taste, and appreciate fine wines just as master wine tasters do!
- Close big business deals by ordering just the right wine for the occasion.
- Get the best possible customer service from waiters and the bartenders, even in restaurants known for their world-class attitude.
- Charm (even surprise) business associates into seeing why they must start doing (or keep doing) business with you.

Take Your Home Entertaining to a Whole New Level

And there's still more you'll get from reading *Power Entertaining*. For example, I'll show you how to take your home entertaining to a new level, in ways that will wow your family and friends alike. You'll:

- Learn the basics of casual (but classy) home-based entertaining using wine and food to create unforgettable social events for family and friends.
- Learn about fun and fabulous foodie websites where you can buy exotic items such as tuna belly and acorn-fed ham to serve to friends and family.
- Learn how to find, select, and serve wines from many countries and teach people something about these wines at the same time.

Finally, here's still other stuff you'll learn from reading *Power Entertaining*:

- How to start and stock a home wine cellar
- How to entertain without getting stressed
- How to bond with wine merchants and sommeliers in your local community, people who can help you plan business and home events
- Why your palate is unique to you (as unique as your fingerprints) and why developing a taste for good wine and food involves learning to trust your judgment about what you like

I want you to enjoy this book because I wrote it for you! I want you to learn to love good wine, good food, and entertaining as much as I do. And the power entertaining tips I share in this book are intended to do exactly that. They'll help you entertain others with ease, enjoyment, and self-confidence—in a variety of business and social situations.

This isn't a book about wine per se (there are many other fine books out there on that topic). But this is perhaps the *only* book on the market today that focuses on how to use the *power* of good wine and food to impress your boss, clients, friends, and family.

So, my friend, why not open up a bottle of your favorite white or red wine right now, take a sip, and then take a deep dive into this book. Prepare to enjoy yourself, and may your next business function or client meeting over wine and food be a roaring and enjoyable success—for you and your clients alike!

All the best!

Introduction

I Love This Job!

How does a guy like me, a kid from New Jersey, grow up to become America's first Master Sommelier? To tell you that, I have to take you back to the tender days of my youth.

After graduating from college in 1968 with a degree in psychology, I decided to go to Hawaii with a buddy of mine for the summer. During my first two weeks in Honolulu, I soaked in the rays, ogled the babes, and fell in love with at least five different women. But then my mother called.

“Eddie, when are you coming home?”

I'd already decided *never!* But how do you say that to your *mother?* So I told her, “Mom, you won't believe this, but I got into grad school here at the University of Hawaii and just landed a great job in one of Waikiki's finest restaurants. I've even bought a car and rented an apartment!” I told her I didn't need money (music to any parent's ears) but that I had to go because I was “so friggin' busy.”

Now, truth be told, everything I told her was a lie. But I figured I could make it all come true soon enough.

I did, in fact, enroll at the University of Hawaii, and then shopped around for a nighttime job to support my schooling. And since I knew what a shrimp cocktail was, I applied for a waiter's position at The Ilikai, one of Hawaii's finest hotels. I told a nice lady in the hotel's human resources (HR) department about my *vast* work experience in restaurants, and guess what? They hired me! Okay, maybe I lied a little here, too, but my fantasy got me into their best restaurant, The Top of the I.

Once on the job, I learned quickly. Nobody seemed to notice my ineptitude, and I quickly earned enough money to share an apartment

in Manoa Valley with my buddy and buy myself a Volkswagen Beetle. Back in those days, a bug was the “in” car because you could drive around with your surfboard sticking up through the sunroof. I didn’t surf, but God it was a great chick magnet. Life was good!

One evening at work, while polishing glassware before the dinner service, I saw Anton, the maître d’, cruising around the dining room. In his hand was a silver chain with a big cellar key and tasting cup attached to it. It was what the French sommelier, Pierre, wore every night.

Suddenly Anton stopped in front of me, hung the chain around my neck, and said, “Pierre just called in sick, and I need you to sub for him tonight.”

I knew nothing about wine, so I said, “No way! I can’t do that.”

Anton leered at me, said he had enough problems on his hands that night without having to deal with me, and then read me the riot act.

“You want to keep your job here right? Well, listen up, white wine goes with fish. Red wine goes with meat. If anybody’s on the fence, pitch ’em a rosé like Lancer’s or Mateus. That’s all you need to know!”

Not having a choice, I picked up the wine list. I opened it in the middle and the first wine on the page was #131, Château Timberlay, a Bordeaux.

“Nice and fruity with a crisp, clean finish, \$16.00,” it said. Sounded good to me!

Before I could study the full list, a customer at table 6 asked for the wine steward. Reluctantly, I approached his table.

“My wife is having scampi, and I am having the rack of lamb, medium-rare,” he said. “What wine would you suggest?”

I was really nervous. “I suggest #131, Château Timberlay. It is a *Bor-Ducks*” (my feeble attempt at pronouncing *Bordeaux*). “Nice and fruity with a crisp, clean finish, and it goes well with meat,” I stammered.

“Well, if you recommend it, we’ll give it a try!” he said.

I brought the bottle to the table, opened it, and, shaking, poured both of them a glass. He tasted it; then she tasted it. She smiled at him, he smiled at me, and then he gave me \$3.00. “That’s an excellent choice!” he said.

“But, of course!” I said, pointing to myself. “I am *the* sommelier!”

A moment later, another man raised his hand from across the dining room. He said, “The wife and I are from Oklahoma, and we’re gonna have that cattleman’s cut, the 2.2-pound porterhouse, *well-done*. What’dya recommend with that?”

Without missing a beat I said, “Why, the #131 Château Timberlay at \$16.00. It’s a *Bor-Ducks*. Nice ’n fruity with a crisp, clean finish. It goes great with a well-done porterhouse steak!” I was on a roll.

“Young man, if that’s what you recommend we’ll have a bottle!” he said exuberantly. So, I poured each of them a glass. She tasted it first, smiled at her husband, and said, “This is wonderful.” With that, the guy gave me a couple of bucks tip. I was beginning to like this job!

At the end of the night all the waiters sat down at a table, and as we cooled our heels, we also counted our tips. It turned out that I’d made twice as much in tips serving wine that night as I had serving food. And, of course, I didn’t know diddly-squat about wine!

I said to myself, “I love this job!”

After that night, I served wine on Pierre’s days off and waited tables the rest of the week. One day I heard there was an opening for a full-time wine steward down the road at an Italian restaurant, The Trattoria. I applied and got the job. I didn’t know a thing about Italian wine but figured I could learn on the job.

As the restaurant’s *vinaio* (Italian for sommelier), one of my responsibilities was to restock the wines on the wine list. This gave me the opportunity to meet many wine salespeople and taste their wines. Thanks to them, my knowledge of wine grew. One of the people I met was a guy named George Spanek, General Manager of Bercut-Vandervoort, a San Francisco-based wine importer. George lived in the continental United States, but his territory included Honolulu. Although The Trattoria was an Italian restaurant, he insisted that I put one of his French wines, Château Bellegrave from Bordeaux, on my *Italian* wine list. Why? He said he needed to place the wine on as many wine lists as he could because the CEO of his company, Henry J. van der Voort was the owner of Château Bellegrave.

I thought, “What the hell? We ought to have at least one French wine on the list. To round out our wine cellar.”

One evening, George told me that his boss was coming to Honolulu the following month and that he'd suggested he dine at my restaurant. He told me I should be excited. "You will meet one of America's most highly regarded wine personalities," he said with a smile.

The evening came that Monsieur van der Voort was booked at our restaurant for dinner. That day was a hectic and tiring one for me at school, but I arrived at the restaurant full of youthful adrenaline. I was psyched to impress this guy when he arrived, so I hatched myself a plan.

That night, whenever customers asked for wine recommendations, instead of suggesting the usual Valpolicella, Chianti, or Barbaresco (as I typically did), I recommended just one thing: the 1966 Château Bellegrave. In a few cases people hesitated at first, but when I told them the restaurant's chef, "Luigi" used the Château Bellegrave in the sauce that accompanied their entrées, most of them readily acquiesced. And in cases where this didn't work, my last tactic (which always sealed the deal) was to pour them a sample of the wine. It turns out nobody can resist a free sample of vino that the sommelier sends to their table!

By the time 8 o'clock rolled around, I had placed 19 bottles of Château Bellegrave on tables surrounding the table reserved for Monsieur van der Voort. I'd choreographed things perfectly!

At the stroke of eight, Monsieur van der Voort and his entourage arrived at the restaurant. When he noticed that people at nearly every table were drinking a bottle of his 1966 Château Bellegrave at an Italian restaurant, he said to his waiter, Jean Jacques, "*Eh bien mon vieux, qu'est ce qui se passe ici?*" ("What's going on here?")

He wanted to know who was responsible for this. With that, the waiter pointed at me and said, "That guy over there." Monsieur van der Voort motioned me to his table and asked me why I'd done this. I told him I was trying to make a good impression on him. He said I had, and asked me to join him after I got off work.

Later that night we had a long talk, and he told me that he felt my passion for wine far surpassed any interest I had in behavioral psychology. He also said that if I really wanted to pursue my wine studies, I should do it at the famous Institut d'Oenologie at the

Université de Bordeaux, France. He added that if I were interested, he'd make the necessary introductions to get me in.

I was ecstatic—until he said I must be fluent in French! But he allayed my fears by saying I could take care of that with an additional year of study at the Université de Poitiers, and then offered to arrange an introduction for that as well.

Then he told me to call him *Henry*.

I told Henry I would think about his kind offer. So, over the next day or so, I thought about what it would mean to leave beautiful Honolulu; my wonderful girlfriend, Lani; and all my friends. It would be tough, but then again, I had a passion for wine that had been with me for years. Not only did I like to drink it, but I loved to serve it and entertain with it as well. I was a *joie de vivre* kind of guy who loved organizing parties for my friends and hosting them with both good wine and good food. Now, Henry was giving me a chance to formally pursue a career in a field I really loved. I knew this was my calling and was what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. My apprehension lasted about a day. Then I called Henry.

I didn't have enough money to pursue my new studies, so I had to work another nine months to save enough cash for wine school. Then I moved to France to study the language, and before long, I enrolled in the university and earned the prestigious degree, *diplôme d'aptitude à la dégustation des vins*, or DUAD, after three years of study.

But things didn't end there. In Europe, the highest distinction for a sommelier is that of Master Sommelier, a title bestowed only on completion of a rigorous and harrowing wine exam. I wondered if I could be that good and decided to give it a shot. I studied and studied and studied and took the exam, passing all three sections on my first try. With that I became America's first Master Sommelier in 1973—at the tender age of 28!

So that's how I got my start in the wine business—through the generosity of a wonderful friend and benefactor, Henry, who saw my passion for wine and was willing to help me turn my interest in wine into a career. But the story of my journeyman days as a sommelier doesn't end there. In fact, there's a funny footnote to this story that makes me both chuckle *and* wince to this day.

After passing the Master Sommelier exam, it was time for me to return to America. Four years in France had been nice, but it had also taught me to appreciate things like big cars, Big Macs, free enterprise, and the kind of chicks I'd met in Hawaii. Nothing against France—I now spoke the language with aplomb. But I really was hankering for home.

As it turned out, though, getting back home wouldn't be that easy and would wind up costing me a king's ransom in wine—all because of the car I owned!

While studying in France I had bought a beat-up Fiat 600 from a friend for \$150. It was already about 20 years old when I bought it, but at least it ran. In fact, I drove that car for three years while in wine school in Bordeaux. For the first two years, the car worked fine. I drove it everywhere, exploring the French countryside on weekends, visiting châteaux, sampling great wines, and collecting bottles of fine vintages that I tucked away in the car's trunk and hauled back with me to my student apartment.

Then one day I hit a bump in the road (In France these things are often the size of sink holes.) and lost the car's starter motor. Too expensive to replace, I wound up driving the car for the next two years without a starter motor, jump-starting it when I needed to by pushing it or parking on a hill, releasing the brake, and letting the car roll gently downhill when I needed to get it going in the morning for class. I did this for *two* years!

At times operating this Mixmaster of a car with its 26-horsepower toy engine was really comical. A tiny thing (by American standards) when you started it, it sounded more like a very large household appliance than a motor vehicle. But it was fun to drive and generally reliable, and parking it was never a problem! In fact, I found this really neat parking space at the top of a hill near where I lived as a student in Bordeaux that was always available because nobody else would park there. (Yeah, you guessed it; it was right next to a fire hydrant.) For two years I collected unpaid parking tickets on the car, considering it the price I had to pay to drive a car with no starter motor.

But now, as I prepared to leave Bordeaux for the last time, I was concerned. The car was as rickety as a rickshaw, mostly because of all the miles I'd put on it over the years. Even after losing the starter

motor, I'd continued my weekend jaunts to the countryside to sample and buy wine. What's more, I had continued to collect parking tickets that the *gendarmes* had placed on my car's windshield several times a week. By this time, I had more than 100 of them tucked away in the glove box. All unpaid!

Still, I thought the car had enough life in it for one last road trip from Bordeaux to Paris for my flight home. But little did I know . . .

As I packed my stuff for the flight to the States, my most treasured possessions were 116 unopened bottles of some of the finest wine in the world, bottles that I'd collected during four years of weekend wine romps through the French countryside. I had collected a wine cellar's worth of vintages that was worth thousands in today's dollars.

I couldn't take all these bottles with me on the plane, of course, so, I shipped 100 bottles to the United States ahead of me. Thank God! The remaining 16 bottles—some of the best in the lot—would travel with me from Bordeaux to New York.

On the day of my departure from Bordeaux, I left the city around noon with an open bottle of 10-franc wine to drink on the way. It was an 11-hour drive to Paris, and for the first few hours, I drove merrily along, breathing in the French country air, mulling my future, and serenely sipping wine as the ancient French countryside passed quietly behind me

And then trouble!

About 9 hours into the trip, just 2 hours short of Paris, a light flickered on the car's dashboard. I wanted to ignore it, but I knew what it meant. The light flickered amber for a few moments and then turned to a solid red.

Uh ohhh . . .

I pulled the car over and tried to figure out what to do. Although I had my ticket with me for my return flight, I didn't have so much as a franc in my pocket in the event of a roadside emergency or accident. (Remember, I was a student!)

I didn't know what to do. I couldn't turn the engine off because I knew I'd never get it started again. (At this point the car was too heavy to push because it was so full of my stuff!) There was no way I could knock on anybody's door to ask for help because it was late

at night, and if somebody called the police, they'd find 100 unpaid parking tickets in my glove box and I'd be dragged off to a French jail never to be heard from again.

Making matters worse, I had never insured the car during my years in France (a requirement of French law), so I was afraid of having my passport confiscated and my wine impounded and getting hauled before an unsympathetic French magistrate for God knows what kind of punishment.

Yes, I was in deep shit. Or *merde*, as the French say.

So I went to the back of the car and flipped open the hood to stare at the engine. After all, that's what *real* men do right?

Then I got it. The engine was overheating. I thought for a moment and came up with the perfect solution. I unzipped my fly and took aim at my car's now clattering engine. The only problem was it was dark and I didn't notice the spinning radiator fan. The result, shall we say, was like "spitting in the wind"; everything came right back to me, soaking my pants without giving any relief to the exasperated engine! Ugh. Now what?

Then it hit me. I had lots of wine on board. Oh God, had it come to this?

I went back to the front of the car, opened the first box of wine and took out a bottle. It was a 1959 Château Mouton Rothschild. I pulled out the cork, took a sip, said, "Oh my God!," and poured it into the car's dry radiator. I still remember the sound it made, *Glug, glug-glug-glug, glug, glug-glug, glug . . .*

I watched the dashboard hopefully, but the red dashlight stayed on. Damn!

I pulled out the next bottle, a 1959 Lafite Rothschild. I took a swig, uttered a stronger profanity, and then poured *it* into the radiator. Again, *glug-glug-glug, glug, glug-glug, glug . . .*

No change.

The next vintage I had with me was my 1955. I poured bottles of Château Lafite Rothschild, Château Mouton Rothschild, Château Latour, Château Margaux, and Château Haut Brion (a total of five bottles in all) down into the void, never to be cherished or loved by anyone!

Still the light stayed on.

What the hell? My face was now wet with tears and red with anger. I felt really sorry for myself and angry with myself at the same time!

Then I went to the 1953 vintage. Same volunteers this time—bottles of Lafite, Latour Mouton, Margaux, and Haut Brion. Oy vey!

The light didn't flicker, not even for a moment.

Next into the radiator went two bottles of 1961 Hospice de Beaune, Corton, Cuvée Docteur Peste (liquid silk) . . .

Finally, the light went out!

By this time, only one bottle of wine remained. With things finally under control, I got in the car, drove to Paris, left the car running near the airport tarmac, got out with my bottle and little suitcase, and sprinted to board my plane.

Okay, so maybe you're a little skeptical about the veracity of this story. Over the years some people have questioned whether I've exaggerated events here for dramatic effect. One man called me a liar. He was a lawyer. But here are the plain facts. Everything I've said about this story is true. There's no exaggeration. Honest!

You must realize that in 1973, wines we consider priceless today, like the Château Mouton Rothschild, cost only about \$10.00 a bottle in Bordeaux. Today, wines like this can go for \$500 to \$1,000 a bottle!

Now back to the story . . .

The plane took off for America. I sat back in my chair, stinking of wine (and worse), reached into my bag, and pulled out a bottle of 1945 Château Latour (the year I was born).

The girl sitting next to me noticed the label, smiled, said her name was Cheryl, and appeared to ignore my heavy beard, pungent aroma, and disheveled appearance. I pulled the cork and with two hands lifted the bottle to my lips and started drinking.

I was a happy man. After all, I'd achieved my goals. I'd pursued my passion to become a wine expert and become America's first Master Sommelier—and I wasn't even 30.

I'd also learned a classy romance language in the process, steeped myself in European culture, dated a few fabulous French women, and proved how resilient I could be when faced with an overheated Fiat on the edge of a major radiator breakdown.

Life, I decided, was good, and I set myself about the task of achieving my next goal: to bring the joys of good wine, bonhomie, and good food to others. And that's a goal I've achieved with the writing of this book.

So read on, my friend. And above all else: *Amusez-vous bien*. Or as we say in American, enjoy!

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My Definition of Power Entertaining

More business decisions occur over lunch and dinner than at any other time, yet no MBA courses are given on the subject.

—Peter Drucker

Does the thought of taking a big client to lunch make your palms sweat or cause your stomach to knot up?

Does the idea of hosting a group of business colleagues or major customers at dinner in a fancy restaurant make your heart pound or leave you gasping frantically for breath? I'm serious!

It may be because you think you're bad at small talk, are impatient with "social niceties," or don't know how to properly read a French menu or wine list. (Your mother never taught you this stuff.) Or, maybe it's because you know it was only a year ago that you finally learned the difference between tabbouleh and baba ghanoush—this after stumbling upon the Food Channel one night while channel surfing for another episode of *Law and Order: SVU*.

Or maybe it's because you fear your client (the man or woman you're taking to dinner) knows more about good wine and food than you do, and you don't want to look like some yahoo when he or she orders the halibut cheeks with tempura crosnes (aka Chinese

artichoke) and you opt for the 16-ounce sirloin with a side of twice-baked potatoes.

Relax my friend; you're not alone!

Just as many people fear public speaking more than their own death, a lot of us also have a morbid fear of entertaining other people—especially in business settings. Oh yeah, you might be comfortable taking that client buddy of yours for a beer once in a while at that bar down the street from your office. (You know, the place with the loud music where the beers come with nachos and a quart bucket of fried calamari.) But that's as far as you ever go with “business entertaining.”

Until now, it hasn't mattered much, either. You've had jobs where business entertaining wasn't really necessary. Or, if it was, it was always a low-key and occasional thing, like taking your secretary to lunch on their birthday, celebrating a colleague's promotion, or buying that occasional lunch for your client buddy you know well.

Now Business Entertaining Is Part of Your Job Description!

But now you're in the big time. Now your job requires you to do business entertaining on a regular basis. You may be:

- A salesperson who must regularly wine and dine clients in nice restaurants
- An executive who often closes big business deals over dinner or cocktails
- A chief executive officer CEO who must play host to business prospects at swanky cocktail receptions, glitzy dinners, and other business social functions
- A corporate banquet or meetings planner who's looking for new ideas in planning office parties, client events, awards dinners, and other business functions
- A banker, lawyer, ad executive, or investment advisor whose clients like to do business over dinner and drinks

- One of the millions of other men and women in business today for whom business entertaining is part of doing the job

Yes, for many people today, business entertaining is part of the job description—at least the *implicit* job description. And now you’ve realized it’s part of your job description, too!

You picked up this book because you realize that you need to develop the skills, know-how, and panache to entertain others with style, ease, and confidence in business situations. In essence, you’ve decided that you need to master the skills of power entertaining!

What exactly *is* power entertaining, you ask?

As its core, I define power entertaining as the art of building strong business relationships with colleagues and customers, using great wine, food, and hospitality as the currency for bringing people together, creating enjoyable events, fostering interpersonal chemistry, and instilling in people a desire to do business with you and your company or organization.

This book is about giving you the tools and social savoir faire to power entertain with confidence, because doing so can make you a star in your business, somebody whom others will be attracted to and want to do business with time and time again.

Building Business Relationships Is More Important Than Ever!

Building relationships has always been key to success in business, but today it’s more important than ever. Business is hypercompetitive, and building and sustaining strong client relationships is critical not just to getting business but to keeping it. Remember the sales adage, “Keeping an existing customer costs a lot less than acquiring a new one”? That’s always good advice, but today (given the cost of doing business), it’s truer than ever!

Mastering the art of power entertaining will help you both *attract* and *retain* customers. And guess what? It doesn’t have to cost you an arm and a leg. You can entertain others with class and style but also at a very reasonable cost. So, I encourage you to make power

entertaining a part of your company's business development efforts and marketing mix from this point forward.

There's also a second reason to make power entertaining part of your approach to business development today: by applying power entertaining principles to your interactions with clients, you and your company can get a critical leg up in today's increasingly global business environment. That's right. In today's world we all know that business is increasingly global and cross-cultural in nature. To be successful in this new business world, executives must be able to entertain effectively across multiple countries, cultures, and time zones. Sophistication and worldliness are important, and knowing the subtleties of how to entertain others in a wide variety of situations can make the critical difference when it comes to landing large international clients, closing deals with foreign partners, building relationships with global customers and suppliers, and much, much more.

See where I'm going here?

Let's face it; business entertaining is something you need to know how to do—with skill, charm, knowledge, and self-assuredness.

Thus, the time for you to get over any ambivalence you may have about business entertaining is *now*, my friend. And learning the principles of power entertaining can help you do that. Embracing power entertaining principles and practices will help you start or grow your business. They can help you nurture both new and existing business relationships. They can help you advance in your career and excel in your interactions with others. Bottom line: power entertaining is a unique form of marketing and business development that you can use for a variety of business purposes.

An Entertainment Coach to CEOs

Over the years, I've helped hundreds of business executives and CEOs become successful power entertainers, and my goal in this book is to help you become one, too. What does it take? Just a slight change of mind-set on your part and a willingness to embrace and apply the principles of power entertaining that I outline in these pages. If you conscientiously apply the ideas and suggestions I outline in this book, you, too, can be a power entertainer in whatever realm of life and business you operate!

How Power Entertaining Is Different from Traditional Business Entertaining

For years, many companies have built their business entertaining (and business development efforts) around a simple model of “boozing and schmoozing” clients. Typically this entails businesspeople using their expense accounts to wine and dine clients and business prospects in expensive restaurants or other exclusive venues. And sometimes it involves a company sponsoring big cocktail receptions or sporting events or hosting big business banquets. The premise in all these cases is to throw expensive food and alcohol (sometimes a lot of it) at people with the hope that it will increase sales and improve business relationships. But truth be told, it’s often hard to gauge the success and cost-effectiveness of this kind of business entertaining, especially after hotels and caterers are paid and everybody’s expense reports have been submitted! And, it’s often an excuse for everybody (salespeople and customers alike) to get so heavily hammered while “discussing business” that they don’t always *close* the business.

So, is there a better way to do business entertaining? You bet!

Power entertaining differs from traditional business entertaining in at least five ways:

1. *Power entertaining isn’t just an excuse to booze and schmooze with clients; it’s actually a business development strategy.* It’s about creating highly pleasurable social events for people built around great wine, great food, great company, and great ambience. It’s also about giving people enjoyable memories of an evening with you (and your company) that will “brand” you in their minds, cause them to remember you fondly, and make them want to do business with you in the future!
2. *Traditional business entertaining often involves large social events featuring lousy hotel food and boring everyday wines of no distinction. In contrast, power entertaining events are often held on a small, intimate scale, featuring sampler menus of delicious foods alongside many different kinds of wine served throughout an evening.* The idea at a power entertaining event is to introduce people to

wines and foods they've never had before and to use this as the catalyst to get people talking and interacting with one another—and with you! The wine is often the star of the show at these events, while the food items served with the wine play an important and savory supporting role.

3. *Traditional business entertaining often includes boring after-dinner speakers that nobody remembers. In contrast, power entertaining events include strong educational and entertainment components, so people leave the event feeling they've learned something (and enjoyed something) that they will long remember.* To inject entertainment and educational components into a power entertaining event, you might decide to:
 - a. Have a professional sommelier give a short lecture to people about the finer points of wine tasting.
 - b. Introduce people to a selection of wines and appetizers they've never tasted before.
 - c. Serve people unusual pairings of wine (for example, comparing American wines and their European counterparts).
 - d. Organize wine and food pairings around other specific themes.
 - e. Give people who attend your event small gifts and mementos like menus, recipes for the food served, and info about the various wines they sampled that night. All this to create an event that they will long remember.
4. *Power entertaining events give people a better chance to network than occurs at more traditional client events.* At power entertaining functions, guests get to mingle with one another while enjoying the various wine/food pairings you serve to them throughout an evening. This breaks down social barriers, encourages relationship building and interaction, and creates a pleasant shared experience for everybody present.

Finally, the beauty of my event-proven power entertaining principles is that you can use them to plan and manage events of virtually any size! Yes, you can use them to plan and manage events for hundreds of people in a hotel ballroom (if you really want to). Or, use them to plan an event for just a couple of dozen people at an exclusive restaurant, resort, or

country club. You can design an evening to feature a beautifully choreographed series of wine and food pairings served to people over several hours (complete with color commentary on what people are tasting). Or, you can put together just a couple of wine/food combinations to serve people over an hour or two. You can even use power entertaining principles to design intimate one-on-one dinners with your most important clients in five-star hotels, business clubs, or other exclusive settings.

Give People an Unforgettable Experience!

The bottom line here is that power entertaining is all about creating an experience for people, the likes of which they don't normally see—and probably never have experienced—in a business setting before. I like to say that a power entertaining event can be the culinary equivalent of going to see a performance of Cirque du Soleil. Done right, your guests will be blown away, not only by the wine and food you serve, but also by the surprises and delights you tuck into your afternoon or evening event with them.

If you build your next business event around the concepts I've just mentioned, not only will you wow people with your ability to throw a good a party but you'll also give them a great wine and culinary experience that they'll long remember—and always associate with you!

That's a brief overview of what power entertaining as a concept is all about. Think of it as a new operating system to govern how you do client development and business entertaining in the future. I guarantee it works, and this book will show you how.

Chapter Overviews

Following are more details on what you'll find in each chapter of *Power Entertaining*:

- *Chapter 2: Toss (and I Do Mean TOSS) That Caesar Salad!* Want to know how *not* to put on a big business event for a lot of people in a hotel? In this chapter, I tell the story of how I helped

save one of my clients from social disaster by helping him plan a menu for a big event that won him kudos with customers and colleagues alike. (I think you'll like the menu I recommended he serve. It's one you could serve, too!)

- *Chapter 3: 20 Secrets of Successful Power Entertaining.* Want to be known as somebody who puts on mind-blowing wine tastings and hospitality events for your clients and colleagues? Chapter 3 lays out 20 power entertaining tips to make you a master of upscale business entertaining in a wide variety of settings. I talk about how to power entertain with style and panache; how to create a total experience for your guests using principles of hospitality, graciousness, and stagecraft; and how to delight your guests with fine wine and good food, great ambience, and careful planning. In writing this chapter, I drew heavily on my many years of experience living, studying, and working in Europe, especially France, where I spent thousands of hours entertaining and serving people as a sommelier in restaurants, at workplaces, and at home.
- *Chapter 4: Power Pairing Great Foods with Great Wines.* Good food and good wine can bring people together at a party like few other things can. To quote my friend and colleague Sam Horn, they are the “international currency for connection” and can set the mood for people to engage, hook up, hang out, and generate “fireworks” with one another. But what about hooking up the right wine with the right food to create *culinary* fireworks at a party or client event? How do you do that? In this chapter, I talk about how to create dramatic and even provocative pairings of wine and food that will make your palate pop and your jaw drop. I describe powerful, even orgasmic combinations of wine and food that are mouthwateringly delicious and unforgettable!
- *Chapter 5: Your New Best Friends: The Sommelier and the Wine Merchant.* In this chapter I emphasize that as a power entertainer, you don't need to become a wine and food expert to act like one. You simply have to have friends in the right places. And that means developing personal relationships with sommeliers and wine merchants in your community and at your favorite restaurants. Taking the initiative to meet such wine professionals can

help shape the power entertaining you do and make any event you host a blowout success!

- *Chapter 6: So Many Wines, So Little Time!* In this chapter I first take you on a brief tour of the world of wines and then share more than two dozen suggested wine pairings that you can incorporate into power entertaining events. You'll learn such things as how to distinguish a Beaujolais from a Bordeaux and a Petit Chablis from a Premier Cru, as well as the meaning of words like *terroir* and *flabby*. You'll also learn all the basics for designing power pairings of wines to both delight and impress your guests and keep them talking about your event for days, if not weeks, afterward!
- *Chapter 7: Taste Wine like the Masters Do.* In this chapter I explain how to taste wine as the Masters do and how to enjoy wine tasting to its fullest by using your eyes, nose, and taste buds to assess its quality, complexity, and character. I discuss the tasting methods I learned while a student at the Université de Bordeaux and how you can conduct fun wine tastings with your guests, in part by introducing them to tasting criteria inspired by European wine masters. I conclude the chapter by explaining that although there are many objective criteria for judging a wine, everybody's palate is different—as unique, in fact, as their fingerprints. So, you should discover what *your* palate enjoys, not simply subscribe to what others (including wine critics) say you should enjoy.
- *Chapter 8: Out of the Kitchen Closet: Coming Out as a Foodie!* In this chapter I describe some of the best foodie websites on the web and where to find really special stuff to serve guests at business or home events. Why shop online? Simple. Today, everybody shops for gourmet foods at their local gourmet food store, but that means everybody is fishing from the same pond. This makes it more difficult to find really special things with which to wow your company. By contrast, there are literally hundreds of fun and exotic foodie websites that you can visit to find exotic items that you'd never find in your local gourmet food shop. Because website URLs change constantly, I recommend that you use my website, www.eddieosterland.com, as the portal to

visit all of the foodie websites I talk about in this chapter. That way, you'll enjoy a hassle-free online shopping experience and be eligible for discounts on many online food products.

- *Chapter 9: Power Entertaining at Home.* In Chapter 9 I tell you how to start a wine collection (or wine cellar) and use it as the basis for power entertaining at home. I provide tips on what to include in your wine collection and how and where to store it. I also encourage readers to collect a broad international sampling of wines from various wine-growing regions around the world, including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, South America, and, of course, Washington State, Oregon, California, and New York (especially Long Island).
- *Chapter 10: Masterminds: From Wine Geek to Wine Expert.* Ever thought of turning your hobby and passion for wine into a full-time profession? It's a big leap from wine hobbyist or geek to wine professional, but in this chapter I talk about credentials you may want to pursue to become a sommelier, wine merchant, or wine educator. I discuss the four most esteemed organizations that offer professional wine credentials around the world and how they differ from one another. I wrote this chapter as a public service to my fellow sommeliers and wine educators who undertake extensive education and training to become wine professionals (and who deserve acknowledgment for doing so). I also wrote it for all those who aspire to learn more about the business and scholarly sides of the wine world.

So, there you have it, my friend: an overview of what *Power Entertaining* is all about. You're going to learn a lot about being a power entertainer in the pages that follow. But first, to set the stage for things, let's start in Chapter 2 by talking about what you should *never* do when planning a big business dinner and reception in a hotel. And I mean *never!*

Praise for *Power Entertaining*

“Eddie Osterland is a brilliant sommelier, an accomplished businessman, and a member of a seemingly shrinking group of people known as class acts. I loved him and admired him from the moment I met him, and now I am so happy he is sharing this invaluable information in his outstanding book. I highly recommend it.”

—JACK CANFIELD, COAUTHOR OF *THE SUCCESS PRINCIPLES AND CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL*®

“Successful leaders know all about the importance of nurturing their relationships with colleagues and business associates. Entertaining with ease and confidence is often a key part of that process. In *Power Entertaining*, Master Sommelier Eddie Osterland offers a wealth of fun, informative tips on how to entertain successfully in all kinds of business situations. Read this book and let Eddie show you how to become a master of business entertaining!”

—KEN BLANCHARD, COAUTHOR OF *THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER*® AND *LEAD WITH LUV*

“Looking for a new way to entertain clients or develop business? *Power Entertaining* is a must-read for anybody who’s interested in using hosting as a business development strategy. Full of creative ideas on how to bring people together around good wine and food, this book will make you a pro at what I believe to be the most fun and effective way to grow your network.”

—KEITH FERRAZI, AUTHOR OF *NEVER EAT ALONE*

“Wine knowledge is a powerful tool for today’s businessperson—providing leverage in all business entertaining. Eddie Osterland’s dynamic but expert approach makes learning about wine just as much fun as drinking it.”

—MARY EWING-MULLIGAN, MASTER OF WINE AND COAUTHOR OF *WINE FOR DUMMIES*

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Also available
as an e-book

