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## The harder they come

Sorta sad to see a prodigiously talented young thing go from zero to Mariani so quickly. I can't tell if "intern" is code for "unpaid," but anyone who needs help in attending parties is getting too many invitations. Food is a first-hand experience.

Sending an emissary to the starchefs.com book party at Barfry, for instance, would mean missing out on a physics lesson, some great banter, a little bitching and a surprising admission. Not to mention the most effete slider ever: foie gras. I learned that a little bottle of Champagne will bubble over wildly unless you remove the straw, which funnels the effervescence straight up and out. I heard that a bright young chef with a great resume is already anticipating trouble in bringing a venerable but tired Village restaurant up to critic speed (can you say FOH?) And while everyone was wondering why the Frialator was off, I was impressed by the steady flow of raw tuna creations from the kitchen. Only as I left did I find the table with the big pile of brochures promoting "Superfrozen tuna — 'fresher than fresh.'" But those are just my impressions. I wonder what an untrained kiddie would think.

The fat-with-details book the party was promoting was also worth the journey. I would say it's intended for Trotter wannabes, but for some reason Charlie is not among the 500-some "Chefs to Know." And while I wondered why a web site would need to produce hard copy, I can already see how handy it is to have all that information to flip through while my overburdened Mac is wheezing. The birth years alone are fascinating. Until a certain Mexican starchef showed up, I was easily the oldest person in the room at the affair, and I rode home flipping pages and taking comfort in how many chefs are actually my age or older in a young guys' game. And the interview questions could come in handy for those already bailing on what a friend called couture food-writing. . .

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