

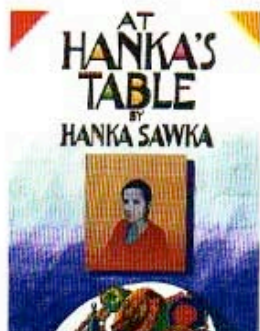
Recipes of Love

Hanna Sawka '96 remembers dinner at her parents' house in New York as the most exciting time of day. Around the table, sharing ideas about politics, art, and literature, would be a virtual salon of struggling artists, photographers, and writers, all friends of her father, Jan, an exiled artist from Poland who brought his family to New York City in 1977. "There were so many new ideas and so much creativity going across that table," Hanna said. "I'd just sit and take it all in. It was a great way to grow up. I wish everyone could have something like that in their lives."

At the heart of every gathering was her mother's cooking: homemade dishes such as beef roulades, pierogi, and many others, all created from treasured recipes from her native Poland. *At Hanka's Table* (Lake Isle Press, 2004, \$21.95; www.amazon.com), a collaboration between Hanna and her mother, Hanka, with artwork by Jan Sawka, collects dozens of those recipes and intersperses them with vivid accounts of Hanka's experiences

growing up in communist Poland. For Hanna, the "table" referred to in the title represents more than just a piece of furniture. "In our house, it was where cultures were exchanged," she said.

The book, which took about three years to research and write, serves not only as a cookbook but also as a tribute to family, Polish culinary history, and cultural heritage. "Food is only one part of it," said Hanna, who majored in English and theater at Smith. "It's about surviving, it's about women's empowerment, it's about values and the importance of family."



Like the country of Poland itself, which is situated at the crossroads of Europe, the recipes in the collection reflect a mix of ethnic flavors, with many carrying French, Italian, and Turkish influences.

Of those sumptuous dishes that brought her friends and family together, Hanna points to two as her favorites: the cold summer soup and the meringue cake. "I call it 'paradise on a plate.' It's that good."
—JM

debut | NEW FILM DEPICTS FAMILY CONFLICT



Carry Me Home, the latest film project by Anna Ryan Hansen AC '90, is being shown regularly on Showtime. The drama, which premiered on December 13, depicts the family conflict that arises following a father's death in World War II, as his young daughter (Ashley Rose Orr) clashes with her grief-stricken mother (Penelope Ann

Miller) over the advances of a new suitor. Airtimes are listed at www.sho.com. More information about Hansen's film projects is available at www.saturdaypictures.com.