



Thursday, December 28, 2006

## Brand sluts? Gastroporn? What's a 'peerent' to do?

### Final Word

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So what does the new year hold for us? Lots of people seem to think they know already. My inbox has been filled this week with things to look for in 2007.

One missive came from trendspotter **Marian Salzman**, the New York advertising executive who popularized the term "metrosexual."

Her latest book, written with **Ira Matathia**, is out this week. In conjunction with the release of *Next Now: Trends for the Future*, Salzman shared some phrases she believes will soon become part of pop culture.

Among them: "adulthood," when young people are at the crossroads between autonomous living and relying on the parents; "brand sluts," consumers who jump from brand to brand with no loyalty; "peerents," parents who treat their kids like peers; and "truth lite," the shoulder-shrugging way people shrink from accountability, cloud the truth and dance around the facts.

I can relate to none of them. I never lingered at any crossroad after college. I waved goodbye to my parents, moved out and moved on, not even returning to do laundry. I'm also quite loyal to brands, having worn the same style of moccasins from L.L. Bean now for 40 years.

Furthermore, my parents never once treated me as a peer. Just the thought of it gives me a good chuckle.

And when I was growing up, truth did not come in "lite" form. It was still the real thing. Full strength.

One term on Salzman's list I could relate to, though. I'm quite familiar with it, in fact. "Gastroporn."

Salzman describes it this way:

"Preparing, cooking, tasting and eating food have become voyeuristic pleasures separated from physical reality and carried out by experts who go through the moves with practiced ease."

My partner, Jack, is addicted to gastroporn. He can't get enough.

Addiction is part of his personality, I fear. A few years ago, I wrote about his obsession with The Weather Channel. We can't go anywhere without his monitoring storm clouds. Europe. The Caribbean. New Jersey.

I worry about his need to know where cold fronts are at all times. I have tried to get him into a 12-step program but failed. I'm sad to report he still gets high witnessing a low-pressure system sweeping across the Great Plains.

Now gastroporn on Food Network has joined The Weather Channel on his list of addictions. On any given day, especially Saturday and Sunday afternoons, I can walk into the den and there he sits watching someone dice onions, bake bread, sauté onions, his eyes as glazed as the carrots.

I don't know who any of these gastroporn stars are. I don't want to. There's an insufferably perky young woman, a sweet if somewhat irritating Italian grandmother, a Southern bottle-blond belle and an earnest young man who twirls faster than his blender. It doesn't matter who they are. They all have a hold on Jack.

I know where all this began, too. Julia Child and a simple reduction sauce. One sip led to another, as it so often does.

Just a warning to all as we enter a new year.