

unpleasant surprise in following the recipes if they assume that “Mildly hot serrano and jalapeño chiles...often have almost no heat and little taste” (p.38). The bibliography is less comprehensive and overlooks important works, including those by Vanessa Fonseca, Cruz Miguel Ortiz Cuadra, and Diva Sanjur.

The standardized approach of the series invites cross-cultural comparisons by future scholars, but, unfortunately, this structure also makes it more difficult for the present author to demonstrate the thesis that a common Latino food culture is (or is not) emerging from the meeting of immigrants in the United States. The chapters are organized into separate sections based on national origins, with little attempt to connect them. It does not help the reader trying to keep these comparisons straight that South American countries, alphabetically ordered, alternate almost perfectly between the Northern Andes and the Southern Cone. Moreover, the historical background is treated only briefly, and the role of Iberian conquistadors in unifying diverse indigenous cuisines is relatively neglected. Janer does a far better job with ethnographic sources, providing nuanced descriptions of the changes and continuities of gender roles resulting from migration and intermarriage. She also explores the commercial interactions among Latinos and with outsiders that take place in popular restaurants and markets, as well as in the realm of haute cuisine with the Nuevo Latino movement. Avoiding facile generalizations, this book offers an insightful portrait of the enormously diverse Latino foods and people.

—Jeffrey M. Pilcher, University of Minnesota

*Holy Smoke: The Big Book of North Carolina Barbecue*

John Shelton Reed and Dale Volberg Reed,  
with William McKinney

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008  
328 pp., 237 Illustrations. \$30.00 (cloth)

John Shelton Reed and Dale Volberg Reed set out to explain everything about North Carolina barbecue, and they most certainly succeed in a way that is both truthful and easy to understand. With conversational flair reminiscent of the people whose stories they tell, Reed and Reed begin by explaining North Carolina barbecue both historically and stylistically. Rounding out a reader’s basic knowledge with directions and tips for preparing barbecue at home, the authors finish the guide with several biographical snapshots of cooks who have influenced barbecue traditions.

From the beginning the authors explain that theirs isn’t the only way to craft North Carolina barbecue. They come by their claims honestly and humbly, providing everything from diagrams for building your own pit to recipes for side dishes like coleslaw and sweet tea. Part how-to and part storytelling, the book begins to unravel the deep folk tradition beneath the sauce. Reading this book gives experts and novices alike a chance to experience the cultural dilemma of “Piedmont” versus “Lexington” firsthand. Many of the stories the authors tell of Jess Swicegood, Sid Weaver, Ed Mitchell, and Wilber Shirley highlight simple men and women of character who have picked one thing to do and who do it right.

Making barbecue isn’t glamorous, and this book shows just how difficult it can be. But the tiny mom-and-pop restaurants that dot the map prove that quality ’cue is worth it. The owners get up at three or four A.M. to start the wood coals, stoking the fire for sometimes six to eight hours to rile the taste buds of their customers. And they do it because their grandfather or their father did it, and because they believe that there’s only one good way to make barbecue.

Through historical notes and asides, recipes, diagrams, and stories of people who have carried on the tradition, the authors show that barbecue is more than just a meal. Love, hardship, and generations of striving go into every morsel of this “white and brown.” All visitors to North Carolina should keep this relevant guide at their fingertips. Perhaps then they would start to see past the chain-restaurant grub for the real deal.

—Jessica Orr, Raleigh, NC

*Wine Politics: How Governments, Environmentalists, Mobsters, and Critics Influence the Wines We Drink*  
Tyler Colman

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008  
xv + 186 pp. Illustrations. \$27.50 (cloth)

At first glance, the title *Wine Politics* makes the reader ask, “What is so political about wine?” Tyler Colman answers this question in both his preface and first chapter before taking the reader on a fascinating and fast-paced ride over nearly two hundred pages. His accomplishment is remarkable, considering how complex the ideas he presents are. Colman is a talented writer who brings academic rigor to the world of wine. Six years ago he submitted his Ph.D. dissertation on “The Politics of

Quality: Institutions and Market Stratification in the Wine Sector” to Northwestern University’s Department of Political Science. Since then he has authored an award-winning blog ([www.drivino.com](http://www.drivino.com)).

In Chapter Two Colman outlines the histories of the French and U.S. wine industries from about 1850 to 1930. He considers the 1930s key. During that decade France’s wine industry was crystallized into a sophisticated appellation system that controlled how French wine would henceforth be made and sold. This system became the model for all of Europe to follow and for the rest of the world to reckon with. For the United States the 1930s were the pivot point between the end of Prohibition and the beginning of an unsophisticated, unbridled, and creative wine industry, which soon fell into the vice grips of a highly regulated, state-controlled distribution system. Focusing primarily on the Bordeaux and Napa Valley wine industries, Colman chronicles how the French and U.S. wine industries met their respective challenges in the decades that followed. He discusses how these two industries negotiated societal and technological changes as well as distribution, regulatory, and ecological constraints. His comments on the impact of wine journalism on consumer perception and quality and the subsequent response of the wine industry and trade have global implications.

Colman’s information is accurate and well documented (there are sixteen pages of footnotes). As a wine educator and journalist, I value his deft use of well-researched information to support the themes he develops. *Wine Politics* has become a full-fledged member of my library, and I recommend it to students enrolled in a course I teach on the business of wine. If the reader already has an average-to-expert understanding of wine and the wine industry, this book will rapidly telescope his or her understanding. By the end of the volume Colman has clearly shown the patterns of change that led to the present state of the wine world. For Colman, wine politics means the web of human activity that brings the bottle to the dinner table.

—William Nesto, MW

*Pet Food Politics: The Chihuahua in the Coal Mine*

Marion Nestle

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008

232 pp. Illustrations. \$18.95 (cloth)

The 2007 recall of nearly one hundred brands of pet food “revealed that anyone interested in the health of people, food animals, or pets should care deeply about how pet foods are made, used, and regulated” (p.3), according to author Marion Nestle, professor in the department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University. In this carefully researched and meticulously documented book, Nestle outlines the events leading up to the recall and details the responses (or lack thereof) of the pet food industry and the federal government. From the initial illness and deaths of laboratory cats being used in palatability studies, the trail led first to Menu Foods and then to an astonishing array of suppliers, producers, and consumers. Menu is the company that made most of the recalled brands, a fact that came as a shock to many consumers. The author points out early on that the main difference in pet food brands is not so much the quality of the nutrition as the price.

Nestle traces this convoluted story to the point when industry and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) scientists determined that the culprit was melamine, an industrial chemical used to make plastics (because scrap melamine is full of nitrogen, it has long been used as an additive to animal feed). In this case, melamine was added to wheat gluten to falsely boost the apparent protein content of pet foods. The number of cats and dogs that died from eating tainted products will never be known, and the repercussions of the recall reached all the way up the human food-supply chain.

After attempting to untangle the intricate web of suppliers from all over the world who provided Menu with ingredients for its products, the author concludes that the supply chain is so complex “that end users can hardly be expected to know where their ingredients come from” (p.133). A longtime food advocate, she details the problems faced by the understaffed and inadequately funded FDA and USDA, and joins the growing call for a single agency to oversee food-safety procedures for animal and human food alike. The FDA currently operates under regulations first passed in 1906 and revised in 1938, when national and international food supplies were handled under greatly different circumstances. It’s no wonder that consumer confidence in the government’s oversight of our food supply fell from 82 percent in January 2006 to 47 percent in December 2007.

—Lisa H. Hiley, Williamstown, MA

