

John Baxter: *Eating Eternity. Food, Art and Literature in France*: Museyon, New York, 2017: 268 pp., paperback, \$19.95.

The Australian John Baxter, now living in Paris, is famous for his guided walking tours of that city: immersive tourism – intellectually as well as physically pushing the envelope. He has already written several pedestrian (literally) guides to Paris, as well as an evocation of the Côte d’Azur in the 1920s, but in the volume here noticed he combines his enthusiasm for art with that for the table in 29 short chapters ranging over the whole of French gastronomic experience. The word gastronomic is perhaps the key, the text reminds one strongly of those old *bons-vivants* and their vast fund of anecdote, often instructive, frequently amusing, and willing to recruit any number of tendencies and cultural constructs to their service. It can be broad brush, with sweeping statements that elide a host of details that may run counter to the point he’s making, but the whole provides an admirable bedside book with lots of nice illustrations. The word culture is also key as each chapter usually takes a cultural fact (existentialism and the Left Bank, the impressionists, Versailles, Millet’s gleaners, or Josephine Baker and jazz) and links it back to eating and drinking. All good stuff, but sometimes the mythical fact caps reality. He is also hot on French colloquialisms, and instructive too, though some of his turns of phrase might sound odd from the mouth of a denizen of today’s *banlieux* even if spot on for Bertie Wooster.

Carolyn Korsmeyer, ed.: *The Taste Culture Reader*, 2nd edition: Bloomsbury, 2017: 404 pp., paperback, £28.99.

This first appeared in 2005 and was fast adopted as a necessary textbook thanks to its catholic selection of extracts and articles from the best of sources, old and new. The second edition has added some ten chapters, mostly of original writing rather than reprints, which broaden the approach and, in some cases (for example modernist cuisine) bring it up to date. Welcome new entrants include Charles Spence, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, François Jullien and Denise Gigante. The paperback is affordable; the hardback is for libraries.

Peter Naccarato, Zachary Nowak, Elgin K. Eckert, eds.: *Representing Italy through Food*: Bloomsbury, 2017: 269 pp., hardback, £85.00.

The price is not a mistake, although Amazon are offering it for the time being at £70.99. This volume is the outcome of a conference at the Umbra Institute in Perugia, where two of the editors hold posts. The idea of Italian food as a construct, subject to different interpretations (and varying wildly over time) in different parts of the world and in different media, has long been current. This set of essays offers infinite evidence of just that fact with studies of film (*The Godfather*), the novel (Camilleri’s Inspector Montalbano), the Italian/American identity seen through the prism of pasta sauces, Italian food in Israel,