

underlines the psychological importance of the modern boutique hotel in our conceptualization of leisure and relaxation. The most popular home improvement or modification among these families was the construction of a new master bedroom with a decent bathroom. Conceived as a refuge from the dire chaos of their daily lives (a hope not always realized, alas), the template is invariably the stylish hotel. One is struck by the insignificance of the kitchen, at least as a physical space – even though the room, cramped and chaotic though it may be, was the beating heart of family life. For the record, the feature the archaeologists on this study got most excited about was the use of the refrigerator door for display and information. And the fact that got me most ventilated was the almost universal abandonment of the garden and outdoors, even in a climate as dulcet as California. A charming book which portrays a society consuming too much for its own good.

Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella; Sten Hedberg, translator: *Tolv böcker om lantbruk*. Stockholm: Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademien, undated [2012?] ISBN 978-91-85205-77-6

To put Columella in context, he lived under the Roman Empire in the mid-first century AD. He came from a wealthy farming family in southern Spain and also farmed in Italy. Columella was in many ways the best ancient Roman writer about agriculture: his ‘twelve books on farming’ are more systematic than Cato’s work, more businesslike than Varro’s, and include a unique section of recipes for farm-prepared foods and preserves.

You may think, if your Swedish is rusty, that you don’t need this new Swedish translation of Columella. English readers have, after all, a Loeb Classical Library edition in three little volumes, published 1941–1955 and still in print, with a better-than-usual English translation by Ash, Forster and Heffner. Don’t jump to conclusions. Here you have not only a new translation but an explanatory glossary of proper names, then an index of plants (Swedish, botanical Latin, classical Latin) with detailed notes, then an index of animals and fish, then a general subject index. And then thirty-two fine illustrations of Roman agriculture from mosaics, tomb reliefs and manuscripts, some of them quite unfamiliar. And then maps and lists of agricultural products of the Roman provinces. And then a collection of twelve illustrated chapters, almost a book in themselves, adding up to a symposium by Hedberg himself and eleven other authors. The subject is Columella and his world: his work in its literary context; farming in

the ancient Mediterranean; the animals and plants that formed the raw material of ancient farming and gardening; food and daily life in the first century. The survey of ancient plants and their uses, by Kjell Lundquist, is outstanding among these supplementary chapters.

ANDREW DALBY

Orlando Gough: *Orlando Gough Recipe Journal: A Celebration of Extraordinary Home Cooks*, No. 2: TOAST, 2012, 100 pp., paperback, £11.95.

As understated and elegant as a Moleskin journal, this suavely presented recipe collection is by no means beauty without substance. The musician Orlando Gough's recipe journal is exactly that, recipes collected over his lifetime, separated into decades, with amusing recollections and artistic black and white photographs. His prose is wise and debonair; his recipes are precise, clear and reliable. The recipes are old favourites, Mum's marmalade, cullen skink and baked eggs all feature, bringing to mind one's own youth and the sort of nursery food we crave as we get older; then progressing through Elizabeth David to the wider repertoire of the British bien-pensant middle class. There is a wistful quality reminiscent of Nigel Slater, and the recipes are just as sensible and intuitive. All in all Toast has produced something as simple, classic and pleasing as a slice of its namesake. Just as Orlando's granny learns in a hat shop – about which we read in one recipe introduction – restraint is worth more than extravagance. Wisdom indeed.

LETITIA CLARK

Catherine Brown: *Scottish Cookery*: Birlinn, 2013: 468 pp., pb, £12.99.

The arrival of this paperback version, with an updated buyer's guide, of Catherine Brown's substantial, readable, indeed classic work should be registered. Close inspection reveals many changes since the revised edition from the Mercat Press in 1999 (the very first issue was published by Richard Drew in 1985). There are some new recipes, some excisions and much refinement of the text. It is arguable that you will prefer the format as the paper is very mass-market, but the typography is spacious enough and nicely legible. Her combination of quotation, narrative and recipe is to be admired.