

Anne Willan with Mark Cherniavsky and Kyri Claffin: *The Cookbook Library. Four Centuries of the Cooks, Writers, and Recipes That Made the Modern Cookbook*: University of California Press, 2012, 375pp., hardback, £34.95.

I recall talking to Mark Cherniavsky about a book along these lines in the early days of my tenure of Prospect Books. How lucky the authors are in their choice of publishers: the UCP, in their ‘Studies in food and culture’, of which this is number 35, under the supervision of Darra Goldstein, have served them magnificently. They have ample space, handsome illustration, tasteful typography (in two colours) and excellent design to lay out for us envious readers the bones of their remarkable collection of cookery books. Anne Willan has in a sense been here before in her much-quoted and often-appreciated *Great Cooks and their Recipes* (1977). But don’t think you can economize by not buying today because you bought yesterday. What we have here is a clear and enlightening account of cookbooks up to the Victorian era. As an appendix to each chapter there is also a selection of commented recipes: these are both lucid and revealing and might even provoke you to cook a ‘Yorkshire Christmas pie of five birds’ – it’ll take you a bit of time but Anne Willan gives you much guidance. There is also a fine index and an excellent bibliography. Would that all collectors were so intelligent. Bravo!

Lynne Chatterton: *From the ground up, home cooking without fear*: Pulcini Press, Limited Edition 2010, 357 pp., hardback, £22.00.

Although we carried a short extract from this book in *PPC* 92 I have been remiss in not noticing it, which omission I now fill. A handsome paperback with arresting typography, this is a private publication that repays investment (so often they don’t). Lynne Chatterton and her husband are knowledgeable about farming, both hands-on and bookish, and the lands and its uses give structure to the many sensible and enjoyable recipes. These are what they might eat at home, and so might you, but were you to do so you might be displaying wide experience of the world’s cuisines and favourite dishes. Lynn is a woman of strong opinions which benefit from years of work among bureaucrats and NGOs, as well as a latter-day career as an olive farmer in Umbria. What’s nice about her recipes is that they are do-able, even if your larder doesn’t always contain (as apparently hers does) a haunch of wild boar. The book can be bought online from <<http://www.cottage-umbria.com/FTGU.html>>