

ending on prohibition. Our understanding of wine and our relationship with it have been shaped by many different societies between the two periods discussed, and the reader is left hankering for more detail. Given the stated egalitarian intent of the authors, it felt like the concerns of the average drinker could have been addressed more too. Is sulphur to blame for my headache? What happens in my wine when I decant it? How does ageing work? Instead of appealing to this audience, Chapter 3's focus on biochemistry is taxing for humble economists like us and we presume for many others. It does not fulfil the promise of "being accessible to everyone." We also experience an awkwardly crude explanation of the atomic scale in a chapter which simultaneously over-indulges in chemistry nomenclature, making the tone seem inconsistent. Most upsetting was the perpetuation of myths of food and wine matching, which should have died some time ago. Believing no wine should be consumed alongside garlic or fresh fruit seems based more on concern for rules than the foundations upon which they rest, as much of the world breaks their "First Commandment" on a regular basis.

Despite these minor criticisms, we got ample enjoyment out of this work and look forward to future discoveries, as do the authors, looking at "vins de l'impossible" in their final chapter. Anthropogenic climate change offers the conflicting prospect that your two humble reviewers may, in a not so distant future, savour a Scottish "Côtes du Forth" with Tattersall and DeSalle's next volume.

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JUSTIN SPRING: *The Gourmands' Way: Six Americans in Paris and the Birth of a New Gastronomy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, NY, 2017, 433 pp., ISBN 978-0374103156, \$30.00.

PAUL FREEDMAN: *Ten Restaurants That Changed America*. Liveright Publishing Corporation, NY, 2016, 527 pp., ISBN 978-0871406804, \$35.00.

ALICE WATERS: *Coming to My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook*. Clarkson Potter Publishers, NY, 2017, 306 pp., ISBN 978-0307718280, \$27.00.

Similar themes, ideas, and historical references to time and place tie these three books together as they trace the advent of food and wine culture and enjoyment in the United States. Guided by the overarching influence of French culinary ethos, they explore the evolution of American cooking, restaurants, and food personalities through a biographical approach. Within this context, Justin Spring's *The Gourmands' Way* explores six American food and wine writers who lived in

France and incorporated the most detail about wine in relation to food; Paul Freedman's *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* described the way these ten restaurants both influenced and responded to American society; and Alice Waters' *Coming to My Senses* relived the life and ideas of one food legend through the opening of her iconic restaurant in Berkeley, California. Taken together, these works leave a lasting impression of eating and drinking as an irrefutable part of life and culture.

It is difficult to discuss eating and drinking in present day America without noting the importance of French food and wine. Just as French fine wine very often serves as the basis for analysis of wine pricing, consumer behavior, and the wine trade, among others, one cannot represent much of fine dining without also acknowledging the French influence. While only four of the restaurant histories in *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* reveal their French heritage (Delmonico, Antoine, Le Pavillon, and Chez Panisse—and one that was created to be decidedly *not* French—The Four Seasons), Freedman also notes the predominant, if now diminishing, influence of French food and wine on American's dining habits. The verities of good French food and wine were made widely accessible to Americans through the cookbooks and writings of six Americans (and their associates) who lived, trained, and cooked in Paris and elsewhere in France during the mid-20th century (the six, profiled in *The Gourmands' Way*, are Julia Child, M. F. K. Fisher, Alexis Lichine, A. J. Liebling, Richard Olney, and Alice B. Toklas). And, as we learn in all three of these volumes, several of these culinary texts heavily influenced Alice Waters.

In her memoir, *Coming to My Senses*, Waters' credits her stay in France as a student and the accompanying French culinary experience with her awakening to fine food and fresh ingredients. Leaning on cookbooks such as those by Richard Olney and Elizabeth David (people we meet intimately in *The Gourmands' Way*), she began preparing exquisite home cooked meals for friends. With that experience and after stints as a waitress and Montessori teacher, she began harboring the idea of opening a restaurant modeled on the small French *prix fixe* establishments she so enjoyed in France. Hence the creation, on a shoestring, of Chez Panisse, which started with a French menu and soul. And while Chez Panisse eventually evolved into an American restaurant and café, it continues to maintain its French roots and follow French culinary principles, creating menus based on the availability of locally sourced, seasonal ingredients.

The emphasis on France's culinary influence is a principal theme in *The Gourmands' Way*. Here, we meet the six Americans, with various backgrounds and lifestyles, who all decided to create and work (all or much of the time) in France at about the same time. What ties them together in *The Gourmands' Way* is that they were all influential writers who informed Americans' perceptions of French food and wine, and through that, Americans' enjoyment of food and wine in general. Their books and articles provided Americans with the knowledge and ability to experiment with French cooking in their homes and demystified the

selection and pairing of French wines with food. What also variously links these individuals, in addition to their love of a good meal, is their free-spirited and bohemian approach to life. For example, Alice Waters was a political activist and supporter of the 1960s free speech movement. Richard Olney, with limited funds, bought a crumbling house in the South of France and began the process of renovating it over years by hand. Alice B. Toklas and her partner Gertrude Stein held court engaging in wide-ranging discussions over dinner with a continuing series of visitors among the avant-garde artists and writers of the time—as did Olney and others.

Food and wine, of course, are intrinsically linked to a country's culture in all three of these volumes. This connection informs Paul Freedman's selection of the ten most influential restaurants in America—or, as the book's title says—*changed* America. These are restaurants whose innovations say something about the way society was/is progressing or which helped influence such progress (and not meant to indicate the ten best restaurants). Changes in American society since the creation of the first influential restaurant—Delmonico's, established in the early 1800s—is evidenced, for example, by the emerging role of women, the assimilation of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and the growth of an automobile-focused society. These and other societal shifts are all reflected through the lenses of the restaurants documented in this book. For example, the changing role of women in American society is seen through restaurants in several ways in *Ten Restaurants That Changed America*. Schrafft's is identified as a safe-haven for women. Until its creation, women were generally thought poorly of if they tried to dine alone. As women increasingly worked out of the home and wanted to eat lunch outside of the office, Schrafft's provided a comfortable and welcoming environment for women without male escorts, with menus catering to their tastes and, until Schrafft's final years, the absence of alcoholic beverages. The story of the empowerment of women over the past 100 years in America is also shown in the chapters discussing restaurants where women are owners and chefs—including Cecilia Chiang's Mandarin, Alice Waters' Chez Panisse, and Sylvia Woods' Sylvia's Restaurant.

The ethnic and racial diversity in the United States, as well as the internal migration of African Americans from the South to the North, is also explored through restaurants in *Ten Restaurants That Changed America*. The explosion and acceptance of Chinese and Italian food (whether totally authentic or modified/created for American tastes), as well as the rise of an even broader ethnic diversity in dining, is shown through the book's histories of the Mandarin in San Francisco, Sylvia's in Harlem, Mamma Leone's in New York, and Antoine's in New Orleans.

*The Gourmands' Way* is the most wine-centric of the three volumes reviewed, although the importance of wine for the individuals and restaurants portrayed is clear in all three works. The American expatriates cooking and eating in France considered wines that paired well with foods an essential part of the meal, and went to great lengths to understand French wine culture. They took advantage of the opportunity to visit and often make friends with the local *vignerons*. Richard Olney, who was by then writing a wine column for *Cuisine et Vins de France* (and later published

*Simple French Food*), constructed a wine cellar as part of his home renovation project in Provence, and then was meticulous about the wines selected to accompany each course of the frequent meals he prepared for friends. Julia Child's husband, Paul Child, also paired wines with care for Julia's dinners at home and for their meals in restaurants. They and others profiled in this book all understood, too, the role of simple as well as grand cru French wines as part of the dining experience, although the wines cited are often classified Bordeaux and great Burgundies. Even though many of the gourmands had limited resources (Olney, Fisher, Toklas), this choice was reflective of the era under discussion—the mid-20th century, when fine wines were all relatively inexpensive compared to today; footnotes in *The Gourmands' Way* often tell us what these wines, similarly aged, would cost today. Even when Chez Panisse opened towards the end of this era in 1971 on a tight budget and with only three wines on its wine list (Mondavi Gamay, Mondavi Fume Blanc, and Chateau Suduiraut Sauternes), Alice Waters in *Coming to My Senses* noted that great Sauternes cost \$2.50 per bottle, and the most expensive, d'Yquem, was \$3.50 (about \$21 in today's dollars).

The story of Alexis Lichine and his influence on American wine knowledge and consumption told in *The Gourmands' Way* is particularly enlightening for wine economics. Lichine was a New York wine salesman, importer, and educator. In order to enhance his public image as a wine expert (which he was), he wrote *Wines of France* in 1951. This publication served as a springboard for lecturing extensively about wine across the United States, and, as a result, to selling more and better wines to his clients. In France, he then began bottling and shipping these fine wines directly from estates, and through the purchase of several chateaus (including Priure-Lichine), began to centralize the purchasing, storage, shipping, and distribution of wines, adding efficiency to and cutting costs from a more traditional way of doing business in France. These innovations, however, after a period of time were also partly responsible for the decline in his business, as much larger and better capitalized wine companies followed his lead and diminished his competitive advantage.

Not to be overlooked in all of these stories about the people and restaurants that led the way for food and wine in America are the risks they took to achieve what they did—risks both personal and financial. Lichine accepted the risk of tinkering with the traditional French wine business model, but, as seen, increased competition (and several bad vintages) ultimately forced him to sell his business and company name (although the sale price allowed him to move to France and continue wine-making on his Chateau). Waters' Chez Panisse did not make a profit for years. New immigrants to the United States also frequently risked their life savings to open restaurants, and Alice B. Toklas, after Gertrude Stein's death, with limited funds, assembled her recipes and memoirs in the *Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* in order to financially support herself. A. J. Liebling, covering Europe for *The New Yorker* was in fact dining in Paris when it was invaded at the start of WWII (he continued his lunch under the initial bombardment), and returned under sniper fire as it was liberated. Along the way, too, soon after D-Day, Liebling was

able to partake of impressive provincial food and wine in Normandy, some of which he described in his book *Normandy Revisited*. Betting on the need for reliable and familiar places to eat in a newly mobile America, Howard Johnson decided to build his restaurants along highways and roads, becoming the first standardized chain—a formula that was risky at the time, but now ubiquitous. Julia Child's success publishing *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* led her to take a chance with developing a show in the relatively new medium of television. And even though financed by those with deep pockets, the opening of New York's lavish Four Seasons restaurant in 1959, costing \$4.5 million (about \$38 million in 2017 dollars), was obviously risky.

This brief review of three very enlightening books cannot, of course, provide the richness of detail and fascinating facets within them. Both *The Gourmands' Way* and *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* are extensively researched, scholarly works, with numerous references and footnotes, yet they are highly readable narratives. Both conclude by looking at what the authors see as trends in the future of dining in America, including the gradual lessening of French influence, the continuance of the farm to table movement, and the use of fresh and local ingredients and wines. *Coming to My Senses*, as a memoir, informs us about the background of an individual who has done much to change the way Americans think about food. These books reveal the events and influences leading up to America's present-day culinary landscape. All three books, in the end, tell good stories.

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