

The Barcelona Cookbook: A Celebration of Food, Wine, and Life

Andy Pforzheimer

Sasa Mahr-Batuz

Andrews McMeel (Jun 16, 2009)

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Who better to celebrate in book form the musical-chair-like ingredients used in authentic tapas cuisine than the owners of a wildly successful chain of upscale tapas restaurants in the northeastern United States? Tapas is a freestyle culinary art form wholly dependent on quality ingredients. In *The Barcelona Cookbook*, Sasa Mahr-Batuz and Andy Pforzheimer offer creative takes on headliners like serrano ham, chorizo, grilled octopus, sardines, calamari, Manchego, Cabrales blue, and dozens of other uniquely Spanish ingredients and succeed where other tapas cookbooks seem flat and contrived. A native Spaniard will certainly provide nuance in seasoning and composition, but attitude is also a major component and Mahr-Batuz and Pforzheimer's recipes bounce off the page.

Tapas cookbooks remain popular because tapas is foremost a party food, and last we checked, food lovers still party. Also, no less than seventeen cocktail recipes from the Barcelona Wine Bar and Restaurant remind readers that tapas is the original bar food. Furthermore, Spain is an endless font of intriguing wines from every corner of her perch between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Like nearly all southern European wines, the versatile offerings from Spain are thoroughly friendly with food and *The Barcelona Cookbook* expends a great deal of energy exploring the familiar and obscure regions and grape varietals so that food—wine pairings become a source of joy not dread.

MATT SUTHERLAND (June 15, 2009)

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