



Source: Herald, The (Glasgow) {The Arts}
 Edition:
 Country: UK
 Date: Saturday 13, December 2014
 Page: 8,9
 Area: 720 sq. cm
 Circulation: ABC 37728 Daily
 Ad data: page rate £11,500.00, scc rate £26.50
 Phone: 0141 302 7000
 Keyword: Birlinn

Global tastes with a local source

Cate Devine finds plenty of excuses to get cracking in the kitchen thanks to a batch of new cookery books written by internationally inspired Scottish authors

Typical. You wait for years for just one substantial Scottish cookbook to appear on the scene, and suddenly seven turn up at once. Not that I'm complaining; amid lavish oeuvres from the better known - Yotam Ottolenghi's **Plenty More** (Ebury, £27), Michel Roux's **The Essence Of French Cooking** (Quadrille, £30), Antonio Carluccio's **Pasta** (Quadrille, £20) and - yes - **Mary Berry Cooks** and **The Great British Bake Off's Big Book Of Baking** (BBC Books, £20 each) - 2014 has also brought forth a crop that goes some way at last to acknowledging in print the burgeoning food revolution that's been taking place north of the border.

The year started promisingly with **Three Sisters Bake** (Hardie Grant, £20), a highly visual celebration of the achievements of three young siblings - Gillian, Nichola and Linsey Reith - with their restaurant at Quarriers Village, Renfrewshire.

Baking is only part of what the girls do; pulled pork and French onion soup with mini Gruyere toasties are examples of their grown-up repertoire, which has expanded to two new neighbourhood restaurants and a thriving street food operation since publication. Which

could yet make this first book a future collectors' item.

With the ongoing hype surrounding the BBC's Great British Bake Off (plus various accompanying spin-off books) showing no sign of abating, Sue Lawrence's **Scottish Baking** (Birlinn, £17.99) hoveled into view like an oasis of calm.

Breathtakingly clear photography, paired with minimalist layout, help contemporise the humble scone, oatcake and bannock, reflecting their renewed appreciation by a younger generation of bakers.

Lawrence, who has "lived and breathed baking" ever since she can remember, is rightly intent on celebrating the plain (porridge oatcakes) and the unsung (Bride's Bonn) while adapting the long-forgotten (Pitcaithly Bannock) and adding a few ideas of her own, such as haggis flatbreads. Beats the GBBO's fussy showstoppers hands-down.

Carina Contini's **Kitchen Garden Cookbook** (Frances Lincoln, £25) is a collection of month-by-month recipes, growing notes and stories from the first productive year of her Midlothian Victorian kitchen garden, which she restored with her husband Victor to supply their Edinburgh restaurants (whose number has increased to three since publication).

There's a heavy emphasis on her



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There's a heavy emphasis on her network of local artisan suppliers too.

Beautifully produced and written with obvious passion for her Scots-Italian heritage, this book is a must-have for anyone serious about local, seasonal, sustainably produced food - and how to cook it.

The tone of Scots-Sikh chef Tony Singh's **Tasty** (Headline, £20) matches the Leith-born restaurateur and television presenter's innate charm, humour and energy.

Based on a "mash-up" of the culinary influences found in Scotland's street food, it contains such idiosyncratic wonders as Thai fish cake Scotch egg, salt cod tattie scones, duck stovies, Desperate Dan beans and chocolate samosas.

There's a youthful, hungry vibe here: Singh's point is that cooking should be about taste and flavour rather than aiming for the gourmet and the grand.

Cultural and culinary accord continue with **Ninth Wave** (Birlinn, £20) from the self-taught Canadian chef Carla Lamont.

Her story of coming to Mull and meeting her fisherman husband Jonny, and transforming his family's run-down croft in Fionnphort into an award-winning restaurant, is unusual and compelling.

Recipes from the menus, influenced by Lamont's extensive travels, use fresh seafood, meat, vegetables and herbs sourced from as close to the croft as possible. Interspersed with romantic

photography of the Hebridean isle, it's a sure-fire winner for those in search of inspiration.

Back in the city, **Mother India** (Preface, £25) is Monir Mohammed's warm account of his early life in Glasgow's East End and decision to establish a modern 1980s Indian restaurant that eschewed flock wallpaper in favour of mismatched vintage Scottish Edwardian furniture and served a short menu of the authentic Punjabi cuisine he'd learned at home using Scottish ingredients.

It is a reminder of how sub-continent cuisine has moved with the times in

Scotland.

A surprise highlight of 2014 is **Korma, Kheer & Kismet** (Adelph, R395/£4,

Kindle) the Scottish journalist Pamela Timms's memoir of eating in Delhi, where she has lived for 10 years since leaving Edinburgh with her husband and children.

An appropriately low-key publication, it focuses on the authentic street food of the old city, sought out through frustration with expat life. The "chaotic, medieval" gullies of Old Delhi throw up a series of gastronomic adventures and friendships.

By dint of what appears to be sheer journalistic doggedness Timms manages to put together some ancient and mysterious recipes, many of which - like a mutton korma, born of "30 different spices and a devilish pact with ghee" - have never been put in writing.

Timms's winding tale of how she gleans the essential key to making jalebi, which dates from 15th-century Persia and "looks like a creeper, tasty as nectar", is beautifully told.

At least she has regular trips back home to remind her of the melting pot that is modern Scottish cooking.

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inspires her cooking