

book of the year



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My goodness, where did 2019 go? Here it is December already and because Thanksgiving came so late this year we're all scurrying about doing our last last last minute Christmas shopping while we still have the turkey day leftovers in the fridge. How does the time fly by so rapidly? Nonetheless, there's no delaying what has been the December tradition in this space now going on 13 years – the big reveal of the annual The National Barbecue News Barbecue Book of the Year Award. Amazing to think that we're that far along on this list, having begun it back in 2007 with “Dr. BBQ's Big-Time Barbecue Road Trip” by Ray Lampe, who went on to become a media star on several of the barbecue competition TV shows and has now added being a revered St. Petersburg, Fla., restaurateur. There have been many outstanding books added to that list written by some others who have gone on to acclaim across the media landscape. Here's a refresher on our past honorees:

2007 – “Dr. BBQ's Big-Time Barbecue Road Trip” by Ray Lampe (\$16.95, St. Martins Griffin, 272 pp.)

2008 – “The Best Barbecue on Earth: Grilling Across 6 Continents and 26 Countries With 170 Recipes” by Rick Browne (\$22.95, Ten Speed Press, 254 pp.)

2009 – “Big Bob Gibson's BBQ Book: Recipes and Secrets from a Legendary Barbecue Joint” by Chris Lilly (\$24.99, Clarkson Potter, 256 pp.)

2010 – “The Kansas City Barbeque Society Cookbook 25th Anniversary Edition” by Ardie Davis, Paul Kirk and Carolyn Wells (\$24.99, Andrews McMeel, 318 pp.)

2011 – “Smokin' with Myron Mixon: Recipes Made Simple from the Winningest Man in Barbecue” by Mixon and Kelly Alexander (\$22, Ballantine, 192 pp.)

2012 – “Wicked Good Barbecue: Fearless Recipes from Two Damn Yankees Who Won the Biggest, Baddest BBQ Competition in the World” by Andy Husbands and Chris Hart

Barbecue News 2019 Book of the Year!



2018 Book of the Year

(\$21.99, Fair Winds Press, 224 pp.)

2013 – “America's Best BBQ Home-style: What the Champions Cook in Their Own Backyard” by Ardie Davis and Paul Kirk (\$19.99, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 180 pp.)

2014 – “Wiley's Championship BBQ: Secrets That Old Men Take to the Grave” by Wiley McCrary, Janet McCrary and Amy Paige Condon (\$19.99, Gibbs Smith, 216 pp.)

2015 – “Franklin Barbecue: A Meat-Smoking Manifesto” by Aaron Franklin and Jordan Mackay (\$29.99, Ten Speed Press, 224 pp.)

2016 – “Smokin' Hot in the South: New Grilling Recipes from the Winningest Woman in Barbecue” by Melissa Cookston (\$22.99, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 192 pp.)

2017 – TIE: “Praise the Lord: Recipes and Revelations from a Legendary Life in Barbecue” by Mike Mills and Amy Mills (\$25, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 336 pp.)

AND “Pitmaster: Recipes, Techniques & Barbecue Wisdom” by Andy Husbands and Chris Hart (\$24.99, Fair Winds Press, 224 pp.)

2018 – “Cool Smoke: The Art of Great Barbecue” by Tuffy Stone (\$29.99, St. Martin's Press, 288 pp.)

We have a set of criteria we work from to determine the books that are eligible each year. The books must have been released within the dates of November from the previous year until November of the current year (this accounts for publication deadlines that would exclude some books). We consider just about anything from the outdoor cooking genre but will admit that bias is given to those that significantly feature smoke cooking. And I reckon it goes without saying that we give preference to those familiar in the competition barbecue world. After that, our very select judging panel narrows this to a short list of finalists and then ultimately our yearly winner. Without further ado, here's this year's finalists (but not the ultimate winner):

“Smoke Lore: A Short History of Barbecue in America” by Jim Auchmuty (\$32.95, The University of Georgia Press, 266 pp.) – Just a heads up that it took an amazing book to keep this one from being the winner – that's how much I liked this book. So well written, so meticulously researched, so many great sto-

ries. This book needs to be on your bookshelf.

"Franklin Steak: Dry-Aged, Live-Fired, Pure Beef" by Aaron Franklin with Jordan Mackey (\$29.99, Ten Speed Press, 216 pp.) – Yeah, this book was outstanding as well. We definitely had a wealth of riches in great books this year to have these first two honorees plus our ultimate winner. Any of these could have ranked as the best. From the first time I sat down with this book I knew it was the greatest book on steaks that I'd ever read.

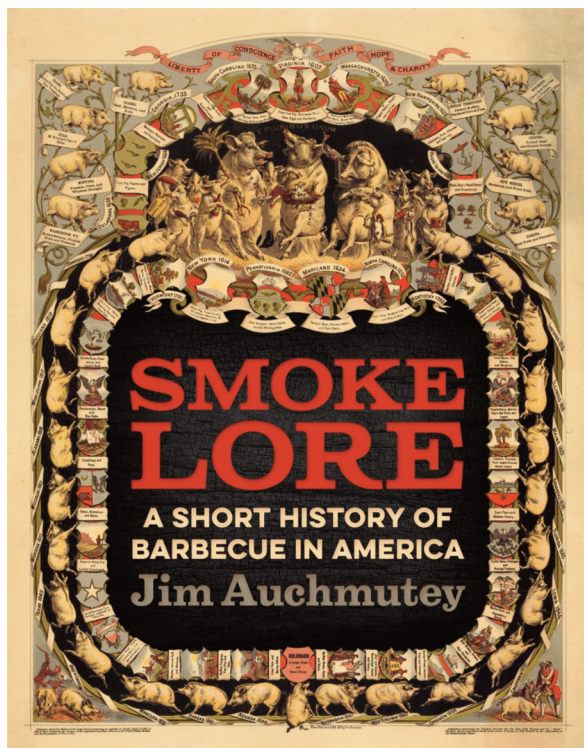
"BBQ&A with Myron Mixon: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Barbecue" by Myron Mixon and Alexander (\$29.99, Abrams, 320 pp.) – The latest book from the winningest man in barbecue. I liked this particularly because of the unique format in which it was posed, as if you were sitting down for a Q&A with Mixon.

"Smoked: One Man's Journey To Find Incredible Recipes, Standout Pitmasters and the Stories Behind Them" by Ed Randolph (\$25, Page Street Publishing, 240 pp.) – I loved the stories told here and was envious of the travels that were made necessary to write it. I'm just waiting for the day someone says to me, "I'm going to write a book about the greatest barbecue joints and pitmasters in our nation and I need you to come along." I am so there.

"The Brisket Chronicles: How to Barbecue, Braise, Smoke and Cure the World's Most Epic Cut of Meat" by Steven Raichlen (\$19.95, Workman Publishing, 278 pp.) – I already know it is coming – that email I get whenever I review a Steven Raichlen book, accusing me of being a hopeless Raichlen fanboy. OK, I'll admit it – I've always enjoyed his books, every one of them. And yes, they do command a prominent spot on my bookshelf. But it is definitely not true that I have an autographed 8x10 on my nightstand that I bid sweet dreams to before turning in each day. Or at least as far as you know.

"The Ultimate Burger: Plus DIY Condiments, Sides, and Boozy Milkshakes" by the Editors of America's Test Kitchen (\$26.99, America's Test Kitchen, 256 pp.) – I probably enjoy the books from America's Test Kitchen and associated brand Cooks'

Country as much as I do the ones from Steven Raichlen. They are always so well done in terms of bringing together written content and visuals. This book really stood out.



2019 Finalist

"Weber's Ultimate Grilling: A Step-by-Step Guide to Barbecue Genius" by Jamie Purviance (\$26.99, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 352 pp.) – We get a new volume of these books under the Weber brand and written by Purviance almost annually and each time I marvel at how they keep it fresh and interesting. Look at all the prolific writers and see the lengths they go to in order to create new books that don't just plow over the same ground. Weber and Purviance have been remarkable in staying on top of new trends and developing great content around it. So that's seven finalists and we still have a winner to add to that. Eight great books this year, every one of which I would say could be the one you would use over and over until the pages are dog-eared. It is noteworthy that in a time when people are turning primarily to digital media for the bulk of their information, robust numbers of excellent printed books are still being released.

So now without further delay is the winner for 2019 – **"Operation BBQ: 200+ Smokin' Recipes from Competition Grand Champions"** by Stan Hays, Tim O'Keefe and Cindi Mitchell (\$30, Page Street Publishing, 352 pp.). Hays is the co-founder

and CEO of Operation BBQ Relief, the organization that comes into places following disasters or other situations of great need and provides meals to those in need. O'Keefe is a certified barbecue judge and competition team member. Yep, these guys are in our family. Together they put forth the feel-good book of the year by accumulating recipes from over 70 grand champion and world champion teams. But it wasn't just the recipes alone that made this awesome; it was the heart-felt stories from the many volunteers who donated their time, sweat and commitment to further the cause of Operation BBQ Relief. I will warn you now that you will feel moved by this book. We all owe a huge thanks to this group.

Well there you have it, another year in the books. Thanks to you, our readers, for taking this all in each month. It is a privilege and a pleasure to bring this to you.



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