



el pecado original por  
origine: B/ARCELONA  
en la Boqueria  
(en París)

Señores que  
Boqueria

ENCURTIDOS



STORIES  
CHARACTERS  
RECIPES

BIA CO  
QUIER  
DE CKA  
MPRA  
IET

libro  
cuán lo no  
01/2

Francia que me lo a teatro  
a verdades y tipos que  
bien manresa ve

MY  
BOQUERIA

OSCAR MANRESA

CARNE

Bares y restaurantes  
de los Bo  
Nombres en Buenos  
A AVENDER VERA  
R MANDATO DIVIA

TAMOS A  
IE MILES  
ES RAMBLES



# MY BOQUERIA

OSCAR MANRESA

PHOTOGRAPHY

XAVIER  
TORRES-BACCHETTA



Text © Oscar Manresa  
Photography © Xavier Torres-Bacchetta  
Translation: © Cillero & de Motta

Design: FericheBlack

Project Editor: Jon Sarabia

First edition: October 2018

© Editorial Planeta, S. A., 2018  
Av. Diagonal, 662-664, 08034 Barcelona (Spain)  
Planeta Gastro is a registered trademark  
of Editorial Planeta, S. A.  
[www.planetadelibros.com](http://www.planetadelibros.com)

ISBN: 978-84-08-19612-9  
D. L.: B. 17643-2018

Printed by TG Soler

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the author or publishers. Infringement of the aforementioned rights may be considered a crime against intellectual property (Art. 270 and subsequent of the Spanish Penal Code).

Please contact the Spanish Reproduction Rights Centre (CEDRO) if you would like to request the photocopying or scanning of any fragment of this book. CEDRO can be contacted on [www.conlicencia.com](http://www.conlicencia.com) or by telephone on +34 91 702 19 70 / 93 272 04 47

Printed in Spain

# CONTENTS

**9** Foreword **ALBERT ADRIÀ** **12** Introduction **OSCAR MANRESA** **17** Chap. 1 **FRANCESC 'OLIVETA'** **31** Chap. 2 **NÚRIA VILA** **45** Chap. 3 **LLORENÇ AND XAVIER PETRÀS** **59** Chap. 4 **JAUME SOLEY** **73** Chap. 5 **XAVIER FRAUCA** **87** Chap. 6 **SISETA** **101** Eating at La Boqueria **EL QUIM DE LA BOQUERIA** **102** **PINOTXO BAR** **105** **JOËL'S OYSTER BAR** **107** **CASA GUINART** **108** **CLEMENS** **113** Chap. 7 **MONTSE TARRÉ** **127** Chap. 8 **MARC BESORA** **141** Chap. 9 **SEBAS ORTIZ** **155** Chap. 10 **AINA CAPDEVILA** **169** Chap. 11 **FRANCISCA AND ROSA** **183** Chap. 12 **MY NAME IS MANRESA** **197-218** Recipes: **GILDA IS THE NAME OF A WOMAN / HAM BONE CONSOMMÉ / MOUNTAIN PIE / EGGS WITH AN EDGE / FISH SHELLS / MILKING THE TIGER / MARINE POTATO STRAWS (HOMAGE TO THE ADRIÀ BROTHERS) / TIMBALE OF WAR / SAMURAI BONE MARROW / PIGEON SHOOTING / DROWNED DUCK, DOUBLE THE DUCK / PORK FAT WITH CAVIAR** **222** About the authors **224** Acknowledgements



OLIVES FRANCESC

---

CHAP.

1

**FRANCESC  
«OLIVETA»**

OLIVES  
PICKLES  
PRESERVES

---

Stall 949



ACEITUNAS





**T**ony Soprano. I know it's a cheap joke, but nobody ever said I could make my living as a stand-up comedian. It's just that whenever I look at Francesc, it's the first thing that comes to mind. I see him with the cigar, dressed in black, standing twenty metres away from his stall, mumbling something incomprehensible, as if he had discovered that a meteorite was about to fall and could no longer come to La Boqueria to sell olives. All sorts of olives, just to be clear, because Francesc has never been a one-olive kind of guy. One woman, yes; one olive, no.

I see him and think of the mobster from Queens who has to struggle against everything every day and return home in one piece. Except for the fact that Francesc doesn't shoot anyone, beat people up and isn't the boss of a dangerous criminal organisation, I'd say he's a dead ringer. He has olives - big, small, oval, round, spicy, stuffed... In fact, if there's an olive that Francesc doesn't sell, it's because it doesn't exist. This man, who is more *Barceloní* than Barcelona itself and who knows La Rambla better than he does his own dining room, has spent more years in La Boqueria than anyone. If it weren't for the fact that the person everybody greets as 'chief' is me, they should be saying it to him. No, perhaps chief suits me better, but HE WILL ALWAYS BE 'THE BOSS'.

Francesc the olive seller is a son of La Boqueria. This is not just a figure of speech - you know, something you say to embellish a sentence. No, what I'm saying is genuinely authentic (which is a figure of speech). In the 1970s, Francesc's parents met in the market. One had a stall selling chickens, and the other a stall selling olives. Their story is that of any couple of teenagers who spend the day studying at the library (if there still are any) and then start to eye each other, to like each other and - if luck is on their side - to fall in love. Francesc's parents came to like each other between chicken breasts and Manzanilla olives, a market love story, if it can be called that. Why not? I like it. Let's call it that.



The fruit of their marriage was a gigantic chicken and olive stall. All right then, I made that up. Out of their marriage came a guy as big as the Sagrada Família, with a bad temper like the people you greet with 'good morning', and who answer you with, 'I'll let you know tonight if it was a good one'. He's the stereotypical PISSED-OFF CATALAN

who never has a reason to smile, except when nobody's looking at him. Francesc always says that he used to smoke Montecristos from Cuba but now only smokes Caliqueños from Valencia. When he does,

*Olivera se va a la  
Jero Ju Trabado\**

\* OLIVETA TAKES HIS WORK SERIOUSLY









## The TONY SOPRANO of la Boqueria

I think back to the times when La Boqueria was one big family, when we all knew each other (and when I say all, I mean all) and the whole neighbourhood came to do the shopping at our stalls. It was before the arrival of the tourist tsunami, the hyper-interventionist city council, or of those clever people who think that you can run a food market as if it were a hospital or a police station. We all earned a good living in those days, and people would smile. Perhaps it's naive on my part, but La Boqueria back then seemed to be a different place, where the group was the most important thing and selfishness was rare. The market today is a monster with shiny scales, but a monster no less. Francesc is a kind of Robinson Crusoe, lost on an island, never giving up, which is probably the reason everybody knows him, loves him and admires him. And of course, his olives are fantastic.

Seeing that there's time and nobody to bother us, let me tell you Francesc's story. Tony Soprano... sorry, Francesc, studied to be an industrial mechanic, but just like those who hear the call of the wild and flee the big city by moving to the country, this forty-something-year-old gentleman (I won't reveal his real age, seeing as I'm the one who runs into him in the market every day), HEARD THE

CALL OF THE OLIVE. Although he denies it, I imagine it to have been a sort of epiphany in which a giant *mojo picón* olive appeared to him in his dreams. 'Francesc, quickly, get dressed and go to La Boqueria to sell olives to humanity,' it said to him in a deep, *mojo picón* olive voice. Francesc will deny this version of the story, but I'm the one who invented it and it seems believable to me.

Francesc's family began to sell olives in La Boqueria in 1935, and the man keeps plugging away, as if he weren't stubborn enough. His brother also used to work here, but now it's his wife who watches over him to make sure the olive king doesn't smoke more cigars than he should. Even so, one of the best things you could do in the market before midday is go in search of Francesc at his stall, ask him for a bit of cheese and a bottle of wine, and chat with him about the sacred and the profane. As tends to happen with people whose everyday life is lived at street level, what comes out of Francesc's mouth isn't pushed through a literary sieve, nor is it fruit of a keen reflection brought on by the reading of the Greek classics; what Francesc says is the unfiltered version of what you and I would think when attempting to determine why this market, one of the great icons of the Barcelona we know and love, has been turned into a kind of Cirque du Soleil, where the timeless classics have been relegated to a side of La Boqueria where a ghostly calm seems to reign.



Anybody would think that the leaders of this city would be only too willing to lend a hand so that the workers in La Boqueria's market stalls, who have given it everything they have again and again (wearing out their health in the process), can continue to go through the motions of making a living from their work. But this is not the case, my friends. While some people can sell fruit in a plastic cup and everybody is okay with it, Francesc can't serve his customers a drink because 'you need a special permit', which strengthens his belief in what many economists say: that the real virus we're suffering from is bureaucracy, not capitalism.

Nevertheless, the olive-seller holds his ground, while lifting and shifting around gigantic tubs of olives which would give the Hulk a ruptured disc, but he merely displays the grin of a man in a hurry to get it over with. I suppose this is the perfect definition of Francesc's character, that of a man as indomitable as Paul Newman in that film, you know, the one where he scoffs down 52 hard-boiled eggs. Or was it 50? Don't try it yourself, just in case.

If you ever go and see Francesc, and you get him talking, he'll tell you that he hasn't had a holiday in eleven years, and that he devotes so much time to his work that when he gets home, he doesn't feel like doing anything. He'll also tell you that THERE'S NOT EVEN 50 PER CENT LEFT of the original market, and of all the stalls in La Boqueria during its heyday, there are only half a dozen left. Their places have been occupied by people without any social or cultural interest in what we do, without a clue of the place we occupy, without the least concern to know why, year after year, we are considered the best market in the world. But they don't have to endure the pressure of bureaucracy because what they do is as harmful as it is inoffensive. Francesc says they aren't to blame; rather, it's the people who let them do it who are responsible. I'm inclined to blame both sides, because one culprit isn't enough for me (I've never been a person to do things by halves).

Forgive me if I sound sentimental - I know it's not my style - but Francesc is one of my greatest weaknesses, possibly because he's one of the greatest human beings in this market (no, it has nothing to do with the fact that he has bigger hands than Muham-



mad Ali) and whose company is among the most pleasant in which to enjoy a break from this cruel world. There are times when he doesn't take his cigar out of his mouth to speak and I think this is admirable because, being the non-smoker that I am - if you want to see me doing something stupid, look up 'Action Bronson Boqueria' on YouTube; you won't regret it - I love the smell of cigar smoke, and I'm a bit envious of people who know how to handle them with skill. I get dizzy after two puffs.









I seem to have overlooked a very important point: Francesc's olives. You could almost take it for granted that the olives sold at an olive stall in La Boqueria have to be incredible, but there are other stalls - I won't name names - that can't hold a candle to Francesc's. Besides, FEW PEOPLE TAKE THE BUSINESS AS SERIOUSLY AS HE DOES, and as there's no better way of illustrating a point than with an example, I'll give you one. I have a restaurant called La Torre d'Alta Mar, which is located in a tower of Barcelona's port cable car, right at the very top. So you have to ride the lift up, because to have to climb the stairs would mean that half the customers wouldn't make it, and the other half would drop dead in the foyer. My policy doesn't include letting customers die, because I think the business would suffer.

One day, a good many years ago, the lift stopped working. Francesc arrived with two tubs of olives, the kind of tubs you could fit the Titanic, Everest and Godzilla into and there would still be room left. I told him the lift wasn't working and that he should come back with the olives another time. But he was alone and his delivery schedule was so tight that it would be impossible for him to come back. So he looked at me, picked up his tubs, adjusting the handles... and off he went up the stairs. Up 25 flights.

I thought I'd never get to see him again, that he'd be found on the 13th floor collapsed in a heap, with his olives rolling down the stairs. The thought of having to call his wife, speak to his kids... They'd blame me and everybody at his funeral would give me dirty looks. And they'd throw olives at me on the way out. Big fat ones. I imagined it all as if it were one of the films they show on Sunday afternoons, on any channel.

He reappeared ten minutes later, sweating as if he'd just got back from hell. It was a sight worthy of a Viking; I'd always thought Francesc had Nordic blood. 'Vinga, fet [all done],' he said, giving me one of his slaps on the back - the ones that push your ribs out of your body by a foot - and he left. I can still picture him, walking fast, thinking about his next delivery, cursing my bloody lift. That night I served loads of olives to all the bastards who came, and I didn't even charge a supplement for the guy who had sweated buckets just so they could enjoy them, which is something I regret deeply. And people ask me why I love Francesc... What's not to love?









