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BOOK REVIEW

Soffritto – A delicious Ligurian memoir

Lived by Lucio Galletto.

Written by David Dale

Allen and Unwin, \$49.95 (HB)

You don't have to have heard of Lucio Galletto or eaten in his hatted Sydney restaurant to appreciate this enchanting book. Galletto travelled with writer David Dale and photographer Paul Green back home to Lunigiana on the north-west coast of Italy three times in search of his soffritto. "Soffritto," Dale explains, "is the local word for the base of a sauce, the ingredients that give a dish its identity: oil, garlic, herbs, celery, family, locality, tradition".

Dale's engaging and sensitive writing captures the essence of Galletto's passion for life, love, food, family and restaurants. Italian history and culinary traditions woven through the narrative add further depth. The last 11 pages are reserved for recipes. There's an authenticity to Green's photography that shows connection to and understanding of the people and places in this story, their culture and, explicitly, their food. Alongside Green's photographs of modern Lunigiana, black and white family photos dating to the 1930s features. A delicious memoir indeed.

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