



**The Charleston Academy of Domestic Pursuits: A Handbook of Etiquette with Recipes**

by Suzanne Pollak '74 and Lee Manigault

Stewart, Tabori & Chang; New York, 216 pages, \$24.95

Reviewed by Michael Matros

Just as you might visit Downton Abbey on a Sunday evening, consider setting aside some time in another citadel of culture, with a stopover in the Low Country of South Carolina and *The Charleston Academy of Domestic Pursuits: A Handbook of Etiquette with Recipes*.

Don't buy the e-book version of this guide to the good life; you'll want to experience the pleasures of the volume's heavy and elegant paper, its inviting typography, and the simple and amusing illustrations by Tania Lee. You may want to hold and read through all the advice of the two self-styled "Deans of the Academy" before opening the book within the inevitable spatters of the kitchen, where you may later want to attempt its "dove with jalapeño and bacon" and "hash browns in duck fat & cream."

Please do not let indulgent recipe titles such as these prevent your requesting the *Academy Handbook* for your birthday. Throughout their book, the deans maintain an extended pretense of cultural and gastronomic superiority, but their hearts extend to anyone wanting to extend her (their audience is fairly gender specific) comfort in creating good food, serving it in a congenial, civilized setting, and understanding how possible it is to host a brunch, cocktail, or dinner party for a few or a few dozen guests. Elegance, they emphasize, is best accomplished in a state of happiness.

Through its dozens of printings, the classic regional cookbook *Charleston Receipts* has introduced Low Country cuisine to thousands of kitchens over the years and remains a primary introduction to the region's culinary heritage. The *Academy Handbook* does not attempt to replace it – no recipes require you to decapitate a live "cooter" in order to make turtle soup, as you'll find in *Charleston Receipts*, and okra does not appear in the

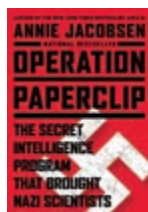
*Academy* index – but the authors do take pride in their region: "Here in the Low Country we know that the four seasons are actually deer, dove, duck, and turkey. At the Academy [yes, they give workshops] we will teach you how to roast a pig in your backyard, as well as how to preserve excess bounty from the garden."

Roasting a pig, by the way, requires an all-night vigil and the instruction to "hydrate the pig with an apple-cider vinegar-based mop sauce every time you crack open a new beer."

Each recipe is introduced by a short, whimsical essay, but the instructions themselves are straightforward, with very few esoteric ingredients required (they do tell you where to find pomegranate molasses for your Cleopatra's lamb salad) and a minimum of nonsense.

As the title tells us, this book is about how to behave as much as about preparing candied bacon or a proper champagne cocktail. The authors extend their advice beyond mealtime into proper behavior for hosts and guests. "Nobody really wants pets or children as houseguests," they inform us, "although no host is actually going to tell you that." They also happily recognize that the finer points of etiquette evolve in a modern era. But while the placement of dessert forks can now be a matter of opinion, the placement of elbows at the table is not.

The *Academy Handbook* never has to enter your kitchen for you to enjoy and learn from it, but you will eventually want to put it to use. Before you start working your way into its offerings, however, take note of the deans' most important advice: "You only need to know how to cook one or two things – you just need to cook them better than anyone else does."



**Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program that Brought Nazi Scientists to America**

by Annie Jacobsen '85  
Back Bay Books,

624 pages, \$18

Reviewed by Hannah MacBride

If we study history to learn from it, then Annie Jacobsen has given us a lot to learn.

The author of the *New York Times* best-seller *Area 51* now offers her readers the exceptional and painful story of *Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program that Brought Nazi Scientists to America*. The title, combined with a concise and damning prologue, summarize the story: How a large group of former Nazi scientists were courted by the United States in an effort to capitalize on the technical advances they had made in Germany. These scientists and their families were given jobs, housing, and, eventually, American citizenship. Some made great contributions to American science.

Through meticulously researched details, Jacobsen weaves information culled from once-classified documents, oral histories, exclusive interviews, and personal correspondence into a chilling tale of science gone mad. Each of the 21 "Paperclip" scientists on whom she focuses was an ardent Nazi implicated in – and some convicted of – heinous war crimes, including the use of concentration camp prisoners as test subjects and slaves. Seven doctors hired were involved in "mercy killings" or medical murder crimes.

How did this happen? Jacobsen does an excellent job bringing to life the fearful and harried post-WWII climate that made Operation Paperclip possible. These scientists may have been Nazis, but they weren't communists. They may have committed awful crimes, but their research helped give the United States a technical edge in the arms and space races. Many of the scientists – and the government agents who worked with them – denied their affiliations with the Nazi party. Those who admitted their crimes believed that they were guiltless because "extreme times call for extreme measures." The U.S. government, at least in the case of Operation Paperclip, seemed to agree with them.

Like any skilled writer, Jacobsen leaves her readers with more questions than answers: Is all fair in love and war? Is science – or the scientists who practice it – amoral? Do the ends justify the means? Prepare to open up Pandora's box when you open this book.