

borborygmus

Rumblings from the World of Food

To the Editor:

Meat and Market

It was with great excitement that I awaited my first issue of *Gastronomica*, what I expected to be an epicurean resource. After receiving it recently, I wish to forward some rather despondent input. On so many levels it is hard to capture, I have issues with Charlie Grosso's "Market and Meat" photographic sample of her *Wok the Dog* project (Summer 2008).

This is, at a minimum, sensationalist journalism but, more realistically, work that is the result of an individual's fascination with the macabre. This opinion is exemplified by Ms. Grosso's revolting and callous picture titles. Additionally, I see no connection between the statement "...but we have lost our connection not only to the vendors who sell us our food, but to life itself, to the animal our dinner once was" and the photographs shown, which depict the goriest elements of slaughter with no correlation to the actual sentient being. It would have been so much more powerful, appropriate, and value added if, after that statement, she had shown or detailed information on the Buy Local or Grass Fed movements, which actually do connect you with your food, where it comes from, and the vendors who provide it to the market.

Ultimately, the magazine carries much responsibility for giving this

type of eccentricity exposure, so I have canceled my subscription.

—CJ Penley, Pleasanton, CA

Charlie Grosso responds:

The point of my project is to raise cultural awareness and cause viewers to rethink ideas about Western cultural superiority. My work questions whether we have modernized and sterilized our food industry to the point where we have lost something of value that less-developed nations still retain. How can we impose our own standards of right and wrong on those who must eat, on those who do not see a dog as a companion but as food, given their cultural norms?

Most of my images do, in fact, depict local and grass-fed livestock, because the majority of the cultures I photograph know little of the industrialized killing machine we have created here in the States. Experience has taught me that markets like those depicted in my photos waste far less than we do and make use of every part of the slaughtered animal. Their practices represent a far more profound display of respect for the sentient being that gave up its life than does the standard Western approach of only eating select parts and discarding the rest.

I urge *Gastronomica* readers to put aside outrage and take another look at my work, and at the fuller body of work that is offered on my Web site

(www.charliestudio.com). We must look beyond our immediate surroundings and think about the global society.

