among German Café-Konditoreien, Italian caffé-bars, and Parisian café-brasseries, but a deeper discussion would have been appreciated, as treatment of this key point feels rather superficial. The rest of the book subdivides into profiles of each grand café, naming its illustrious patrons and recounting their various caprices and apocryphal anecdotes. At the very end is an abridged list of coffeehouse cameos in literature, music, art, and cinema.

Most of the gloriously chandeliered, gilt-mirrored cafés showcased in Fitch’s book survive today based on their reputation as past breeding grounds for revolution, art, or fashion—as well as the margins they make on their memorabilia—rather than on their relevance to the present. The rise of television, home coffee machines, cell phones, and public toilets all contributed to the demise of this institution, which was rather easily replaced by Starbucks and cyber-cafés. But the romance and mythologies surrounding Europe’s grand cafés live on—and Fitch’s book contributes to that effort.

—Nathalie Jordi, Dublin

Soul of the City: The Pike Place Public Market
Alice Shorett and Murray Morgan
175 pp. Illustrations. $18.95 (paper)


The market was established in 1907 through the efforts of Councilman Thomas P. Revelle, who aimed to lower the cost of produce by encouraging farmers to sell their own goods. In its first years the market was a resounding success. Frank Goodwin conceived of and constructed the buildings that house the marketplace and sold the majority interest in the market to his nephew, Arthur Goodwin, in 1925. Conflicts soon arose over the management of the marketplace, particularly over the Goodwins’ practice of renting the best stands to shops run by middlemen. In 1933 the market passed from the Goodwins to Joe Desimones, an Italian immigrant who worked his way up from stall owner to majority shareholder. In 1973 the Preservation and Development Authority took control of the market and brought it and the surrounding seven acres under the protection of the National Register of Historic Places.

The latter part of Soul of the City chronicles the troubles the market faced in the 1970s and again in the 1980s, when politics and financial strain threatened its closure. The book firmly supports the saving efforts of Victor Steinbrueck and, later, his son, Peter Steinbrueck, who authored the book’s forward. The history of the market depicted in Soul of the City is a pleasing mix of fact, celebration, and unveiled advocacy.

True to its name, Soul of the City is also an indirect portrayal of the history of Seattle, by means of a microcosm. The wider history of the city frequently intersects with the market’s own, through political figures like Revelle and Senator Warren G. Magnuson, and through events like the General Strike of 1919 and the internment of Japanese Americans in the 1940s. Shorett and Morgan spend their strongest chapters focusing on the individual characters of the marketplace: immigrants from diverse backgrounds whose travails speak to the dynamics of the population of Seattle at large. Unfortunately, in the authors’ attempt to make the past more immediate, their writing can be florid. The tone works best when they rein themselves in for the more serious historical chapters, or let themselves have fun with the colorful characters, particularly in Chapter 5. The story of Nellie Curtis and her “hotel” in Chapter 8 is another delectable highlight.

Punctuated by pictures and individualized anecdotes, Soul of the City is less a scholarly work than a loving portrait—a good, quick reference for those interested in the market. It captures both the history and the atmosphere of a clearly beloved city and place.

—Margot Kaminski, New Haven, CT