

Book of the week

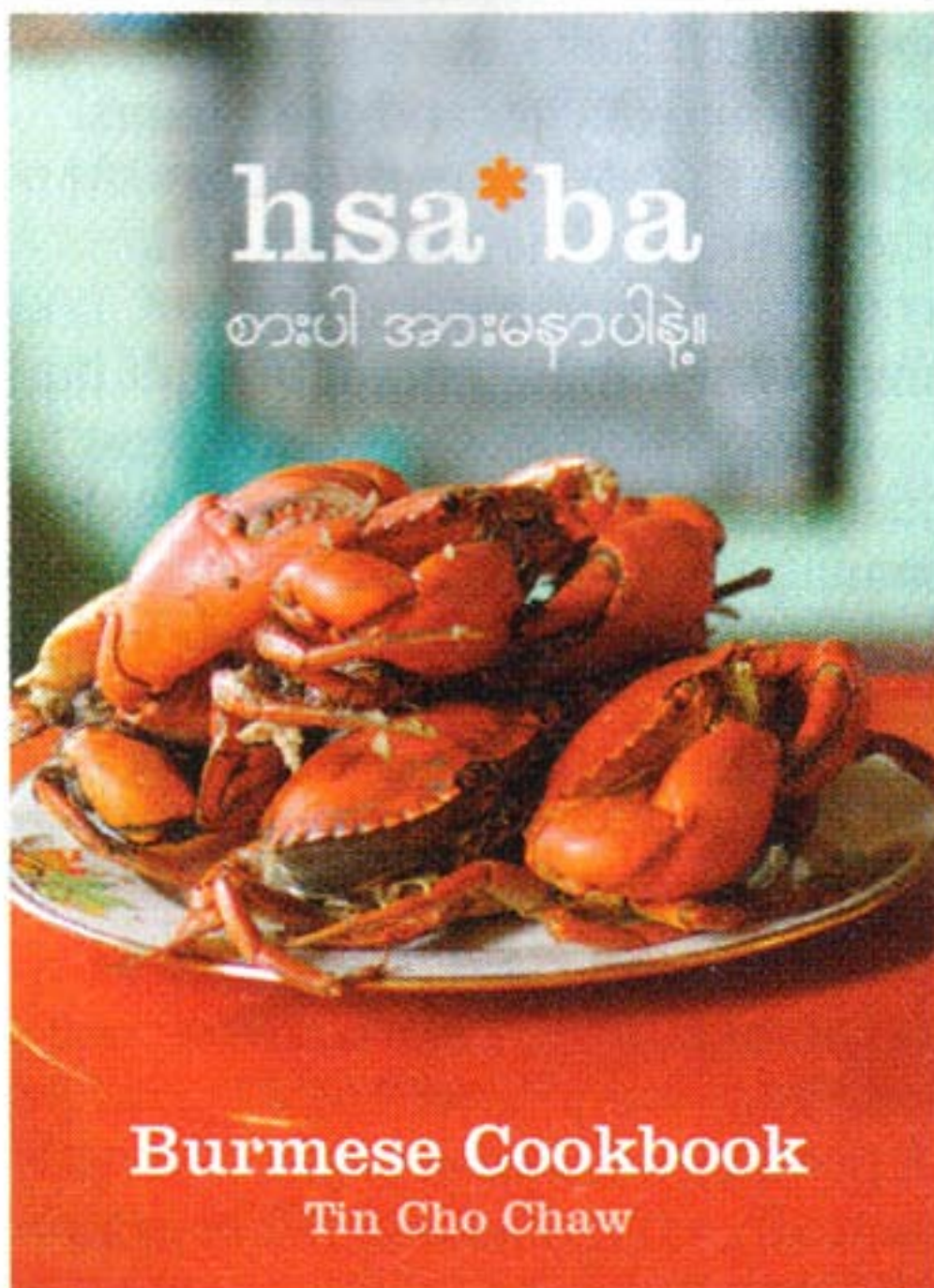


'Hsa Ba: Burmese Cookbook'

Seldom does a book arriving with so little fanfare make such a splash in the kitchen. We'd been on the lookout for a good Burmese cookbook for years and came across this one, published in 2008, on the excellent blog and website www.hsaba.com ('hsa ba' is Burmese for 'please eat').

The author was born in Rangoon and moved to the UK when she was eight years old. The book is the result of remembered dishes from childhood and, more recently, visits to family still in Burma. The 100 clearly written recipes have been honed and tested so that they work in Western kitchens but retain the taste of Burma.

Dishes such as tomato fish curry with fish sauce and red chilli, roasted eggplant salad, wing-bean salad and golden sticky rice had us heading back to the kitchen again and again to satisfy our cravings. Some, such as slow-cooked pork belly and mutton yoghurt curry recall the Chinese and Indian influences evident in the nation's food, while others, such as mohingar (a fish noodle soup, considered the national dish of Burma) and pickled tea leaf salad, are emphatically Burmese.



The author has a background in graphic design, so this well-presented book doesn't feel self-published – it's as professionally put together as any other we've reviewed on these pages (and more so than many). As an added bonus, you can watch a selection of the recipes being cooked by the author on the website. This book deserves to get widespread international recognition. *Susan Low* 'Hsa Ba: Burmese Cookbook' by Tin Cho Chaw is published by Grassblades Limited at £20.