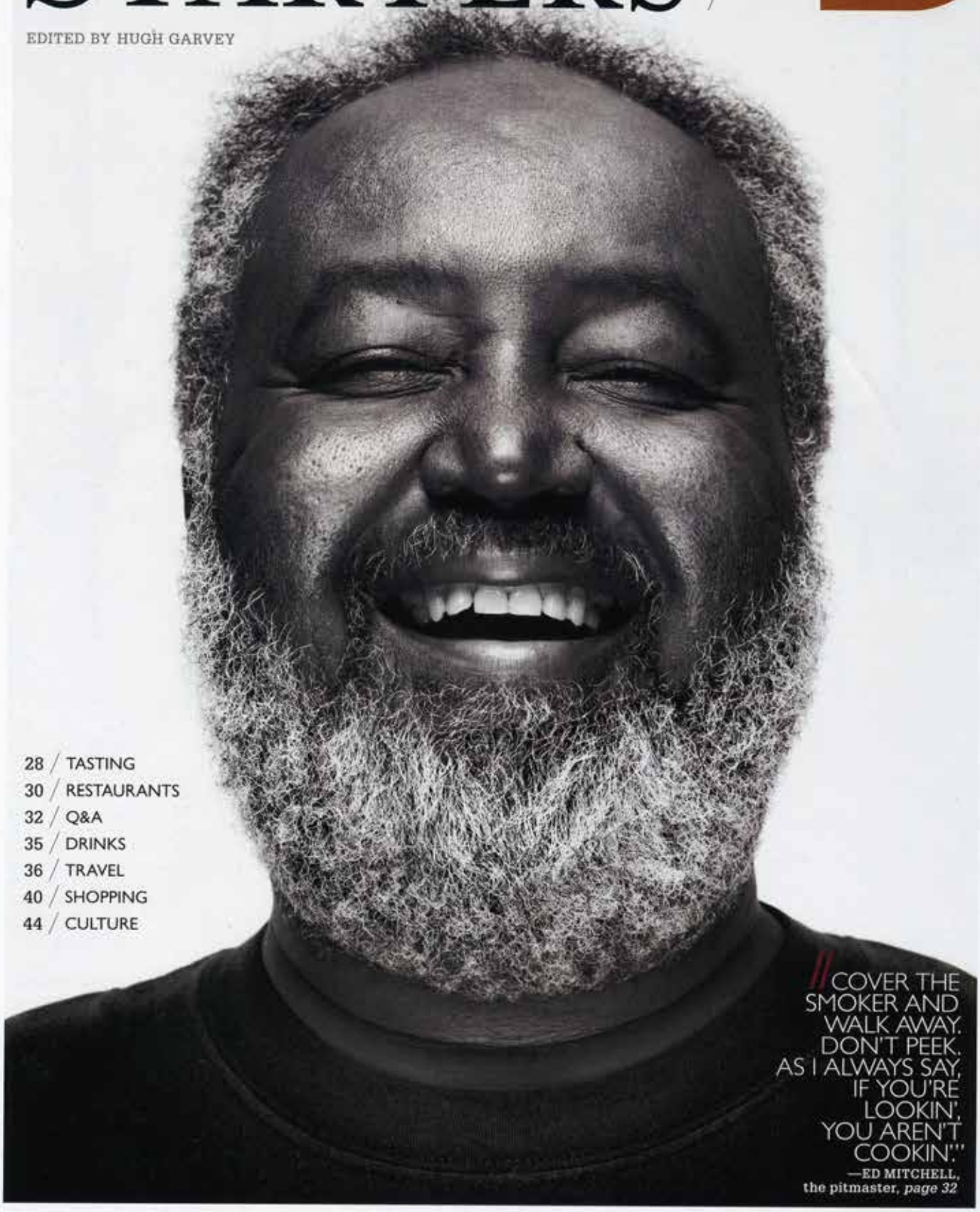
STARTERS

QUICK BITES FROM THE WORLD OF BON APPÉTIT

EDITED BY HUGH GARVEY



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"I COVER THE SMOKER AND WALK AWAY. DON'T PEEK. AS I ALWAYS SAY, IF YOU'RE LOOKIN', YOU AREN'T COOKIN'."
—ED MITCHELL, the pitmaster, *page 32*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTIAN WEBER/

EXPERT ADVICE FROM/

the pitmaster

ED MITCHELL
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Mitchell barbecued his first whole hog when he was 14. Incidentally, he swigged moonshine for the first time that same day. It was, in his words, the day he became a man. Today, he's a barbecue legend, revered for his eastern North Carolina-style chopped whole hog, which you can taste at The Pit, his upscale joint in Raleigh.

Can authentic barbecue be made at home?
Not unless you're willing to get a small animal, cook it whole, and chop it up. But you can make something that resembles barbecue and still tastes pretty good. You can become what I call a barbecue specialist. Pick a specific cut of meat and perfect it.

How low and slow should barbecue be cooked?
I am probably the only guy who goes against the grain when it comes to the "low and slow" barbecue mantra. I get the fire really hot so it sears the meat. I cover the smoker and walk away. Don't peek. As I always say, if you're lookin', you aren't cookin'.

Tell us about your favorite sauce.
I love the eastern North Carolina-style vinegar-based sauce that consists of apple cider vinegar, preferably White House brand, salt, pepper, a little cayenne, and a little sugar. You can add some Texas Pete Hot Sauce for more kick. Give it a good shake and you're onto something.

What's the current state of barbecue quality across the country?
It's definitely undergoing a renaissance. The trick is to find someone who is doing it the authentic way. The movement I'm involved with now is trying to bring local farmers into the mix. I want to use farms that are raising their animals in a more natural way. It's funny; it's the way barbecue was done 100 years ago.
–ANDREW KNOWLTON

CHRISTIAN WEBER; GROOMING BY PAIGE SMITHERMAN AT WALTER SCHUPFER MANAGEMENT