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The Ripening Sun: One Woman And The Creation Of A Vineyard



Synopsis

For most people giving up the day job and moving to a beautiful area of France and living off the vines is an impossible but delicious dream. In 1990, Patricia Atkinson and her husband decided to sell up in Britain and emigrate to the Dordogne. Their idea was to buy a house with a few vines attached and employ someone to tend to the wine while they earned their living with some financial consultancy work. There followed a series of disasters: the stock market crashed leaving their small holding as their sole source of income; the first red wine harvest turned to vinegar; and Patricia's husband returned to Britain, unable to cope with the stress and never returned. Patricia Atkinson, whose only knowledge of wine up to that moment was 'that it came from a bottle' and who had not a word of French, was left to salvage their life savings from the vineyards. What follows is a remarkable story of struggle and transformation whereby her tiny 4 hectare plot has become a major estate of 21 hectares, where her Clos d'Yvigne wines have won awards and been adopted by wine merchants throughout the world and where she has been hailed as a superstar by UK wine writers.

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Customer Reviews

"[an] eloquent tale" * Citylife * "Remarkable . . . an extraordinarily affecting read" -- Carla McKay * Daily Mail * "Enthralling . . . you end up admiring this plucky, warm-hearted woman and lusting to sample her vinous output" -- Christopher Hirst * The Independent * "Should be required reading for anyone enjoying the vineyard dream...an impressive human story" * Spectator * "Amazing and amusing . . . unputdownable" * The Lady * --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition

of this title.

A remarkable story of a woman's struggle to transform a tiny 4-hectare vine plot in the Dordogne into a major estate of 21 hectares. Today, Clos d'Yvigne wines win awards and have been adopted by wine merchants throughout the world. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A stunning story! Patricia Atkinson is a gutsy, driven, and talented woman who transforms a small derelict vineyard into a thriving enterprise despite a number of troubles that would have made most people sell up and leave. I have never been particularly interested in any facet of the wine making process so I had no idea that there are so many steps involved. Patricia Atkinson does it all from tractor driving to cleaning the barrels to becoming an expert wine taster. She gets great advice and help from neighbors and friends, but her drive and determination make this book incredibly interesting even if you don't give two hoots about the wine making process. Patricia Atkinson was 50 when she moved to her vineyard which would make her about 75 now. I read that she sold her vineyard, but some of her wines are still made. I hope that she is enjoying herself wherever she is.

This genre of books seems all too often to be filled with fluffy, dreamy accounts of the beautiful life in southern Europe, lacking in any real account of the hard work that it took to build that new life. Patricia Atkinson, however, shares the details of what it took to build a life in France, and it is a rich, detailed and emotional account. It is indeed a book that is hard to put down. You may need to have at least some interest in wine making to appreciate all of the details, but anyone buying a book about starting a winery in France probably has that interest (the one-star reviewer being a sad exception). This is the first book that I've read that I felt had the right blend of escapism with a healthy dose of reality, all wrapped around the beautiful land and seasons of southwest France. I can't wait to read her next book.

Besides an endearing light story, there is ALOT of wine making expertise, terms, and tasks a casual observer of wine production doesn't think about, or maybe even hear about. Taking notes wouldn't be a bad idea if you wanted to retain some of the inside vocabulary. I have been to this beautiful area of France and recommend anyone interested in going to do so. Picking grapes there would not be the reason to go, but experiencing the countryside, the history and many of the things mentioned in the story make for wonderful travel.

I enjoyed this book because it helped me imagine what it might be like to move to France and open a vineyard (note: it would be hard!). It's nicely written but there was a bit too much technical info about wine making for me. I would have enjoyed it more if there'd been a great focus on the relationships and personalities of the people in the author's life.

A very well done autobiographical account of developing a vineyard to survive. Gives a very good account of the life cycle of the work and decisions needed to make wine, from the vineyard to the bottle.

I have been a fan of Peter Mayle's books on Provence and decided to branch out when finding this book as a recommendation. Was not sure what to expect but found it a delightful book on living in the french countryside but even more on what is involved in wine making. Learned more from this memoir than I have from many books on wine making. Entertaining and informative. Have been in touch with the author about renting one of the two cottages that she has on the site and are delightful vacation spots. Unfortunately her wine club offerings are only available in England. This is a book you will enjoy reading more than once.

Interesting book

This is a compelling story about an English woman who finds herself running a winery. She learns French and how to make wine while developing friendships with her French neighbors. She ends up earning the respect of the local growers for her tenacity, palate and ultimately her wine making ability. I could not put it down and have given it to others who found it equally moving. It does contain a lot of technical information about wine production, but I found this to be a plus. As the tale unfolded, I studied the photographs included in the book centerpiece.

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