



Red, White, and Drunk All Over: A Wine-Soaked Journey from Grape to Glass

Natalie MacLean

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After three years of sipping, spitting, and slogging her way through bushy vine leaves and cellar cobwebs, award-winning writer Natalie MacLean takes readers behind the scenes of the international wine world, exploring its history, visiting its most evocative places, and meeting some of its most charismatic personalities.

In *Red, White, and Drunk All Over*, Natalie travels to the ancient vineyards of Burgundy to uncover the secrets of the pinot noir, the "heartbreak grape" from which some of the most coveted and expensive wines in the world are made. She visits the labyrinthine cellars of Champagne to examine the myths and the mystique of luxury bubbly and the *grandes dames* who made it the drink of celebration the world over. She pulls on sturdy boots to help with the harvest at the vineyards of iconoclastic Californian winemaker Randall Grahm and goes undercover as sommelier for a night in a five-star restaurant with a wine list the thickness of a phone book. She looks at the influence of powerful critics, notably Robert Parker and Jancis Robinson, invites readers into her dining room for an informal wine tasting, and compares collecting notes at a bacchanalian dinner with novelist Jay McInerney.

As funny and engaging as she is knowledgeable, Natalie has an unconventional wit, curiosity, and obsession with all things related to wine that make for a tour both amusing and informative, from grape to bottle to glass.

Red, White, and Drunk All Over: A Wine-Soaked Journey from Grape to Glass Details

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From Reader Review Red, White, and Drunk All Over: A Wine-Soaked Journey from Grape to Glass for online ebook

Sean says

Takes the topic of wine one step further, delving into more focused conversations such as California terroir and private tasting at DRC.

Natalie MacLean has an easy, friendly style of writing, that takes the reader by the hand and carefully leads them through some of the more intricate discussions on wine.

My wife started to read this book, but thought it was too "wine geek" heavy. I (a professional wine steward) bounded through the book with no problems, and learned quite a lot about subjects I had only glimpsed the periphery of in the past.

So I think if you're a wine geek, you'll thoroughly enjoy this book, but if you're a beginner, then read Windows of the World by Kevin Zraly... Wine for Dummies... drink wine for a few years... and then pick up this book and jump in. You may have a better background for enjoying.

Dawn says

The first 3-4 chapters were a slog, but I really enjoyed the latter chapters, which read like essays on a variety of wine-related topics: retail wine sales, wineglass manufacturing, in-home wine tasting and dinner parties, high-end restaurant sommeliers, and the author's dinner and dishing with fellow wine enthusiast and literary celebrity Jay McInerney. The author's passion for her subject and educating the reader is evident and is probably the most enjoyable aspect of this book. As a result, I have begun following her on social media, where she has a very active presence and enthusiastic following.

Cindy says

I really wanted to like this book because it's about wine, but I couldn't do it. I didn't even finish it. I didn't even get half way. 80 pages in and I couldn't take anymore. Do you know what it's like to read a book where every 5th sentence is a comparison? It's unbearable. There was a moment when she compared a process done by some vineyards that makes the wine taste uneven and how this was like liposuction and how your skin can never be as even as it had been if you'd never gotten fat. Really, really?? Sure, when she gets it right, it's spot on, but when it's simile upon simile upon simile, maybe a metaphor to mix it up a bit, it's hard for the good ones to register. Her writing style is really best suited for short pieces; anything longer than your average magazine article and you will just get annoyed. Trust me. But I bet her free newsletter is marvellous.

Melissa says

Though I resisted the notion at first, I think this is the kind of book I would have written about my wine

experiences if I had the gumption: unpretentious and talking about how I arrived at my wine education rather than flaunting my credentials. I like to think that books I fly through and look forward to getting back to have strong merit, and this one definitely kept my interest. I like her honesty and modesty when talking about wine experiences whether it be the pressure to select a wine for a group while dining in a restaurant or the intimidation of the "seasoned" people of the wine trade. She has a great balance of storytelling and educational information that varying levels of wine lovers should enjoy. In the end, this was an enjoyable read above all, and I found myself begrudgingly related to the story (after all, we all like to think we're unique...)

Terra Wolski says

All sorts of wine adventures! The whole beginning part that talk of winemakers in France was too foreign to me - and I can't afford a big wine collection (nor would I know what to do with any of it) ... read as part as my 2019 reading challenge .. as the copy that I have has "my favorite color on the cover" (purple) (not shown on the goodreads cover).. oh and I did actually love the part (and actually laughed out loud) where the woman thought the Pinot noir smelled like fertilizer and was told "it was supposed to smell like shit"" haha!! (I love drinking Pinot noir!! Lol)

Tara deCamp says

This book is very informative and MacLean's love for wine shines through, but the prose was unbearable. The word choice, comparisons, and language had me cringing nearly the whole time. Some highlights: "the hills roll like playful green dolphins" describing a geographical boundary: "like the curve between a woman's shoulders and hips" describing a wine: "light and ephemeral as Ariel but with Caliban's sexual energy"

It's just not my style; this kind of writing may appeal to others.

Deborah Sowery-Quinn says

Fascinating book about many aspects of wine.

Mell says

While I had some trouble with the section on the complicated red wines of France, I enjoyed learning about the wine world and the stories told by Natalie MacLean. Wine still seems a bit fussy and complicated to me, but she did shed light into many aspects of wine making and drinking. It's a competitive world, and a few powerful people can shape sales and ratings. No wonder people spend so much time reading about and studying wine.

I love stories about women who defy the times and succeed in the "man's world," so reading about the French champagne widows was great. And learning how Australian wines have challenged the "old world"

vineyards is also quite interesting- I do like to cheer for an underdog. Hats off to people like Natalie for trying to make wine more accessible to people like me.

Jonathan says

I did not finish this book, because I read the following text on page 22:

"I dissolve with pleasure into the wine, like a sugar cube with warm water poured over it. The only way to convey the intensity of flavor in my mouth would be to make the words on this page burst into flames."

Now I don't know a lot about writing but this short pair of sentences somehow manage to mix melodrama, a bad cliche, and a really weird metaphor into an unpalatable lump of awkward description. Does this make other people want to drink wine? Actually it *does* make me want a nice glass of Cabernet, but probably not for the reasons the author wanted. I'm sure this book has some interesting stuff (the part with the poop in the cow horn was OK) but I can't get past the writing style.

One thing I appreciated in the first twenty pages was the author's admission of wine's alcoholic content. She points out, and rightly, that the vast majority of "wine literature" sort of skips over that part, and acts as though it's just fancy grape juice with an innocent warm aftertaste. She says point-blank that she loves the buzz and that the alcoholic aftereffects are one part of the pleasurable experience of drinking wine for her. It's the same for me, of course, and I expect for most wine drinkers--finally, someone with some credibility admits what we're all thinking.

Dina says

Probably a lame comment since this is the first wine book I've read, but this has got to be the ultimate beginners guide to wine. I love how Natalie MacLean takes you step by step through the processes of growing grapes, creating a blend, critiquing, selling, serving and, most importantly, drinking wine. The descriptors were enough to add about \$80-ish extra bucks to the true price of the book (if you're like me and not ready to drop upwards of \$100 on a bottle of Krug), and I dare anyone to get through it without emptying at least a few bottles. There is no pretension here, best evidenced by her less-than-impressed encounter with Georg Reidel and his famously expensive stemware. There's a lot to take in, but well worth the time and effort. I would recommend anyone with a curiosity of delicious fermented grape juice give this one a go, along with Natalie's amazing informative and thorough newsletter, *Nat Decants*.

Natalie says

Thanks for your reviews everyone! I learn from the good and from the less-than-enthusiastic. I've posted some background info and questions for book clubs if anyone is interested ... though I'm sure any gathering my book might prompt would involve more wine, less analysis:

book clubs and tasting groups

I also post my favorite wines, a monthly newsletter and a food and wine matching tool on my site:

food and wine matcher

Cheers,
Natalie

www.nataliemaclean.com

PS The rating above is not mine but my mother's :)

Teena in Toronto says

I found some parts of this book to be interesting. I will admit that I got bogged down at times, especially in the beginning when she was visiting the various wineries.

I am not close to being an expert about wine and I found this book was over my head at times. I guess I need more of a "Wine for Dummies" style of book.

Considering MacLean is Canadian (born in Nova Scotia and now living in Ottawa), I would have liked her to spend some time talking about our wines since we have excellent regions in Niagara, British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

Suzanne Kittrell says

Well, this is about how wonderful wine is and why we all like it and, oh yeah, how it is made in some of the exclusive vineyards in France and Napa/Sonoma. This woman has writes a wine column and describes what goes on in her head when she sips on the grape juice - I wish I had that much imagination of what I think I am smelling and tasting - she's never dull and never without an apt description. A good read if you want to know more about the business and the romance of wine and how it all can tie together whenever you open up a bottle. Did you know that there are 5 million bubbles in every glass of champagne? And you drink them all. One of my favorite quotes, paraphrased, "Every woman looks more beautiful after she has drunk a glass of champagne." Oh those French. Must be all those bubbles. You gotta love the sentiment.

Dianne says

This is an entertaining journey through the world of wine that's written in - surprise! - language we can all understand. I've read - or at least started reading - others that only experts would be able to get through. For a nowhere-near-expert they were beyond boring. This is one you can understand and enjoy. It may even give you the courage to experiment a bit.

She begins with a chapter called "The Good Earth" in which she explains how the grapes are grown in various regions. This is followed by Harvesting Dreams then The Merry Widows of Mousse which is about Champagne. That was my favourite chapter. Who knew just talking about champagne could be so much fun?

The next is "Purple Prose with a Bite", about wine writing, then A Tale of Two Wine Stores, comparing two

different retail marketing styles, and "A Glass Act" which is a look at what types of wine glasses are available and what works best and why. The remaining chapters are Partners at the Table, Undercover Sommelier, which is quite funny, and Big City Bacchus.

Well written, entertaining, and down to earth, this book is filled with great stories of the author's experiences with wine. It's probably the un-stuffiest wine book you'll ever find. It has lots of helpful information, and is utterly lacking in the silly wine snobbery that tries to make us ordinary folk feel inadequate. This author is someone you could enjoy having a wine conversation with even if you're just a beginner. She's fun rather than intimidating and when you're talking about wine experts, that's not something you often get to say. This book is definitely worth a look if you want to learn a little more about wine and pick up a few suggestions on what to order with dinner or what to put in your wine rack.

Colleen says

I would have liked to see more of MacLean's personality shine through in the book - the glimpses that appeared seemed delightful. And shame on the editor for not pushing for a bibliography in the back. MacLean mentioned many other books throughout hers but there's no gathering of them together in a bibliography or works referenced. If I want those titles, I'll have to flip back through every page, which is unlikely.
