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The Magic Of Provence: Pleasures Of Southern France



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Synopsis

When Yvone Lenard returned to her native France and purchased a house in a hilltop village of Provence, an enchanted world of food, wines, and unusual adventures—including chicken rustling, flirtatious advances from neighbors, and a sÃƒÂ©ance—was opened up before her. This is her account of the spell cast on her by Provence, from her first morningÃ¢â ¬â„¢s visit from a charming prince bearing a jug of the villageÃ¢â ¬â„¢s vin rosÃƒÂ© to the growth of her friendship with a duchess in the local chateau. Lenard shares tales of travels to St.-Tropez and of visits from American friends who find unexpected romance and magic in Provence. Told with verve, wit, and LenardÃ¢â ¬â„¢s deep understanding of the French language and culture, this memoir includes tales of others who have been drawn to the region, including Vincent van Gogh, Brigitte Bardot, and Princess Caroline of Monaco. Ways to re-create the magic of the regionÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sensuous way of life include recipes for food and drinks and tips for entertaining in the ProvenÃƒÂ§al style.

Book Information

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Elysian Editions (March 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0871272121

ISBN-13: 978-0871272126

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 28 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #636,485 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 inÃ Â Books > Travel > Europe > France > Provence #429 inÃ Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > French #821 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Culinary

Customer Reviews

On an impulse, during the final hours of a year-long stay in France, the author and her husband, who live in Los Angeles, bought a run-down house in a village in the Luberon mountains of Provence, gave vague instructions to a contractor for its restoration and left for home. When they returned the following summer, they found that, miraculously, the house had been renovated exactly as they wished. And so begins this enchanting collection of essays in which Lenard, the author of several textbooks on French language and culture, tells of a vacation home in a fairy-tale town

where a duchess in straitened circumstances lives in an ancient castle, the townspeople are friendly and other Americans rush to find similar ruins to renovate. The village begins to work its magic when the husband of the duchess's niece, a deposed prince from a neighboring European country, acts as their welcoming committee. Soon, neighbors share drinks and conversation at the village caf?, aged pensioners help Lenard water flowers in the square and her husband, Wayne, is invited on a ghost-hunting expedition to the local cemetery. Not everything runs smoothly: a gardener hired to care for their plants takes their money and never shows up; a cleaning lady turns nasty. For the most part, however, life in the village is delightful, and Lenard describes it with wit and affection. Adding to the book's appeal, tempting Proven?al recipes end each chapter. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Seduced by the prospect of living the good life in the sensuous land of sunshine, olive groves, and vineyards, another American encounters la vie Provencale. This time the American is actually French-born and buys an ancient, broken-down house in the mountainous Luberon on impulse after a teaching stint in Aix-en-Provence. But the house's restoration is of little significance here; Lenard wants to tell the stories of the people she encounters. She finds herself living next to a castle and befriends its chic expatriate royalty. Lenard crafts narratives skillfully, and her recounting of a disastrous Aida performed in a monumental Roman ruin is hilarious. She concludes most chapters with simple recipes, including kir, vegetable tarts, baked Alaska, and creme brulee. How these recipes succeed in American kitchens depends on whether ingredients in domestic markets measure up to those from Provencal market towns. Mark Knoblauch

This book is on the Road Scholar reading list for tourists to Provence. The author gives a charming view of what life in Provence e was like for her and her husband. Delightful to read.

I so enjoyed the dream come true of buying and living in Provence. The experience of life where each person from royalty to tradesman is valued and an integral part of village life. Where all seem to live the ultimate good life of beauty, good food, great wine, a flower, friends, and the joy of just appreciating life. viva Provence!

Going to Provence? Put this truly delightful book on your "must read" list! Discovering "The Magic of Provence" led to three magical summers (and hopefully many more ahead) of beauty, adventure and Provencal cuisine. Off the beaten path, Ansouis (officially designated as one of the "Most

Beautiful Villages in France") will delight you and its residents will intrigue you. The author lived her stories as she and her husband moved into their newly-built home in a tiny hilltop village, met the royalty in the castle and tested each chapter’s delicious recipes in their own kitchen. Get ready for a treat!

The author is like my father-in-law when he describes the fish he caught: he lies about their size and the quantity, but I couldn’t care less about fishing anyway.the author is self-important and pretentious.some of the stories were amusing, but I also had impressions that the most interesting ones weren’t true. And the beginning when the author is aristocracy-struck and tries to curtsy, is laughable but not in a funny way. She comes across as simple-minded.I mean, the woman believs in ghosts and ouiji board!I didn’t analyze the receipts because I cook from real cookbooks, I just skipped the pages.The only parts which were interesting where the ones I knew she was making her stories up. Perhaps she should try her hand at fiction?I was hoping for a true account of life in Provence but found instead a collection of fables.

Liked the first book much more Changes.

This book lets you join in the adventure of living in Provence. You can practically feel the sunshine, and taste the wine. All the people seem like neighbors. I can’t wait to try some of the recipes. If you can’t travel to Provence, or are considering it, this is the book to read.

As a collector and reader of books on Provence, I was entertained by the book; however, it is a quite modest addition to the body of existing personal narratives. The book’s most off-putting aspect was the author’s constant gushing over neighbors who are minor lapsed royalty. At one point she even labels an airport worker a communist for reacting negatively to her namedropping reference to the duchess in order to obtain more favorable treatment. Her inclusion of recipes, although not novel, did provide optional ingredients to permit their preparation with easily obtainable ingredients. Nothing as profound as Durrell’s or Ford’s books on Provence, the book most resembles a predecessor which title it appears to borrow from: Lady Winifred Fortescue’s "perfume From Provence".

I found the book at our local book store a month before my wife and I left for a trip to Italy and Provence. My wife read it before we left and really enjoyed it. I read it in Italy as preparation for our

time in the south of France. I, too, found it quite pleasurable. Ms. Lenard’s account of the incredible way she and her husband found their house and the good fortune that followed was in sharp contrast to so many "I bought a home in Europe and the renovations were a disaster" tales. Her anecdotes about life in Provence were certainly euphoric and somewhat over the top, but, hey, why not? When you live in a lovely home in one of the acknowledged paradises on Earth, it seems only fitting to revel in your good fortune. It’s the good life and good for you, Yvone.Now, about my tease: sure enough, we met Ms. Lenard and her husband on our trip. They were friendly, warm, and most gracious in the brief time we spent together. Now, does this make objectivity impossible in writing this review? Probably - but honest - I really did enjoy the book and recommend it highly, whether you’re an armchair traveler or are planning a trip to the south of France.

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