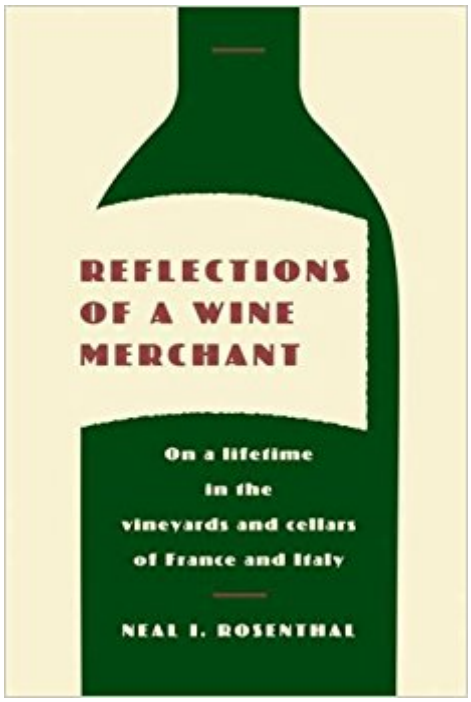
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Reflections Of A Wine Merchant



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Synopsis

A leading importer of limited-production wines of character and quality takes us on an intimate tour through family-owned vineyards in France and Italy and reflects upon the last three decades of controversy, hype, and change in the world of wineIn the late 1970s, Neal I. Rosenthal set out to learn everything he could about wine. Today, he is one of the most successful importers of traditionally made wines produced by small family-owned estates in France and Italy. Rosenthal has immersed himself in the culture of Old World wine production, working closely with his growers for two and sometimes three generations. He is one of the leading exponents of the concept of Ã¢â ¬Å“terroirÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •the notion that a particular vineyard site imparts distinct qualities of bouquet, flavor, and color to a wine. In Reflections of a Wine Merchant, Rosenthal brings us into the cellars, vineyards, and homes of these vignerons, and his delightful stories about his encounters, relationships, and explorationsÃ¢â ¬â •and what he has learned along the wayÃ¢â ¬â •give us an unequaled perspective on winemaking tradition and what threatens it today.Ã Â Rosenthal was featured in the documentary film Mondovino and is one of the more outspoken figures against globalization, homogenization, and the Ã¢â ¬Å“critic-izationÃ¢â ¬Â• of the wine business. He was also a major subject in Lawrence OsborneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s The Accidental Connoisseur. His is an important voice in defense of the individual and the artisanal, and their contribution to our quality of life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. The 2008 vintage qualities remain undetermined, but with this title by New York City wine importer Rosenthal, the still-young year yields one of the outstanding wine books of recent memory. From long experience, the author writes that wine should be first understood as an expression of soil through fermented grape juice and begins his memoir of a tradesman's life with a short manifesto on that expressive quality called terroir. Then, Rosenthal takes us on an autobiography of his life as a wine merchant, starting with the opening of his Manhattan shop in 1978, from early misadventures and small-scale successes to the ferreting of significant discoveries far off the paths habitually beaten through France and Italy in particular. His and his wife, Kerry, had a knack for finding the hitherto unknown, and he narrates these discoveries with physical and social details that bring moments to vivid, sensory life. The period he chronicles was one of enormous developments in wine, from California through globalization, and he writes intelligently of the problems that came with progress. Yet neither the trade nor this title is romantic: Rosenthal makes clear the hard, often unpleasant work of winemaking and its trade and the setbacks that are part of the process. Through his business, he has had and been responsible for countless wine-related experiences of exceptional quality; he has now provided a literary one. B&w photos. (May)
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Ã¢â ¬Å“Neal Rosenthal is a source of the kind of wines that I have always looked for, wines that speak to me not of marketing trends, but of the places where they were grown and the people who made them. Whether rustic or elegant, NealÃ¢â ¬â„¢s wines are wines of character, of taste. His lively book, which displays the spunky personality of the author, shines light on how character and taste may be bred into wine.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Victor HazanÃ¢â ¬Å“There have been many books about wine, but rarely one as absorbing and as wise as this one. Rosenthal tells of his travels in France and Italy, of his friendships with wine growers, and of his own growing understanding of this ancient business that combines both art and commerce.Ã Â He writes so well, one can taste the wines he loves.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Charles SimicÃ Â

Neal Rosenthal has written a good book about his experience in the wine business.Inevitably it's going to be compared to Kermit Lynch's "Adventures on the Wine Route." That's the benchmark for wine books of this sort and I'm not sure anyone is going to equal it. Lynch is a good story teller as well as being kind of a Lewis & Clark of U.S. wine merchants, which gave him incredible stories to tell.One of Rosenthal's chapters is a direct rebuttal to "Adventures on the Wine Route," where he discusses the problems of the wine seller choosing the barrels of wine he's willing to sell.As far as

complaints from other reviewers that he’s bitter or settling scores, I think Rosenthal is just telling the story as he experienced it. One U.S. importer in particular seems to come across poorly. I’ve talked with three people who’ve dealt with that importer directly or through intermediaries and except for his excellent portfolio none had anything nice to say about him. So when Rosnthal writes bad things about him he’s just picking the low-hanging fruit.I want to try some of the wines that Rosenthal describes. I’m still trying to track down some Chambave rouge and I’ve got a line on some white Burgundy.The writing is awkward in places. That’s as much a fault of the editor as it is Rosenthal. It really seemed to slow down at the end. I got the feeling with the ending he ran out of gas and just wanted to end the book.Also, he seems to be making the same pro-terroir argument several times with slightly different arguments. It seems that could have been condensed.There’s not much mention of my two favorite Rosenthal imports, Foreau and Schleret. Maybe he didn’t have much to say. I’m glad someone is bringing them into the United States.But I liked the book and would recommend it to anyone who loves wine.

Compelling reading, very real insights by an obvious veteran oenophile; agree with his preference for old world style, quality and pedigree, and emphasis on terroir and domaine bottling - "poetry in a bottle". Equally enjoyable as was Mr. Kermit Lynch’s book.

Great Book - Thanks

Before wine was overtaken by the evil corporatists, true entrepreneurs like Neal, who cared about quality, personality and originality, discovered wonderful gems that enhance life. Not only is the book an entertaining read, he selections really are some of the best.

Best wine book ever. Just wish I had his portfolio in my business.

If you want a very interesting read plus good info with wine this is the better of some I have read,

I must have read a different book than the one reviewed so unfavorably here, although the title and the author are the same. "Reflections of a Wine Merchant" was exactly what I had hoped it would be when I bought the book for my husband, the winemaker in the family. He found the book opinionated but dead-on right, and he felt that it was about time that someone wrote to decry the industrialization of wine and the homogenization of taste. When we have finally lost the ability to

appreciate terroir or even the opportunity to experience it, we will be all the poorer for it, and we can only hope that through the efforts of people like Rosenthal that never happens.There are huge philosophical differences among vintners and wine merchants about what constitutes good wine; my husband and I have read quite a few books on the subject. My husband's methods are of the old school which lets the grape speak for itself and turn into whatever it will become, whereas the newer school, represented more by California, Chile, and Australia, wants a product that will be the same across batches and regardless of the provenance of the grapes, and so they use embellishments to enhance the wine in order to be able to sell it young and standardize the product. What one prefers is a personal choice but it's important to recognize that there is a difference.Rosenthal's descriptions of his interactions with vintners, positive and negative, were fascinating and offered insights into both the sociology and the techniques of the ancient craft of winemaking. I found his writing to be adept, descriptive, and on point. My granddaughter is about to enter the sixth grade, and were she to express herself a third as well as Neal Rosenthal does here, her teachers would be amazed and ecstatic. Please don't let the previous reviewers discourage you from buying and reading this book, especially if you have an interest in understanding the possibilities and potential of wine.

Entertaining & authentic writing

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