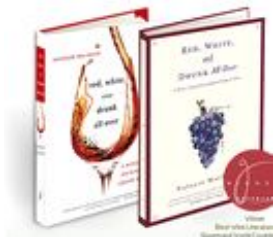


["RED, WHITE, AND DRUNK ALL OVER," a Wine Soaked journey from Grape to Glass by Natalie MacLean, Reviewed by Szilvia Gogh:](#) MacLean



goes undercover as a sommelier in a five-star restaurant, looks at the influence of powerful wine critics Jancis Robinson and Robert Parker, invites readers into her dining room for an informal wine tasting –are just a few of the subjects she covers in her amusing and informative book.



Natalie MacLean had me at "Hello." Her unusual and picturesque writing style captivated me immediately. "A pilot light have been ignited inside me; over time it would grow into the flames of full-blown passion," she writes in her introduction. I feel exactly the same way about my relationship with wine as she described hers. "I need a drink to get through the arsenic hours between five P.M. and seven P.M. If ever gave in completely to those impulses, I'd throw away everything I've worked for. My subject is addictive."

A subject all-too-often addressed in dry encyclopedias and consumer guides is given new life by MacLean, a participatory journalist who is willing to roll up her sleeves rather than sit back and sniff. She takes her readers along for the journey through her descriptive words. "Burgundy's Cote d'Or, a thirty-mile necklace of a region just three hours southeast of Paris, is divided into the Cote de Nuits and the Cote de Beaune. It starts in Dijon to the North and falls in a graceful arc, like the curve between the woman's shoulders and hips, to the fortress of Beaune in the middle, continuing on to Chagny in the south."

MacLean chooses phrases in her book that are easily digestible by the lay person, yet

sophisticated enough to satisfy the toughest wine critic. She describes drinking a burgundy to be a "mind-bending, body-wrapping, soul-quenching experience no other wine gives."

She visited hundreds of cellars of Champagne in France to the sun-soaked vineyards of California to write "Red, White, and drunk all over". She recalls her experiences with great enthusiasm. "I'm surprised to be charmed by a wine that doesn't have the palate-whacking power of big fruit and alcohol. Yet as I swirl it around, the aromas seem to pull me headfirst into the glass, as though I'm drawn by gravity through layers of timeworn soil –the earth's power to reclaim all that belongs to her."

Her passion for wine leaps off from cover to cover. MacLean goes undercover as a sommelier in a five-star restaurant, looks at the influence of powerful wine critics Jancis Robinson and Robert Parker, invites readers into her dining room for an informal wine tasting –are just a few of the subjects she covers in her amusing and informative book.

To fund her late-night vinous habits, Natalie MacLean holds down day jobs as a wine writer, speaker and judge. An accredited sommelier, she is a member of the National Capital Sommelier Guild, the Wine Writers Circle and several French wine societies with complicated and impressive names. Her unswerving goal in life is to intimidate those crusty wine stewards at fine restaurants with her staggering knowledge. More than 73,000 wine lovers subscribe to her free e-newsletter at www.nataliemaclean.com.