

This time, wine is both the companion and the destination, and who would complain about that?

References

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Anne Krebiehl: *The Wines of Germany*

Infinite Ideas Ltd., London, UK, 2019, 326 pp., ISBN: 978-1906821869, \$38.75.

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“The king is dead, long live the king,” or so it seems with much wine writing today. Despite the availability of excellent content on the Internet and the significant shift in consumer interests toward questions of sustainability, labor, and equity, a slew of publications appear each year that seem frozen in time, as if unwilling to recognize that the palates of readers, like wine drinkers, evolve over time. *The Wines of Germany* exists somewhere between the old and the new. While the book offers much to celebrate, including its geographic comprehensiveness, it also relapses into wine-book clichés, feeling at times like an address book (with brief descriptions) of German estates.

Anne Krebiehl MW (Master of Wine) is an accomplished writer whose credentials are nearly unmatched in the niche world of German wine. Her work has appeared in *Wine Enthusiast*, *Decanter*, *Falstaff*, and several other leading publications, including *Trink*, a forward-looking online publication. Krebiehl’s expertise and passion for German wine are evident on every page, though the timeworn structure of the book somewhat undermines her impressive credentials.

Following a series of detailed yet difficult-to-read (black and white) maps, the book begins with a brief and somewhat rote foray into the history of German wine, followed by a more compelling explanation of the evolution of German wine laws, which, like it or not, have had an outsized influence on the taste of German wine, past and present. The introduction also includes sections on Riesling, Spätburgunder, Sekt, and climate change, all of which can be useful both for novice and more learned German wine enthusiasts.

The remainder of the book is divided by geographical regions, with each of the 13 *Anbaugebiete* meriting its own chapter. Herein lies the bulk of the book. Krebiehl introduces each region with a description of its history, key figures, and relevant data (e.g., varietal plantings). Following each regional introduction, Krebiehl offers descriptions of selected estates, including ownership information, details about plantings, recent changes, and recommendations. While Krebiehl acknowledges that the roster of estates in the book is not exhaustive, it is certainly the most comprehensive list between two covers of which I am aware. Even the most widely traveled of readers will surely find something new, whether about a hitherto unknown estate or even a long-time favorite.

For readers outside of Central Europe, one of the book's key strengths is its serious look at regions that are less familiar, including Württemberg, Saale-Unstrut, and Hessische Bergstrasse. The section on Württemberg alone covers 24 producers, only a few less than the number covered in the section on the more familiar Mosel. In addition, each chapter features interludes about something peculiar to or particularly important in the region. For example, in the chapter about Württemberg (p. 271), the reader will learn about *Schichtstufenlandschaften*, or the "tiered layer landscape" that dominates the region. Another of the more interesting interludes describes the *Landwein* movement in Baden, which Krebiehl cleverly connects to the region's historical/political tradition of going against the grain. A short glossary helps navigate Germany's notoriously complex wine vocabulary.

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Jane Lopes: *Vignette: Stories of Life & Wine in 100 Bottles*

Hardie Grant, London, UK, 2019, 304 pp., ISBN: 978-1743795323, \$25.70.

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Vignette begins with directions for reading. The first chapter, titled "How to Read this Book," instructs the reader that the book can be read in three distinct ways. The first is as a guide to great wine. As the subtitle suggests, the author provides a list of 100 bottles intended to cover the range of experiences available from the world's wines. The second is as a memoir, the author's story of discovering wine, working for years as a sommelier, and eventually passing the Master Sommelier exam. Lastly, this is also a coffee table book for the casual reader. It contains sidebars on a diverse set of topics, presented in colorful formats, including charts, maps, and illustrations.

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