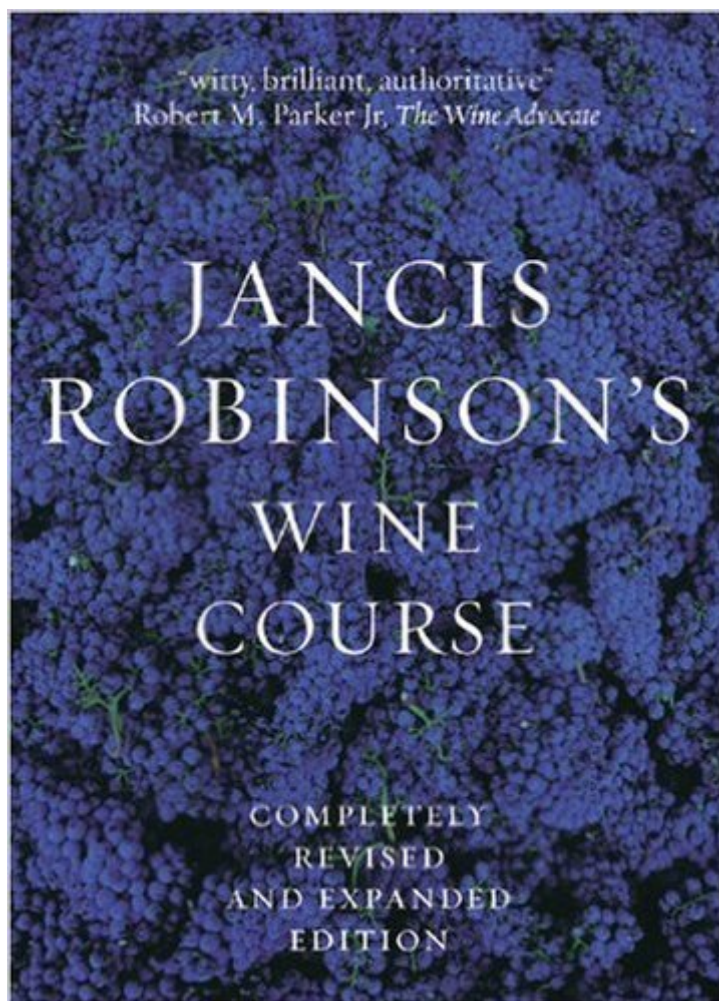


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Jancis Robinson's Wine Course: A Guide To The World Of Wine



Synopsis

The enormous variety of wines available today can be baffling even to an experienced buyer. Anyone who enters a wine store is immediately confronted by rows and rows of racks filled with a myriad of choices. Where do you begin when all you want is a reasonably priced quality wine to serve with dinner? Jancis Robinson can make anyone an expert, or at least an informed buyer, in short order. In this comprehensive guide to the wine-producing countries of the world, she captures the flavor of each region's wines and presents her personal recommendations on the best names from around the world, with thirty-two completely new pages covering the latest developments in South America, South Africa, and Eastern Europe. Robinson also describes the distinctive characteristics of hundreds of different grape varieties and studies the traditional and innovative methods employed in the creation of great wines. A fully updated vintage guide makes selection even easier. Dedicated to ensuring that you get the most out of every glass, Jancis Robinson's Wine Course explains how to taste and store wine, what to serve on special occasions at home, and how to order the best value from a restaurant wine list. Full of infectious enthusiasm and heaps of personal tips, this book will soon have you reaching for the corkscrew.

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Customer Reviews

There are many types of wine books on the market today. Some are the Dummy and KISS type - with little graphics and simple statements to start you from your first baby steps. Other are rich tomes with a wealth of information, like the Oxford Companion to Wine, which Jancis edits. These

have just about every term and region you could hope to learn about. This companion to Jancis' TV series is neither of the above, and it is much more. It is Jancis speaking to you, from her richly educated base of knowledge, to help you learn what makes wine so interesting. Think of Jancis as your incredibly experienced aunt, who has just come back from some exotic trip. She and you have sat down in the living room by a fire, are sipping some wine, and she is preparing to regale you with stories, and tidbits, and insights, and fascinating worlds you didn't even imagine. That's what the book is like. It starts with the basics - how to taste, how to serve, how to decant, wine and food. Even in these areas you get the sense that Jancis is chatting with you about something she loves. She admits to decanting full whites not because they need it, but because she loves the glowing color. She goes into the gritty details of how wines are made, what a free-run-wine is, how sparkling and sweet wines are created. And then, she begins in on the regional reviews. France, of course, is first. It always seems to come first. Beautiful pictures of the Chateau Latour tower and Loire valley gables. You move on through Italy, Spain, and yes, the US and Australia get a mention in here too. The reviews are all written from her heart - you see clearly what she likes and doesn't like, and you learn why. A great way to learn more about wine - especially if you're also able to watch the TV Series!

In what is truly one of the most informative and informal books on wine, Jancis Robinson, the only journalist ever to be given the title Master of Wine, takes you on a journey through this magnificent drink. As one who truly knows her craft, Jancis shows the reader everything needed to be able to make good decisions about wine. From a discussion about different wine glasses to the different regions where wine is made to the different grape varieties, Jancis lets it all hang out. Don't get me wrong, though. While Jancis is very informal in her discussion, she is decidedly British, so the text reads as if it were spoken with an accent. Some of the terms are British as well, so a little knowledge of the British way of speaking helps. For example, what Americans (and the French) call a Bordeaux, the English call a Claret. These little things might trip a true wine novice, but I'm certain that anyone who enjoys wine and wants to find out more will keep this book in the bookshelf (when not reading it) for a very long time.

If you are looking for a good book to start out with, to learn the basic ABC's of wine, then I would recommend *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Wine* by Phillip Seldon. This one (Jancis Robinson's) however is good for people like myself who already know the basics (the distinguishing characteristics of grape varieties, the main regions, how to make reasonably good food/wine

pairings, etc.) In other words, it's not the easiest book to follow. Another note- she makes her disgust of Spanish wines known in the opening paragraph on page 222 when she says "If it (Spain) had Germany's love of efficiency, or France's respect for bureaucracy, Spain might be sending us oceans of judiciously priced wine made expressly for the international market. But Spain is an anarchic jumble of districts and regions...and heartbreakingly awful human constructions, and has to be treated as such by the wine enthusiast." I found those comments to be misleading, as Spain to me is a model exporter of high quality wines. Just about any Rioja or Tempranillo wine imported and that goes for less than \$...is of fine quality. That is my opinion of course. Another semi-complaint is that there was not enough material on Argentina (only 6 paragraphs) which I found to be a shame, since Argentina has very unique and delicious wines. Overall this is good, as I said earlier, for those who already have a basic knowledge.

This book was extremely interesting. It covers the whole gamut of the wine hobby, from the technology of the cork and corkscrew :) to bottles to a useful synopsis of almost every variety of grape known to man. The most useful part is the regional information - each major winemaking region is discussed, most in quite some detail. A discussion of label reading is also quite useful. As a wine novice, I found the book to be very entertaining and refer to it regularly.

I've looked at dozens of wine education books over the years and so far this is my favorite. I was looking for something to bring my modest knowledge of wine to the next level, and this fit the bill perfectly. It steers a middle course between the big encyclopedias and the smaller more approachable books that are too basic if you've already read a few. It's definitely not a book for the beginner, though. It's technical enough to be useful to intermediate to advanced wine lovers, but still readable for someone with some basic background. But I think an advanced beginner would be the minimum background and probably more like a beginning intermediate. The information is detailed and encyclopedic enough so that I think anyone who knew the whole book could probably run a typical wine shop, at least from the standpoint of the necessary wine expertise, and maybe more. You could certainly run the tasting counter at most wine shops as you'd be able to discuss just about any topic that came up. Besides the usual major varietals and wines, it's great for looking up information on more obscure offerings. For example, I looked up Bandol and Banyuls (the French equivalent of port, using an older process) two red wines from Roussillon-Languedoc that I didn't know very well, and in a few minutes I had a good idea of these formerly obscure (to me) wines. Other features I liked were the chapters on white and red varietals which covers hundreds of

different clones and hybrids, many of which are still fairly obscure. My only quip, and it's a small one considering how good the book is overall, is the writing style. It's a bit turgid and grandiloquent for my taste, but others mileage may vary. All in all a truly great educational tool for the more experienced wine lover that you will find yourself referring to many times over the years.

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