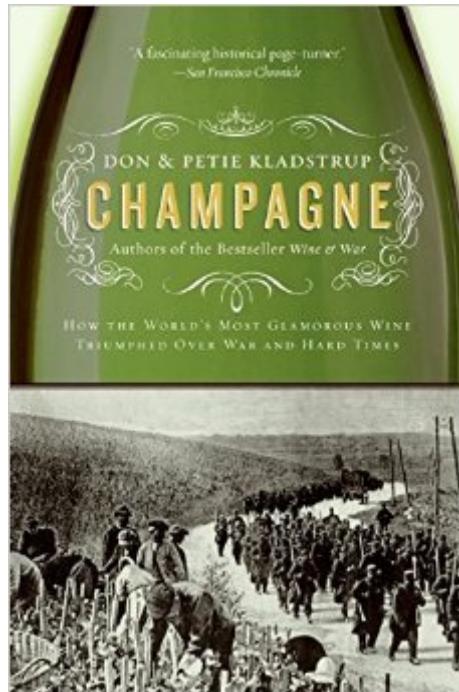


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Champagne: How The World's Most Glamorous Wine Triumphed Over War And Hard Times



Synopsis

Throughout history, waves of invaders have coveted the northeast corner of France: Attila the Hun in the fifth century, the English in the Hundred Years War, the Prussians in the nineteenth century. Yet this region â€“ which historians say has suffered more battles and wars than any other place on earth â€“ is also the birthplace of one thing the entire world equates with good times, friendship and celebration: champagne. Champagne is the story of the world's favourite wine. It tells how a sparkling beverage that became the toast of society during the Belle Epoque emerged after World War I as a global icon of fine taste and good living. The book celebrates the gutsy, largerâ€“thanâ€“life characters whose proud determination nurtured and preserved the land and its grapes throughout centuries of conflict.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I found this book--which I finally threw down unfinished in irritation after the umpteenth faux "fact" was presented--trite beyond belief. I presume that a history is factual. This was not. The authors presented so much factually wrong, unsupported information and claims that I finally decided I could not justify spending more time reading it. For instance, they claim that both Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette drank champagne with a last meal before their executions. Well, Louis did enjoy a fairly good meal--without champagne--before his execution. Marie Antoinette, however, was so brutally treated and degraded by her captors as the Widow Capet before hers that there most assuredly was no "last meal" for her, much less a champagne chaser. Her maid recounted the details of her prevailing upon her to eat a few mouthfuls of some vermicelli which she warmed up on her stove in

her cell. If she drank anything it was water--likely from the nearby and very polluted Seine. Anyone offering her champagne would have most certainly ended up being arrested for royalist sympathies. With all the many fine sources out there on both of these executions, how can the Kladstrups get away with printing such trite, factually wrong drivel merely to add some silly patina of faux glamour to their thesis? Then they go on to describe the aristocrats being guillotined, describing how the victims were forced to kneel and put their heads on the block. Have the Kladstrups even the remotest familiarity with how a guillotine works?? There is no block. There is no kneeling. There is no cooperation by the victim whatsoever. Read any source on the topic. Yet again, the Kladstrups trot out rubbish which is not even factually close to correct.

Don and Petie Kladstrup's new book, "Champagne", is a serious but lively romp through the history of champagne...champagne, the drink and Champagne, the region. It is also a revealing look at the French and how they defended what became their national symbol through war and (literally) pestilence. Defend it they did, to their credit and our good fortune. Written as a timeline, "Champagne" begins in the Middle Ages with an almost startling revelation....the bubbles in the wine, so essential to its success and taste in later years, were considered to be a flaw. The drink as we know it today must have borne little or no resemblance to what was consumed hundreds of years ago. The Kladstrups delve into many other aspects of the making and the keeping of champagne which are as engrossing as their narrative....how sediment was handled, the trials and errors of storing champagne so the bottles would not explode, the care of the vineyards, and so on. I was surprised to hear that dry champagne was a rather late development and that its initial offerings were met with resistance as most people preferred their champagne to be sweet. The transportation of champagne is one of the more humorous parts of this offering. As much as this book concerns itself with the product, it is even more a story of people and politics. The effects that wars had on the region of Champagne (and no one really knows where those boundaries begin and end) make it all the more surprising that champagne could ever have survived the onslaught of armies inflicting a tremendous toll, most notably during World War I, on the vineyards and the people who owned and operated them.

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