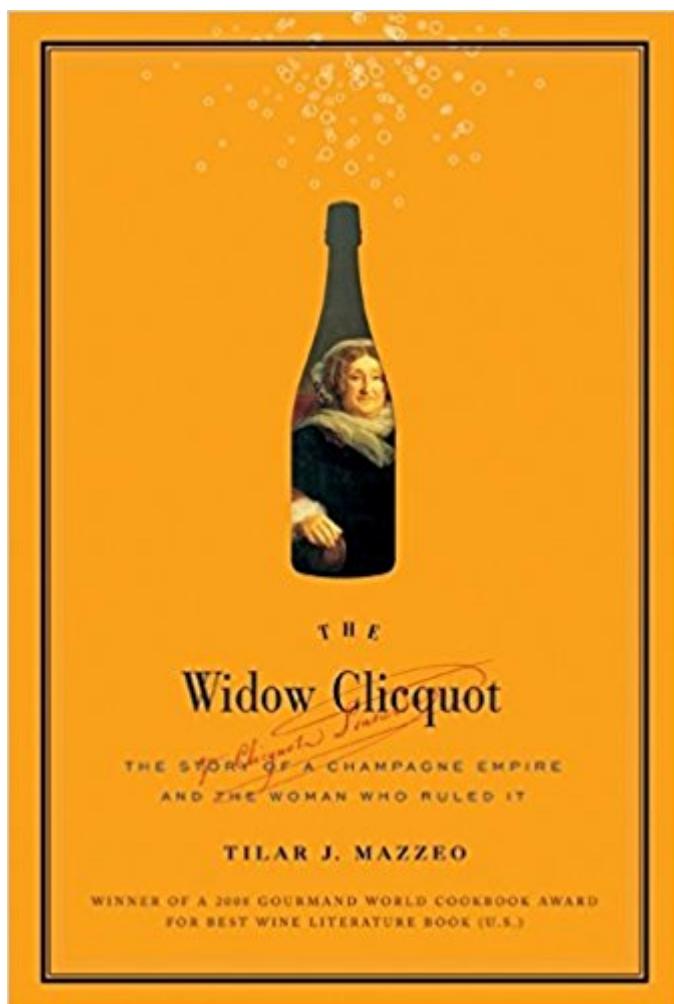


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The Widow Clicquot: The Story Of A Champagne Empire And The Woman Who Ruled It



Synopsis

The Widow Clicquot is the New York Times bestselling business biography of the visionary young widow who built a champagne empire, became a legend in her tumultuous times, and showed the world how to live with style. Tilar J. Mazzeo brings to life the woman behind the label, Barbe-Nicole Clicquot Ponsardin, in this utterly intoxicating book that is as much a fascinating journey through the process of making this temperamental wine as a biography of a uniquely tempered and fascinating woman.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, October 2008: With its trademark fizz and sparkling taste, champagne has long been the beverage of choice for those in a celebratory mood. From the artillery of popping corks on New Year's Eve to the clinking of newlywed glasses, a bit of the bubbly has locked arms with good cheer for centuries. Yet had it not been for the pioneering Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin, the libation deemed "the wine of civilization" by Winston Churchill might today be available only to the excessively wealthy or extremely lucky. Author Tilar J. Mazzeo toasts the *ÃfÃ©lan* of Champagne's Grand Dame with *The Widow Clicquot*, a fascinating story of the cunning bravery and good fortune that helped build the *Veuve Clicquot* brand. Widowed at age twenty-seven by the death of her husband *FranÃfÃ§ois Clicquot*, Barbe-Nicole assumed control of her family's wine business amid the chaos of The Napoleonic Wars. That she became a prominent female leader in a male-dominated industry was one thing; building an empire amid savage political unrest was quite

another. With passionate research and true admiration for her subject, Mazzeo pays homage to the beloved Widow from Reims and the remarkable weight her name still carries today. -Dave Callanan

"Mazzeo's tale moves swiftly through Barbe-Nicole's many accomplishments, including her method for storing bottles nose-down--an innovation that allowed the second fermentation detritus to be cleared efficiently, setting her far ahead of her competitors." -- Los Angeles Times

The Widow Clicquot is someone we should all know about....Long a shadowy, legend-obsured figure, in Tilar Mazzeo's agile hands the widow sheds her weeds and takes form before our eyes as a distinctly modern entrepreneur....The result is narrative history that fizzes with life and feeling. --Benjamin Wallace, author of the New York Times bestseller, *The Billionaire's Vinegar*

Joan of Arc and *Madame Clicquot* were the two women heroes I knew when growing up in France. What a gift to have this new, well-researched biography of one of the world's first 'legitimate' businesswoman, our contemporary as a global business leader. --Mireille Guiliano, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller, *French Women Don't Get Fat*"Told in a light and graceful style that is just right for its subject.... [I]t's a fascinating trip, made even more so by Ms. Mazzeo's charming cameo appearances as a kind of tour guide.... This example of Barbe-Nicole's voice is exceptional...an intoxicating business biography." -- Julia Flynn Siler, *The Wall Street Journal*

A must read for anyone that enjoys champagne. Not only does it tell the story of a woman struggling to run a business in a time of war when women were often treated like chattel. My favorite vignette was about when after trying to ship her champagne west and then east during the Napoleonic Wars her efforts to hide her wine behind walls when the Russian Calvary arrived at her chateau shouting for more champagne before they rode off to battle. A good read.

This book is about the life of the Clicquot widow who created a champagne empire after her husband passed away. There are too many distractions away from the main theme, by having detailed background of the political goings on in France, its rivalry with England, and the political maneuverings taking place. In my opinion, the book could have been cut in half by not including so much political information, and just telling the story of the widow and how she came to be, for some time, the number one champagne producer and exporter in France. Ancillary information about France's politics just drags the book, and often put me to sleep.

The author takes pains to point out how barren the historical materials were in trying to recreate the

life of the grand dame of champagne. To compensate she immersed herself in what was available, actual account books, family letters, news accounts, portraits of the family, etc. She, apparently, spent much time in the same French areas that the Clicquots family occupied and put herself in The Widows shoes to imagine what motivations must have driven her entrepreneurial instincts. The Widow comes alive in the book.

This was selected for a book group read and we even had the gorgeous wine over lunch. I really enjoyed reading the History of this Champaign and of Champaign in general, and it had lots of great little tit bits and was generally an easy book to read and It was well written. I did expect a bit more information about the Widow as she was the title, I love books about interesting women, obviously there was little real information available about her. I felt the book was interesting and informative but was not great, especially if you considered you were reading a biography. I liked it and would give it a 3.5 if I could.

Fascinating chronicle of the life of the Widow Clicquot, who ran the family champagne business after her husband died. This was unheard of a few hundred years ago! I learned a great deal about the making of champagne, plus the strength of the brand. Enjoyed a bottle of the Widow after I finished the book, excellent combination.

I purchased this book in advance of a trip to France wine country. I was looking for some insight into the history of the Champagne region and the woman who made such a major impact on the Champagne industry. This book delivered on both of those topics. While not much is known about the Widow Clicquot's younger years, the author did an admirable job of painting a picture of what her life was probably like based on what is generally known about French society and local politics at the time. The evolution of the Champagne business through the lens of this family-owned winery was also interesting, and even suspenseful as the author took us through the strategies and risks employed by the Widow in her pursuit to create a great Champagne house. The only drawback to the book is that it felt repetitive at times. Perhaps since not a lot is known about the details of the Widow's life, some of the same information was covered in different contexts throughout the chapters. In all, however, I recommend the book for anyone interested in the rise of the Champagne industry and insights into this particular woman who was so instrumental in that rise.

Captivating story of one of the pioneers of the champagne industry - it made me think of Bill Gates,

only the Widow Clicquot was a woman and had to deal with several major political upheavals and wars in the course of building her company. It's too bad that the author didn't more first-hand accounts (letters, etc.) about the Widow to draw from, but she does an excellent job of describing the political, social and economic background of the times. The information on the history of champagne-making and the Widow's role in inventing and perfecting many techniques that made it commercially viable is absolutely fascinating.

Keep my interest while giving me a historic perspective of the era. May not be pure research on the specific people, but talks of what is typical of the era.

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