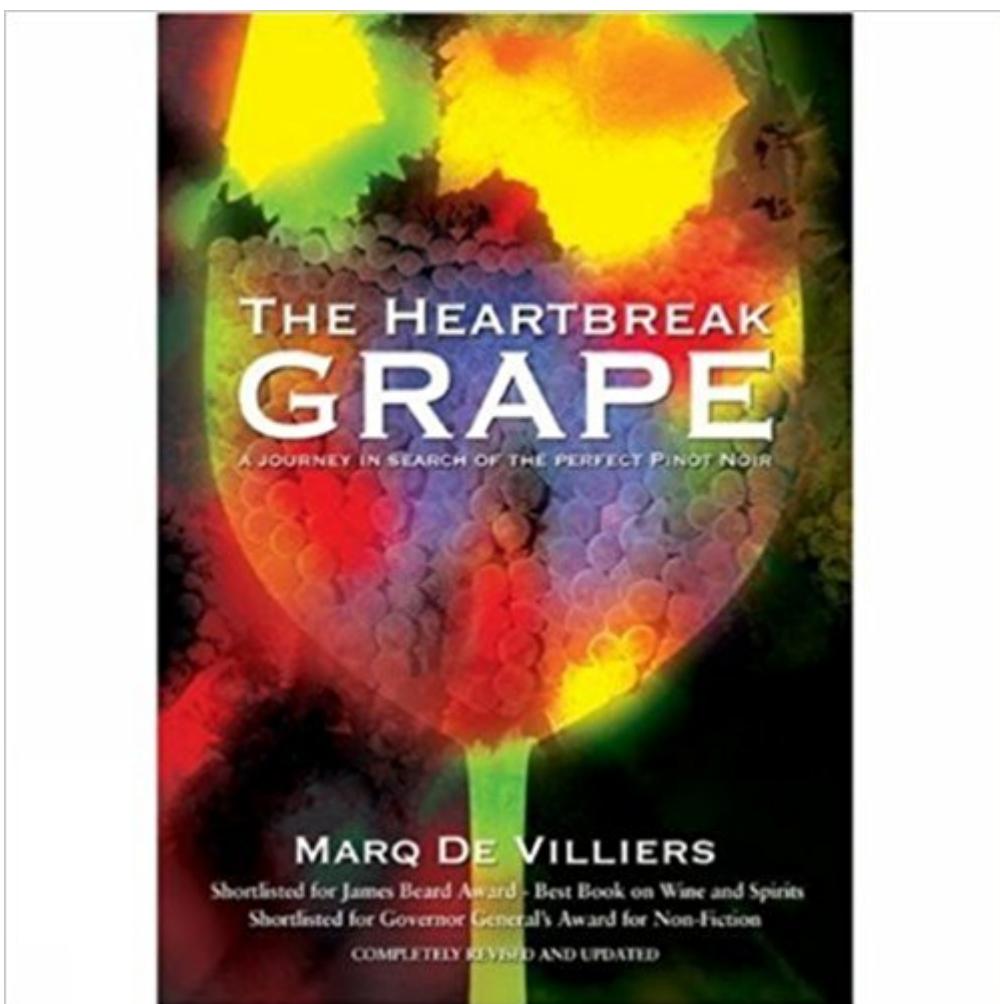


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The Heartbreak Grape, Revised And Updated: A Journey In Search Of The Perfect Pinot Noir



Synopsis

DeVilliers' quest for the 'heartbreak grape' begins with one sip of the superlative Calera Jensen '87. Behind the scenes of one of the world's most fascinating and romantic industries, the author celebrates the tenacity and invention of individuals who devote their lives to the magnificent obsession of wine-making in this completely revised and updated edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 246 pages

Publisher: McArthur & Company; Rev Upd edition (February 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1552786102

ISBN-13: 978-1552786109

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,714,513 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #102 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Wine & Spirits > Collecting #1783 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Homebrewing, Distilling & Wine Making #4659 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Travel

Customer Reviews

A very interesting read, especially for wine lovers. Lots of great technical knowledge about wine making, but never boring. Both the author and Josh Jensen have great personalities, which really shine throughout this story. I really don't get through too many books, but I really enjoyed reading this, especially while sipping Calera's Central Coast Pinot Noir.

If you ever buy California or Oregon Pinot Noir, you should buy this book. Besides enjoying a very readable and historically accurate story, the book will imbue you with an intimate knowledge of what it takes to produce a fine wine -- and why that wine is so exceptionally compelling. Part of the joy is knowing that Josh Jensen is still producing great wines, and his disciples, such as Steve Doerner now up in Oregon at Cristom Winery have carried forward, if not elevated, Jensen's acumen, dedication, and stubborn unwillingness to compromise -- even with the most difficult, Heartbreak Grape. Lucky us!

I recently published Creating World Class Red Wine, a top down study of how the finest wines in the world are made. Years ago, I read everything (quality) about wine in the English language. Since it is a biography, The Heartbreak Grape is one that I will recommend amongst several for those interested in how quality wine is made. It is Josh Jensen's quest for his dream. Josh is a pioneer, doing what many around him claimed could or should not be done--hence the title. The bottom line is, Jenson's work became an inspirational cornerstone for the California and Oregon Pinot Noir Industry. Also, do you like Viognier? He brought to the states. I can connect with that because I helped make some of the first Viognier in WA state from Ciel du Cheval Fruit when I worked with McCrea. Read this book. It's a good read even if you are not a winemaker.

Here is a story well told. Marq de Villiers so enjoyed his chance encounter with a glass of Calera Pinot Noir that he found himself contemplating it throughout the evening it had been shared. He wondered if he could retrace the wine's history - from the winemaker's dream to make it up to the moment it was poured into the very glass set before him. The result of that resolve is this book - an engaging and entertaining journey to Mt. Harlan, the home of Josh Jensen's Calera Wine Company, and a chronicle of not only the wine poured into his glass, but of Jensen's long-endured struggles to make it. De Villiers did his research in 1991, and into late 1992, I believe, and the original book was published in 1993. I read the first edition only to find out that soon after I had done so, a completely revised and updated version would be released in late April '07. I was probably one of the first to buy it again. I had to see what had happened to Josh Jensen since then. Of course, I knew that he was still making wine, because I had been compelled to order half a case of his pinot after all I had read about it. Watch out, this book could cost you more than the \$12.95 retail price - but no matter, the wine is awesome, I can assure you of that. The revised edition is more of the same, which is to say it's a very good continuation of a great story. De Villiers is reverent to the grape, to viticulture, to Josh Jensen himself, and to the wine he produces. He tells the story as much from Jensen's point of view as anything, but like a good photographer or film producer, he comes in tight on his subject and then backs off to show more of the entire landscape. You feel privy to the triumphs and setbacks that Jensen went through as a young man trying to find his land, lay out the vineyards, get water to his young vines, and then bring his wines to market. But de Villiers delivers more than that. He explains - in such poetic prose, why pinot noir is such an onerous varietal, and as he conveys that, you can't help but quietly sense that it is the perfect life's challenge for Jensen, who is quite a character himself. The book is an easy read but you'll find that you're learning about wine and its attendant culture in ways you might not normally have access. What you learn about viticulture,

wine, and winemaking is passive and simply a byproduct of the story. It certainly beats reading textbooks. Well-written and researched books have that special something that makes them unforgettable. They're the kind that long after you've read that last page, you'll find yourself still thinking about it in unexpected moments. There are only a few that I place in that category personally, but seriously . . . for me, this book is one of them.

in the first couple of chapters, this is a pretty good book about wine. The first few pages are a bit over-dramatized, but de Villiers soon finds his voice and it becomes quite readable. The book is effectively a history of Calera, and a case study in founding and starting a small winery, with a few detours into wine-appreciation. I particularly liked the ease with which de Villiers quotes Jensen and the notes from their conversations. All things considered, it's one of the most enjoyable gentle reads on wine.

This is the book for anyone who is curious about growing grapes and making wine - not just Pinot Noir! It is well-written and thoroughly researched, but the best part is that the reader really gets to know Josh Jensen, an exceptional man and a true trail blazer in the California wine industry. It is even fun to read!

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