2008 wine books Part 1

17 Dec 2008 by Jancis Robinson

I can't tell you how glad I am that I have this website - for all sorts of reasons. One of them is that wine books, which are one of my other principal outlets (see here), seem to have lost a great deal of enthusiasm on the part of publishers, booksellers and reviewers. I haven't even spotted a round-up of drinks books in the mainstream UK press this year, whereas this used to be de rigueur alongside the food book round-up.

I have been asked to suggest books suitable for the more casual wine drinker, ie not detailed analyses of specific regions. From those that have emerged this year I find it difficult to pick out anything truly outstanding.

Andrew Jefford, whose *The New France* (2002 Mitchell Beazley) really was outstanding, gives us an introduction to wine in ***Andrew Jefford's Wine Course*** (2008 Ryland Peters & Small), which is nicely produced with lots of colour, panels, slightly perfunctory maps and so on, but I'm not sure Andrew's wonderfully intricate writing is perfect for the newcomer to wine. It would make a good-looking present, however, and is not overpriced at £19.99/$29.95.

If Andrew's is the most successful new wine primer of the year, my heavily revised ***How to Taste*** (2008 Conran Octopus and Simon and Schuster) is an old standby that I hope fills a gap. The idea is that a complete newcomer to wine can learn really quite a lot about it by doing, or at least reading about, the series of practical exercises that accompany the wine and tasting theory presented in a logical progression. You can read more about this book priced at £16.99/$26, and about many of my other books, here.

Just published is Beverley Blanning MW's ***Choosing the right wine***, in the Teach Yourself series. The content is well-thought out and clearly written but, as with the other books in the series, has very little visual appeal. Lack of illustrations and a paperback format may deter some but it does mean that it slips easily into your pocket or bag if you want to mug up on your way to work or look something up while you are out shopping. The cover price is £9.99 but you can take up the publisher's offer of a 20% reduction (and free p&p in the UK) here. Or just head straight to Amazon, where it's £5.99 or $10.17.

And don't forget that there is a wealth of wine information available free in our Resources section. Just click on Resources top right of here.

More suggestions for your bookshelf in 2008 wine books Part 2.