2012 wine books - general

23 Dec 2012 by Paul O'Doherty

See our guide to 2012 wine book reviews.

A Little Course In … Wine Tasting
David Williams
Dorling Kindersley
£9.99/$16

This is a colourful easy-reader for the new wine lover who just wants to know a little more. It's split into three main sections. The first looks at the key areas for tastes, the range of flavours and aromas, how to taste wine, and white, red and rosé styles. Going a little further, the second section takes on white and red grape varieties, classic European and New World whites and reds, and the sparkling wines of the world. The last section covers the effect of oak, climate, age and how to match wine and food, among other considerations. Overall, this is easy-to-read and classic entry-level fare.

The World Encyclopaedia of Wine
A Definitive Tour Through the World of Wine
Stuart Walton
Lorenz Books
£14.99/$25

Into the all-embracing encyclopaedia class, this is a glossy, colourful run through some of the most popular grape varieties along with a whiz around the vineyard regions of the world. With a short introduction, Walton, who has written for *Decanter* and *World of Fine Wine*, writes briefly on the changes in the wine trade in recent years and the imminent arrival of China as a major player in the wine world, among other topics, while also asking such questions as whether wine production has become 'over-technologised' or if there is 'just too much science involved in what should be a simple product'.

After that, the narrative covers bite-sized sections such as the principles of tasting, storing and serving and matching food and wine, before focusing on 12 of the most popular grape varieties along with connecting Chardonnay with Burgundy, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the rest of the world. From there Walton covers all the major regions with a heavy emphasis on France. (France, for instance, is allocated 50-odd pages while Spain gets 10.) The rest of Europe gets another 50-odd pages as does the New World, making this a very interesting read for the novice particularly interested in France. Overall, this is a well-written, colourful and short reference book that’s also well-priced.

Wine for Dummies
Fifth Edition
Ed McCarthy and Mary Ewing-Mulligan MW
Wiley
£16.99/$22.99

Following a similar format to other *For Dummies* books, this particular yellow compendium begins with sections on topics such as getting to know wine, buying wine to drink at home and serving wine, before going on to give an overview on the Old and New Worlds. Written enthusiastically by two wine fanatics who married each other, it ticks all the boxes for someone eager to learn more about wine and is a much better than you’d think, despite the typically crude paper of the *Dummies* library.