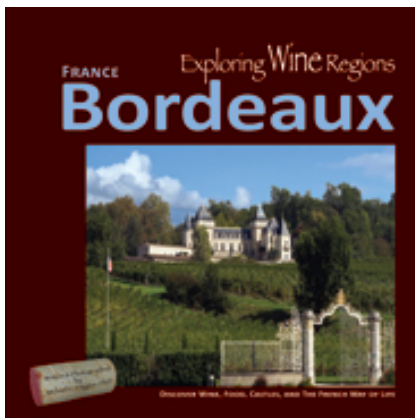


THE US Review of Books



[Exploring Wine Regions, Bordeaux, France: Discover Wine, Food, Castles, and The French Way of Life](#)

by Michael C. Higgins, PhD
International Exploration Society

Book review by Nicole Yurcaba

"It began with nature creating an ideal terroir for wine growing, followed by man's unique intervention to enhance the terroir, followed by important events in history, which created the demand and distribution of Bordeaux wine to the world, and finally, the classifications to control and delineate quality."

As viticulture and winemaking continually evolve due to environmental shifts and societal attitude changes, and as the two concepts more and more become parts of everyday culture and conversation thanks to wine delivery services like Naked Wines and entrepreneur vineyards, many people find themselves exploring the world's most famous wine regions' histories and cultures. While the wines of these regions cannot be replicated just anywhere due to unique, completely natural terroirs, these wines and regions serve not only as an inspiration for entrepreneurs and experts alike but also as draws for curious tourists wanting breathtaking environments worthy of any Instagram post or coffee table photography book. Bordeaux, splendidly positioned along the Garonne River, offers experience and enchantment. Like Bordeaux, this book welcomes visitors with open bottles and beautiful glasses into gastronomic and viticulturist luxuries. Bordeaux, with its grand downtown and breathtaking landscapes, comes to life vividly and fully in Higgin's work. Each turn of the page offers readers a new adventure in this spectacular region, and readers will feel like they are on a trip with their very own personal tour guide.

The author asks if we are really going to "spend \$1,000 a bottle every day" while touring the area. This becomes a pertinent question for economical travelers who still want to indulge in an area's richness while living on a budget. Therefore, this book's purpose becomes, from its beginning, about informing readers of just how accessible Bordeaux's

luxuries actually are for travelers. The historical, contemporary, and economic insights interspersed throughout the book balance sections detailing topography and environmental uniqueness. Combined, this provides readers with insights about the grandeur Bordeaux offers to not only wine and food lovers but also to the more history and socio-economic inclined. Amidst these informed narratives, the photography captures an inviting landscape that poets, photographers, and artists alike can appreciate. In the high-quality photographs, each hotel and restaurant, each tourist attraction and winery, becomes an individual receiving its own spotlight.

With France ranking as one of the most popular international culinary tourism destinations in Europe, this book highlights Bordeaux's role as a medieval city, detailing how its entire downtown is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which according to this book, "has the greatest number of restaurants per capita in all of France," claiming a whopping "5.46 restaurants per 1,000 people." In its presentation of Bordeaux's many fine restaurants, this book provides photographs capturing the simple elegance of the region's restaurants. The food recommendations are concise yet superbly detailed. They will leave even the most unrefined palate watering for a taste of La Brasserie Bordelaise's high-quality meats, which according to the book, are "exceptional ham, delicious grilled beef, and typical Gascony dishes," or thirsting for any one of the several hundred wines in the collections of Le Chapon Fin or Le 1925.

Nonetheless, this book is more than finely detailed narratives and fantastic photographic eye-candy for wine and food enthusiasts. It is also an easy-to-read travel guide, complete with detailed maps of and insights about tourism hot spots, such as Lacanau-Ocean, Euronat's Thalassotherapy Spa, and even the region's sixty miles of cycling paths. In this book, quaint hamlets rest against a backdrop of expansive, green-with-bounty vineyards. Castle-like homes owned by only two families in the last 300 years offer kind sommeliers willing to help curious visitors blend their own wines. Thus, the text becomes a much needed visual guidebook for novice travelers venturing to France or the Bordeaux region for the first time. It is also an excellent resource for well-seasoned Francophiles. The book even includes the addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and website addresses for the numerous hotels, wineries, and restaurants in the area, thus helping travelers plan ahead by giving them the information needed to research and reserve their spot at each of the unique places exhibited.

With its alluring photography portraying everything from friendly locals to secretive wine cellars, along with its personal anecdotes about traveling through the Bordeaux region, this book is sure to become a must-have and must-read for adventurers of all ages. As the French culinary tourism industry continues to grow and thrive, this text will grow in its importance because of its excellent contributions to not only food and travel writing but also cultural preservation. History lovers, travel writers, and travel experts will find this text on par with the likes of works by Rick Steves and Lonely Planet.

RECOMMENDED by the US Review

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