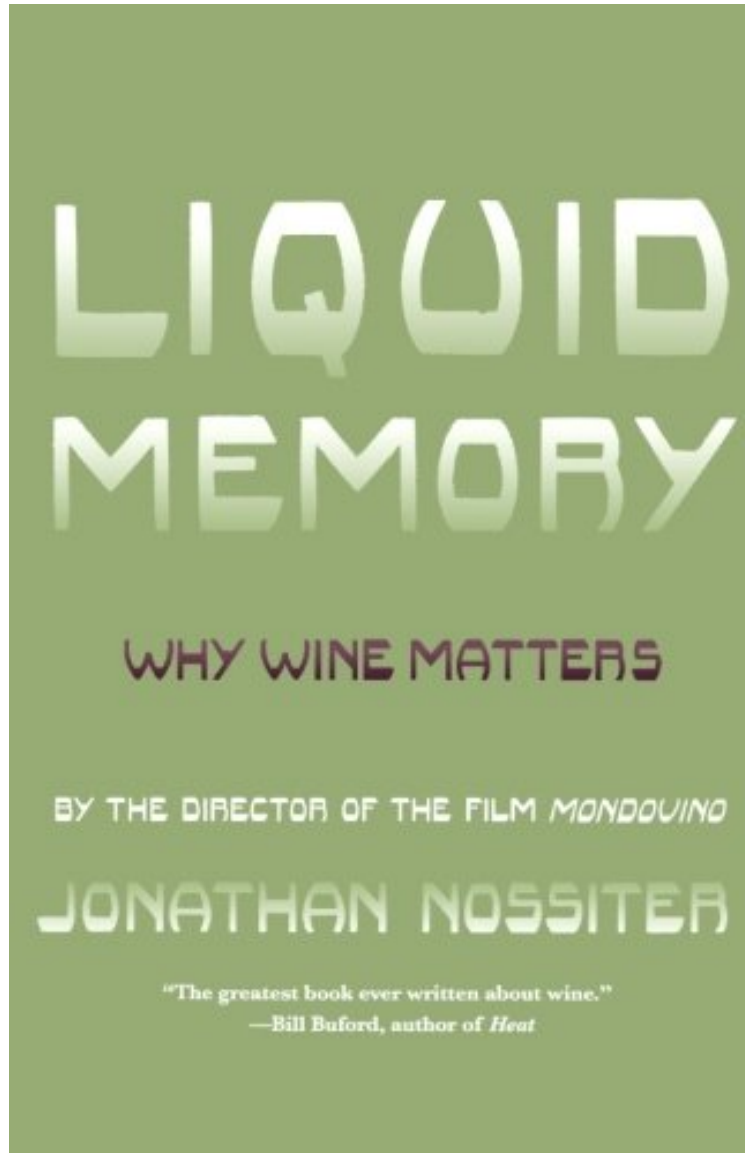


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Liquid Memory: Why Wine Matters

Jonathan Nossiter

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Jonathan Nossiter : Liquid Memory: Why Wine Matters before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Liquid Memory: Why Wine Matters:

45 of 48 people found the following review helpful. Something of a disappointmentBy ChambolleJonathan Nossiter is the creator of "Mondovino," a riveting and entertaining documentary/screed about the Parkerization, globalization and industrialization of wine and those who struggle to resist it by continuing to make "terroir wines" that honestly express the place they come from and the people who make them. Based on Mondovino, I came to this book with high

expectations and predisposed to be enchanted. "Liquid Memory" confirms what Mondovino demonstrated: Nossiter is a true believer in "terroir winemaking." On that score, I'm with him 110%. He likes the wines and winemakers I do. He decries the "critics," wines and winemakers in my own personal pantheon of enological demons. He extols the virtues of cellaring honest and well made "minor" wines from "bad vintages" because they may well have something wonderful to say, even when they are ten or twenty years old. This may all be well and good. Alas, the book is marred by an overdose of three things: (1) bombastic/pedantic/sophomoric flights of fancy and psychobabble; (2) irrelevant name-dropping; and (3) backbiting and sniping at folks on the author's personal enemies list. Do I really want or need to know that Nossiter drank wine x with "talented local film director Sandra Kogut and her American husband, Thomas Levin, an ebullient Princeton professor of postmodern bent"; or that he spoke with "Edward Bradley, my ever-engage professor of Homeric Greek and Latin from Dartmouth College" while he was working on Mondovino? No, I really do not. I came to this volume expecting a reasoned and insightful essay on the culture and esthetics of winemaking and the enjoyment of wine. That is certainly here, in dribs and drabs, but unfortunately blended with extended forays into Nossiter's experiences and predilections as a film-maker and cineaste (Ettore Scola, Cassavetes and Fassbinder, anyone?); fuzzy headed political theory (perhaps Reagan and Sarkozy are somehow responsible for the prevalence of flabby, extracted, low acid, high alcohol wines?); and a vendetta involving a Spanish winemaker and journalist named Victor de la Serna. Reading all about this last left me downright queasy and ill at ease -- like watching some red-faced lunatic screaming at his invisible demons on the subway -- and wishing that Nossiter had been able to stay on the high road rather than engage in this silly sort of mud-wrestling in public. The high point of the book, at least for me, is the all too brief Part III, "All Roads Lead to Burgundy." Part III succeeds, in large measure, because it consists mostly of the plain-spoken and insightful words of three articulate and seriously good winemakers -- Jean-Marc Roulot, Christophe Roumier and Dominique Lafon. These three state, more simply and directly than anything else in this volume, what honest, terroir driven winemaking is all about. The writing here succeeds for much the same reason Mondovino succeeded as film -- Nossiter has mostly stepped out of the way and let the winemakers do the talking, albeit applying his own sensibilities as editor to help them deliver their message as effectively as possible. I find what Parker, the Wine Expectator and others have done to winemaking, wine marketing and the personal enjoyment of wine as odious as anyone does, including Nossiter. However, it seems at this point Parker bashing has turned into a cottage industry that spawns a multiplicity of books like this one, in which the authors mostly preen and preach to the choir. Far more interesting and productive reflections on terroir winemaking abound, among them a nice little volume edited by Jacky Rigaux, translated into English as "Terroir the Winegrower" and published by Terres en Vues. Rigaux's book consists of short interviews and essays from many winemakers and negociants, predominantly Burgundians but also including some folks from Alsace, the Loire, Bordeaux, Italy, California, and South Africa. These are the folks who must put philosophy into practice out there among the vines and in the cuverie, and they have much to say -- as they did in Mondovino and as Roulot, Roumier and Lafon do in "Liquid Memory." This is a worthwhile book -- when Nossiter isn't busy prattling on about his personal list of "great Italian directors" or his lunch with Charlotte Rampling, which is not why one buys and sits down to read a book subtitled "Why Wine Matters." Just as heavy handed winemaking obscures "terroir," here the subject matter is somewhat buried beneath the author's personal stamp.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. awful. By Bob from Michigan This book is terrible. It reads more as one of those journalistic books about the author's journey of self-discovery than anyone else. A alarmingly large chunk of the book is just the author recounting some boring conversations that he had with producers in Burgundy about random things. It includes zero useful information. I felt like I had wasted a few hours of my life after I finished this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One Star By FCBwolf66 Author couldn't stop talking about film, as opposed to wine... soo there's that then.

Jonathan Nossiter, award-winning filmmaker and former sommelier, had his first taste of wine at the age of three in Paris, from his father's fingertip. For him, wine is "memory in its most liquid and dynamic form," an essential art. In *Liquid Memory*, the American expatriate takes readers on a cheeky insider's investigation of the mysteries of terroir, the historical sense of place that makes wine unique. Nossiter, who already created an uproar in the world of wine with his film *Mondovino*, here reveals how the tyranny of snobs, critics, and charlatans prevents us all from taking part in what should be a gloriously democratic bacchanalia. From the sacred wineshops of Paris to film locations in Rio de Janeiro, this singular journey invites us to consider how power influences taste and how one's own taste might combat power in any sphere. Unabashedly controversial, *Liquid Memory* has already riled the establishment, and it will continue to stimulate wine lovers and convert the skeptics for many years to come.