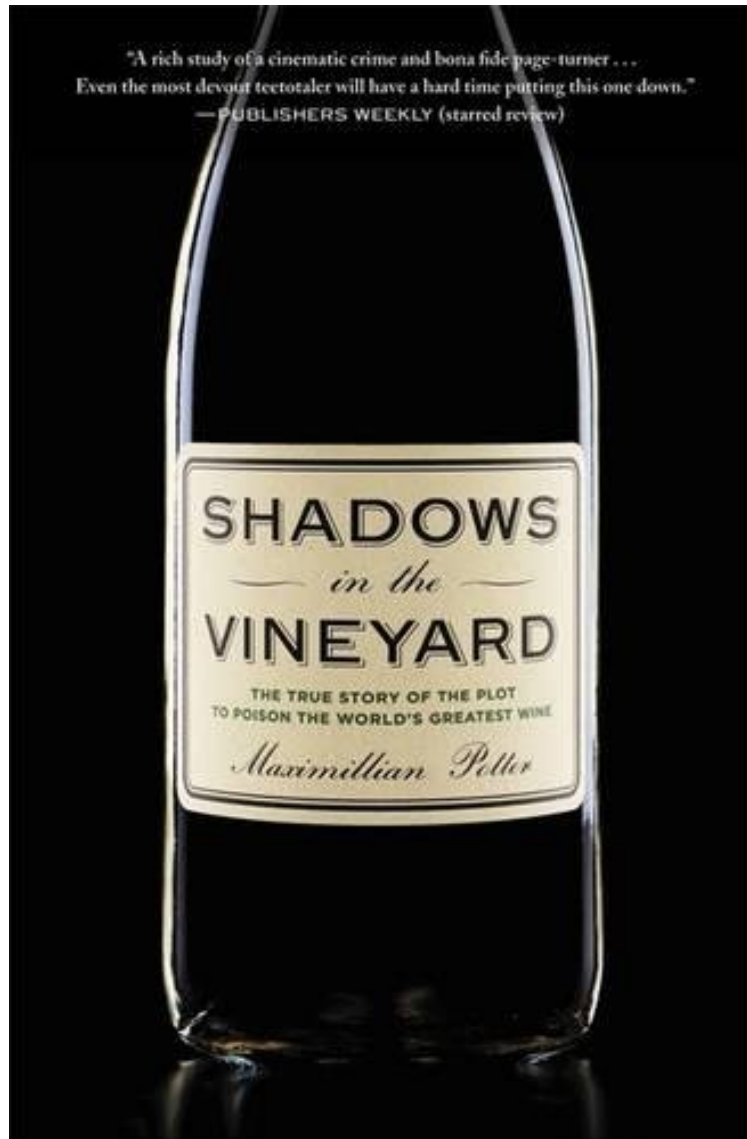


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Shadows in the Vineyard: The True Story of the Plot to Poison the World's Greatest Wine

Maximillian Potter

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Maximillian Potter : Shadows in the Vineyard: The True Story of the Plot to Poison the World's Greatest Wine before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shadows in the Vineyard: The True Story of the Plot to Poison the World's Greatest Wine:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. MY NEW GIFT FOR WINE LOVING FRIENDS AND

COLLEAGUESBy TOM O'CONNOR I have been torn between my competing impulses of not being able to put "Shadows in the Vineyard" down and a contradictory desire to extend the time it takes for me to finish this book for as long as possible so as to prolong its enjoyment. The character development and imagery are incredibly vivid and seamlessly melded across time and geography. When you combine this with a love of historical writing and historical fiction as well as crime and mystery novels, "Shadows in the Vineyard" has accomplished at least a trifecta of everything that is dear to me in a book. Although this book is non-fiction, it reads like a novel and keeps you on the edge of your seat. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. "The thing about fate is that you never see it coming."By Mary WhippleThe language with which vintners, connoisseurs, and critics talk about their favorite subject often resembles religious ecstasies, making the use of sacred wine for Christian communion services seem not only appropriate but completely right. In this book, which is "the true story of the plot to poison the world's greatest wine," however, author Maximillian Potter, a journalist, takes a much more secular approach to the subject, as he investigates the very real 2010 plot to poison the vines at the Domaine Romanee-Conti on the Cote d'Or. With its Pinot Noir regarded as the world's greatest wine, and its availability limited because the vineyard itself is small, the interest of sophisticated criminals in this wine is not surprising. At auction, a single bottle of Romanee-Conti from 1945 was then fetching as much as \$124,000. The 2010 crime within the French vineyard itself is daring, potentially devastating to the vineyard, and both complex and time-consuming to pull off, as an unknown person or persons sets out to extort a million euros from M. Aubert de Villaine, the seventy-one-year-old "Grand Monsieur" who runs the Domaine with his cousin Henri-Frederic Roch. When Aubert de Villaine does not act upon receiving a message, the extortionist gives one last warning, providing more specific information and indicating that he has already drilled the bases of seven hundred vines and has already begun injecting them with poison. He will continue to do this if his terms are not met. Author Potter's broad approach to this subject resembles a compilation of stories about the vineyard, its owners, and its history, jumping back to the time of Louis XV and Madame Pompadour, and then jumping forward to the present, then toggling back and forth. While some might argue that such an approach slows down the narrative, others will treasure the insights gained into the whole subject of wine-producing. Throughout the book, Potter keeps the personalities of his subjects front and center, giving life to a subject which might otherwise feel static. King Louis XV, Madame Pompadour, and the Prince de Conti, an ancestor of the vineyard's owner and cousin of Louis XV, share space with scenes of the extortionist, living in a tiny eighty square-foot cabin carefully disguised on the de Villaine property, while two police try to discover who he is. In the last pages of the book, the author raises questions regarding the succession to M. Aubert de Villaine's position and who the choice may be. He talks about his own background and his reasons for writing the book and his opinions about wine critics with their elaborately over-the-top descriptions of wine, then describes having his first taste of Burgundy in the cellars of Domaine Romanee-Conti, with M. Aubert in decidedly different terms. He tells le Grand Monsieur: "This may sound crazy to you, but when I was a kid there was a candy called Pop Rocks. It was like candied sand and when you put it in your mouth, it sort of bounced around and filled your mouth. "[This wine] is like divine, liquefied Pop Rocks that make me feel lightheaded - the kind of happiness that I felt after I first kissed my wife." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Ghosts of Grapes will Haunt my DaysBy William FieldsThis a great tale, filled with history and mystery for wine lovers. I would have given it five stars, if I hadn't found several editing errors. I loved the story and Mr Potter's writing craft. The historical passages were as intriguing as they were informative. I would have appreciated acknowledgement of George Hussman of Hermann, Missouri for providing the American grape cuttings that saved French wines for the world during the 19th century phylloxera infestation and mention of his role in creating the epicenter of wine in North America. I was a little disappointed in the scope and depth of the crime. I was certain that there were more vengeful villains involved.

Amazon Best Book of the Month, July 2014Journalist Maximillian Potter uncovers a fascinating plot to destroy the vines of La Romane-Conti, Burgundy's finest and most expensive wine. In January 2010, Aubert de Villaine, the famed proprietor of the Domaine de la Romane-Conti, the tiny, storied vineyard that produces the most expensive, exquisite wines in the world, received an anonymous note threatening the destruction of his priceless vines by poison-a crime that in the world of high-end wine is akin to murder-unless he paid a one million euro ransom. Villaine believed it to be a sick joke, but that proved a fatal miscalculation and the crime shocked this fabled region of France. The sinister story that Vanity Fair journalist Maximillian Potter uncovered would lead to a sting operation by some of France's top detectives, the primary suspect's suicide, and a dramatic investigation. This botanical crime threatened to destroy the fiercely traditional culture surrounding the world's greatest wine. SHADOWS IN THE VINEYARD takes us deep into a captivating world full of fascinating characters, small-town French politics, an unforgettable narrative, and a local culture defined by the twinned veins of excess and vitality and the deep reverent attention to the land that runs through it.

"Inspired by a daring crime that a lesser writer might reduce to police procedural, Maximillian Potter has opened a portal into a fabled world unknown to outsiders. The story he so compellingly recounts in SHADOWS IN THE

VINEYARD breathes, like the hallowed wine at its heart, with life and history and wonder." "Benjamin Wallace, author of "The Billionaire's Vinegar"" "Aubert de Villaine is the legend behind the legend. DRC is the most celebrated wine on the planet and the place where the alchemy of the soul of the earth, combined with the elements, as well as the knowledge and wisdom of craftsmen, are united to create this magical nectar. But out of nowhere, the dark side interfered and this inconceivable thriller began. This riveting story, where good ultimately triumphs, instills a renewed appreciation of the Cote d'Or region, its people, and the passion that is the fortitude behind this incredible wine." "Eric Ripert, chef and co-owner, Le Bernardin, author of "Avec Eric"" "An arch-criminal clicks on his headlamp in his underground lair and instantly, you're hooked. SHADOWS IN THE VINEYARD is non-fiction at its nail-biting best, a literary true-crime thriller that plunges you into the manhunt to apprehend - and understand - a mysterious villain who set out to destroy the most treasured wines in the world. SHADOWS IN THE VINEYARD is so full of bizarre twists and one-of-a-kind characters that if you think you know what's coming next, just wait till you turn the page."

"Christopher McDougall, author of "Born to Run"" "Maximillian Potter has taken a sinister plot and woven an intriguing story around the most revered wine estate in the world with the most respected winemaker at its helm. Through this event he has painted a colorful tableau filled with fascinating historical evidence on why the Domaine de la Romanee-Conti, the terroir of Burgundy, and the culture of Burgundy, are among the most treasured and special sites on the planet. Bravo." "Daniel Boulud, James Beard Award-winning chef, and Daniel Johnnes, James Beard Award-winning sommelier"" "A gripping, real-life mystery and an intimate portrait of one of the world's great wine-makers as he battles the man bent on destroying five centuries of greatness. Maximillian Potter has always been an outstanding reporter and now he reveals the fascinating story of France's legendary vineyard, Domaine Romain Conti." "Michael Hainey, author of "After Visiting Friends"" "A whodunit with a culprit worthy of a Woody Allen film, Potter's first book is a rich study of a cinematic crime and bona fide page-turner....Even the most devout teetotaler will have a hard time putting this one down." "Publishers Weekly (STARRED)" "[Potter] places the crime in a broad, rich, historical and cultural context that is engaging" "USA Today"" "A gripping crime drama more creative than most procedurals, and Potter does excellent working in fleshing out both the involved players and the historical context of the Burgundy region and its oenophiles." "The Daily Beast"" "About the Author Maximillian Potter is the senior media adviser for the Governor of Colorado. Formerly, the executive editor of 5280: Denver's Magazine, he was a staff writer at Premiere, Philadelphia, and GQ and has been a contributing editor to Men's Health/Best Life and Details, and contributor to Vanity Fair. A native of Philadelphia with a BA from Allegheny College and MSJ from Northwestern University's Medill School, he lives in Denver with his family.