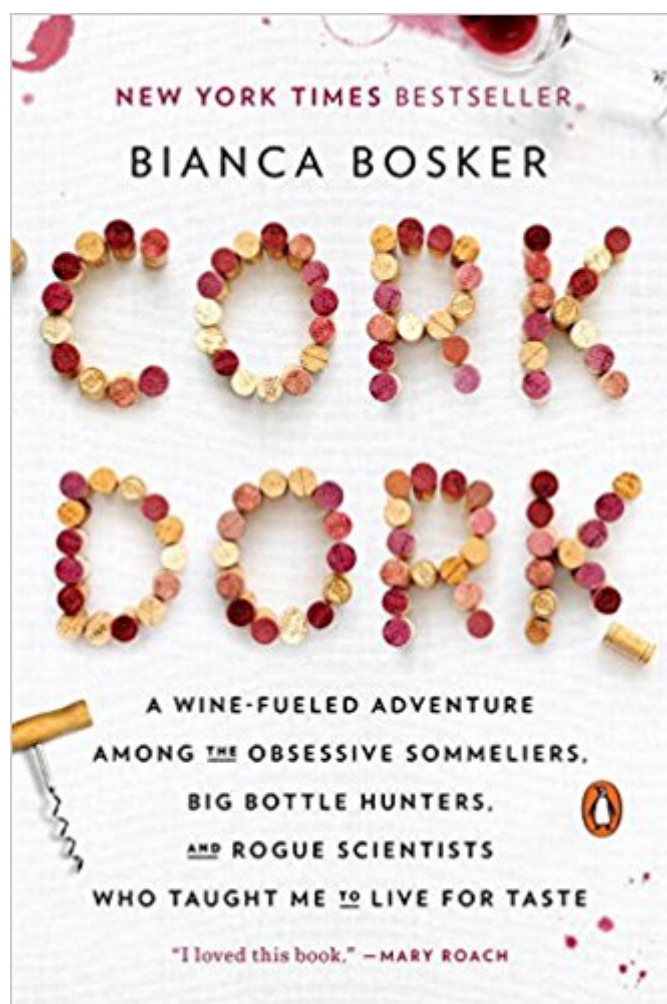


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# Cork Dork: A Wine-Fueled Adventure Among The Obsessive Sommeliers, Big Bottle Hunters, And Rogue Scientists Who Taught Me To Live For Taste





## Synopsis

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER “Thrilling . . . [told] with gonzo flair” —*Jan . . .*

When the sommelier and blogger Madeline Puckette writes that this book is the “Kitchen Confidential” of the wine world, she’s not wrong, though Bill Buford’s *Heat* is probably a shade closer.

—Jennifer Senior, *The New York Times*

“Think: *Eat, Pray, Love* meets *Somm*. As informative as it is, well, intoxicating.” —*Fortune*

A Professional journalist and amateur drinker Bianca Bosker didn’t know much about wine until she discovered an alternate universe where taste reigns supreme, a world of elite sommeliers who dedicate their lives to the pursuit of flavor. Astounded by their fervor and seemingly superhuman sensory powers, she set out to uncover what drove their obsession, and whether she, too, could become a “cork dork.”

With boundless curiosity, humor, and a healthy dose of skepticism, Bosker takes the reader inside underground tasting groups, exclusive New York City restaurants, California mass-market wine factories, and even a neuroscientist’s fMRI machine as she attempts to answer the most nagging question of all: what’s the big deal about wine? What she learns will change the way you drink wine—and, perhaps, the way you live forever.

Named one of 10 New Nonfiction Food Books to Read this Spring and Summer by *Bon Appetit*

Named one of The 4 Books You Should Read This Spring by *Fortune*

Named one of 12 Nonfiction Books You Need to Read in March by *Harper’s Bazaar*

Named one of the 20 Best Nonfiction Books Coming in March 2017 by *Bustle*

Named one of The Best Drink Books of Spring and Summer 2017 by *Punch*

Named one of the Best Books of Early 2017 by *Brightly*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Bosker's journey into this sodden universe is thrilling, and she tells her story with gonzo flair. . . . She gives great gossip . . . [and] is, in the main, great company as a narrator—witty, generous, democratic . . . When the sommelier and blogger Madeline Puckette writes that this book is the Kitchen Confidential of the wine world, she's not wrong, though Bill Buford's Heat is probably a shade closer to this book's sensibility and heart. —Jennifer Senior, The New York Times

"Reads like a wine lover's equivalent of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*: There is paradise, but only after glimpses of purgatory and hell. A funny, thought-provoking and at times frightening look at the sublime tastes, enormous egos and curious rules of a profession that is both insanely rigorous and occasionally ridiculous. —Associated Press

"A madcap 18-month journey...[that's] as informative as it is, well, intoxicating." —Fortune

"The 4 Books You Should Read This Spring —A funny, fascinating adventure. —Real Simple

"Cork Dork is remarkably entertaining. Bosker is a talented writer, a thorough reporter and is unfailingly funny. —The San Francisco Chronicle

"A savory romp...[that reveals] not just the intricacies and nuances of flavor that vary from grape to grape, but why wine has become such a social staple for the entire world—and how the way we drink it can potentially change our lives. —Harper's Bazaar

"12 Books You Need to Read in March —[An] often-hilarious memoir. —Good Housekeeping

"An informative and riveting read that doesn't take itself too seriously—a much needed dose of reality the wine world could benefit from. —Bon Appétit

"Incredibly well written, intelligent, witty, and highly entertaining. —Eater

"As fresh and fun as a Wachau Riesling—packed with helpful information, wrapped in honest inquiry, and slathered with humor and wit. —Terroirist

"One of the most entertaining drink-related memoirs in years. —Punch

"A page turner . . . I heartily recommend [it]. —Martin Moran, The Sunday Times (UK)

"Refreshingly accessible...It's delightful and informative to see a subject as potentially stodgy as wine appreciation refracted through the perspective of someone young, female, and very

smart. *Portland Mercury* "[A] must-read wine book. *San Jose Mercury News* "You'll never feel lost in front of a wine list again. *Cynthia Graber and Nicola Twilley of Gastropod*, via *The Atlantic* "I loved this book. It's not just about wine. It's about learning how to listen to your senses, to more deeply experience and appreciate the world around you, and everyone could use another glass of that. *Mary Roach*, author of *Gulp* "In this smart and sharply observed book, Bianca Bosker takes us on a marvelous journey through the mad, manic, seductive subculture of wine and wine lovers. It's also a deeply felt story of her own experience, told with great heart and wit. *Susan Orlean*, author of *The Orchid Thief* "Cork Dork is a brilliant feat of screwball participatory journalism and Bianca Bosker is a gonzo nerd prodigy. This hilarious, thoughtful and erudite book may be the ultimate answer to the perennial question of whether or not wine connoisseurship is a scam. *Jay McInerney*, author of *The Juice* "In this delightfully written and keenly observed book, Bianca Bosker helps us become connoisseurs not only of wine but also of people whose passions would more aptly be described as obsessions. *Walter Isaacson*, author of *The Innovators* "Speaking as someone who barely knows a good Bordeaux from a bottle of Boone's Farm, I was charmed and entertained by this book. *John Jeremiah Sullivan*, author of *Pulphhead* "The Kitchen Confidential of wine: Read this book, and you'll never be intimidated by wine or wine snobs again. *Madeline Puckette*, co-author of *Wine Folly* "Fascinating [Thanks to Bosker's sensory descriptions, we get to taste and smell alongside her, without dealing with the thousands of hours of study and endless flashcards first. *Bustle* "An informative yet funny examination of wine. *Brightly*, "The Best Books of Early 2017" "A quest both hilarious and horrifying to understand the nature of taste. *Imbibe* "An entertaining read. *Phoenix New Times* "Reading Bianca Bosker is like sitting down with a brilliant, curious friend for an after-work drink, and suddenly finding it's midnight and the table is littered with empty bottles. Between her hilarious exploits and thoughtful meditations on wine and life, you'll want to stay for just one more. *Lauren Collins*, author of *When In French* "A joyful journey of discovery into the *Æsoul* of wine, filled with wit and insight at every step. *Maria*

Konnikova, author of *The Confidence Game* – “If you have wondered about the mysteries of wine, and the airs of people who claim to know something about it, *Cork Dork* is essential reading. Read it and you will never look at wine in quite the same way again. This is reportage of a high order.” – Roger Cohen, author of *The Girl from Human Street* – “Rollicking and lively...I gulped down this book with enormous pleasure.” – Julia Flynn Siler, author of *The House of Mondavi* – “I have read many ‘wine books,’ some casual, some pedantic, and many happily informative. But Bianca Bosker’s book stands out as being spectacularly successful in teaching us about wine, in making us love wine, and in presenting a tone of unfailing good humor.” – Richard E. Quandt, *The Journal of Wine Economics* – “Always perceptive, curious, and entertaining, the author describes her experiences with precision and a wry sense of humor...Readers will certainly come away from the book knowing more about wine and likely eager to explore it further, but even those less inclined to imbibe will be intrigued.” – Kirkus Reviews (starred review) – “An interesting look at those with an unquenchable thirst for those unique bottles of vinicultural perfection.” – Booklist – “A page-turning and fascinating memoir.” – Publishers Weekly

Bianca Bosker is an award-winning journalist who has written about food, wine, architecture, and technology for *The New Yorker* online, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times Style Magazine*, *Food & Wine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, and *The New Republic*. The former executive tech editor of *The Huffington Post*, she is the author of the critically acclaimed book *Original Copies: Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China* (University of Hawaii Press, 2013). She lives in New York City.

I am not, by any stretch of the imagination, a wine person. If you were to ask me what the last wine I had was I’d answer something like “The \$7 red I had with dinner last month.” I probably have a dozen or more bottles of wine in my department store wine rack, but they tend to be bottles of three-buck Chuck for cooking, wine I bought because the label looked interesting, or (horror of horror!) sweet German wines. And yet I’ve always been curious about wine, and the people are willing to spend upwards of \$100 a bottle on some particularly special wine. I’ve tasted some of these wines, and while I could tell that yes, they were significantly better than what I’m used to, I couldn’t see getting \$100 worth of pleasure out of a bottle of wine like I could getting \$100 worth of (say) a

really exquisite dinner. Author Bianca Bosker shared this curiosity about wine and taste. What is it in wine that compels some to pay \$100, \$1,000, or more on a single bottle? What was she missing? Being a technical editor and reporter by trade, and not a little compulsive about the things that interest her, she quit her job and set about learning the trade of the Sommelier, the professionals whose job it is to select, taste, and recommend the finest wines in the world to those willing to pay. To this end she apprenticed herself to one, a man with a single-minded devotion to wine whose one goal in life is to achieve the title of Master Sommelier, a title held by perhaps 250 people worldwide. The best sommeliers, or "cork dorks" as they sometimes refer to themselves among themselves, can earn \$150,000 or more in New York restaurants. They're part expert, parts sales person, and part enabler. They can add millions of dollars in revenue to a high end restaurant over the course of a year, and they're rewarded handsomely for it. But to get to be a top Sommelier requires a degree of dedication and sacrifice that few have. Serious somms restrict their diet to avoid contaminating their palate. Mouthwash and hot peppers are an absolute no-no and on serious tasting days they might avoid brushing their teeth. They spend their off hours studying and tasting wine with vendors and other sommeliers, and making copious notes. Bosker's aim was to achieve the status of a Certified Sommelier, which she could then use to get an actual position as a sommelier in a high end restaurant. She did manage this, and along the way met a great many sommeliers, people in the wine trade, and even neuroscientists in her pursuit of understanding and learning the fine points of taste and smell. The result is an entertaining and informative read, interesting not only to those with a serious (or even passing) interest in wine, but those fascinated by the nature of obsession, and the sort of person who can be consumed by an all-encompassing obsession for something as seemingly trivial as a bottle of wine.

Great story

Good read .as a member of the winetrade. Very to the point... Enjoy your reading.....even better with a magnum of your favorite wine

Great info here. Good insight even for the experienced Cork Dorks

This book is yummy. And now I have to enter sixteen more words in order for to publish this review.

While some chapters get bogged down in the process of learning to taste and smell, the chapters of working in swanky restaurants, attending wine tastings, taking certification tests and the wine industry itself, make the book a fascinating read ... very enjoyable. I learned a great deal...

A literate hoot

Great book for anyone interested in a fun book on wine!

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