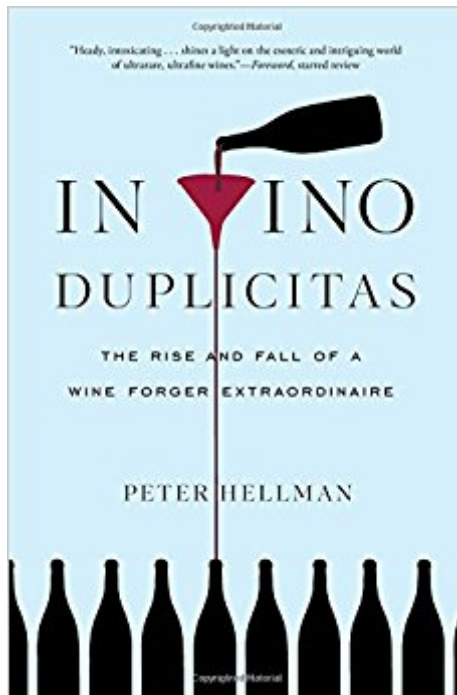




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In Vino Duplicitas: The Rise And Fall Of A Wine Forger Extraordinaire



Synopsis

True crime pairs well with fine wine in the astonishing story of Rudy Kurniawan, perhaps the most notorious—and unlikely—wine forger in history. Few gain entry to the privileged world of ultrafine wines, where billionaires flock to exclusive auction houses to vie for the scarce surviving bottles from truly legendary years. But Rudy Kurniawan, an unknown twentysomething from Indonesia, was blessed with two gifts that opened doors: a virtuoso palate for wine tasting, and access to a seemingly limitless (if mysterious) supply of the world's most coveted wines. After bursting onto the scene in 2002, Kurniawan quickly became the leading purveyor of rare wines to the American elite. But in April 2008, his lots of Domaine Ponsot Clos Saint-Denis red burgundy—dating as far back as 1945—were abruptly pulled from auction. The problem? The winemaker was certain that this particular burgundy was first produced only in 1982. Journalist Peter Hellman was there, and he would closely investigate as a singular cast of characters—including a Kansas-born billionaire and self-proclaimed hoarder, a dignified Burgundian winemaker, a wine-loving young prosecutor, and a crusty FBI agent who prepared for the case by reading *French Wine for Dummies*—worked to unravel the biggest con in wine history. Whether driven by the love of wine or of justice, all were asking the same question: Was the mild-mannered Kurniawan himself a dupe? Or had one young man—with little experience and few connections—ensnared the world's top winemakers, sellers, and drinkers in a web of deceit?

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: The Experiment (July 31, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1615193928

ISBN-13: 978-1615193929

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.1 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #118 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Wine & Spirits > Wine #1 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > True Crime > Hoaxes & Deceptions #2 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Culinary

Customer Reviews

"An engrossing account of wine fraud and forgery . . . Hellman clearly knows his stuff." • "The Wall Street Journal" • "Heady, intoxicating . . . shines a light on the esoteric and intriguing world of ultrarare, ultrafine wines." • "Foreword, starred review" • "[A] compelling mix of wine devotion (journalist Hellman's included) and true crime (complete with avenging furies, from a bloody-minded Koch brother to a passionate French vintner)." • "Maclean's" • "Like 'Law & Order' for oenophiles, 'In Vino Duplicitas' is a true crime account set among the cognoscenti of the wine world." • "Imbibe" • "Journalist Peter Hellman spent years following the strange saga of Rudy Kurniawan, who in 2013 was sentenced to 10 years in prison for selling untold millions of dollars in fake rare vintages. Hellman tells the phenomenal story of the mysterious fraudster in 'In Vino Duplicitas.'" • "Wine Enthusiast" • "A captivating story . . . Hellman's voice is that of the amused but compassionate observer. He saves his disdain for those who seemed to have colluded in the scam, the auctioneers and rich collectors so eager for economic gain and status that they willfully ignored the evidence in front of them. By definition, rare wines are in finite supply. It is perhaps this underlying matter of motivation that does most to deepen the satisfaction of this well-told story." • "Times Literary Supplement" • "In 'In Vino Duplicitas' is a fast-paced and suspenseful real-life thriller brimming with rich, vivid detail." • "Apple's iBooks Best Book of July" • "[An] absorbing account of true crime in high society." • "Publishers Weekly" • "Peter Hellman led the way in reporting on Rudy Kurniawan's monumental fraud, and he has written the book it deserves: tenaciously researched, propulsively told, and infused with earned wisdom about the wine world. I found it hard to put 'In Vino Duplicitas' down and, like one of the authentically magical bottles the book describes, it will linger in your mind." • "Benjamin Wallace, author of 'The Billionaire's Vinegar'" • "A page-turning cautionary tale about the elite world of wine, and a gripping and disturbing read. You won't be able to put it down." • "Frances Dinkelspiel, author of 'Tangled Vines'" • "The best account of fraudster Rudy Kurniawan to date. Riveting, deftly-researched, entertaining, it's a page-turner that reveals all sorts of new details about the largest wine fraud in history." • "Mark Oldman, author of 'How to Drink Like a Billionaire'" • "An exciting page-turner" • "George Taber, author of 'Judgment of Paris'"

Peter Hellman, a New York-based journalist and author for more than 40 years, has been a contributor to Wine Spectator for more than a decade. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and New York magazine, and many others. His books include When Courage Was Stronger than Fear, Chief!, and Fifty Years After Kitty Genovese. He and his wife, Susan, live in New York City.

Rudy Kurniawan will go down in history as one of the great scammers of the ultra-rich. Blessed with a baby face, a pitch-perfect palate for wine, and millions of dollars from a mysterious family source, Rudy burst onto the wine scene in the early 2000s and soon became a celebrity. The wines he bought and shared with rich wine collectors soon became legend, and Rudy eventually capitalized on his own myth to fool those who thought they were his friends. Using his amazing sense of taste and wine memory, Rudy began blending old French wine with young California wine, pouring it into old bottles, and selling those fakes as the real things for thousands of dollars. Peter Hellman has written a page turner so filled with shocking revelations about the wine elite that it will be a classic for decades to come.

Fascinating story so well written about the business of selling, buying and drinking expensive wines. While the subject of the book, an Asian charlatan, gets much the attention and conviction, many of the supposedly upstanding auction houses such as Christies and some high end wine dealers come out with lots of dirt on their hands. The author does a great job of chronicling the events that occurred over several years, with more details than I needed. Nevertheless I could hardly put the book down and enjoyed it immensely. Note that there are color photos near the end of the book, which I noticed only as I was finishing up. It would have been helpful to reference them earlier.

This was such an enthralling book from start to finish. A great true crime story (even for beer drinkers)!

The incredible story of wine forger Rudy Kurniawan - brilliantly written and full of depth.

The story of a classic con man who was a gifted wine taster. Sharply written, fast moving tale of how to hoodwink the rich guys. Then along came a winemaker and a Koch brother who decided to set matters straight.

Really enjoying this read. Although the numerous list of wines I am not familiar with and names I could never pronounce interfere somewhat with the overall story for me (I love wine but am not an aficionado). But I love a mystery, especially one based on true facts. So I actually have had a hard time putting this down. Goes well with a glass of wine :-)

An excellent telling of this extremely intricate story following years and years of research by the author. Would say that the wine facts part are a touch dense at times and will be trickier for those not in to high-end wine, but he does do a very good job of explaining as much as he can and not being pedantic. Still a very good international crime caper and fills in all kinds of facts not covered by the recent documentary film, although then the book seems to leave out a few characters that were key to that film which was a bit surprising.

What an interesting book! This book is a real eye-opener regarding the wine industry.

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