



The Widow Clicquot

By Tilar J. Mazzeo
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Introduction

The Widow Clicquot is the *New York Times* bestselling business biography of the visionary young widow who built a champagne empire, became a legend in her tumultuous times, and showed the world how to live with style. Tilar J. Mazzeo brings to life the woman behind the label, Barbe-Nicole Clicquot Ponsardin, in this utterly intoxicating book that is as much a fascinating journey through the process of making this temperamental wine as a biography of a uniquely tempered and fascinating woman.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Philippe Clicquot kept giving the young Barbe Nicole so many chances during the early years of failure?
2. What do you think was Barbe Nicole's bigger achievement: her discoveries in the world of wine or her success as a businesswoman?
3. How do you think her competition with Jean Remy Moet shaped the direction of her company?
4. What do you think was the secret to Widow Clicquot's success as a businesswoman? What do you think allowed her to succeed at a time when women didn't traditionally run businesses?
5. How did the technologies of the nineteenth century shape the Widow Clicquot's story?
6. What do you think was the real story of what happened with George von Kessler?
7. Why do you think the Widow Clicquot excluded her daughter from the business?
8. What do you think happened at the end of the nineteenth century that gave the Widow Clicquot and Louise Pommery the idea to launch the first wine tourism?
9. Why do you think there are so few women in the champagne industry today?
10. If you could discover one new "lost" letter by the Widow Clicquot, what would she be writing about?

About the Author

Tilar J. Mazzeo writes on the things she loves best: French culture, luxury goods, wine, food, and the good life. A professor of English at Colby College, she divides her time among the California wine country, coastal Maine, and New York City.