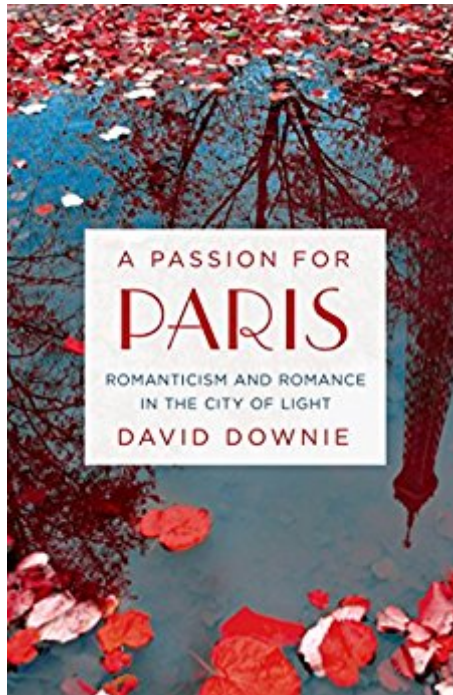




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A Passion For Paris: Romanticism And Romance In The City Of Light



Synopsis

"A top-notch walking tour of Paris. . . . The author's encyclopedic knowledge of the city and its artists grants him a mystical gift of access: doors left ajar and carriage gates left open foster his search for the city's magical story. Anyone who loves Paris will adore this joyful book. Readers visiting the city are advised to take it with them to discover countless new experiences." —Kirkus Reviews (starred) A unique combination of memoir, history, and travelogue, this is author David Downie's irreverent quest to uncover why Paris is the world's most romantic city—and has been for over 150 years. Abounding in secluded, atmospheric parks, artists' studios, cafes, restaurants and streets little changed since the 1800s, Paris exudes romance. The art and architecture, the cityscape, riverbanks, and the unparalleled quality of daily life are part of the equation. But the city's allure derives equally from hidden sources: querulous inhabitants, a bizarre culture of heroic negativity, and a rich historical past supplying enigmas, pleasures and challenges. Rarely do visitors suspect the glamor and chic and the carefree atmosphere of the City of Light grew from and still feed off the dark fountainheads of riot, rebellion, mayhem and melancholy—and the subversive literature, art and music of the Romantic Age. Weaving together his own with the lives and loves of Victor Hugo, Georges Sand, Charles Baudelaire, Balzac, Nadar and other great Romantics Downie delights in the city's secular romantic pilgrimage sites asking, Why Paris, not Venice or Rome—the tap root of "romance"—or Berlin, Vienna and London—where the earliest Romantics built castles-in-the-air and sang odes to nightingales? Read *A Passion for Paris: Romanticism and Romance in the City of Light* and find out.

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Customer Reviews

David Downie has written a remarkable and unexpected tale of the 19th century Romantics of Paris. Deeply grounded in French literature, art and history, he shows readers the physical Paris that was inhabited by Victor Hugo, Balzac, George Sand, Baudelaire, Delacroix and others. Not only where they met, but what their neighborhoods were like, how far apart from one another they lived, and which streets they took to their assignations. Reading, it's possible to follow in their wake imaginatively or even to make your own Romantic map for the next time you are there. Do this and you will time travel to a different Ile Saint Louis from the high-toned one you know. 150 years ago, Bohemia existed there, and can still be traced. Was the Marais always chic? No -- it was both Royal and Bohemian, and ruled by Victor Hugo, more famous than any writer would ever be again. The Montmartre of the Romantics was hilly, grassy, with pasturing goat herds and the freshest of fresh air. The windmills were utterly for real, and the artists' studios were vast, light and cheap. If you have ever wondered how the great Romantics bodily inhabited Paris, how long it took them to walk from one haunt to another, and how much of what they did and saw is available to you today, then read this book. Seeing their art and poetry in a new context that no one but David Downie could provide, you will want a date to meet a like-minded friend under the bust of Chopin in the Luxembourg Gardens, and set off make their trail your own. If you could use an architectural disquisition on why Haussmann's Paris feels and looks all wrong, then there's one here that you can "dine out on for a year.

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