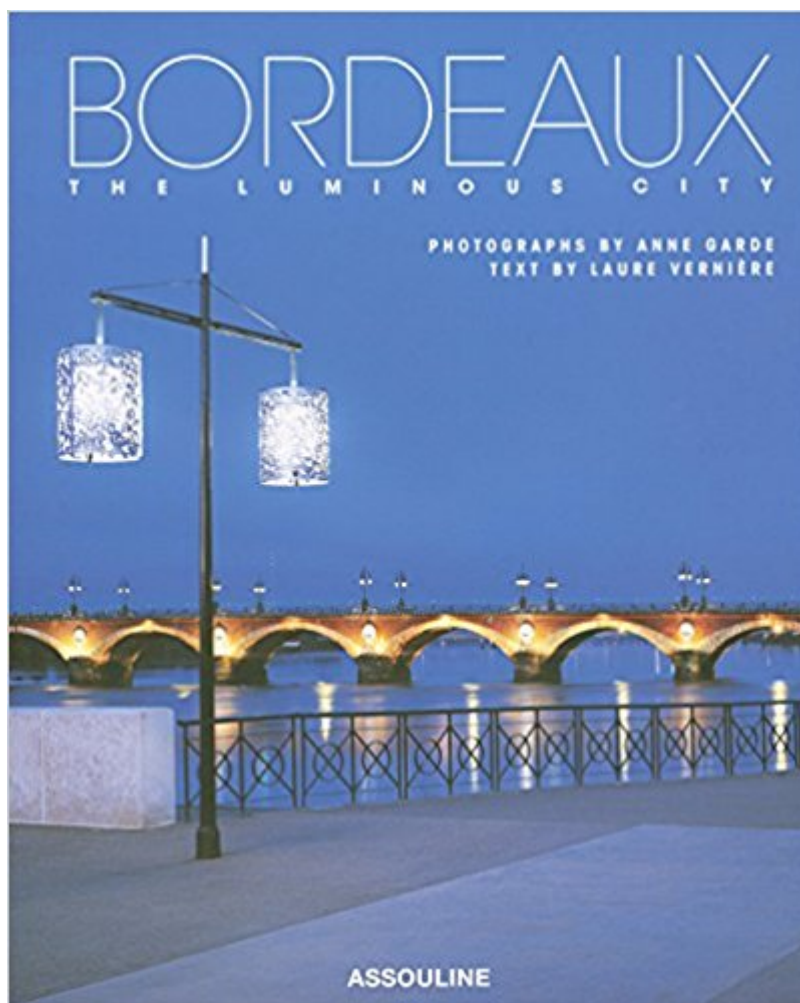




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Bordeaux



Synopsis

Bordeaux is not only the name of a worldwide, high-quality wine terroir, it has long been the center city of the countryside of France. A magnificent place founded in the third century B.C., Bordeaux boasts several golden periods of development, including its meteoric rise in the eighteenth century as the country's center for the arts. More recently, the city's great mayor, Alain Juppe, has driven its resurgence as one of the most contemporary and enjoyable cities in Europe a city synonymous with arts, culture, and business growth. Today, more and more English speakers flock to this cosmopolitan locale, choosing to become part of its story and its way of life. Here, Anne Garde, a well-known artist and photographer, reveals the personality of this great city of change, while writer Laure Verniere evokes the spirit of the city, past and present.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Photographer Anne Garde and travel writer Laure Verniere have coauthored several books and consider themselves twins of photography and literature. Together they bring hidden elements of people, places, and architecture into view using photographic techniques and language. They have worked for international magazines, publishing houses, and advertising companies.

In what I thought would be a wonderful companion book of a recent trip to this beautiful city, turned out to be a series of dismal photographs of mostly industrial areas of Bordeaux (shipping containers, shipyards, machinery, etc). The photos contained in this book are unflattering, (some were grainy) and unrecognisable as Bordeaux. There are perhaps two or three interesting architectural shots of

some of the more aesthetically beautiful buildings in and around the city, and a lovely cover shot of the Pont de Pierre spanning the river Garonne (but a poorly framed and horribly crooked landscape photo [see attached photo] of the same river & bridge on the inside pages). The rest is just a dismal collection of photos that do not resemble Bordeaux at all. In fact, most of the photos in this book look like ANY industrial area in ANY city of the world. Where are the photos of the beautiful Place de Quinconces and the equally stunning Fontaine des Girondins? The Place de la Bourse and the Miroir des Quais? The activity and energy of Place de la Comédie? Where are the photos of the public art, the monuments, statues, and museums to the great philosophers, thinkers and artists of Bordeaux? Where are the beautiful buildings, cobblestoned streets, the historic gates, restaurants & bistros, etc? All this is sadly lacking for a book that bills itself as "The Luminous City." If it weren't for the cover photo, you wouldn't know this was a book about Bordeaux at all!

Unlike most English-language books about Bordeaux, this spectacular photographic essay focuses not on the wines produced nearby, but on the magnificent architectures of France's "second city," its "Port de La Lune." These include the 18th-century structures and spaces that primarily define the city (the basis for its recent designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site), but also modern ones, including industrial and commercial constructions, and the emerald tramway that seductively snakes through the city (as if an alter ego of the Garonne), all designed to provocatively complement Bordeaux's "patrimoine culturel." The resulting juxtapositions, as captured by Garde and narrated by Verniere, are a remarkable, unexpected delight. A native of neighboring Libourne, Garde's earliest perceptions were infused with what Roland Barthes extolled as southwest France's "luminous light." After completing studies in sociology and art history in the crucible of France's "1968," she embarked - with author Verniere, another native of Aquitaine - on a lifelong exploration of the world's peoples, cultures, and geographies. Their partnership has produced a shelf of books, hundreds of articles, and dozens of gallery exhibitions on three continents. Here, Garde's photographs exploit the sometimes unlikely chromatic effects of both natural and man-made light which accent the city's surfaces and environs, the nocturnal in particular. Verniere's text reveals the historical, commercial, and cultural currents - including the slave trade - that underlie all that stone and steel, sculpture and ornament, from the mosaic to the graffito. Lyrical asides conjure Bordeaux's evocation of locations as far flung as Siberia, Africa, India, even the United States. The reader is thereby afforded an intimacy with Bordeaux hitherto inaccessible to all but longtime residents. Meticulous Italian printing of the photographs, which Garde produces with traditional, non-digital equipment and film ("argentique"), completes the effect. For Francophiles and neophytes alike, this will be the perfect

holiday gift - and one sure to provoke wanderlust.

I bought this book hoping for beautiful pictures of the city. While it was nice to finally find a book that focused on the city instead of the wine region, this book was a disappointment. The photos were mainly of what I thought were boring or even ugly parts of the city. Where is Rue St. Catherine, Place St. Pierre, or the Jardin Publique? There are also no people in any of the photos-when some of my favorite memories are of soccer games in the park and people strolling down the street. If you have memories of the beautiful spots in city and are hoping to reminisce, this book is just not what you're looking for.

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