

MEDIA KIT FOR CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS

By Rebecca Rosenberg



AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR REBECCA ROSENBERG

Rebecca Rosenberg is a triple-gold award-winning author of *CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS*, lavender farmer, champagne geek, champagne tour guide, and cocktail creator for Breathless Wines. She is the moderator of Breathless Bubbles & Books and American Historical Novels.

Rebecca writes novels about history's real-life women of substance who made an indelible mark on the world. Her novels have garnered many awards, including IBPA, IPPY, and starred Publisher Weekly reviews for her novels, *THE SECRET LIFE OF MRS. LONDON* (Lake Union 2018) and *GOLD DIGGER, The Remarkable Baby Doe Tabor* (Lion Heart 2019). As a lavender farmer and founder of the largest lavender products manufacturer in America, Rebecca's debut book was *LAVENDER FIELDS OF AMERICA*.

CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS

Champagne, France, 1800. Twenty-year-old Barbe-Nicole inherited Le Nez (an uncanny sense of smell) from her great-grandfather, a renowned champagne maker. She is determined to use Le Nez to make great champagne, but the Napoleon Code prohibits women from owning a business. When she learns her childhood sweetheart, François Clicquot, wants to start a winery, she marries him despite his mental illness.

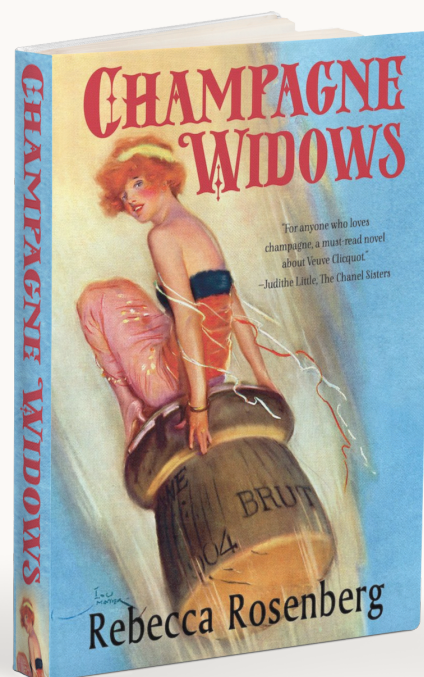
Soon, her husband's tragic death forces her to become Veuve (Widow) Clicquot and grapple with a domineering partner, the complexities of making champagne, and six Napoleon wars, which cripple her ability to sell champagne. When she falls in love with her sales manager, Louis Bohne, who asks her to marry, she must choose between losing her winery to her husband, as dictated by Napoleon Code, or losing Louis.

In the ultimate showdown, Veuve Clicquot defies Napoleon himself, risking prison and even death.

EARLY PRAISE

"For anyone who loves champagne, a must-read about Veuve Clicquot."

**-Judithe Little, best-selling Author
of *The Chanel Sisters***



"*Champagne Widows* is a witty, accomplished novel, featuring a tough and charming heroine of the first order. One can't help but root for Barbe-Nicole, an astute businesswoman who brilliantly holds her own against none other than Napoleon Bonaparte. Although the events unfold two centuries ago, the story feels so modern, the characters could be your friends and neighbors. As easy to love as a glass of Veuve Clicquot, this may be Rebecca Rosenberg's best book yet.

-Michelle Richmond, best-selling author of *The Marriage Pact*



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EARLY PRAISE, CONTINUED

"The sun-drenched vineyards of France, a real-life heroine who against all odds refuses to give up her dreams... and champagne. What's not to love? And that's just what Rebecca Rosenberg delivers in Champagne Widows. Barbe-Nicole Clicquot was a woman ahead of her time, a fascinating blend of ingenuity, heart, and sheer tenacity, with a nose for wine and a head for business. A 19th-century widow who built an empire as war raged all around her. Note: This richly woven tale is best savored slowly, though, with all delicious things, it won't be easy."

-Barbara Davis, best-selling author of *The Last of the Moon Girls*

"Champagne Widows is an inspired story based on the real-life Grande Dame of Champagne, Barbe-Nicole Clicquot Ponsardin, who built her famous champagne empire amidst the turbulence of 19th century France. Barbe-Nicole is my kind of heroine: a woman with passion, courage, family loyalty, and a killer business sense. Rebecca Rosenberg's sensual details make every scene of this intimate novel come alive. A true reading pleasure!"

**-Martha Conway, best-selling author of
The Underground River and *The Physician's Daughter***



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For release September 1, 2021
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New Veuve Clicquot Novel Reveals how Pandemic, War, and Sexism Nearly Derailed the Champagne Industry

CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS tells of the remarkable woman who defied Napoleon to build a champagne empire.

(Sonoma, CA, September 1, 2021) In a story that could be pulled from today's headlines, the determination and audacity of a young widow during a pandemic birthed one of the world's greatest champagne empires. *CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS*, new historical fiction by Rebecca Rosenberg, tells of twenty-five-year-old Barbe-Nicole Clicquot, a young widow and founder of Veuve Clicquot champagne.

In the early 1800s, Barbe-Nicole and her husband struggled to perfect the early art of making champagne, hampered by archaic techniques, crude equipment, and fragile hand-blown bottles. Then, to complicate their plight, worldwide pandemics of typhoid fever, typhus, smallpox, cholera, and yellow fever ravaged Europe. All this, while Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte waged fifteen years of war to control Europe, destroying the economy for champagne sales. When the pandemic claimed her husband, the widow (Veuve) Clicquot forged ahead on her own.

If disease and war were not enough to battle, Barbe-Nicole could not own a business as a married woman. According to the Napoleon Code and the custom of coverture, a married woman's identity was 'covered' by her husband's, and she had no legal or financial rights. "I was shocked to discover women could not own businesses in the nineteenth century," said Rebecca Rosenberg, award-winning author of *CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS*. "But I was fascinated to discover the 'widow' loophole and why widows refused to remarry after their husbands died."

When Barbe-Nicole's husband died of Typhoid fever, she was allowed to own her vineyards and business as a widow. Other 'Champagne Widows' remained single to keep their wineries. Most notable are the widows Clicquot, Pommery, Bollinger, Laurent-Perrier, and Roederer, who built the world's leading champagne brands.

"The first women of champagne making must not have realized how strong they were until they had to learn and do it all to survive for themselves and their wineries! It makes it even more of an honor to learn a craft still dominated by men," said Penny Gadd-Coster, Executive Director of Winemaking, Rack & Riddle, a thirty-year veteran of méthode champenoise, the traditional method of making champagne.

Rebecca Rosenberg is a triple-gold award-winning author, champagne geek, and lavender farmer in Sonoma County, California. Her other books include *Lavender Fields of America*, *The Secret Life of Mrs. London*, and *Gold Digger, the Remarkable Baby Doe Tabor*.

Distributed by Ingram, *CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS* will be released in print on March 1, 2022, through independent bookstores and online booksellers.

For Advanced Review Copies or more information, contact Rebecca Rosenberg, rebecca@rebecca-rosenberg.com, 707-548-8648.
For media kit and launch party information, visit www.rebecca-rosenberg.com



TALKING POINTS FOR CHAMPAGNE WIDOWS

VEUVE CLICQUOT, the woman:

1. Why is it significant that Veuve Clicquot was the first woman to make champagne in 1805?
(laws against women owning businesses, fifteen years of Napoleon wars, pandemics, and economic ruin)
2. What took so long when Dom Perignon discovered it a hundred years before, in 1693?
(champagne for royalty, the volatility, and unpredictability of making wine, people's tastes, laws against women owning a business)
3. What did Veuve Clicquot do to change champagne?
(riddling for clarity, first vintage champagne, first rose, paved the way for other widows to own wineries!)

NAPOLEON and the RED MAN:

1. Why is it significant that Napoleon was waging wars against European monarchs while Veuve Clicquot made champagne?
(The times couldn't be more difficult amidst wars, economic ruin, pandemics, and prohibitive laws—yet Veuve Clicquot persevered and found a way to make and ship her champagne.)
2. Napoleon waged fifteen years of war against European countries. What was his goal?
(Napoleon used the values of the French revolution to turn peasants against European royals for his own benefit. He started as revolutionary but overthrew the French government and crowned himself emperor. He crowned nine relatives as kings of Italy, Holland, Naples, Spain, and Tuscany.)
3. What was the cost to France?
(Conscripting more than a million French men in his army, bankrupting the treasury with fifteen years of war after the Revolution, cutting off foreign trade with wars and the Continental Blockade.)
4. Who is the mysterious Red Man in the novel? Is he real?
(The Red Man is reported through history and eyewitnesses as a mysterious man who advised Napoleon about his European conquest.)

CHAMPAGNE:

1. How has champagne changed today from 250 years ago?
(sweetness, clarity, consistency, vintage, rose)
2. Why is champagne more difficult and expensive to make than wine?
(double fermentation, longer aging, and the tirage and dosage process costs much more)
3. What key things should we know about champagne? (true Champagne is only French, how to correctly pop a cork, hold a bottle and glass, three main types of champagne made with three grape varietals)