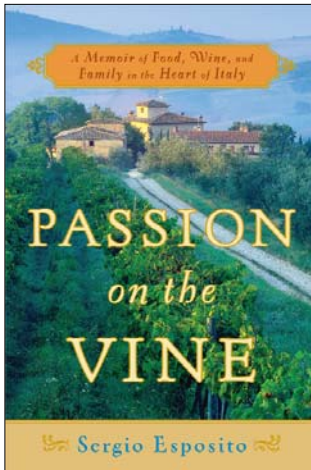


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**Sergio Esposito**

*Passion on the Vine: A Memoir of Food, Wine, and Family in the Heart of Italy*  
Broadway, \$24.95 (224p) ISBN 978-0-7679-2607-2

At a young age, Esposito and his family move from Naples, Italy, to Albany, N.Y., where he first falls in love with wine in the basement dining room of his uncle's house. Even as he reflects on the poor quality of those first sips, he understands he was consuming the sense of family and the spirit of his crazy yet adored uncle. After opening a store in Albany, he moves to Manhattan to work as a sommelier in the early 1990s. There he partakes of haute cuisine and affluent wine collections, while learning the hierarchy of international wines. While French wines are considered the pinnacle of the industry and Californian wines are gaining interest, there are very few Italian wines of note. With a fiery passion, he determines to bring appreciation of the wines of his homeland to America and opens Italian Wine Merchants, where he continues today to import highly selected Italian wines. His writing is exuberant, and his wine descriptions evocative. A bottle of Ribolla reminds him of "staring at a cracked painting of a beautiful woman from long ago." For lovers of wine, this is a full-bodied read about one man's passion and the many delectable moments along his journeys. (*Apr.*)