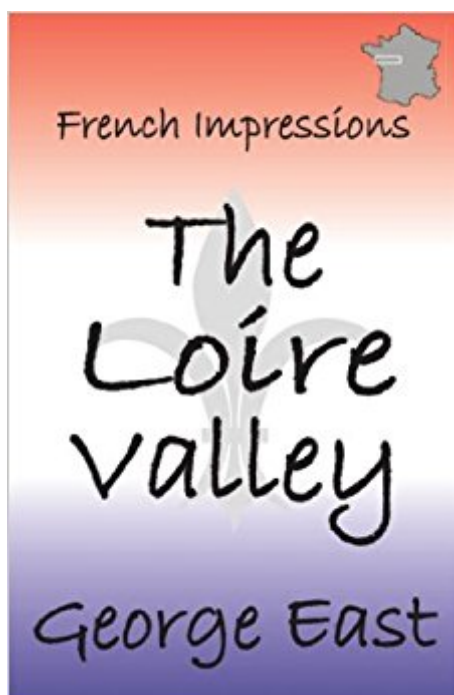


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French Impressions - The Loire Valley: Number 2



Synopsis

Yes, we know you know the Loire is the longest river in France. But did you know that one in every 702,203 Americans is named after the Loire Valley town of Nantes? Or that thirteen bottles of Loire Valley wine are sold and drunk somewhere in the world every second? Not all of them are imbibed by the author of this book, though he did his best to up the consumption rate during his year in this fascinating part of France. George East has spent more than a quarter of a century living with the enemy and observing their sometimes funny little ways, and the master raconteur's accounts of his rampaging around France have been enjoyed by millions. Inside these covers you'll find very little about the grand chateaux of the Loire, but a lot about the towns and villages and the people who live in them. You'll also learn about the history and culture and food and drink of the region. Particularly the food and drink. There are also dozens of easy-to-follow recipes for favourite Loirean dishes, from sauteed frogs' legs to roasted swan. One thing is for sure. You will find French Impressions: The Loire Valley different from any travel book you have read. Unless, of course, you are one of the army of fans who follow their flawed hero on his constant journeying in search of a Gallic paradise and the perfect coffee éclair -

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

French Impressions: The Loire Valley "The title is very apt. Compared with other travel books, reading George's work is like coming across the brightness and brio of an Impressionist painting in a museum full of sombre art..." West Town News

Before becoming a (fairly) professional writer, George East tried his hand at a number of careers. "It would be good to say I followed the advice that writers who wish to become great authors should try all experiences and conditions and types of work," says George. "In fact, I get bored very easily, and I also got sacked a lot." George's varied career path has included (in no particular order): (failed) Rock god, Impressionist (house) painter, plumber, welder, demolition engineer, pickled onion manufacturer, private detective, male model, lorry driver, brewer's drayman, PR and Marketing guru, magazine editor, freelance journalist, hotel manager, snooker hall major domo, seamstress night club bouncer, DJ and radio and television presenter. After a record 15 jobs in three years, George decided to become a media star, and got a job as tea-boy at Portsmouth's new commercial radio station, Radio Victory. After five happy years and having climbed to the dizzy heights of senior producer, George got itchy feet again and thought he would emulate fellow Portmuthian Charles Dickens by becoming become a great writer. A promising career writing stories for Jackie and Bluejeans magazines came to an end when a conference in London revealed him to be a bearded 18-stone man rather than hackette Gloria Glasspole. It was time, George reckoned, to become a beer baron. As detailed in *A Year Behind Bars*, George became Mine Host at one of the seediest pubs in Portsmouth. During his reign he was voted Worst Landlord of the Year for two years running, after which the organisers abandoned the contest, saying they would never find anyone bad enough to displace George. It was because of the pub that George became the only human bed tester in the history of the world. When his bed collapsed and the leg came through the ceiling of the public bar, setting off the alarm and causing the arrival of two police cars and an ambulance, the media leapt upon the story and tale of *The Bed Bustin' Bar Owner* went viral. After appearing on 300 radio stations across America and in the pages of most national newspapers, an international bed manufacturing company offered our hero a job as a professional bed tester, travelling around furniture exhibitions and demonstrating the invulnerability of Sealy beds by leaping from the top of a stepladder on to an Emperor-size divan. Unfortunately, George lost his post when his role in television advertisements was taken over by a cartoon hippopotamus. As recorded in *The Mill of the Flea* series, George persuaded his wife they should move to France to escape their creditors, and where they would make their fortune living off the land and their wits. His schemes for garlic-flavoured car deodorisers, panning for gold and bottling the polluted waters of their Normandy mill-house stream not working out, our hero turned his hand to writing about his continuing disasters in his second favourite country. There are seven books in the series about his life and times across the Channel, and George's wanderings in France have resulted in the *French Impressions* series, so far featuring unusual (not to say unique) travel books about Brittany and the Loire Valley. As

there are another twenty regions to write about at a year apiece, George trusts that the French Impressions series will see him out to a happy retirement and allow him to concentrate on his hobby of finding any bars in France he has not already visited.

A few years ago, I stumbled upon George East's books. So happy that I did. All of them are great fun. I especially loved the "Mill of the Flea" series, which chronicles his and his lovely wife Donella's years living in a very rural area in Normandy. Best of all the ex-pat books concerning an Englishman living in France. I've read the others after they moved on to different environs, particularly Brittany, with so many hilarious stories about learning the local ropes. Now they are off to offer travel stories along the Loire. Lovely, but pull no punches. George is not shy. I know that the Dordogne will follow. Can't wait.

I LOVE France - the Loire Valley in particular. This author writes with an English smugness that is hard to tolerate. He seems intent on putting down all the things that make the Loire so beautiful and pleasing. Here's a tip: MOVE back to England. I SO wanted to find a book about the Loire that is written from my place - a place of awe and appreciation, but this is depressing and hurtful to my Francophile heart.

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