

Uncorked: A Corkscrew Collection

Marilynn Gelfman Karp

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At some exasperating point, every wine drinker faces a wine bottle in need of opening with no corkscrew at hand. It's a pivotal moment because only when forced to use a screwdriver, fork, or one's teeth to carry out an inventive extraction (or shove, as the case may be) are we forced to confront the fact that the humble corkscrew is indispensable to the good life.

Corkscrews have been with us since wine bottles were standardized in the eighteenth century, most likely adapted from the gun worms or screws used to remove wadding from the gun barrels of the day. And it is the all-too-human desire for our most common and useful devices to also be beautiful that helps to explain what's become of the corkscrew over the centuries.

Uncorked: A Corkscrew Collection, Marilynn Karp's stunningly photographed collection of more than 650 corkscrews, is a museum-like tour from clunky, cast steel bar top contraptions to ornate silver and ivory screw pulls to a four-part novelty corkscrew depicting the corpse of Prohibition to an obscene facing couple corkscrew featuring a soldier and a woman lifting her skirt.

Each of the ten chapters showcases corkscrews using a similar mechanical process to pry corks from bottles. Karp writes, "the arrangement of the whole collection and this volume is about identifying discrete and fluid categories of form and function within the evolutionary narrative of the corkscrew, which is succumbing to the advent of the screw-top."

Uncorked is an irresistible page turner for any lover of the grape.

MATT SUTHERLAND (November / December 2020)

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