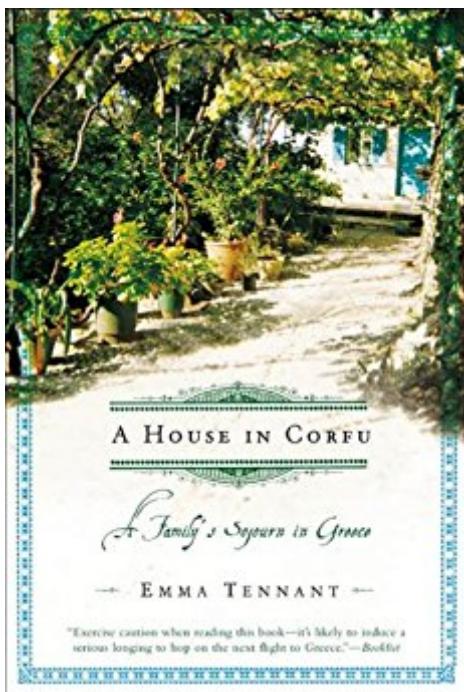


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A House In Corfu: A Family's Sojourn In Greece



Synopsis

The story of an unspoiled island and an English family making a home by the Aegean Sea. In the early 1960s Emma Tennant's parents, on a cruise, spotted a magical bay and decided to build a house there. This book is the story of that house, Rovinia, set above the bay in Corfu where legend has it Ulysses was shipwrecked and found by Nausicaa, daughter of King Alcinous. It is also the story of the couple who have been at Rovinia since the feast in the grove that followed the roof-raising-Maria, a miraculous cook and the presiding spirit of the house, and her husband, Thodoros-and of the inhabitants of the local village, high on the hill above the bay. Tennant offers us the delights of quotidian adventures-salt water in the well, roads to nowhere, collapsing walls-all hilariously presented. That the house is still lived in and loved, with new generations coming to understand the delights of Corfu, is a tribute to the people and a special landscape which is distinctly Greek. Full of color and contrast, A House in Corfu shows the huge changes in island life since the time of the Tennants' arrival, and celebrates, equally, the joy of belonging to a timeless world: the world of vine, olive, and sea.

Book Information

File Size: 1010 KB

Print Length: 224 pages

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. (February 1, 2003)

Publication Date: February 1, 2003

Sold by: Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B007XV1PJO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,772,229 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #42 in Books > Travel > Europe > Greece > Corfu #290 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Europe > Greece #343 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Europe > Greece

Customer Reviews

ok reading.

I used to live on Corfu (and it's an island; therefore, it's "on" Corfu, not "in" Corfu!) and first stayed there about 2 years after the author first set foot on Corfu. I have been going back there ever since. This book is a terrible disappointment if one is looking for plot, character development, reader involvement, etc. However, it's wonderful if one is an architect, a civil engineer, and/or a horticulturist. This is the first book I have bought in a long time where I wanted my money back! I found myself skipping page after page after page, in sheer boredom. One can read about lovely flowers and sea only for so long. After that, it would be nice to know a little bit about the society, the politics, the people, etc., of which we get precious little in this book. A horrendous waste of time. And if I felt that way and know (and love!) the place well,...I can't imagine what a reader who has never been there would think. A great soporific. Please, don't waste your time.

I love travel books especially books that guide you through life in the Mediterranean - Greece, Italy, south of France. The last book I read on Greece was also my first introduction to the delights of armchair travels; the incomparable *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell. At age 13, I wanted to move there immediately, never mind that both my parents were in the civil service in Singapore. Durrell's books became my yardstick for travel books ever since. And Tennant's, sorry to say, disappointed. It was boring, superficial and totally lacking in any insight into Corfoit customs, the people and island life. Not surprisingly as Tennant spent only a couple of months a year on that island while she made a life for herself and young family in London. She wrote as a tourist, not a Corfoit islander. However had she ghost-written a book with her parents who had moved to Rovinia to retire, I think it would have been a more interesting read. As it is, this paperback earns a "Read only if there's nothing left on your bookshelf" award.

I was amazed by the negative review another reader gave this lovely book. I would guess that most of us who like to read about a life spent in the sun, do not expect, or want, an action-packed plot! The whole point of living a Mediterranean idyll, where one day slips lazily into another, is that not a lot happens. Or not the kind of things that we would all hate to confront in real life, such as police car chases, broken hearts, or other major dramas. What we want is to be transported to another world and to imagine ourselves there. This book is about being happy - never easy to portray, but Emma Tennant has succeeded. It made me feel a great deal happier than I was before I picked it

up. It is also beautifully written.

I enjoy reading books on Greece so I buy a lot of them. This one was a disappointment. I have to agree with the reviewer (above) who says it is a waste of time. It is one of those books that lament the advent of mass tourism and infrastructure development, and I suppose these inevitable changes deserve lamenting in several senses, but other writers have done it so much better. Maybe the first and last chapters could be recommended but the rest is boring. None of the characters come alive and none of the real issues they face are made as clear as they should be. All the people (tourists and locals) seem to do is drive around looking at the mountains and eat... and they all eat too much.

A House In Corfu made me long to go at once and savour the tastes, smells and colours so wonderfully described in Emma Tennant's book. Her tales of locals, family and the glorious blue sky and sea had me wanting more as soon as I finished it.

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