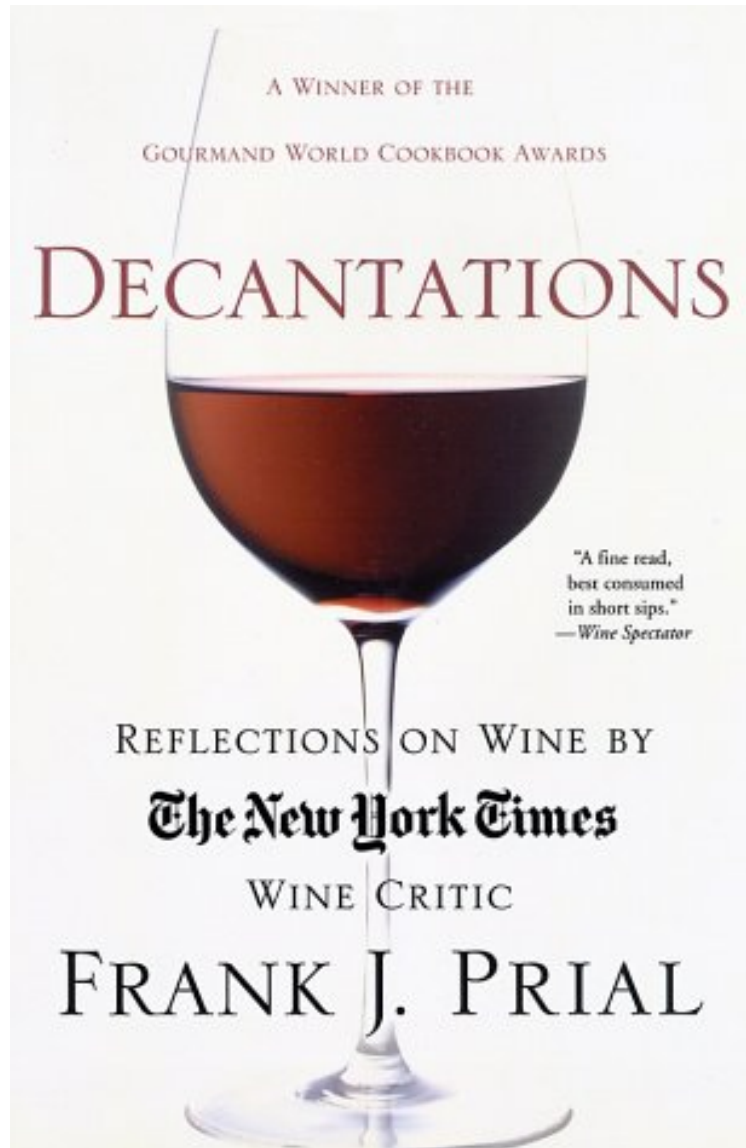


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Decantations: Reflections on Wine by The New York Times Wine Critic

Frank Prial

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Frank Prial : Decantations: Reflections on Wine by The New York Times Wine Critic before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Decantations: Reflections on Wine by The New York Times Wine Critic:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A great collection of "short stories" about wine and people. By Christopher Menkin. This book is like a collection of your favorite short stories on wine, about wine, about people who make wine; educational, informative, and delightful to read. Each chapter is a "short story", short, easy to read, and re-read. It is a collection of over 90 columns from Frank J. Prial's "Wine Talk" which often appears Wednesday in The New York Times. He has been writing for the newspaper for over thirty years, starting as a reporter, then foreign correspondent, and while in France, got into writing about wine as a "novice". While Prial is considered a "wine critic," he is not a "wine rater" or "telling you this is better than that." He likes people, and those that make wine, most of them. It comes out in his columns assembled in this book with humor and warmth. Perhaps it should have been called the "Best of Prial." The writing is superb. Great humor, knowledge, point of view told in short story format, so you can set down, think about, perhaps re-read, and enjoy the world of wine from Bonny Doon in the Santa Cruz Mountains, to the Napa Wine Company ("a winery for winemakers who don't happen to own a winery"), on our website, to a Beirut hostage who survived three years in captivity by reciting daily the 1855 Bordeaux classification. His syntax and vocabulary is excellent. Most importantly, he does not talk down to you, and is fun to read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. WINE. By Arline P. Gertsoff. I GAVE IT AS A GIFT TO HIS COUSIN. A GREAT WAY TO LEARN ABOUT WINE AND GRAPES. A MASTER CRITIC.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Pour Yourself Some of This. By Bill Marsano. Long, long ago I'd heard that Frank Prial, author of this book and wine critic of the New York Times, had to be badgered and bullied into taking the job. And who could blame him? Writing a weekly column year in and year out is an exhausting grind. Still, I'm awfully glad he took it on, and gladder still that some of his columns--from the past three decades or so--have been collected in this book. This is a book for the intelligent reader with an interest in wine; it is not for snobs and geeks. Its content is not poetry, for Prial is not a poet (as, for example, Gourmet magazine's Gerald Asher is). But he is first and foremost a reporter, and that's what's wanted more often than not when it comes to informative prose about wine (anybody can scribble stuff about 'hints of chocolate on the nose,' and far too many do). What Prial provides is the literary version of a good, sturdy country red, full of pleasure and easy to like. This isn't a "wine course"; there are no Qs and As and lists to memorize. "Decantations" is instead a stroll through the vineyards with a well-informed observer who's happy to pass on a little of what he's learned down the years. Prial ranges widely, writing of wine's notable families (the stately Rothschilds, the elegant Antinoris, the vivacious, New York-born Benzigers); some colorful titans (from Walter Taylor, the self-styled Baron of Bully Hill to Alexis Lichine, the Russian-born American who revolutionized the French wine business, whether the French liked it or not). Want some insight into the foolish devotion to vintages--or the equally foolish devotion to the tyrannical Bordeaux Classification of 1855? Want the lowdown on Beaujolais Nouveau? Prial clues you in, and briskly, too: One of the things a reporter learns is to keep it brief, and Prial does not ramble on. I could quibble a bit. There's not nearly enough here about Italian wines, and overall the book is TOO short--a mere 304 pages, including the index. But good wine writers and good wines have this much in common: They leave you wanting more.--Bill Marsano

Frank J. Prial has written authoritative and entertaining wine articles for The New York Times for over 25 years. His pieces have delighted wine lovers of all ages with celebrations of old favorites and forays into new tastings from around the world. In *Decantations*, Prial's first book since *Wine Talk* was published in 1978, the wine master's finest columns are gathered on everything from imbibing with the Rothschilds in France to stalking Zinfandels and Chardonnays in Africa. This robust collection of articles, organized by topic, include informative, humorous, and sometimes unorthodox observations on wine making, wine families, wine personalities and the wine business, as well as tips on ordering, tasting, and enjoying wine. An essential book for lovers of wine and lovers of lovers of wine.

.com With *Decantations*, a rich, reflective, often riotous compendium of over 90 previously published pieces from Frank J. Prial's "Wine Talk" column in The New York Times, the author's lean, spare prose takes the reader from a custom-crush facility like the Napa Wine Company ("a winery for winemakers who don't happen to own a winery") to a Beirut hostage who survived three years in captivity by reciting daily the 1855 Bordeaux classification. Eschewing florid "winespeak" for reportage--his column was interrupted for half a decade when he was posted overseas as a foreign correspondent for the Times--Prial adopts an angular style that when applied to thumbnail sketches of, say, Harry's New York Bar in Paris (located at "sank roo doo noo") is appropriately Hemingway-like. But some sketches in *Decantations* require a bigger thumb, with endings clumsily truncated (a tour with Washington winemaker Mike Hogue dissolves into a press release of statistics). He's a wine writer who bemoans the genre's paucity of humor, then uses *Decantations* to effect a remedy: one hilarious column predicts a bottle price of \$5,000 for Domaine de la Romanee-Conti--they like to price themselves "slightly behind Chateau Petrus." *Decantations* is Frank J. Prial: crisp, collected, and uncorked. --Tony Mason

About the Author Frank J. Prial has written for The New York Times as a reporter, foreign correspondent and wine columnist for 30 years.