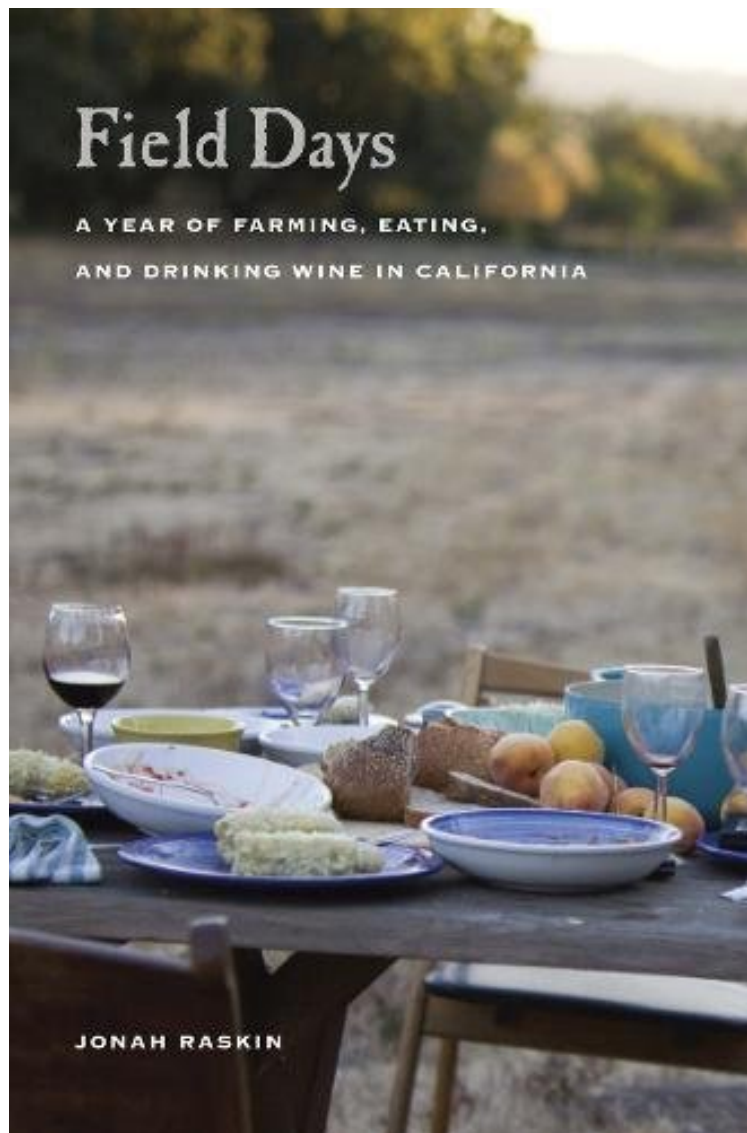


(Mobile pdf) Field Days: A Year of Farming, Eating, and Drinking Wine in California

Field Days: A Year of Farming, Eating, and Drinking Wine in California

Jonah Raskin

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Jonah Raskin : Field Days: A Year of Farming, Eating, and Drinking Wine in California before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Field Days: A Year of Farming, Eating, and Drinking Wine in California:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Walk Around the Farm on the Way to the Market By Timothy Williams Like William Butler Yeats's excursions to Coole Park in Ireland and Henry David Thoreau's adventures at

Walden Pond in Massachusetts, Jonah Raskin's odyssey at Oak Hill Farm in Sonoma, becomes the basis for individual change and transformation to the surrounding culture. The descriptions of Raskin working in Oak Hill Farms magnificent organic fields, bring the reader to the soil itself and into the hearts, minds and dreams of the people who own, work, and live at Oak Hill, as well as the people who flock to buy its fresh organic produce and flowers. Field Days, takes the reader into the heart of the movement of organic farming that flourishes in Sonoma County and around the USA. It takes us through the toil and triumphs of the small farm, clinging to life within a world of totalitarian mono-crop farms that wait outside the small farmer's gate, like those world dominators in Aldous Huxley's Island, ready to take over at any slightest opportunity or crop failure. In Field Days, the author writes with a farmer's guile and care. He leads us down rows of corn, beans, and flowers, and we share the discoveries in their planting, cultivation and harvest. He sets us on the side of the road to watch the crops loading onto the farm truck and their slow drive to the barn where they are washed and readied for market. The author also takes us deeper into the discussion about the importance of multi-crop organic farms versus mono-crop conglomerates. He shows the sustainability of the small farm that does not strain the land, the soil, and the farm itself. Jonah Raskin's book shows us the magic an organic farm like Oak Hill produces in a community. This is a must read for any person interested in organic farming anywhere. It is not so much a bird's eye view as it is that the bird carries a keen eye, a pen and a hoe, and a solution for the preservation of delicious organic produce. Timothy Williams 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great book on local farmers! By Kelly S. Davis Jonah did a wonderful job of telling of the hard work and love that goes into running a small farm, as well as the love of the land that the people here have. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sexist, racist, clueless, lecherous snoop pens bad book about great farm By Loud Latin I usually don't finish reading books that I throw across the room in disgust while reading, but I made an exception this time because Oak Hill Farm is great. His treatment of Sharon Grossi is only the tip of the iceberg ("Did she perhaps want to show her ex-husband that she could succeed without him?" No, you idiot, *perhaps* she simply liked farming) He's a 65-year old lech: "Just then another young woman arrived, sporting a pierced nose and with her hair in dreadlocks. She had a beautiful mouth... I had to know her name. She was planning to prepare raw food to sell at a three-day reggae festival... "When I set up my booth, it's all about the visuals," she said. "It's all about what attracts the eye." Everything about her certainly attracted the eye... And right on cue, Marvin Gaye's voice filled the Red Barn. Shoppers began to sway their hips back and forth. Genevieve certainly did, and I might have continued my conversation with her if Anne Teller hadn't arrived just then." p 72-73 He's sexist: "Malu had taken the reins from him at the Sonoma farm, where she now supervised a small crew of workers that included her own father. No one seemed to mind a woman at the helm." p 127 "Miguel took what was at hand and gave us his best impression of a woman. He grabbed two onions, placed them on his chest, squeezed them, and at the same time puckered his lips and rolled his eyes. He was perfect. 'Guapo,' I said, which brought even more laughter." p 183 He's a snoop: "We parked and went inside the workers' house, where half a dozen men live... Inside the refrigerator were a six-pack of Corona, corn tortillas, and cheese." p 138 He's kind of stupid: When interviewing the owner of Oak Hill farm, "almost as an afterthought, I asked Anne about herself..." Genius at work on page 75. He's a bad writer: "I felt that I had been down on the farm too long and that, with the end of summer approaching, it was time for a weekend of riotous city living in "Baghdad by the Bay." That's what famed San Francisco Chronicle columnist Herb Caen called San Francisco to capture in a phrase the city's mix of exotic, polyglot neighborhoods. But with the United States at war in Baghdad and all across Iraq, and with American troops waging a seemingly endless war against terrorism around the globe, the phrase no longer seemed appropriate." p 187 Then thanks for using the phrase and going on an unrelated diatribe. He's an elitist: "We're going to have to find a different way to consume. We'll need to think about the environment and our long-term ride on the earth for future generations.' Coming from Sam Josi, the global financier turned chef, these words about consumption and the environment meant more to me than if they'd come from a fiery environmental activist or one of the many San Francisco anarchists who denounce corporations and globalization." p 192 He's kind of creepy: "On warm nights in August and September, the arms and shoulders of the women were bare, and I was reminded of sensuous nights in Provence and the feeling of the Mediterranean. The most beautiful women in the world shop at the Tuesday night market. It seemed so easy - far easier than I had imagined - to make a woman (or a man, for that matter) happy with the beauty and abundance of the produce..." p 229 Did I mention he's a bad writer? "That also proved to be true of Arden Bucklin-Sporer, who lives in San Francisco and works for the school district. Arden - the name suggests the Forest of Arden and the word 'garden' with the letter 'g' lopped off - started and now nurtures the gardens-in-the-schools program..." p 156 He's tone-deaf to his own racism: "Born in 1950 in Mexico, Miguel Barrios has worked in agriculture ever since he was a boy... he came to the United States... He became an American citizen, though how he passed the test I can't imagine. He speaks barely a word of English." "Miguel's story is common enough; millions of men and women have stories like his. He is one of many, and in many ways he wears a cloak of invisibility - much like the invisibility that Valde and his son Jesus took on when they wore their hoods in the fields at Oak Hill. Those hoods seemed emblematic of their status in society and their place in our culture... I was surprised by the farmworker habit of covering up the body in both summer heat and winter cold. At times I thought they might actually be seeking anonymity, though my friend Uriel assures me that this isn't the case. Mexicans cover up to protect themselves against the sun, he insists, not to hide." p 104-105 I can only assume

Uriel is rolling his eyes on the other end of the phone line. This guy's day job is to teach people how to write. Let that one sink in.

“Sooner or later, nearly everyone who cares about wine and food comes to Sonoma”—so begins this lively excursion to a spectacular region that has become known internationally as a locavore's paradise. Part memoir, part vivid reportage, *Field Days* chronicles the renaissance in farming organically and eating locally that is unfolding in Northern California. Jonah Raskin tells of the year he spent on Oak Hill Farm—working the fields, selling produce at farmers' markets, and following it to restaurants. He also goes behind the scenes at Whole Foods. In this luminous account of his experiences, Raskin introduces a dynamic cast of characters—farmers, chefs, winemakers, farm workers, and environmentalists. They include such luminaries as Warren Weber at Star Route Farm, the oldest certified organic farm in Marin County; Bob Cannard, who has supplied Chez Panisse with vegetables for decades; Sharon Grossi, the owner of the largest organic farm in Sonoma; and Craig Stoll, the founder and executive chef at Delfina in San Francisco. Raskin also offers portraits of renowned historical figures, including Luther Burbank, Jack London, and M.F.K. Fisher. *Field Days* is a heartfelt celebration of the farm-to-table movement and its cultural reverberations.

From Publishers Weekly In this rambling memoir from America's heartland of organic produce, literary scholar Raskin (*For the Hell of It: The Life and Times of Abbie Hoffman*) recalls a pleasant year visiting farm friends in Sonoma, Calif. Following the chronology of one season, he goes to farms, markets and restaurants, profiling Mexican workers, talking with small-farm advocates and even harvests vegetables himself. The breezy, romantic prose is peppered with literary references, and, at times, awkward academic language. His descriptions of meals seem limited to sumptuous, delicious and excellent; similarly, the analysis tends to be cursory. After listening to one industrious produce seller's story, Raskin evokes a simple Wow! The closest his research comes to a serious investigation is a description of employees at the Sonoma Whole Foods Market, a company he openly dislikes. The story's overarching countercultural bent intensifies the aging academic's apparent longing for the revolutionary roots of organic foods. The redemptive aspect of this memoir lies in its intensely local specificity—Northern California's marijuana-growing culture and a feeling of youthfulness—although the sprawling narrative imparts more of a gauzy, poetic impression than any cohesive ideas about food or farming. 22 bw photos. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist College professor Raskin spent a year working at Oak Hill Farm in California's Sonoma County, documenting what makes the place a success in an era that values local, organic, sustainable agriculture. Founded by dedicated conservationists, Oak Hill Farm and the people who labor in its fields typify contemporary attitudes toward food production. He talked to farm workers from all over Sonoma, even to a couple of dedicated, knowledgeable Mexican laborers who lack legal status. Each of Raskin's subjects has some unique history, but they are united in their love for what they perceive as a fulfilling rural lifestyle. Idealizing the role of agriculture, they formed close bonds with the land, their animals, and with those who buy their produce. As Raskin notes, with tongue in cheek, every farmer in the area claims to be a supplier for Alice Waters' celebrated Berkeley restaurant, Chez Panisse. --Mark Knoblauch “Lyrical. . . A finely textured account of how the origins of eating and drinking reveal the nuances of modern community.”