

"New Year" Discussibles

Rosé & *Chez Moi*
September 2008

Dear Charlie,

Another pairing of words and wine await you - as do new discussible titles and events for your fall get-togethers. There are creative ideas and entertaining responses from your reading group colleagues - and some marvelous musings from your favorite authors - all in this month's edition of the **Reading Group Choices** newsletter!

More Wine by the Book!



In This Issue

[New Discussibles for the New \(Book Group\) Year](#)

[What's in a Name? \(Part II\)](#)

[Save a 19th Century Treasure!](#)

[Your Own Discussible Choices](#)

[Reading Group Events for NRG](#)

[1-On-Ones with Discussible Authors](#)

[Reading Groups Share Their Tips](#)

[More Wine by the Book!](#)

New Discussibles for the New (Book Group) Year

In our recent survey, many of you told us that your discussion groups took the summer "off" and resumed in September. So here's some new discussible titles to consider as you make your selections for the new year.

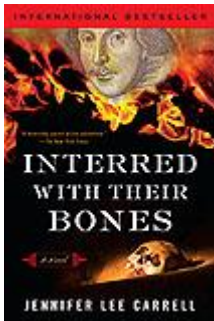
Many of you who share books and wine in your discussions told us that you enjoyed reading about the "words & wine pairing" in the July newsletter. So this month, we have another pairing for you - and a chance to win a copy of the "paired" book!

Agnès Desarthe's novel, ***Chez Moi***, tells the story of one woman and her restaurant that could be her last chance for a new stable life. She describes in mouth-watering prose one of her servings with a



In ***Gilding Lily***, Tatiana Boncompagni creates a heroine everyone will love . . . and no one will ever forget. Lily Bartholomew begins writing essays about life among the rich and snobbish, which tosses her into the spotlight and in the path of social disaster. But as Lily navigates her way through the shark-infested waters of Manhattan society, she starts to rediscover her own place in the world-and how to regain what truly matters.

In Pam Jenoff's historical fiction piece, ***The Diplomat's Wife***, we see Marta Nederman, lucky to have escaped with her life from the brutality of a Nazi prison camp. Recovering from the horror, Marta marries Simon, a caring British diplomat, and glimpses the joy that home and family can bring. But her happiness is threatened when she learns of a Communist spy in British intelligence, and that the one person who can expose the traitor is connected to her past.



Interred with Their Bones, by Jennifer Lee Carrell, introduces readers to the cryptic and fascinating world of "occult" Shakespeare, the study of the word games, puzzles and ciphers found all throughout the Bard's works. Its heroine, Kate, races to evade a killer and solve a tantalizing string of clues hidden in the words of Shakespeare, which may unlock one of history's greatest secrets.

[Enter for a Chance to Win a Free Copy](#)

Swim to Me, a heartfelt coming-of-age novel by Betsy Carter, follows Delores chasing her dream of being a mermaid with a group of other aquatic dance hopefuls-girls just as awkward and uncertain out of water as they are beautiful and graceful in it. And in this make-believe world of sequined tails, Delores learns some very real lessons about growing up and surviving in a world where everyone



glass of chilled rosé:

"I serve him a portion of chocolate, pear, and pepper tart with a glass of chilled rosé. . . I look at him and think he's feeding off me because I put all of myself into that first tart, that inaugural dessert. I kneaded gently, melted patiently, saved the juices as I sliced, then incorporated it into the pastry, with Massai-black chocolate, my brown pastry in my hands, rolling it out and shaping it, the pepper over the pears because I believe - in the kitchen as in other areas - in the mysterious power of alliteration."

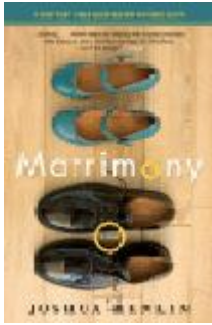
Makes you want to sit down right now in her restaurant! Perhaps you can at least share the glass of chilled rosé with your friends - choose from this month's selections by **[The Wine Coach®](#)**.

[More About the "Words & Wine Pairing" for Chez Moi](#)

[Enter to Win a Copy of Chez Moi](#)

sometimes feels like a fish out of water.

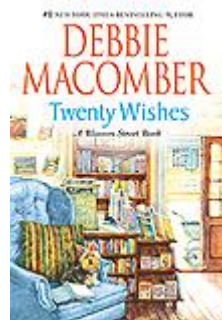
[Enter for a Chance to Win a Free Copy](#)



Josh Henkin takes us back to 1987 in **Matrimony**, where Julian Wainwright, aspiring writer and waspy son of New York City old money, meets beautiful, Jewish Mia Mendelsohn in the laundry room at Graymont College. So begins a relationship that spans twenty years, as it takes Julian and Mia across the country and through the depths of family tragedy, love and friendship, money and ambition, desire and tensions of faith.

[Enter for a Chance to Win a Free Copy](#)

In Debbie Macomber's **Twenty Wishes**, we meet Anne Marie Roche, who gets together with several other unhappy widows to create a list of twenty wishes, things they always wanted to do but never did. As Anne Marie completes her list of twenty wishes, she learns that wishes can come true-but not necessarily in the way you expect.



What's in a Name? (Part II)

Last month's newsletter reported the creative names that reading groups have adopted to describe themselves. We asked for - and received - a number of entertaining responses about the names of other reading groups and their derivations. Here are a few of them.

*"When we formed our group we became the **Middle Pages** - aged 50-60 and still going strong (wine helps)!! We do try to make our meals and décor fit the book of the month!!"*

Lu-Ellen, Middle Pages, Saint Eustache, Quebec

*"We are **Storie delle Sorelle** ... it's Italian for Stories of the*

Chances to Win Discussible Books!

[Interred with Their Bones](#)
[The Zookeeper's Wife](#)
[Matrimony](#)
[When the White House Was Ours](#)
[Swim to Me](#)
[Chez Moi](#)

Featured Books

[The Diplomat's Wife](#)
[Interred with their Bones](#)
[A Long Way Gone](#)
[Swim to Me](#)
[Twenty Wishes](#)
[When the White House Was Ours](#)
[The Zookeeper's Wife](#)

New Profiles of Discussible Books

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Sisters. We wanted a name that described the bond we've created through our club, yet we also wanted to be original (hence the Italian name). Thanks for the wonderful newsletters and tips!"

Heather, Storie delle Sorelle, Glen Burnie, MD

[More Responses and Book Club Names](#)

Save a 19th Century Treasure!

The [Mark Twain House & Museum](#) in Hartford, Connecticut has fallen on hard times, causing the management to announce the potential closure. The mission of **The Mark Twain House & Museum** is to foster an appreciation of the legacy of Mark Twain as one of our nation's defining cultural figures, and to demonstrate the continuing relevance of his work, life and times. A national historical landmark, The **Mark Twain House & Museum** is open year-round and attracts more than 60,000 visitors a year. [Help keep](#) Twain's legacy alive and prevent his house from imminent demise.

Your Own Discussible Choices

Congratulations to Laura and the **Blackey Library Book Club** for winning the random drawing for this month's Discussible Book Choice!

"Our book club just finished reading and discussing [The Knitting Circle](#) by Ann Hood. It is a story about a couple whose 5-year old daughter dies of meningitis and how they try to cope with the loss of their only child. It is a very good book, and everyone in the group liked it although some thought it unbearably sad. One member of our book club has actually been through the tragic loss of both of her children and stated that it came the closest of any book to describing what she had actually felt in dealing with her own loss."

Laura, Blackey Library Book Club, Jeremiah, KY



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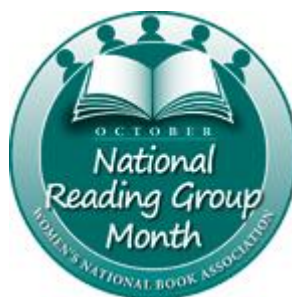
We enjoy hearing from book club members and sharing their choices with everyone. Please **let us know** about your group's discussible choices - you may win a book-related prize for every member of your reading group!

More Discussible Choices

Reading Group Events for NRGM

National Reading Group Month is only a month away!

Lina from Piscataway Public Library in Piscataway, NJ, wrote to us. The **Piscataway Public Library** is holding a Book Swap in celebration of National Reading Group Month. Members will bring their favorite books and discuss with the group why the books are their favorite. Then they will exchange the books with each other. More conversation and more books!



If you live in New England, how about a trip to The **Mark Twain House & Museum**?

And mark your calendar for **book group expo**, October 25th & 26th in San Jose.

Part salon, part marketplace, part marvelous

party, the book group expo experience is all about connecting readers and authors in a powerful way. Readers, writers and fun!



book group expo

Please **let us know** what you are planning to celebrate the month of YOU - the reading group!

1-On-One with Discussible Authors



If you've ever shared dinner or coffee with an author, odds are that you eagerly await a chance to do it again. They are an interesting group of folks, with lots of knowledge, fresh ideas, insights, and a way of communicating that enthralls and inspires. Maybe one isn't available to you today, but you can find the next best thing - visit with some of them in their "**1-On-Ones**" with **Reading Group Choices**. Here are a few that spoke with us this month.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali *Infidel*

Rajaa Alsanea *Girls of Riyadh*

Betsy Carter *Swim to Me*

Josh Henkin *Matrimony*

Syrie James *The Lost Memoirs of Jane Austen*

Carolyn Jourdan *Heart in the Right Place*

DeLaune Michel *The Safety of Secrets*

Ann Patchett *Run*

More 1-On-Ones

Reading Groups Share Their Tips

Several of you have graciously shared tips from your experiences about how to keep your discussions lively, fun, and interesting. Here are a couple of tips that we received recently, but you can find lots **more creative ideas** from your colleagues on the **Reading Group Choices** website.

"Discussions often get sidetracked to conversations which have nothing to do with the book. When this happens, somebody, realizing we're off subject, will say one word which means, 'Let's get back on subject.' Our chosen word is 'Loretta.' When this word is spoken, we all get a little giggle, and get back to our subject without anyone being offended."

Jolene, Millennium Book Group, Boulder, CO

"For years we struggled w/the number of consistent attendees. We then realized that there was the 'core group', but very few younger members. We sought out younger women. We were successful. We now have 30+ members with a 50-50 mix of 20-30 year olds & a mix of 40-60 year olds. The younger members bring in a fresh new slant on the

books, with a much livelier discussion. Tip: Mix the age groups! Amazing how different our meetings are, as well as attendance."

Syl, Talega Book Cub, San Clemente, CA

Thanks to all of you who have shared your tips

More tips!



**Thanks for keeping the joy of
reading alive,**

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