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At Home in France: Tales of an American and Her House Abroad

Ann Barry

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"This engaging and brave adventure story is as beguiling and delectable as France itself. Ann Barry's hospitality takes readers along as she copes with bats, searches for the best boulangerie, explores medieval villages and country roads, and practices the savory intricacies of preparing foie gras."

--Mimi Sheraton

"Ann Barry tells her tale directly and clearly, without cloying artifice or guile, so that it has the warmth, honesty and force of a long letter from an old friend. She makes her reader a welcome house guest in her much loved little cottage in the heart of France."

--Susan Allen Toth

Ann Barry was a single woman, working and living in New York, when she fell in love with a charming house in Carennac in southwestern France. Even though she knew it was the stuff of fantasy, even though she knew she would rarely be able to spend more than four weeks a year there, she was hooked.

This spirited, captivating memoir traces Ms. Barry's adventures as she follows her dream of living in the French countryside. Her fascinating (and often humorous) excursions to Brittany and Provence, charmed nights spent at majestic chateaux and back-road inns, and quiet moments in cool Gothic churches become our own. She takes us along on her one-woman search to find the best homemade breads in the region and on her daily trips to the old-world markets where she finds blood oranges, mounds of fat white asparagus, cream and lavender turnips, and pencil-thin green beans. When she buys a car, she chooses a French classic Citroën that even her banker admires. When her water runs out, the fire department speeds over to fill her tanks. And when a snapping dog sinks its teeth into her ankle, her neighbors insist that she seek compensation from its careless owners.

And as the years go by, and "la Americaine," as she is known, returns again and again to her real home, she becomes a recognizable fixture in the neighborhood. She is always grateful for help, advice, company, and the selfless kindness of her equally eccentric but good-hearted neighbors. Anne Barry is a foreigner enchanted with an unpredictable world that seems constantly fresh and exciting. In this vivid memoir, she shares the colorful world that is her France.

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