



Rebecca Rosenberg, Novelist

www.Rebecca-Rosenberg.com

www.facebook.com/RebeccaRosenbergNovels

Rebecca@Rebecca-Rosenberg.com

Madame Pommery, Creator of Brut Champagne

A Champagne Widows Novel

Champagne, France, 1860. With the surprise of a newborn at forty years old, Madame Pommery is suddenly widowed and must support her family. With no experience, she starts a champagne house and invents brut champagne, breaking society and patriarchal rules.

Madame Pommery Reader's Guide Questions and Discussion Points

1. When Madame Pommery's husband dies, why doesn't she retire to her country cottage as everyone advises her to?
2. What were Madame Pommery's advantages and disadvantages in starting a winery?
3. Who were her greatest supporters and who were her greatest critics?
4. Why champagne is such a unique wine? Why is it more difficult to make?
5. What was Madame Pommery's vision for champagne? How was it different than her predecessor's, Veuve Clicquot?
6. What revolutionary things did Madame Pommery do to accomplish her vision of champagne? How long did it take her to succeed?
7. What were the obstacles impeding Madame Pommery's success in her winery?
8. Who were Madame Pommery's adversaries, and how did she overcome them? Who was the worst adversary?
9. Who had surprising talents that end up helping Madame Pommery? Who was the most unlikely person that helped her?
10. What lessons does Madame Pommery learn about the class system of Nobles, Bourgeoisie and Poor? What did she want for her daughter?
11. What would life with the Baron offer her? What choice does she make for herself and why?

12. What was the Franco-Prussian war all about? How did it cause a civil war between Communards and the French government in Paris?
13. What was Prussia's goal in baiting Napoleon III to declare war on them? Did they want to take over France, or was there something more secretive? Did they accomplish their goal?
14. Madame Pommery had many interests and passions. What legacy did she leave behind?



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