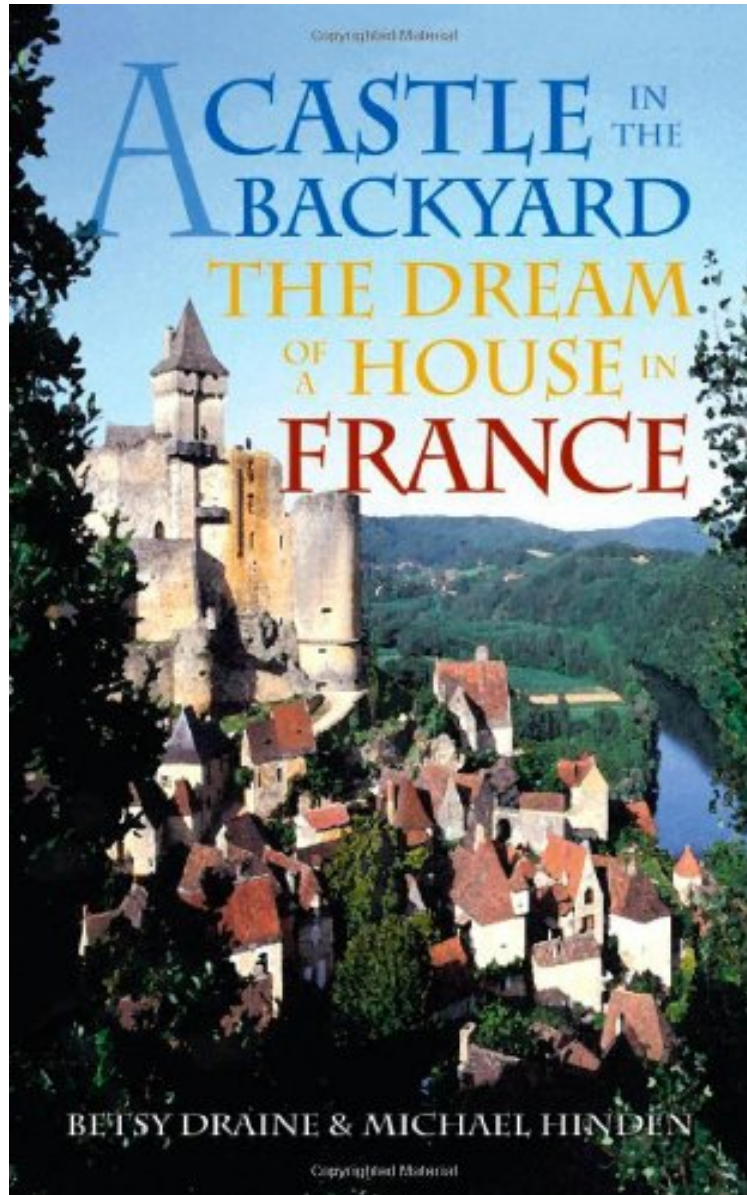


(Mobile pdf) A Castle in the Backyard: The Dream of a House in France

## A Castle in the Backyard: The Dream of a House in France

*Betsy Draine*

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#744022 in Books 2006-03-07 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .80 x 5.001, .72 #File Name: 0299179443322 pages | File size: 47.Mb

**Betsy Draine : A Castle in the Backyard: The Dream of a House in France** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Castle in the Backyard: The Dream of a House in France:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An American couple in rural France: A personal storyBy BarbaraThis book is collection of personal experiences enjoyed by a an American couple after they decided to buy a

little stone house in a village in the Dordogne. The authors are a married couple who are also English Professors, so as you would expect, the writing gets high marks for style and technique. The book invites comparison with "A Year in Provence" by Peter Mayle and "Under the Tuscan Sun" by Frances Mayes. But unlike these books, "A Castle in the Backyard" does not focus on problems encountered in the course of remodeling a stone house. Rather, the focus is on personal interactions between the American authors and the French villagers. The highlight of the book is the chapter on French food and the experience of eating dinner in a rural French home. One also gets good insight into the sense of fraternity among the French villagers and the bureaucratic nature of French civic life. I would recommend "Castle in the Backyard" to anyone who is contemplating an extended stay in a village in the south of France.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Works as a memoir and a travel guide  
By Pauline Kenny  
I read this book in 2008 and read it again recently to help prepare for my first trip to the Dordogne. The book is interesting, well written and informative. The authors give a good, detailed description of searching for a second home in the Dordogne, in southwest France. It is not a book about renovating an old house, but instead is about choosing a place to spend their summers and finding a house that suits them. Then they introduce us to their village, their neighbors and the Dordogne. They work practical travel information into the book. One chapter describes the prehistoric sites the area is famous for. Another talks about local food and restaurants. And another describes some of the local walking/hiking trails. I took notes and am looking forward to visiting the area!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Loving memoirs of a beautiful place  
By B Gardner  
We've just returned from a week long visit to the Dordogne and I re-read this book to relive my still fresh memories. We rented a stone house in Domme for the week, but I can imagine how wonderful it would have been to actually spend a season there. This is a beautiful part of France and the world as a whole. It is a step back in time, not only because of the medieval villages and castles, not only because of the prehistoric cave art but because it is a region still caught in time....a glimpse of the France that was. I remember standing atop Castelnau looking out at the gorgeous river valley and marveling that there were no golden arches or strip malls, no Walmarts or ugly housing developments to be seen. As far as the eye could see, it was picture perfect. I know that image is deceiving; that the countryside is perhaps artificially kept because of tourism, but it is still very special. The book captures the essence of the Dordogne, its culture, food, history, and people and it does so lovingly.

A Castle in the Backyard chronicles the French adventures of American couple Betsy Draine and Michael Hinden, who in 1985 embarked upon a dream. After falling in love with a small stone house set beneath a medieval castle in Perigord, they bought the tranquil getaway located in one of the most beautiful river valleys in Europe. In this delightful memoir Betsy and Michael offer an intimate glimpse of a region little known to Americans - the Dordogne valley, its castles and prehistoric art, its walking trails and earthy cuisine, its people and traditions - and describe the charms and mishaps of setting up housekeeping thousands of miles from home. Insightful and poignant, this memoir chronicles the transformation of Perigord as development poses a challenge to its graceful way of life, and evokes the personal exuberance of starting over, even in mid-life.

From Library Journal  
Draine and Hinden (English, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison) have charmingly recounted their past 15 summers establishing a summer home in the Dordogne valley in southwest France. With wonderful detail, they have created a colorful picture of their search for and purchase of an old stone house in the hilltop village of Castelnau-la-Chapelle. Similar to Michael Korda's tale of relocation in *Country Matters* and Peter Mayle's best-selling *A Year in Provence*, this charming memoir brings to life the history, character, and beauty of the authors' new culture, their rural surroundings, and their quirky fellow villagers. The book includes a list of further readings for those interested in more information about the Dordogne valley, but after reading *A Castle in the Backyard*, you may not need the extra information it may feel as if you've already been to the south of France and loved it. Highly recommended for travel collections in all public libraries. Mari Flynn, Keystone Coll., La Plume, PA  
Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.  
From Booklist  
Several years ago this married couple, both professors of English at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, traveled through the Perigord, a ravishingly beautiful area of southwest France washed and backdropped by the lovely Dordogne River. Captivated by what they saw, they purchased a summer home in the particularly evocative village of Castelnau, which is dominated by a castle built during the Hundred Years' War. The authors' recollections of their summers in the Perigord and, especially, their charming little house will delight any fan of the I-bought-a-house-abroad memoir. From remembrances of their dearest neighbor, Madame Boucher, to descriptions of local cuisine (featuring walnuts, foie gras, and truffles), to stories about the prehistoric cave paintings for which the region is well known, every one of their anecdotes is delightfully worth telling. Each detail of their account is a delicious morsel akin to the hearty fare served in every Perigord home and inn. Brad Hooper  
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "A charming account of village life in the Dordogne valley." - *ForeWord* magazine "Wonderful detail...Charming memoir...Highly recommended for travel collections in all public libraries." - *Library Journal* "Each detail of their account is a delicious morsel akin to the hearty fare served in every Perigord home and inn." - *Booklist*