



Libation, A Bitter Alchemy

Deirdre Heekin

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For many years, Deirdre Heekin has been creating an unusual, revivalist wine archive of rare and traditional Italian varietals at Osteria Pane e Salute, the nationally celebrated restaurant and wine bar she shares with her chef husband, Caleb Barber. Self-taught in the world of Italian wines, she is known for her fine-tuned work with scent and taste and her ability to pair wines and food in unexpected yet terroir-driven ways.

In *Libation, a Bitter Alchemy*, a series of linked personal essays, Heekin explores the curious development of her nose and palate, her intuitive education and relationship with wine and spirits, and her arduous attempts to make liqueurs and wine from the fruits of her own land in northern New England. The essays follow her as she unearths ruby-toned wines given up by the ghosts of long-gone wine makers from the red soil of Italy, her adoptive land; as she embarks on a complicated pilgrimage to the home of one of the world's oldest cocktails, Sazerac, in Katrina-soaked New Orleans; as she attempts a midsummer crafting of a brandy made from inherited roses, the results of an old Sicilian recipe she found in a dusty bookstore in Naples.

Musing on spirits from Campari to alkermes, Heekin's writing is as intoxicating, rich, and carefully crafted as the wines, liquors, and locales she loves.

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