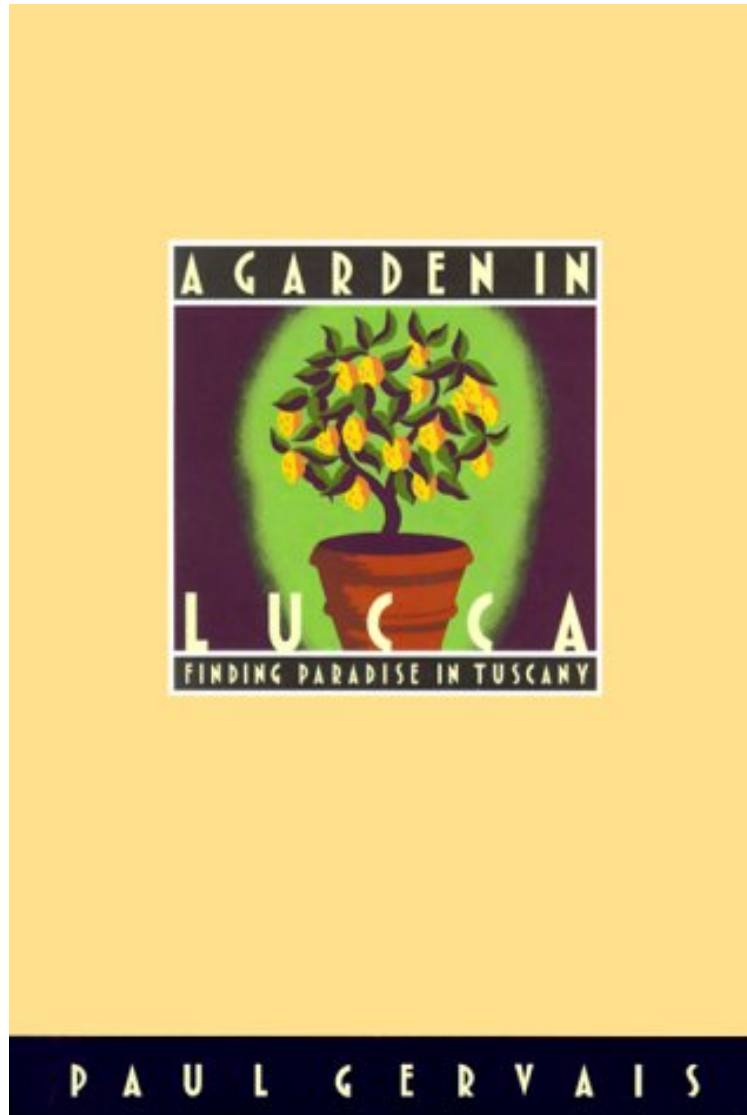


[Ebook free] A Garden in Lucca: Finding Paradise in Tuscany

A Garden in Lucca: Finding Paradise in Tuscany

Paul Gervais

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Paul Gervais : A Garden in Lucca: Finding Paradise in Tuscany before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Garden in Lucca: Finding Paradise in Tuscany:

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you aren't into gardening

This lyrical portrait of an antique Italian villa with its charming caretaker, olive groves, and vineyards is filled with hilarious garden misadventures, witty sketches of eccentric fellow gardeners, and sensuous studies of Tuscan daily life. Entertaining for its garden side trips, its generous information about Mediterranean plants, Italian garden history and lore, *A Garden in Lucca* is, at its heart, a compelling journey of self-discovery that shares with readers the joys and challenges of creating a personal paradise on earth.

From Publishers Weekly In 1982, Gervais (*Extraordinary People*) and his companion moved from California to the Italian province of Tuscany. The villa they bought in the small town of Massa Macinaia, just outside of Lucca, included a vineyard, an olive grove and a half-abandoned garden. Gervais's pensive memoir describes how he transformed this garden into his own paradise. Because he had no previous gardening experience, his first experiments were less than successful--a timid arrangement of box balls, uninspired rows of red salvia, beds of herbs that deteriorated into a parterre of alpine strawberries. Only after several years and the shock of nearly losing the villa because of financial difficulties does Gervais begin to take the garden renovation seriously. He scours books for inspiration, studies garden history and visits showplace gardens. Then, with the aid of handmade terra-cotta pots, hedges and a grotto, he creates a garden that expresses his personality as well as "the spirit of the spot." Gervais describes poetically the thought process that enabled him to create this garden but loses focus when he digresses into vignettes about other aspects of his life in Italy--an eccentric Italian caretaker, New Yorkers who rent a cottage on his property, memorable meals in restaurants. Line drawings not seen by PW. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Novelist Gervais (*Extraordinary People*) has lived in Italy for the past 18 years. Here, with line drawings, he recounts his experiences, as a novice gardener, of creating an acclaimed garden out of the overgrown grounds of a Renaissance Tuscan hunting lodge. There are delightful sketches of eccentric fellow gardeners, accounts of his relationship with the caretaker who came as part of the deal, and a suspenseful description of his attempt, at one point, to sell the property. We read about the tribulations caused by a peacock Gervais received as a gift and his purchase of large, hand-crafted clay pots that were the last of a set made at a pottery that was closing down. (Prince Charles bought the rest.) Gervais is a talented writer, and his memoir makes for entertaining and easy reading. Fans of Frances Mayes's *Under the Tuscan Sun* will also enjoy. For gardening and travel collections. -Carol Cubberley, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Today the dream of having a retreat in Tuscany may be all too common, but novelist Gervais and his partner, Gil, acquired their very own overgrown Renaissance dwelling nearly two decades ago. Gracious and engaging, the author imbues his account of taking up residence and making a garden in the Italian countryside near Lucca with a demeanor that promises to entrance both garden lovers and armchair travelers. Arriving at the book's midpoint, the reader feels regret to hear of financial considerations that result in a decision to sell the now spiffily restored house and grounds. Sadness turns to relief when a real estate deal with an unscrupulous billionaire falls apart. Turning to a succession of ambitious gardening projects with renewed energy, Gervais interweaves planting plans and landscape alterations with vignettes of great meals, stimulating side trips, and a colony of fascinating Tuscan characters. In prose filtered through a congenial lens, Gervais colors all he catches sight of with inimitable warmth and wit. Alice Joyce