

Vintage 1954

Antoine Laurain

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What happens when you combine UFOs, a vintage bottle of wine, and time travel? You get Antoine Laurain's fantasy novel, *Vintage 1954*.

Four newfound friends—Hubert Larnaudie, a property manager; Julien, a bartender; Magalie, a restorer of antiques; and Bob, a retired American on holiday—share a bottle of wine in modern-day Paris. They wake up the next day and discover that they have been transported back in time—they're still in Paris, but now it is 1954.

After the initial shock wears off, the four find each other, try to figure out what happened, and work to fix it. The answer to what happened seems to lie in an UFO story told by Julien's great-grandfather, the old wine grower responsible for that particular vintage of wine. With the help of a scientist, the group figures out that the only way they can return to their own time is by being in the same place, at the right time—right under a UFO as it appears above the Chateau Saint-Antoine vineyard.

Some scenes feel too familiar in this time travel story, and not enough time is given to working out a way to return the characters home. The ending is overly neat. Still, Laurain does a wonderful job of bringing the reader into 1950s Paris and the French countryside.

The book's descriptions are a must for any Francophile, who will be able to meet Dali, Edith Piaf, Audrey Hepburn, and other luminaries in these pages. A character's walk through the legendary market of Les Halles at a time when it was in its full glory, all on the way to dinner at Au Veau qui Tete: such scenes are written beautifully, entering fully into the busyness of their settings.

More fun than science-minded, *Vintage 1954* is a time travel romp through 1950s France.

ERIC PATTERSON (May/June 2019)

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