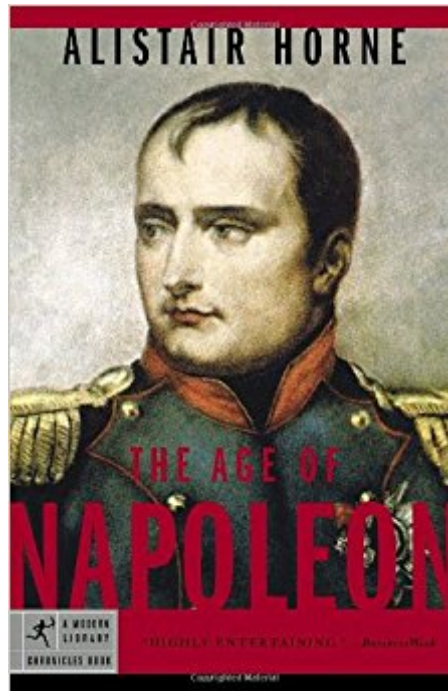




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The Age Of Napoleon (Modern Library Chronicles)



Synopsis

The age of Napoleon transformed Europe, laying the foundations for the modern world. Now Alistair Horne, one of the great chroniclers of French history gives us a fresh account of that remarkable time. Born into poverty on the remote island of Corsica, he rose to prominence in the turbulent years following the French Revolution, when most of Europe was arrayed against France. Through a string of brilliant and improbable victories (gained as much through his remarkable ability to inspire his troops as through his military genius), Napoleon brought about a triumphant peace that made him the idol of France and, later, its absolute ruler. Heir to the Revolution, Napoleon himself was not a revolutionary; rather he was a reformer and a modernizer, both liberator and autocrat. Looking to the Napoleonic wars that raged on the one hand, and to the new social order emerging on the other, Horne incisively guides readers through every aspect of Napoleon's two-decade rule: from France's newfound commitment to an aristocracy based on merit rather than inheritance, to its civil code (Napoleon's most important and enduring legacy), to censorship, cuisine, the texture of daily life in Paris, and the influence of Napoleon abroad. At the center of Horne's story is a singular man, one whose ambition, willpower, energy and ability to command changed history, and continues to fascinate us today. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Two centuries on, Napoleon remains very much a part of European political discourse, as French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin's recent 600-page canonization of the Corsican-born leader

made clear. From the pen of the popular historian Horne (Seven Ages of Paris; The Price of Glory: Verdun, 1916) comes a slim and sexy addition to the 600,000 works on Napoleon Horne says are in existence. Here the author focuses on the nonmilitary and domestic dimensions of Napoleon's life and times: particularly his character, his private life, his beautification of Paris, the style empire and the see-through gossamer blouses of the ladies of the naughty 1790s. Horne's taste for the titillating will be shared by some readers: in Egypt, Napoleon "was solaced by a lady called La Bellilote, who concealed a well-rounded pair of buttocks in tight officer breaches," in Paris by the full-breasted 15-year-old Mademoiselle George. Horne draws extensively on the pages of Lanza de Laborie's massive and largely unread early 20th-century account of Napoleonic Paris, which furnishes him with a treasure-trove of local color. Unfortunately, there are several signs of haste: whatever his achievements, Napoleon was not born in the 15th-century reign of Louis XI, and the first years of the 19th century were not a "new millennium

"a short but vibrant account... a cultured, enjoyable introduction to the man and the mark he left on France. Horne sports his research lightly, the pigments of his narrative and illustration are vivid, the vignettes swiftly and confidently drawn " BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE "Alistair Horne's The Age of Napoleon is a race through Napoleon's career, not such much as military leader as the maker of modern France. Horne gets the essentials of Napoleon right." THE SPECTATOR " A delightful book, brimming over with contagious enthusiasm for its subject... Horne writes with all the authority of one who knows his subject inside out, and his mastery of telling detail is admirable." -- ADAM ZAMOYSKI SUNDAY TIMES "Even those of us who think we know something about the period will find many delightful surprises... In short, it is the perfect read for someone who asks the question: apart from being a great general, what did Napoleon stand for?" -- MARK URBAN THE GUARDIAN "Erudite, expert and unfussy, it tells you all you need to know about the modern world's first great dictator and places him in illuminating social and cultural context." HAM AND HIGH "Horne's consistently fascinating snapshot of this momentous time and place is compelling from start to finish." EVERYTHING FRANCE "excellent... deals with every aspect of the tyrant's career other than the brutal wars he imposed on his neighbours and indeed on his own people." -- CLAUD VON BULOW CATHOLIC HERALD "Accessible and an interesting read." HERALD "The lives of everyday citizens and important court figures from the tumultuous reign of Napoleon" HISTORY TODAY --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an excellent biography of the origins of Europe's military genius and conqueror. Because so

much time has passed since the late 1700's, we don't think about Napoleon in the way we think of Hitler, but he had as devastating an effect on Europe, and the Napoleonic Wars were as violent, in their way, as World War II. Where did he come from and how did he become a military commander at such a young age and with such authority? What were the secrets to his success and his weaknesses? This is covered --as well as his relationship and reasons for marrying Josephine, who is an equally interesting historic figure. After reading this, I got a biography of Josephine to read as well. Napoleonic history, and most of European history is not taught in American schools--at least, when I went to school, we didn't get much of anything. I read a lot (you probably guessed that) but I read whatever I wanted to read, so I covered a lot of earlier history and English history, but never French (despite studying French in high school and elementary school for that matter) and so I missed covering this portion of history. But the French Revolution and the aftermath of Napoleon are as vital to knowledge of world history as are the Thirty Years' War. So I am filling in what's missing. One thing that is interesting --after a revolution such as the French Revolution, which ended in violence, completely unlike the American Revolution, there is a vacuum of power, and the long wars and Napoleon's iron grip on much of Europe, though short-lived, were highly destructive. There's a lesson in this: history repeats itself. After violence, a vacuum, and then a despot.

I've become such a fan of Alistair Horne's books. His history is among the most readable histories, if not the most readable. And I read a lot of history. This book focuses on the non-military aspects of Napoleon's life, especially his physical impact on the city of Paris. So if you are looking for a history of the Napoleonic Wars look elsewhere. But if you know that history and want to flesh out the man and his accomplishments (good and bad), or you want to know more about Napoleon than the widely written military history, this will do the trick. Now to find Horne's book(s) on the Napoleonic Wars!

Enjoyed reading about Napoleon the arts critic, Napoleon the lover and husband & Napoleon the science aficionado rather than Napoleon the military general.

This is a good social history of the Napoleonic period focused on Paris. Seen in that light, it is a good history. I was expecting a more multi-dimensional history that would include military and political considerations and more of a historical narrative mixed in with the social observations. I was disappointed as these elements are missing from this book.

Most books about Napoleon focus on his battles, glory and lovers. This is short book that deals mainly with the major contributions of Napoleon to France (mainly the napoleonic code) and all the failures of his government (nepotism among many others).

Certainly this is not the best book by Mr Horne. It is too poor and shallow in the field of pure history and not enough rich in what I expected the most, a social and impressionist chronic of life in those years. Nevertheless, and all that said, along the march the book gets better and more entertaining, give some lights about a good many things and awaken the appetite to know more.

A first-rate and unapologetic account of Napoleon's accomplishments, foibles and non-military impact on the continent of Europe and the greater world.

Alistair Horne's book on the Age of Napoleon is a great book if you want to know more about France itself under Napoleonic rule. Horne goes into all the different affairs of France including domestic problems dealing with finance and war. He describes the popularity of Napoleon within the Empire as well as how he stocked that popularity to his advantage. Perhaps most interesting is how he talked about the lesser known parts of Napoleon. He talked for instance about the famine in 1810 and the financial crisis in 1804. He also talks about how the war itself affected the people of France. The book is not too long, under 200 pages, but is a good overview of the France of Napoleon and the emperor's rise to power. This book however is NOT a military history so do NOT order this book for that purpose.

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