

The Vineyard: A Novel

By Barbara Delinsky

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New York Times bestselling author Barbara Delinsky has written her most complex and emotionally rewarding novel yet: a story of two women, a generation apart, each of whose dream becomes bound with the other's.

To her family, Natalie Seebring is a woman who prizes appearances: exquisitely mannered, a supportive wife, and head of a successful wine-producing enterprise. So when she announces plans to marry a vineyard employee mere months after the death of her husband of fifty-eight years, her son and daughter are stunned. Faced with their disapproval, Natalie decides to write a memoir.

Olivia Jones is a dreamer, living vicariously through the old photographs she restores. She and her daughter, Tess, cling to the fantasy that a big, happy family is out there just waiting for them. When Natalie hires Olivia to help with her memoir, a summer at Natalie's vineyard by the sea seems the perfect opportunity to live out that fantasy. But all is not as it seems.

As the illusion of an idyllic existence comes crashing headlong into reality, the lives of these two women, parallel in so many ways, become a powerful and moving story.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Like a glass of good pinot noir, Barbara Delinsky's *The Vineyard* is best enjoyed slowly. *The Vineyard* follows the triumphs and tragedies of the Seebrings, a wealthy family of vintners in Rhode Island. The story begins when recently widowed, 76-year-old Natalie Seebring announces her scandalous engagement to none other than the vineyard manager, Carl, whose social standing is, needless to say, several notches beneath the Seebrings'. Natalie's children, Susanne and Greg, are furious with their mother for marrying the help, and only six months after their father's death.

Besides her remarriage, Natalie is working on a family history project, one she hopes will explain all the love and loss she has endured before reaching happiness at long last. She recruits Olivia Jones to help with the project, and Olivia and her daughter Tess move out to the vineyard for the summer. Tension builds with the summer heat as the wedding approaches. To make matters worse, Carl's son Simon, the new vineyard manager, is coldly resentful of Olivia and Tess, who remind him of the wife and daughter he has lost. But amidst all this, Natalie Seebring's long-buried past is slowly revealed, and like a summer storm, the truth blows through the vineyard, leaving everything different in its wake.

Barbara Delinsky says she was influenced by Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* in writing *The Vineyard*, and Natalie Seebring is a fine tribute to the strong, silent Americans who made so many sacrifices during World War II. Keep a hankie close by when reading this one. Family tragedy, unlikely romance, and old wrongs finally made right will have you laughing and crying. --*Francine McBride*

From Publishers Weekly
Wine makers call its meritage: the commingling of several varietal wines into a product that can be marketed as a brand name, year after year. With this novel, the latest of 60-plus, veteran writer Delinsky has once again done exactly that, producing a fan-pleasing blend. At 35, Olivia Jones is a restorer of old photographs, and the mother, via a brief relationship, of a dyslexic, unhappy and bratty 10-year-old named Tess. Herself the daughter of a single mother who checked out as soon as Olivia turned 18, Olivia fantasizes about being related to Natalie Seebring, a client who is the strong-willed and manipulative matriarch of a dysfunctional family of Rhode Island wine makers. When Natalie offers to hire Olivia to be her memoirist and "personal buffer" for a summer, she jumps at the chance. Soon she is embroiled in the turmoil caused when septuagenarian widow Natalie decides to marry former vineyard manager Carl Burke. Natalie's middle-aged children object loudly, and several family employees resign in protest. Meanwhile, Olivia is attracted to Carl's son (and successor as vineyard manager), Simon, who has become a solitary workaholic since the death of his entire family four years earlier in a sailing accident. The only suspense in the slow-moving plot comes at the end, when a hurricane threatens the wine crop, coinciding with the emotional storms produced by Natalie's easily anticipated revelations about her early life; the style is undistinguished, replete with clich?s and italics. Readers who prefer full-bodied novels are likely to find this story bland, thin and cloying. Those fond of literary Beaujolais nouveau, however, to be gulped down on a summer's day without critique, will enjoy this practiced blend of pop psychology, wine-making lore, learning-disability theory and sensuality. (June)
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From Library Journal
A dreamy single mother and photograph restorer, Olivia Jones is in need of help. She finds it in the Seebring family, owners of a Rhode Island vineyard. Through them, she finds a job (writing Mrs. Seebring's

memoirs), a home (in the big house on their estate), and support for her dyslexic ten-year-old daughter. Olivia also finds a lover in the gruff yet oh-so-masculine vineyard manager, Simon. Readers will learn about vineyard management and hurricanes when the estate is threatened by severe weather. While the characters hole up in the big house for safety as the hurricane rages outside, a family secret finally spills out. Delinsky, popular author of modern romantic fiction (Lake News; Coast Road) has written another enjoyable novel. Suitable for collections where her other books are popular.
-DCarol J. Bissett, New Braunfels P.L., TX
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Johanna Hernandez:

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Lynda Wright:

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