



Murder Uncorked

Michele Scott

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Nikki Sands was like every other aspiring actress -- waiting tables between jobs. But Nikki had taken serving wines to heart. She knew enough to impress Napa Valley's golden boy, Derek Malveaux, who offered her a job at his vineyard. And though Nikki may have left her dreams of stardom behind, the world of wine is ripe with intrigue -- and the seeds of sleuthing are planted ...

Nikki has just set foot on Napa Valleys' rich soil when she realizes her new job may not be as safe as she thought. First off, Derek Malveaux is disconcertingly sexy. Second, his top winemaker is dead in the bushes outside Nikki's cottage. It doesn't take a connoisseur of foul play to know something's taken a terrible turn ...

Murder Uncorked Details

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Wanda says

Highly enjoyable cozy murder mystery set in wine country. The plot was a bit unpalatable, but easy enough to suspend disbelief. I enjoyed it quite a bit and finished it in short order. I plan to read more in the series.

Linda Strong says

Anyone who knows me, knows I do not like cozies. After reading my preferred genre of hard core police procedurals, murderers, serial killers, etc., asking me to read a cozy is like offering me ONE vanilla wafer for dessert.

Nikki Sands is an actress, ok, she wants to be an actress. Right now she's working as a waitress, contemplating her life's choices. A run in with "The Bimbo" more or less causes the loss of that job. When "The Bimbo's" date, Derek Malveaux, winds up offering her a job at his winery, she agrees to go with him to check it out.

Note: The interaction between Nikki and the Bimbo had me in stitches!

On her first day at the winery, she discovers the murdered body of the little old winemaker. Nikki is smart, she's sassy, and no one's fool. She, however, does need to learn that playing a detective on a TV show or that having an aunt who actually is a real-life detective or the fact that she has read Nancy Drew books do not make her a good detective. She tends to just jump right in and go for the gold!

There are plenty of suspects with all kinds of motives who might have wanted the winemaker dead. And Nikki is determined to ferret the killer out. Of course, the more she sticks her nose into things, the more danger she's in.

It's a very nice little mystery with twists and turns that actually surprised me. I really liked Nikki and was rooting for her all the way. Derek is a nice foil to her humorous way of looking at things. I like the attraction between them. There is the evil step-mother, a vicious ex-wife, a younger step-brother and his life partner, and the assorted other winery owners who may or may not have a reason to kill. And let's not forget the news reporter who wants Derek for herself.

If someone had told me a week ago I would actually read a cozy that I enjoyed, I'd have thought they were drunk. The only negative I have is all those recipes interwoven every chapter or two. I don't cook with wine, I don't even drink wine, so I skipped through those.

My thanks to the author and Wordsmith Publicity who furnished a digital copy in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Maria (Ri) says

This fast paced mystery kept me guessing all the way to the end. It is such a tangled web that no one is truly innocent. My only complaint is that Derek seems a little too naive perhaps. I enjoyed learning about wines and reading about the delicious foods to pair with them. It made me so hungry and wanting a beautiful rich glass of wine!! I'll definitely be seeking out other books in this series.

planetkimi says

The recipes look yummy, the wine info is neat, and most of the characters are well-developed and interesting. However, it definitely has some narration and plot problems.

Amy says

Nikki Sands is an aspiring actress trying to pay rent as a waitress. After spilling a drink accidentally on a customers date, she suddenly finds herself with a job offer at the customers Napa Valley vineyard.

Nikki goes to Napa and finds the body of the winemaker

Eccentric members of a family, lovers new and old and suspects all around give Nikki the chance to snoop. A mystery with a twist and recipes and wine suggestions are always a bonus.

Jill says

At first I wasn't sure I was going to like this book, about halfway through I couldn't put it down because I wanted to see who the murder was. I enjoyed the twists and turns of the plot.

Jennifer Robb says

I liked this book. I'm not a wine lover but I did enjoy learning a bit about wines. I did think the recipes and wine pairings might be a bit overdone. They do interrupt the story for me. I did not guess who the murderers were until it was revealed. I like that there were several different crimes going on with different perpetrators.

I do wonder how the author will sustain this series--unless she plans to have Nikki investigate more than murders. After all, if a murder happens at each Malveaux winery event, eventually, no one should be wanting to buy the wine or come to the winery. (At least in real life).

Chris Curtis says

I give this book two stars because it isn't the kind of mystery I enjoy, not because it was terrible. This was a

romance with a mystery and I prefer cozies with less romance and more quirky but lovable neighbors and humor.

Girl meets handsome rich man who takes an interest in her and sweeps her away from her boring life. In this case she stumbles into a murder mystery and helps solve it. There is some discussion of wine and food but not too much to distract from the story. There are also recipes which culinary mystery fans would like.

I'm not sure this is a big spoiler but just in case I'll mark it as such. My one pet peeve is mysteries where much of the investigation comes from breaking and entering and this happens a lot in this book. It would have been so easy to get around this by having her actually start the job and get a set of keys and computer access at the vineyard. Other than that it wasn't bad and I think those that like romance and culinary mysteries would enjoy it.

Sara says

Loved the first half of the book which focused more on wine and pairings of food with wine. Nikki starts out as a waitress, one who knows her wines. Unbeknownst to her, she serves up wine and food to a successful vineyard manager. Derek is suitably impressed with Nikki's wine pairing skills and soon offers her a job at his vineyard...and that's when the murders start happening.

Nikki is nosy enough to investigate the deaths at the vineyard--managing to keep ahead of the killer in her investigation. However, all the running around was where the novel really fell apart for me. I still want wine stories with my murders...I hope the next in the series is like a fine wine, one that gets better with age.

Ann Croce says

I enjoyed this cozy mystery. It was fun and fast moving.

Nola Arganbright says

An exceptionally well written book in my opinion. I was impressed by the characters and the strong plot and plot twists. the characters were well developed including the secondary characters.

Nikki was a waitress in a local restaurant when she met Derek. He was on a date and she became a target of the date when she was able to discuss the wine and menu knowledgeably. The green eyed monster took over the date and Nikki was dismissed because of the dates complaints.

Derek happened to own his own vineyard and was quite impressed with Nikki's knowledge and after having a drink later that evening offered her a job in his vineyard in Napa Valley. Nikki decided to take the leap and jumped from the frying pan right into the fire.

After arriving at the vineyard Nikki begins to find dead bodies. Who would want to kill off Derek's employees and was it simply they were in the wrong place at the wrong time or was there a conspiracy afoot! There were so many twists and turns and such great characters. There were some great recipes and good information on wines and pairings.

Hannah says

Murder Uncorked is okay, but I found myself *wanting* to like it a more than I did. Perhaps wine fans would enjoy it more; my knowledge of wine extends to knowing that red wine comes from red grapes and so on, as the main character so aptly stated, and thus I didn't have the faintest interest in all the discussion about whether this wine pairs well with that appetizer.

How I feel about a cozy mystery depends heavily on whether I like the main character, and here I couldn't really get behind Nikki Sands. The repeated references to her failed acting career and her sad past, etc. - I wasn't fond of them, but I could let that go. What really bothered me, however, was the inconsistency in the dialogue. Characters would often say things that totally departed from their previously described personality, and Nikki was the worst offender. One example is the way Nikki went from a polite waitress (described as friendly, social and well-liked) to rudely accusing Derek Malveaux of having other intentions when he chased after her to apologize for the way his date treated her. I don't blame her for her suspicions, but who challenges other people so bluntly when the other person has already clarified twice that they're only there to make amends? My resulting impression of her is that she's an uptight, nosey and rather annoying individual. I don't think that's what the author intended.

Surprisingly, the part I most enjoyed while reading this book was looking through the recipes and reading the accompanying comments from Michele Scott. Even though I'm never going to try the recipes for want of cooking skills, it's clear that a lot of thought went into writing them.

For those interested in picking up some newbie tips about wine, this isn't the book for it; it really requires some knowledge of wine for the mentions of different vintages and so on to make sense. I'm not sure I'll be trying the next book. Perhaps if I have time, I might give it (and Nikki) another chance in the hopes that it's improved.

Karen Syed says

Let me start this review in a most unusual way. I met Michele Scott at the San Diego Writers Conference in February and was charmed by her easy-going and kind personality. I had a pretty good idea that I would enjoy her books, so I bought the first book in each of her series.

While at another book festival in South Carolina five days later, I met Valentine, the wonder greyhound. Being unfamiliar with this particular temporary member of the Regan Black household (Regan, the author of *Justice Incarnate* rescues greyhounds, so it is a bit of a revolving doggie door), I made the mistake of leaving my book on the coffee table when I went upstairs to do my hair.

Visit my blog at www.myspace.com/karensyed for an example of when bad things happen to good books!

And now, my review.

Nikki Sands is having a day...well, perhaps just a moment, but that one moment is changing everything for her. With one little slip, she finds herself thrown out of one situation and power-punched into another.

The entry of a very handsome man in her life is making a real mess of things and if her topsy-turvy feelings aren't enough, now she'd finding dead bodies and fighting for her own life.

Michele Scott has written a delectable tale of intrigue and betrayal in *Murder Uncorked*, book one in the *Wine Lover's Mystery* series. The characters are brilliantly and oddly portrayed, and best of all, the mystery is a real corker. I am actually looking forward to trying some of the recipes she has included.

Jennifer says

This was just meh. I never really got pulled in by the story. It's like there was too much happening, too many characters that could have done it, and that made it less enjoyable. I was surprised that Meredith and Cal were twins and the children of Patrice. The plan for Meredith to get pregnant with Derek's baby and then use the kid to steal his business was crazy, even for a daytime soap opera. I thought Meredith was shady, but when it was Cal who showed up to kill Nikki I started second guessing myself. I do not like Tara and that she is being set up as a possible paramour for Derek is unpleasant. I will consider reading another book in this series before I decide whether or not to get invested.

Lisa Kay says

★★★★? I read this nice little cozy mystery for a challenge and ended up being pleasantly surprised with the story, characters, and furtive plot - almost all of which takes place on a vineyard. I will definitely be continuing the series and may even try some of the recipes.
