

## TAKING ROOT IN PROVENCE by Anne-Marie Simons

New “warts and all” book about life in Provence

- What is Provence REALLY like?
- What the guidebooks don't tell you
- Would you want to LIVE there?

PROVENCE, FRANCE – Here is a stand-alone book about Provence, written by an expatriate who set out in 1998 to find the ideal place to retire. After stressful jobs in Washington DC, the author and her husband opted for the slower-paced south of France and, preferring the city over the countryside, settled in Aix-en-Provence which appeared to have all the offerings of the big city (universities, opera, theater, bookstores) within a beautiful small-city setting just a short drive from the Mediterranean.

*Taking Root in Provence* is the illuminating account, at once humorous and very informative, of this transition, and describes in lively prose the expected and unexpected difficulties of adapting to a new lifestyle and a new language. Contrary to the many books about life in the countryside, *Taking Root* focuses on life in the urban setting of an ancient town and on the slow but sure integration of a foreign couple into a culture that favors leisure, obsesses about food, lives undaunted from strike to strike, and is envied by many.

Former journalist Anne-Marie Simons takes us throughout Provence, from Marseille to Nice, from seaside to mountain range, from village fair to city festival, noting along the way that high culture (with summer festivals in Aix and Avignon) and low culture (with feasts to celebrate the chickpea, the local patron saint, or the olive harvest) flourish side by side and draw equally big and happy crowds.

In a series of vignettes, Simons paints a rich picture of the great diversity of Provence, where ancient history, modern comforts, natural beauty and a pleasant climate happily converge to satisfy body and soul. “Our road has been a happy one,” she says, “with lessons learned and rewards enjoyed along the way to our final goal of coming to feel at home here and becoming ‘one of them’.”

Written with warmth and humor and a strong sense of place, *Taking Root in Provence* speaks to the culture vulture as well as to the armchair traveler or the tourist who likes to leave the beaten path, and to the food lover who'll enjoy the recipes. For those who might consider retiring in France, this memoir, full of enriching experiences and keen observations, is a Must. For all, it is a highly enjoyable ride through Provence.

Reviewers have called *Taking Root in Provence* “A rich little gem” (Maureen O'Brien, writer of crime novels); “Brilliant!” (Robin Hawdon, playwright and novelist); and “A great book about life, culture and cuisine in southern France” (Tom Reeves, author of *Paris Insights*).

### **About the author**

Anne-Marie Simons has worked as a translator, teacher, journalist, sportswriter covering Formula One races, and director of corporate communications. Her Argentine husband left a career in international development banking to become an expert on Provençal cooking and other local pleasures. His recipes are featured.

### **Taking Root in Provence**

ISBN 978-0-9802175-7-5

212 pages

\$15.95