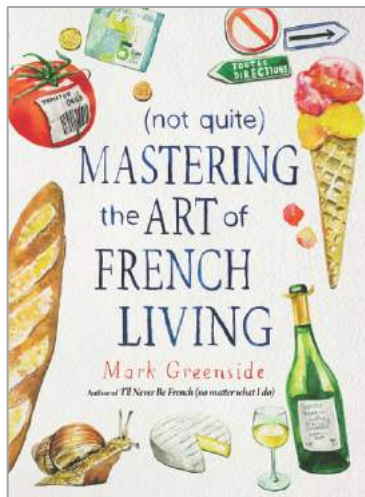




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Dear Friend,

My last newsletter told you about my sewer saga in Plobien. In response, many people wrote to me about their own sewer sagas. I shouldn't have been surprised—we all have sewers and we all use them—but I never would guessed there'd be enough material to write a book—*Me and My Sewer* or *Adventures in Plumbing*, a personal affair. Meanwhile, on my sewer front, nothing is new: no letter from the mayor announcing the beginning of sewer season; no letter

from Spanc reminding me I'm a pollutant; no digging up my front and side yards. I'm still waiting, and that's perfectly fine with me.

What's not waiting is the new book. I just finished the fourth and final round of edits, where thankfully my editor and publisher allowed me to undo the edits I made in the third round. It was the old Proustian dilemma: put a comma in, take the comma out, only my dilemma wasn't about commas, it was about space: how much space to leave between sections? In the first and second rounds of edits the spacing between sections was a double line break. In the third round—who knows why?—I changed the double line breaks to full page breaks. Then, in the fourth round, when I saw all that white space—it felt like filler and ugly gaps—I changed it back to double line breaks, which is how it is now. Whew! Saved from myself once again.

It's amazing, actually, the number of decisions and choices that go into producing a book. Unless they're terrible, they are mostly unnoticed. Things like: line, section, and chapter spacing; font and font size; indents; margins; weight, texture, and shade of paper; cover art; book design; graphics; headers; footers; pagination; even the title is a production issue; and, of course, the blurbs on the back cover, which were my job to get.

Luckily, forty years of public school teaching has taught me to excel at begging. That's the good news. The best news is I didn't have to. The people I contacted were genuinely kind and generous. The result is I have five blurbs that humble me: David Lebovitz, former pastry chef at Chez Panisse and author of *The Sweet Life in Paris* and *L'appart*; Aileen Bordman, founder, and President of Monet's Palate and author of *Monet's Palate Cookbook*; Julie Barlow, co-author with her husband of *The Bonjour Effect* and *Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't be Wrong*; Susan Hermann Loomis, proprietor of the cooking school *On Rue Tatin* and author of *On Rue Tatin*; William Alexander, author of *Flirting with French*. The only person who turned me down was David Downie, and he did so with a written apology, because he was on his own book tour and didn't have time. Lauren Collins, *New Yorker* writer and author of *Living in French*, wrote to wish me luck, as did Harriet Welty Rochefort, author of *French Toast*. (not quite) *Mastering the Art of French Living* is a beautiful book, and I'm pleased to have my name on it and to be supported by so many excellent writers.

Unfortunately, my next job is promotion—something I've never been comfortable doing. The publication date is May 8, and I need all the help I can get. When *I'll Never Be French* was published, newspaper book reviews were one of the most important ways to get the word out about new books—and I had many, including the *NY Times*, *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Detroit Free Press*. Since then, newspapers have become smaller and fewer, book review sections have diminished or been eliminated, and blogs, Amazon, and Goodreads dominate the field, which means they drive sales, shelf life, and when, where, and how often a book will pop up in searches. To help me, I've hired a techie guru to bring me into the twenty-first century, or at least the end of the twentieth. He's currently upgrading my:

- Email: mark@markgreenside.com
- Web site: www.markgreenside.com
- Facebook author page : facebook.com/markgreensideauthor
- Amazon author page: amazon.com/author/markgreenside

Hopefully, this will keep the book popping up in searches and on bookstores shelves longer than the usual few weeks, but the truth is nothing helps or counts more than you. I'm uncomfortable and embarrassed to write this, but everyone—my agent, editor, publisher, friends, family, fellow writers, teachers, students, strangers, pets—tells me I have to do it, so here it is: Please, help me!

I can't ask for something, though, without offering something back. This idea comes from Jessie Kanelos Weiner, the Franco-American artist who did the cover of (not quite) *Mastering the Art of French Living*, and who devised her own contest to promote her gorgeous new book, *Paris in Stride: An Insider's Walking Guide*. So....

To keep the book popping up in searches and on bookstore shelves longer than the three week usual,

A CONTEST

Preorder one (or more) copies of the book from Amazon (yes, I know, I know; I wish it were otherwise; I'm sorry), and write a simple (or detailed) review of the book on May 8 (or as soon as possible thereafter) and place it on Amazon and Goodreads.

In return, I offer two things:

A free two week vacation at my house in Plobien (at a time of your choice) for the winner; 40% off the regular rental price of the house (which is \$2,500/mo) for anyone else who does the above.

Send me a copy of your review, and I will put your name in the hat. In the next newsletter, I'll announce the winner. All others will qualify for the discount. This is the new world of DIY and crowd sourcing resources, I'm sorry to say. In many ways, I prefer the old world, but you already know that, don't you?

I don't know what plans the publisher has for promotion. When I find out, I'll post any events on my web page and Facebook. If I'm in your area, I'll let you know. I'm also a funny guy to have a book club, especially if you're reading my book. Let me know if you have one, and I'll let you know if/when I can attend.

Thanks for everything. I'm excited about May 8 and worried, but you already know that also, don't you?

Please, feel free to share this newsletter with anyone.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

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