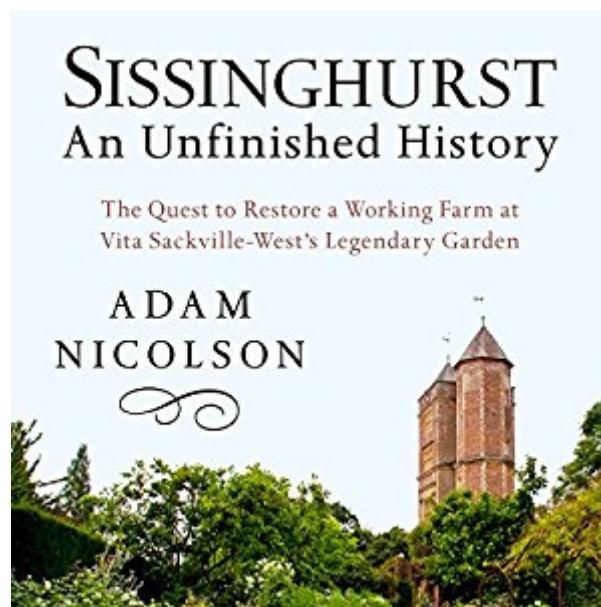




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Sissinghurst, An Unfinished History: The Quest To Restore A Working Farm At Vita Sackville-West's Legendary Garden



Synopsis

Adam Nicolson's powerful memoir reveals the history of one of Europe's most famous gardens and the ongoing battle over its future. From lavish palace for Elizabethan nobles to dreary jailhouse for 18th-century prisoners of war, from well-manicured country house for a string of landed families to weed-choked ruin, Sissinghurst, in Kent, has become one of the most illustrious estates in England - and its future may prove to be just as intriguing as its past. In the 1930s, English poet Vita Sackville-West and her husband, Harold Nicolson, acquired land that had once been owned by Vita's ancestors. Together they created elaborate gardens filled with roses, apple trees, vivid flowers, and scenic paths lined with hedges and pink brick walls. Vita, a gardening correspondent for the Observer and a close friend of Virginia Woolf, opened Sissinghurst to the public. But the thriving working farm began to change after her death. Her son, Nigel, instituted sweeping changes, including transferring ownership of the estate to Britain's National Trust in 1967 to avoid extensive taxation. For author Adam Nicolson, the grandson of Harold and Vita, Sissinghurst was always more than a tourist attraction; it was his home. As a boy, Nicolson hiked the same trails that Roman conquerors walked centuries before. With wistful imagination, fascination with natural beauty, and connection to the land, Nicolson has returned home to restore Sissinghurst's glory. His journey to recreate a sustainable and functioning farm, despite resistance from the National Trust, makes for a compelling memoir of family, history, and the powerful relationship between people and nature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I absolutely LOVED this book. I was taken in by the story of the author's attempt to set up a

self-funding historical estate. I found the detailed background and history of Sissinghurst even more engaging. The writing of this book is probably the best prose I've ever read. So elegant yet very readable. I can guarantee, if you enjoy reading subject matter like this, you will LOVE this book!

An inspiring journey in history of a place and the people attached to it. A lesson in adaptation and standing firm for an idea. Like a highly refined version of the reality television show "Survivor" with different tribes, strategies, and agendas. Instructive on many levels from personal to global. A pleasure to discover.

Well written as always w Nicholson but not everyone is as fascinated w the natural world surrounding Sissinghurst as he is . More people and happenings needed.

I've long been a fan of Sissinghurst as a garden and I've visited it. I have delved into its history and the biographies of the owners, Vita Sackville-West and Nigel Nicolson. This book, by their grandson, is an amazing realization of the languished potency of the manor of Sissinghurst--not only the garden at the center, but the surrounding farms. It shows that sustainable practices can have good economic impact. It's a rich source of information about the property and it's very well written, so it is a pleasure to read.

Interesting and informative story. Made me want to visit the entire property, not just the gardens. I hope he keeps pushing to update how the land is used.

This beautifully written history of the world that was and is Sissinghurst over hundreds of years is intriguing. I enjoyed getting a look at the talented and complex Nicolson family including Adam Nicolson's grandmother, Lady Nicolson, Vita Sackville-West.

English writers seem to relish in boring unnecessary detail but the story of Sissinghurst is a model for saving such properties.

This book is an amazing history that pulls together all the background information that helped the author bring Sissinghurst back to being a working estate. In areas it is a difficult/slow read, but I found the information to be very interesting.

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