



Murder Alfresco

Nadia Gordon

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Returning from a party late one night, chef Sunny McCoskey is the first to discover the body of a murdered woman left outside a local winery, and she may even have witnessed the killer driving away. Thrust into the center of a crime that has rattled the tranquil Napa Valley, Sunny pursues her own investigation, a journey that takes her from Northern California's wine country to the insular houseboat community along the San Francisco Bay. Uncovering a tangle of secret liaisons, Sunny closes in on the murderer, who responds with one more desperate act.

With *Murder Alfresco*, author Nadia Gordon again takes us into the heart of the food and wine culture of the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, and introduces us to an array of irreverent characters. As the *Los Angeles Times* said, "Sunny is a welcome, energetic heroine....She and her pals are fun to be around."

Murder Alfresco Details

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Barbara says

I had high hopes for this book. That being said, I cannot finish this book. There are way too many vivid descriptions of preparing all sorts of meat and seafood for cooking in grotesque detail. I found myself gagging when reading about "de-inking" an octopus, so I skipped past that section and headed right into a section describing how a chef kills a mouse by squashing it to death with a pair of moccasins, after which he sauntered off to prepare deep fried baby chicks, which are to be eaten whole, bones and all. That was it for me. Disgusting.

Sonjie Outlaw says

Who New that surfing was so exhilarating!

Sunny finds a body hanging in front of a winery as she walks home from a party. The police tells her to stay out of the investigation, no way.

Debbie says

This was one of the most disappointing mysteries I've ever read. The story was disjointed and the characters were poorly developed and not very likable. I love Napa Valley wine country and was really hoping to enjoy this series but I don't think I can read another one of these.

Andrea says

Well Sunny McCoskey is certainly continuing to improve as an amateur sleuth. She can't stop herself from wanting to solve the case and she also seems to be the one who is finding the body! Her insomnia may keep a reader up to all hours, wanting to finish the story. I do look forward to reading another book in this particular series. Also the descriptions of Napa Valley have made visiting a priority;preferably without encountering any of the dangers that Sunny has found herself in! I do like good food and wine which are well described by the author.

Genie says

An ok mystery, a new series for me, Descriptions of sunny' s life as a cook and restaurant owner were interesting to me, almost more than the mystery itself. I wanted to eke reading but really only2-3 stars worth.

Jane Brant says

While there is an "indulgent" amount of Napa Valley/Bay Area culinary references, this is an overall fun book for someone who knows California and just wants to flavor it via the printed word. The murder mystery itself is weak....a little bit developed mixed with a lot of fluffy air. Fun, nonetheless! Makes you want to either cook or drive to your nearest five star restaurant. Not too many mysteries do that! The "meat" motif vs. vegetarian is a little tongue-in-cheek, I think.

Barbara says

Oh, I am so conflicted about this book. I like Sunny McCloskey and her friends. Their relationship and interactions are witty and fun and loving. They seem like a caring and supportive extended family and a great group to be a part of and hang out with. I love the Friday night get-togethers.

However, Sunny is turning out to be one of these hardheaded, tenacious and TSTL cozy heroines. She just can't let go and just keeps pushing and sticking her nose into things she has no right or business doing. She also nearly gets killed when trying to keep the murder from leaving town.

I was really disappointed by her actions. Sunny is running her own restaurant and is a hardworking and intelligent person, but she seems to lose all sense and control and can't seem to help herself from trying to investigate this murder on her own. She has her specious reasons – wanting to be sure before informing her “kind of” friend (they have a history but her is really not part of her circle), the police investigator. The fact is, though, she is reckless, foolhardy and takes risks that can get her killed and almost did in this book.

I still enjoyed the book on the whole, though Sunny annoyed me with her actions and behavior. I think it could have been a much better book if Sunny didn't turn out to be TSTL.

Samantha Smith says

Book three in the Napa Valley mystery series. I really enjoyed reading this book. I liked the food talk, the description of the landscape, and the fact that we get to know Sunny, the protagonist, a bit more in this novel. However, I found the actual mystery and motive less appealing than in the first two books in the series. After finishing the book, I found myself wondering who the killer had been and when I remembered I kept thinking, wait, why?! The motive wasn't compelling. But this didn't diminish my reading enjoyment. I gave this book four stars because I liked the characters, the writing, the basic story.

Ellen Marchessault says

Sunny McCoskey's third outing. This time she discovers a woman hanging from a tree at the Vedana winery. Of course she cannot leave the solving to Steve Harvey, local police officer. The climax comes on the road to the top of Mt. Tamalpais, after a few trips to Sausalito. Reliable read.

Judy says

I loved reading about the Wine Country, but it was clear who the murderer was in the first 5 sentences of his/her (no spoilers here) introduction.

And the actions of Sunny, the main character, were completely idiotic. A great background from someone who obviously knows her territory spoiled by a sloppy plot.

Lauren says

Best plot of the series and also the creepiest of the series to date. I very much recommend not starting this book at bedtime as Sunny's discovery of a dead body is leaps and bounds more spine-tingling than anything in prior books. Cannot believe my local library does not own the next book, as I'm dying (pun intended) to get another fix of Sunny's entertaining adventures with wine. Recommended.

Chris says

Sunny finds a body at a vineyard on a midnight stroll and a combination of distress and her insatiable curiosity get the better of her once more. This time we escape St Helena for some roadtrips to Sausalito and the Muir Woods area. Bondage, Ferrari's, and houseboats intrude on the usual Napa themes of wine and food. Looking forward to the next book when we see if Rivka's connection with her new boyfriend is still going strong and if Sunny expands her business.

Marlyn says

This is the third book in the Sunny McCloskey series. I met Nadia at Left Coast Crime in Hawai'i last March, and won this book for correctly answering a trivia question.

Sunny is the chef/owner of Wildside a restaurant in the Napa Valley. She leaves a boring party late one night, intending to call a taxi, but discovers that her cell phone battery is dead. Since it's only a few miles, she decides to walk home. The only vehicle she sees is a truck pulling out from the drive of a vineyard. A few minutes later, she sees something hanging from a tree branch, and upon investigating further, discovers it's the body of a woman. She breaks into the vineyard's office and calls the authorities, but although she tries to forget about the incident, she finds herself obsessed with the young woman and determines to find out what kind of person she was, in the hopes of settling her mind. The story is a bit coincidence-laden, but it's well-written, and Sunny is a sympathetic protagonist.

Denise says

Nice mystery read, and the food descriptions (the heroine owns a small restaurant in Napa) made me hungry!

(And thanks to my visit to the SF area this year, I recognized many of the locals, which was cool.)

Audrey says

So... there are no consequences for evidence-tampering? No say, arrest-like consequences for removing evidence, running evidence under warm water, recording over evidence, failing to turn evidence over to police WHEN YOU ARE A MATERIAL WITNESS IN A MURDER CASE?

Good to know.

I wish Gordon didn't write such lovely sentences, because overall these books are convoluted and over-indulgent.
