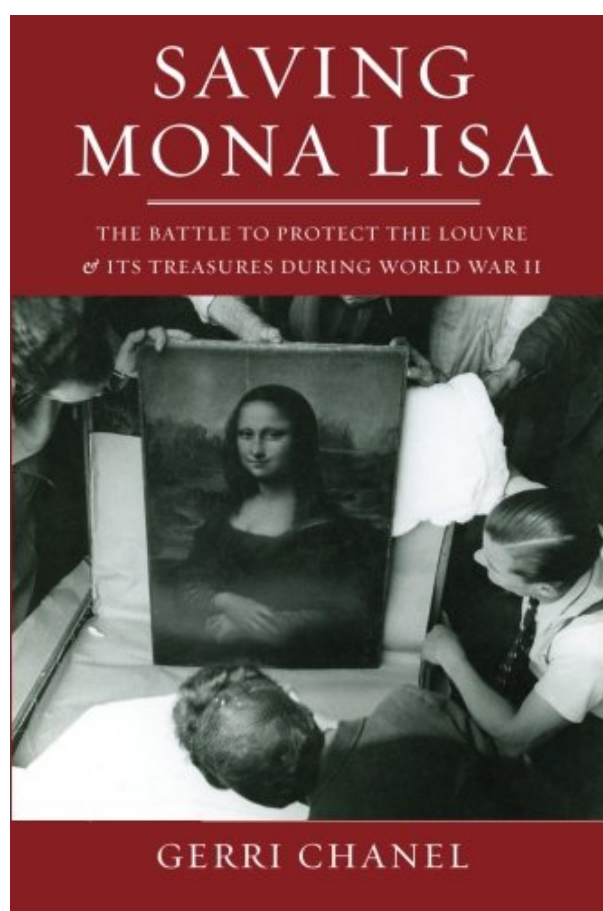


**SAVING MONA LISA: THE BATTLE TO
PROTECT THE LOUVRE AND ITS
TREASURES DURING WORLD WAR II BY
GERRI CHANEL**



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Review

"Artfully interspersed with a series of lush, black and white period photos and boasting the ... emotional scope of a literary novel . . . a celebration of the remarkable power of art . . ."

-- Indie Reader

"... [A thoroughly detailed account of this intriguing chapter in French history. Rather than aggrandizing an already extraordinary story, [Chanel's] narration of the Mona Lisa's miraculous survival - in the face of Hitler's henchmen, heavy bombardment and the complicit Vichy government - lets the facts speak for themselves and they're all the more compelling for it."

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"...[Will] prove to be a monument to courage. Especially recommended to the attention of non-specialist general readers with an interest in World War II history and true tales of extraordinary heroism, "Saving Mona Lisa: The Battle to Protect the Louvre and its Treasures During World War II" should be considered an essential, core addition to academic library 20th Century European History collections."

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"[A]n original work of scholarship that grips the reader with stories of French bureaucrats tying up...Nazi art looting efforts in administrative red tape. Any reader who has run into the famous French intransigence will laugh at Louvre Museum Director Jacques Jaujard's creative ways of thwarting a rogue's gallery of Nazis as he careens around France with masterworks tied to unsteady trucks... Let's hope that Hollywood and history pay attention to *Saving Mona Lisa*, where the truth is more entertaining than fiction!"

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- Benjamin Franklin Book Award
- Indie Reader Discovery Award
- IPPY Award, Bronze Medal
- Foreword Reviews' IndieFab Finalist

For table of contents, excerpts and selected images, see SavingMonaLisa.net

DESCRIPTION

In August 1939, curators at the Louvre nestled the world's most famous painting into a special red-velvet-lined case and spirited her away to the Loire Valley. Thus began the biggest evacuation of art and antiquities in history. As the Germans neared Paris in 1940, the French raced to move the masterpieces still further south, then again and again during the war, crisscrossing the southwest of France. At times Mona Lisa slept at the bedside of curators who were painfully aware of their heavy responsibility.

Throughout the German occupation, the Louvre's staff fought to keep the priceless treasures out of the hands of Hitler and his henchmen and to keep the Louvre palace safe, many of them risking their jobs and their lives to protect the country's artistic heritage. Saving Mona Lisa is the sweeping, suspenseful narrative of their battle.

Superbly researched and accompanied by riveting photographs of the period, Saving Mona Lisa is a compelling true story of art and beauty, intrigue and ingenuity, and remarkable moral courage in the face of one of the most fearful enemies in history.

See editorial and reader reviews below.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 344 pages

Features

- Saving Mona Lisa The Battle to Protect the Louvre and Its Treasures During World War II

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"... a fascinating historical account ... Saving Mona Lisa tells a compelling true story of ordinary citizens (in this case, museum professionals) doing extraordinary things."

-- Arlis Reviews (Art Libraries Society of North America)

Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Wonderful Book, Well Done!

By E. D.

Before even finishing this book, I wanted to rave about its author's accomplishment. As a former art history professor, a constant visitor to Paris(I lived there two summers and a full year as a Fulbright professor), and deeply read about the occupation years, I have long wanted to know how the French protected their art, where they sent it, how they maintained it throughout the occupation. Ms. Chanel has answered so many of my questions and she has done so beautifully. The book is extremely well written, intriguing, perfectly paced, and boasts many photos the reader may never have seen. I loved her mercifully short chapters, jewel-like. I also admired the thoroughness with which she presents her story and places it in the wider context of the war. I was especially impressed to learn of the extent to which Jaujard, the director of the Louvre, stood up not only to the Nazis but also to the collaborationist French who seemed willing to turn the national treasure over to Hitler, et al. This is a wonderful book!

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Intriguing read

By Kirkus Review

Not only does Saving Mona Lisa chronicle the events that took place in France to save the world's priceless masterpieces, it develops the people who put their lives at risk to do so. The book tells of the quiet yet dramatic heroism of a band of courageous curators and assistants who did all in their power to secure the Louvre's collection. As the Germans grew ever closer, time and again curators relocated the art in difficult and dangerous circumstances then found themselves negotiating with Nazis to outmaneuver their attempts to

take possession of individual works of art. Meticulously researched, this amazing real life story is capably told in vivid and intricate detail. The progression of the war, its challenges and privations are woven in to provide a comprehensive account of life in France during WWII. Yet the book is a compulsive page turner, unfolding with the suspense of a carefully crafted thriller.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Saving Mona Lisa is a riveting read.

By Paleopic

What a great book!!!!!! I saw the movie The Monuments Men and, frankly, found this book to tell a far more compelling (if not just more accurate) story. Like the DaVinci Code, I couldn't put the book down at the end of a chapter which drew me into the next one. Kudos to the author for transforming that might otherwise be a boring non-fiction read into an action thriller. It's almost incomprehensible to think of evacuating the entirety of the Louvre, yet the author does an outstanding job of portraying the commitment of the French civil servants entrusted with their treasure and the nature of the logistical planning necessary to undertake such an enormous task . . . perhaps on a scale comparable to the DDay invasion.

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