



## Talk to the Snail: Ten Commandments for Understanding the French

By Stephen Clarke

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**Talk to the Snail: Ten Commandments for Understanding the French** By Stephen Clarke

Have you ever walked into a half-empty Parisian restaurant, only to be told that it's "complet"? Attempted to say "merci beaucoup" and accidentally complimented someone's physique? Been overlooked at the boulangerie due to your adherence to the bizarre foreign custom of waiting in line? Well, you're not alone. The internationally bestselling author of *A Year in the Merde* and *In the Merde for Love* has been there too, and he is here to help. In *Talk to the Snail*, Stephen Clarke distills the fruits of years spent in the French trenches into a truly handy (and hilarious) book of advice. Read this book, and find out how to get good service from the grumpiest waiter; be exquisitely polite and brutally rude at the same time; and employ the language of *l'amour* and *le sexe*. Everything you need is here in this funny, informative, and seriously useful guide to getting what you really want from the French.

Stephen Clarke is a British journalist and the internationally bestselling author of *A Year in the Merde* and *In the Merde for Love*, which describe the misadventures of Paul West in France. He himself has lived in France for twelve years.

Praise for *A Year on the Merde*: "Clarke renders the flavor of life in Paris impeccably: the endless strikes, the sadistic receptionists, the crooked schemes by which the wealthy and well-connected land low-rent apartments...Clarke's eye for detail is terrific." -*Washington Post* "Call him the anti-Mayle. Stephen Clarke is acerbic, insulting, un-PC and mostly hilarious." -*San Francisco Chronicle* "Combines the gaffes of Bridget Jones with the boldness of James Bond...Clarke's sharp eye for detail and relentless wit make even the most quotidian task seem surreal." -*Publishers Weekly*

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In Clarke's newest nonfiction on the French and francophiles (after *A Year in the Merde*), he offers actually 11 witty commandments for understanding the French. He tackles the stereotypical experiences tourists encounter, explaining why French waiters always ignore you, why everyone's always on strike or why Frenchmen are never wrong about anything. He explains the customs: how to decide when to kiss versus when to handshake, how to romance a French woman or how to be cuttingly rude while seeming polite, and how mispronouncing certain words (the noun "un baiser" means "to kiss"; the verb, "to screw") can get you in trouble (other expressions, like "je t'aime," can't be said often enough). Within Clarke's humorous anecdotes lie grains of seriousness. Why, for example, do the French constantly correct everyone's attempts to speak their language if they also want it to be accepted as a global language? And is it not significant that the French term for bedding someone, "conclure," translates as "to conclude"? In the end, this is an entertaining *bon voyage* present for anyone heading to France. (Jan.)

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Review

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About the Author

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