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McCarthy's Bar: A Journey Of Discovery In Ireland



Synopsis

The #1 Irish Bestseller Despite the many exotic places Pete McCarthy has visited, he finds that nowhere else can match the particular magic of Ireland, his mother's homeland. In McCarthy's Bar, his journey begins in Cork and continues along the west coast to Donegal in the north. Traveling through spectacular landscapes, but at all times obeying the rule, "never pass a bar that has your name on it," he encounters McCarthy's bars up and down the land, meeting fascinating people before pleading to be let out at four o'clock in the morning. Written by someone who is at once an insider and an outsider, McCarthy's Bar is a wonderfully funny and affectionate portrait of a rapidly changing country.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although Pete McCarthy was raised in England, his mother hails from West Cork and, despite never having lived there, he can't shake the strange feeling that Ireland is more home than home. A return pilgrimage reveals immediately why he (or anyone, for that matter) feels "involved and engaged" in Ireland. On arriving at the airport in Cork he's greeted by a guy in a giant rubber Celtic cross getup who's telling jokes with a latter-day St. Patrick (the guy who cast all snakes and pagans out of Ireland). Later, when McCarthy happens to mention that his surname matches that of the pub he's in (ever faithful to his Eighth Rule of Travel: Never pass a bar that has your name on it), the owner buys him a Guinness, invites him to her raucous all-night birthday party, then insists he move to Ireland because, well, obviously he belongs. McCarthy's Second Rule of Travel states: The more bright primary colours and ancient Celtic symbols outside the pub, the more phoney the interior.

While the island is turning into a haven for upmarket tourists--and McCarthy offers outstanding examples of bumbleheaded tourists in action--he still finds plenty of pubs where you can buy a bicycle and which still exist primarily as venues for conversation and Irish music sessions. While most travel writers seek out opportunities to meet the famous--or the infamous--McCarthy has the charming knack of just bumping into them on his rambles, which is how he met Noel Redding, formerly of Jimi Hendrix's band, and the author Frank McCourt. Far more interesting, though, are the eccentric and talkative bachelors and landladies who turn up in pubs, B&Bs, and the middle of the road. McCarthy has mastered the art of getting creatively lost, wandering the back lanes of Ireland where the hype of tourism has yet to arrive, pursuing stone circles, impossibly romantic ruined abbeys, and, of course, pubs. What he discovers is that "In Ireland, the unexpected happens more than you expect," which makes for a hilarious tour through one of the most beautiful, friendly, and quirky places on earth with a comedian who has honed the art of telling a good story and of having fun.--Lesley Reed --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

McCarthy, writer and performer of the BBC series *Desperately Seeking Something*, is a worthy addition to the ranks of P.J. O'Rourke, Bill Bryson and Peter Mayle. English-born to an Irish mother, McCarthy spent childhood summers with relatives in West Cork. As an adult, he travels around the south and west of Ireland on a quasi-pilgrimage culminating in a visit to Lough Derg, an ancient penitential retreat. Following the mandate "Never Pass a Bar That Has Your Name on It," he narrates a series of hilarious and surprising adventures with an acerbic eye and a comedian's gift for timing. Like all good travelers, he encounters an eclectic assortment of characters, including a pagan Christian priest who's rejected the Church, an Anglo-Irish Marquess, Jimi Hendrix's bass player Noel Redding, and Frank McCourt. Although occasionally indulging in tourist stereotyping--e.g., earnest Germans and loud, lazy Americans--McCarthy mines a rich comic vein, yielding delightful, often sidesplitting stories steeped in the peculiarities of British humor. He strikes some serious notes, too, adeptly capturing the impact of Ireland's recent social changes, from its astounding economic growth to the "bungalow blight" marring the beautiful countryside. He visits places where historic tragedies still loom large; his account of a mass grave for potato famine victims is simple and moving. This wonderful debut will appeal to readers who are looking for a well-observed travel guide, or simply for its incisive hilarity. (Mar. 19)Forecast: A bestseller in Ireland, this book will surely find an American audience if conspicuously displayed, given the Emerald Isle's current status as a hot vacation spot. The attractive cover photo of the author in front of an Irish bar is a plus.Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an

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It's a little embarrassing to be reading a book in a public place & guffaw aloud. It attracts attention but no matter, this book is simply too funny to allow yourself to care what others think. My husband & I enjoyed this book tremendously & decided to go to McCarthy's Bar in Castletown-Berehaven on our recent trip to Ireland. It's actually Maccarthy's Bar & looks exactly the same outside. We met Adrienne Maccarthy 4th generation owner, who is mentioned in the Acknowledgements section of Pete's book. She noted that my son & I said we were home when we saw the Kerry Red Stag Family Crest on the wall. We talked to Adrienne for an hour or so & when it came time to move on she refused to allow us to pay because we're family & said let's go outside for photos. The pooch on the cover is her recently deceased dog, Bailey. She said Pete was a great guy & stayed in touch often. We were so glad that the way Pete described the town, the people & the other areas in the book are exactly the same now as it was when he originally wrote the book back some 10+ years ago. If you enjoy English & Irish humor, you will enjoy this book....just be prepared for people to "give you the look" when you find yourself unable to surpress the laughter that's bubbling out of you.

I give this book to all my American friends before their first trip to Ireland. Offers great insight to our Irish sense of humour!

This is one of the funniest and most entertaining books I have read. I have bought copies for more than a dozen of my friends who visited Ireland or intend to or claim the nationality. Pete McCarthy comes through a lovely man and a clever observer of human behavior with an abundant ability to see the fun in people and to join in their enjoyment himself. I wish I could have met him in a McCarthy's bar somewhere but alas he passed much too young. If you are one of Ireland's potential visitors, this book will speed up your plans. Even if you are not, this book is a great experience; a great laugh. I read a chapter again now and then if I have a sit down day. Highly recommended.

If you are Irish, plan to visit Ireland, or just a fan of hum porous writing, this book is a must!

A fun read with lots of laugh out loud moments. Just the thing if you want a break from 'regular' life!

I've never found drunks who throw up to be even mildly amusing. I like Irish pubs. I like the west coast of Ireland. I made myself read the whole thing and the writer eventually gets beyond the

vomit. But I couldn't like it.

Oh, it's a great little book packed with more or less respectful comments on Ireland, the Irish and life itself in all its strangeness. Can actually be used as a travel guide to both common known and less known and absolutely unknown sights in Ireland, but You might not be able to down quite as many pints as McCarthy as You follow his tracks from pub to pub - and he only or mostly anyway visited the ones with his surname on the sign. There is sort of a small theme about Noel Redding, the now late bass player with The Jimi Hendrix Experience, who lived in Clonakilty, South West Cork, Ireland, for many years, and that is why I by chance and Google stumbled into this book. I did an interview with Noel back in 1992 and sort of kept in contact. He did actually mention something about a writer, he'd met in 'his' pub way out in the nothingness of rural Cork. Must have been McCarthy. Anyway. This book is certainly not a thriller, McCarthy sure takes his time, but he is a funny and wise and sharp travel companion - even if you just read a chapter or two in bed at night.

Great book! Very, very funny.

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