



## Questions for: Hermione Ireland

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*The managing director of Academie du Vin Library in London contributes to our Q&A series*



***Describe your current job***

I run a young wine book publisher and look after all aspects of the company, which is great, and challenging! But I specialise in the sales and marketing functions primarily.

***What was your first job in the book industry?***

Rights assistant/pa to the foreign rights director at Marshall Editions

***Who has been the most influential person in your career?***

Catherine Bell - former line manager at DK and an all-round impressive professional as well as being a wonderfully supportive boss.

***How has the industry changed since your first job?***

Enormously! When I started in marketing at DK in 1997 there was no such thing as digital marketing, and the Net Book Agreement was still in existence when I started at Marshall Editions in 1993. I think the selling of rights hasn't fundamentally changed but the retail landscape has evolved, obviously. I remember us all speculating on whether Amazon might become something worthwhile.

***What's the biggest challenge in your job?***

Scale/growth. There is great potential for niche publishers, but it takes time and effort to grow an audience.

***What's the best piece of book-related advice you've ever been given?***

Have a very clear idea of who your consumer is and keep them in mind with all of your sales and marketing plans.

***What are the most interesting things you're seeing at the moment in the industry?***

Digital events - what happened as a necessity for bookshops and publishers during lockdown has become a brilliant way to reach a much wider audience with very little barrier to entry and I think they will be here to stay.

***What do you think might be the next big thing?***

Difficult one - I've seen so many digital 'next big things' and so many of them haven't made a lasting



impression. I'd like to believe in the rise and rise of local bookshops, and think that bookshop.org feels like it could make a difference here.

***How are you coping with working from a home environment?***

Mixed feelings about this. We're a remote company but I'm a real extrovert. It's great that we can now have meetings with people in real life which is definitely a good thing from my perspective.

***How do you think the industry will come out of this current Covid-19 crisis?***

I think there is more support for local businesses than there's ever been, although I think Covid is only partially responsible for this. However, Amazon was the biggest winner of Covid and I worry that its dominance will just keep growing.

***What do you most like doing when you're not working?***

Socialising, cooking (and eating), and learning about wine which I'm doing for my new role but is a great thing to do anyway.

***What is the best book you've read in the last year?***

*Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart.

***What are you reading now?***

*The Unlikely Escape of Uriah Heep* by H.G. Parry - great gothic literary fantasy from Hachette New Zealand which I've had on my shelf since I was working there a couple of years ago. Great so far.

***How do you like to read: on screen, on paper, or do you listen to audio books?***

Mostly on paper but not averse to the other two formats. Audio is a bit slow for me and I'm quite impatient!

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