



Entry Title: Amsterdam Exposed: An American's Journey Into The Red Light District

Author: David Wienir

Writing as (if applicable):

Entry Category: Memoir

Structure, Organization, and Pacing: 4

Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar: 5

Production Quality and Cover Design: 5

Plot and Story Appeal: 5

Character Appeal and Development: 5

Voice and Writing Style: 5

Judge's Commentary*:

From the moment I began reading, I didn't want to stop—and in the mark of a truly good book, I completely lost track of time while reading it. From the beginning, you masterfully lay out what readers can expect—"The story told in this book will take you on an intimate and unprecedented journey into that world, perhaps for the last time"—and smoothly draw them in with candid, heartfelt storytelling from the first page to the last. In the telling, you also blend just the right amount of factual info (how cannabis is viewed in Amsterdam now vs. then, what makes the city so biker-friendly, the history of the red light district, bits about Holland's culture, etc.) with vivid, engaging anecdotes. As such, readers are not only being enlightened about a fascinating city and its off-limits red light district, they're connecting emotionally with the characters, whether that's you, the narrator, or later Emma. It's Emma, whose life and person you portray with unblinking honesty, that provides some of the richest moments in this book; here she's fully "seen," rather than a mere caricature or individual with a difficult life that you want us to pity. One very small critique I'd suggest is taking a look at your longer chapters for ways they meander a little bit and could be tightened up (I'm not sure mentioning your sleep habits in Chapter 2 helps your pacing, for example.) Also, your cover is absolutely beautiful and formatting impeccable. Excellent work!