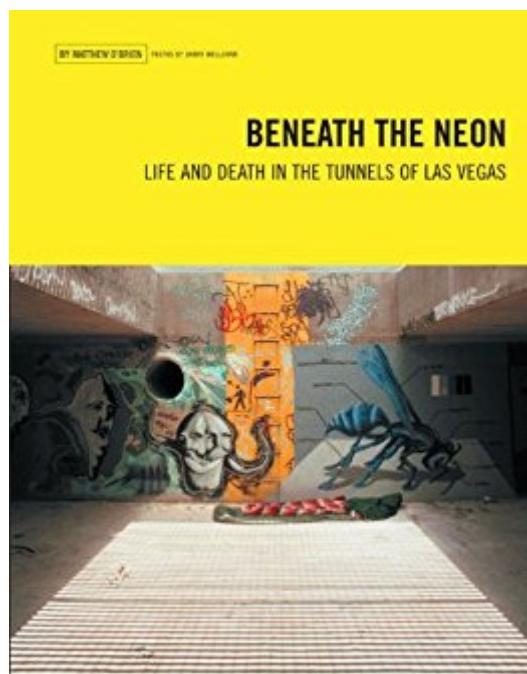


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Beneath The Neon: Life And Death In The Tunnels Of Las Vegas (Travel Holiday Guides)



Synopsis

The catacombs of ancient Rome served as houses of worship for Jews and Christians. The sewers of Paris yielded gold, jewels, and relics of the revolution. A slave trade thrived in underground chambers along Portland's waterfront. Ukrainian Jews found refuge from the Nazis in a system of caves. And thousands of street people lived in the subway tunnels of New York City. What secrets do the Las Vegas storm drains keep? What discoveries wait in the dark? What's beneath the neon? Armed with a flashlight, tape recorder, and expandable baton, Citylife writer-editor Matthew O'Brien explored the black and grey underworld of the Las Vegas flood-control system for more than four years. *Beneath the Neon: Life and Death in the Tunnels of Las Vegas* chronicles O'Brien's adventures in subterranean Vegas. He follows the footsteps of a psycho killer. He parties with naked crackheads. And he learns how to make meth, that art is most beautiful where it's least expected, and that there are no pots of gold under the neon rainbow.

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Customer Reviews

Bought this book after reading a very interesting article online about the subject. While I don't regret

reading it, I would probably only recommend it to someone with a strong interest (and even then, not with glowing reviews). The most interesting parts are the interviews with the tunnel dwellers. This would have been a much better book had the author focused on these rather than on himself and the actual tunnel. Aside from the interviews, the rest is pretty much just filler, and very obviously so. The author fails to make smooth transitions when he introduces historical tunnels and events, reaching painfully for connections between the two. The photos don't really add to the narrative either. The ones that are most interesting-- of the people and their "homes"-- are uncaptioned and never referred to in the text. My major issue with this book, though, was the author's troubling insensitivity toward the individuals living in the tunnels. It seems like he's trying to set up a possible change in attitude, from viewing everyone in the tunnel as druggies and losers to gaining a respect for them as individuals, but this change never really occurs (at least not in any clear way). Instead, he confusingly goes from being impressed by the intelligence of one man to making crude analogies and referring to others as "meth freaks" and "lunatics." In conclusion, if you can ignore the author's attitude and writing style, there really is some interesting stuff in here.

I LOVE social history being a history teacher and this has to be one of the best social perspective history books I've read. Easy to read and I was hooked and couldn't stop reading! I've heard of the tunnel people of Las Vegas being a resident, and this book took me into their world without having to take my germ and bug-a-phobic self into the tunnels. It was fun to read about places I could imagine, and Matthew wrote with such honesty and integrity and knowledge that it was an instant favorite I couldn't put down. After seeing we had many mutual friends on Facebook, I added Matthew and he was extremely friendly and willing to answer any questions I had on the book, which made it even more fun to read...in the end I got to read an amazing book and made an amazing new friend! :)

Matthew O'Brien obviously went Gonzo on the tunnels Beneath the Neon of Las Vegas. He spent months interviewing the homeless who live beneath Las Vegas and walking deep into the tunnels, often pioneering parts of the vast network. The stories enclosed are heartbreakingly real and reflect some of the major issues facing society: drugs, mental disabilities, lack of care for veterans. What makes the stories that much more incredible is that it is all happening beneath a city where people squander millions of dollars each day. O'Brien should be lauded for telling these stories. The homeless are treated with disdain, as if all of them somehow chose their lot in life. By going into the tunnels and talking with the people--not simply asking questions, but exploring the tunnels and

practically living among the "residents"--O'Brien sheds light on these people that would otherwise remain ostracized and forgotten. In doing so, we see these people as they are: perhaps not that different from us. Hard luck, addiction, undiagnosed mental disabilities have sent many of these people below the city. O'Brien reveals them and their stories with genuine honesty. More books like this should be written. It is further proof that what we see on the surface, what the world would want you to believe about a person or place, may not actually be what is actually there. If you are going to Las Vegas or simply want to read stories that are full of truth and grit, this book is for you.

I enjoyed reading this book. Quite interesting about those tunnels beneath Las Vegas. I have been to Vegas many, many times and never knew about them. I would be too scared to venture down in there. I feel sorry for those unfortunate souls who end up down there. I feel sadness when I think about them. I will never know why some people lack the drive and motivation to get themselves out of their situation and do something positive with their life instead of resigning to live like that. Sad, sad, sad.

What a summer! I got the book yesterday and started reading it at about 6:00pm. It is now 1:30am and I just finished reading it. I only stopped a couple of times but I really could not put it down. Bravo! I don't believe Matthew O'Brien when he says that he more an author and journalist than an explorer. It is true that he was motivated because of a felon escape story, but a regular journo would have stopped after reenacting the escape and a regular author would have relied more on fiction. O'Brien created a chronicle about what lies beneath, not only Las Vegas but beneath many other metropolitan areas around the world. Throughout the whole book he kept mentioning the baton. I really hope it always stayed in its sheath. I also liked his writing style, the way the flashbacks keep connection with the narration of the present time and especially enjoyed the historical facts about the use of tunnels, caves and their explorers throughout the history of mankind. O'Brien was able to uncover the real people that live in the drains, and showed us that even if forgotten, ignored or simply at large, they are not the monsters that people think hide in the dark and humid corners of the undercity. And the author goes beyond simply writing a book by helping those in need through his foundation. Thanks for writing that book, for telling the story of those people living underground and for helping them out.

Another excellent book where the author takes us transplants here to places we might not have known existed!

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