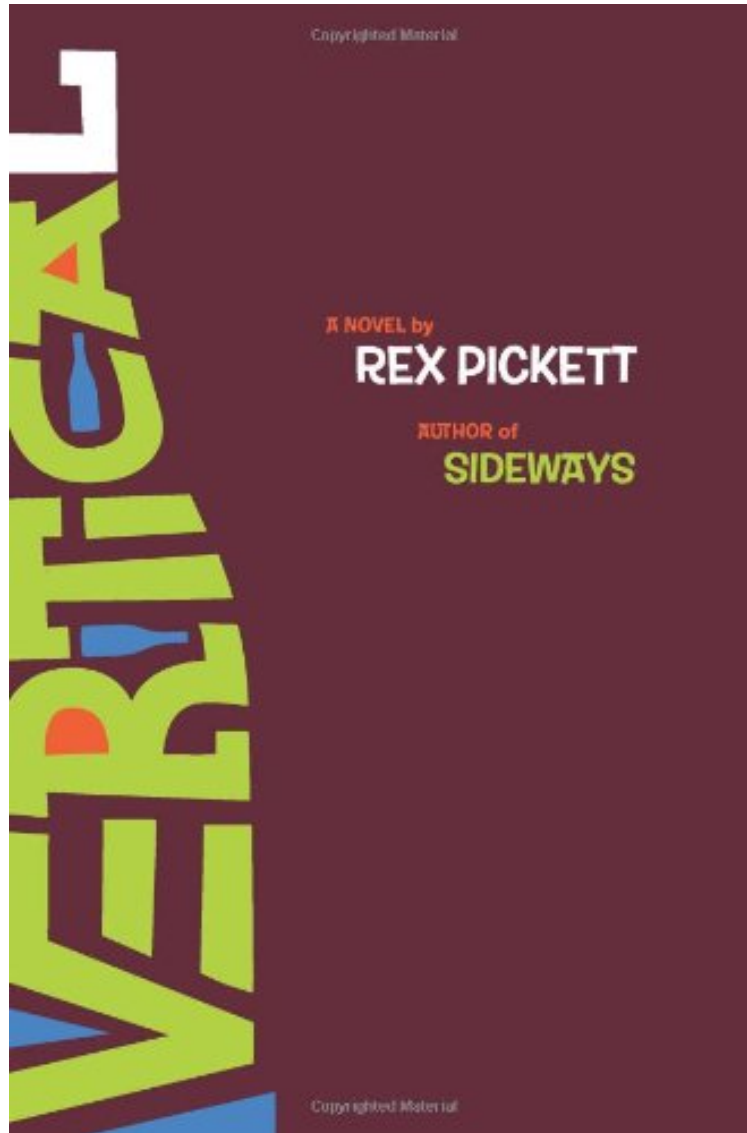


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Vertical

Rex Pickett

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Rex Pickett : Vertical before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vertical:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. This sequel to "Sideways" is not as good as the first book By David Read This sequel to "Sideways" is not as good as the first book, but still has its moments. Whereas in "Sideways" the comedy scenes mostly tended to be very funny, in "Vertical," most feel forced and boorish, not funny. (If you think it is hilarious to have Jack overdose on Viagra, have priapism, and have to have a needle shoved into his penis and have blood spurt out all over the operating theater, then you'll find this book hilarious.) Miles' financial success has not

improved his character. Whereas he was a lovable neurotic in "Sideways," he's more of a manipulative jerk in "Vertical." He's become more like Jack in his misuse of women, but without Jack's genuine, uncomplicated love for the fair sex. There's some strange stuff going on here. Miles gives speeches to oenophiles that include inappropriate, crude sexual language, and Rex Pickett has the audience laughing uproariously. Really? If this stuff really happened, oenophiles are kind of scummy people. And I have a huge vocabulary, but there were 4 or 5 words that I'd never seen before in my life. That's a too showy and pretentious for good writing. This book is saved by the genuine feeling and good writing of the last 80 pages, in which Miles quits drinking, sobers up, realizes that his half-baked, wine-fueled plan to take his mother to live with her sister in Wisconsin isn't going to work, despite his good intentions and best efforts. These scenes are so moving and well written that to me they made the whole book worthwhile. The stuff that's supposed to be funny isn't, but the stuff that is more serious and tragic works very well.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. First half drags, second half great ~By Christopher Barrett I loved Sideways, both the novel and the film. I read Sideways again just before starting this novel. I won't go into too many details, but the first half involves a new Miles enjoying his new lifestyle. He decides to take a road trip from LA up to IPNC Oregon before heading east to Wisconsin to deliver his ailing mother to her sister. So we have a road trip. Awesome yes? Well yes and no. The first half of the novel is all about Miles looking to get laid. And Pickett seems to really get into these scenes. Sadly he spends a lot of time on these 'conquests', albeit to set up later events, but the rest of the narrative suffers. Jack has become a sad and uninteresting character, clinging to Miles coattails. The most interesting character is Miles' mother and her crazy dog Snapper. Once the group is on the road, I expected some winery antics, but sadly we get a stop in at Justin and a quick stop at Foxen. The winery visits lose their allure and are not as funny as in the first novel. In Sonoma we have a quick stop at Gary Farrel. Sadly no Oregon wineries are visited except the stop at Willakenzie while on the IPNC tour bus. What I missed though was the banter between Jack and Miles while drinking and delighting in the vineyard. IPNC is the turning point. While at IPNC some pretty interesting events go down, and we are finally back in the 'Sideways' territory. Once we are with Miles on the subsequent trip to Wisconsin, we enter a whole new realm of writing for Pickett. This is personal, heartfelt, and moving. The relationship between Miles and his mother is brought to the forefront. We also see Miles confront himself with both his alcoholism and his loneliness. It's pretty amazing stuff. So I rounded out to four stars. The first half has some interesting moments, but overall nothing as funny as some of the crazy happenings in Sideways (the boar hunter scene comes to mind!). The second half is amazing. The scene in the Thunderstorm is great, as are the scenes in the final two chapters. It's worth reading if you are a fan of Sideways. Don't expect it to be quite as solid as Sideways though and you will be pleased.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The formula still works By Jeffrey Newman What always touched me about Sideways was the way Rex Pickett wrote this character, Miles, whose flaws were real and common, but also presented elements of hope in his otherwise sad life. He kept writing books, even though all signs pointed to never being successful as a writer. And, in the end, when there was no reason to feel optimistic about his love life, Maya called him back. That glimpse of hope brought tears to my eyes. When I realized there was a sequel to Sideways, called "Vertical," implying that the sideways state Miles had kept himself in as an alcoholic, would somehow improve in this version and his life was on the way up. Before reading a word, my assumption was that the life that had seen a bit of hope at the end of Sideways had vastly improved. While I was excited to see where this character was going, I also thought it might be difficult to enjoy such a positive sequel when the original was so depressing and uplifted by just a small ounce of hope. My assumptions were obliterated from the opening chapter. In fact, I was irritated at where these characters were going after falling in love with their humanity from the first book. Yes, the humor made the read an easy one, but I was disappointed in the appearance of a very shallow continuation of a story I'd felt was so strong. 2/3 through Vertical, though, I figured out where Rex was going. While the end isn't much of a surprise, the way the final 1/3 of the book is written and the development of Miles and his mother made my continuing to read it worthwhile. Like the end of Sideways, Vertical ends with that small sliver of hope that brought tears to my eyes yet again.

The follow-up novel to the blockbuster Sideways tracks the continuing story of Miles Raymond and his buddy Jack. It's seven years later. Miles has written a novel that has been made into a wildly successful movie, and the movie has changed his life. Jack, contrarily, is divorced, has a kid, and is on the skids. Phyllis, Miles's mom, has suffered a stroke that's left her wheelchair-bound and wasting away in assisted-living. She desperately wants to live with her sister in Wisconsin. When Miles gets invited to be master of ceremonies at a Pinot Noir festival in Oregon, he hatches a harebrained road trip. With Jack as his co-pilot, he leases a handicapped-equipped rampvan, hires a pot-smoking Filipina caretaker and, with his mother's rascally Yorkie in tow, they take off for Wisconsin via Oregon's fabled Willamette Valley, where Miles is Master of ceremonies of the International Pinot Festival. It is a road novel for the smart set and wine lover, and anything but predictable.

Vertical -- Rex Pickett's long-anticipated sequel to his now iconic Sideways -- had me alternately laughing and crying through this hilarious, heartbreaking and ultimately moving meditation on Fame, Friendship and Family. Vertical managed to break my heart and then put it back together again, piece by piece ... and should abolish any lingering

doubts whether the author just got "lucky" with *Sideways*. This is a work to be both admired and savored like the great Willamette Valley Pinots Miles exults over." --Marco Mannone, *Forth Magazine* "Vertical" is an often over-the-top, sometimes poignant, always entertaining story peppered throughout with impenetrably obscure but colorfully descriptive and eminently accurate adjectives... . What happens on the trip north through California accounts for much of the hilarious, ludicrous and outrageous action..Rex Pickett has not let us down. --Kark Klooster, *Oregon Wine Press* "Sideways,"is arguably the most influential wine-themed book that became a film in American history. The film *Sideways* grossed \$250 million... and people are still debating whether it alone caused Pinot Noir sales to spike, or was merely a factor in the variety's astonishing success. Now we have the follow up story in *Vertical*..." --Steve Heimoff, *Wine Enthusiast* Rex Pickett shows that his gift for creating wildly funny scenes is quite intact... The book is laugh-out-loud funny. --Paul Jameson, *New York Journal of Books* About the Author Rex Pickett is a screenwriter and novelist living in Santa Monica, CA. His novel "Sideways" was made into the movie of the same title, directed and co-adapted by "Election" and "About Schmidt" filmmaker Alexander Payne. "Sideways" garnered over 350 prestigious awards from various critics and awards organizations, including, most notably, the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. It recently was voted as one of 101 Greatest Screenplays of All Time by the Writers Guild of America. Rex's script "My Mother Dreams the Satan's Disciples in New York" was the basis for the Barbara Schock-directed AFI film which won the 2000 Oscar for Best Live Action Short. He is currently writing a comedy series for HBO entitled "The Nose." "Vertical" is his second novel.