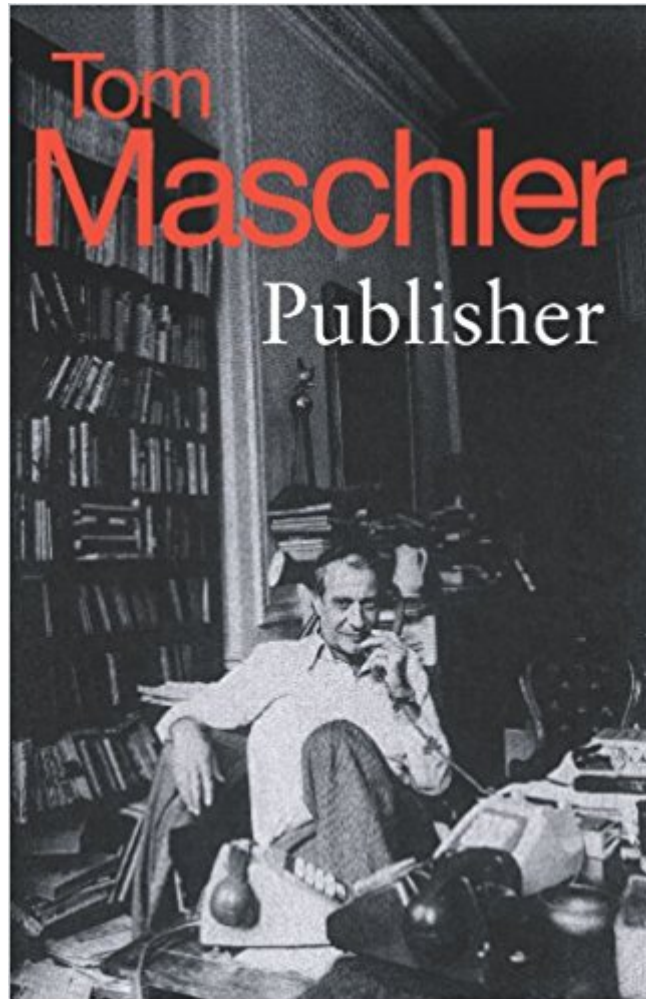




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Synopsis

At the end of the millennium, the leading British industry magazine, *The Bookseller*, selected the ten people who had most influenced its century. Tom Maschler described as "the most important publisher in Britain; the most innovative, adventurous, and newsworthy" was one of them. It went on to say that for nearly 20 years, "he made publishing glamorous." Over the course of his career, Maschler launched the careers of Thomas Pynchon, Joseph Heller, Gabriel García Márquez, Julian Barnes, Ian McEwan, Martin Amis, and Bruce Chatwin, among others. From the party where Norman Mailer stabbed his wife to the porch where Ernest Hemingway shot himself, this frank and fascinating memoir affords a rare glimpse into the golden days of British publishing. An extraordinary literary memoir by one great publishers of the 20th century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Full of tantalizing tidbits on some intriguing figures." — Kirkus Reviews

Tom Maschler was born in Berlin in 1933. His family moved from there to Vienna, and then London. After a much celebrated career in publishing, Tom now divides his time between London and France. He is married with three children.

I enjoyed the book. It's anecdote-laden & short on introspection but interesting overall & very well

written. Piquant glimpses into the personalities of lots of famous authors. T.M. was 'there' through a time of wonderful literary flowering.

Tom Maschler's life story: how he became editorial director of moribund publisher Jonathan Cape in his twenties after an apprenticeship with legendary Penguin publisher Allen Lane, transformed their fortunes by innovative and creative publishing of literary fiction and intellectually groundbreaking non fiction, founded one of the worlds most well known literary prizes, the Booker Prize, and published a vast number of the great and good writers of the last few decades, is so remarkable that it is impossible to mess up. That said, Maschler makes a pretty good fist of it. His writing style is plain and un-self aware to the point of autism, he name drops famous writers like a glossy magazine columnist and clearly fancies himself as a raconteur, a bon viveur, though clearly he has upset many more people than he realizes. Many stories end along the lines of: and he/she never spoke to me again. I can't help thinking I am owed an explanation. Maschler's monstrous ego aside (at one typical comically un-self aware moment he writes of the pride he felt when a secretary said she could feel his presence in the Cape building even when she hadn't seen him arrive), his contribution to publishing is undiminished. He worked tirelessly to promote serious and intelligent books, and had a remarkable talent for spreading a buzz about his titles like bushfire through the publishing world. Publishers and booksellers knew that with Maschler behind a title you were guaranteed a: quality and b: (more important in publishing) sales. All this for comparatively little financial reward himself. Towards the end he writes of the buy out of Jonathan Cape by Random House when it could no longer survive as an independent company. By that stage, Maschler and his managing director were paying themselves only £40,000 a year, far less than many of his authors were earning as a result of Maschler's tireless support. Maschler will go down as one of the post war greats of the British publishing world (though equally important is Liz Calder (now of Harry Potter house Bloomsbury), also vital to the Cape story and chronically undermentioned by Maschler. He mainly takes gleeful spite in boasting of authors he poached from Liz at her expense. Perhaps it is the case that good publishers make good writers, but great ones can't string a sentence together (for that is why they publish, rather than write). The entrepreneurial flair of the Maschler's of this world don't often go hand in hand with reflective, literary skills. Maschler's life story will be magnificently told one day, but by an authorized biographer, rather than the man himself.

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