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Collins uses Brentwood, Belle Meade for The Claret Murders



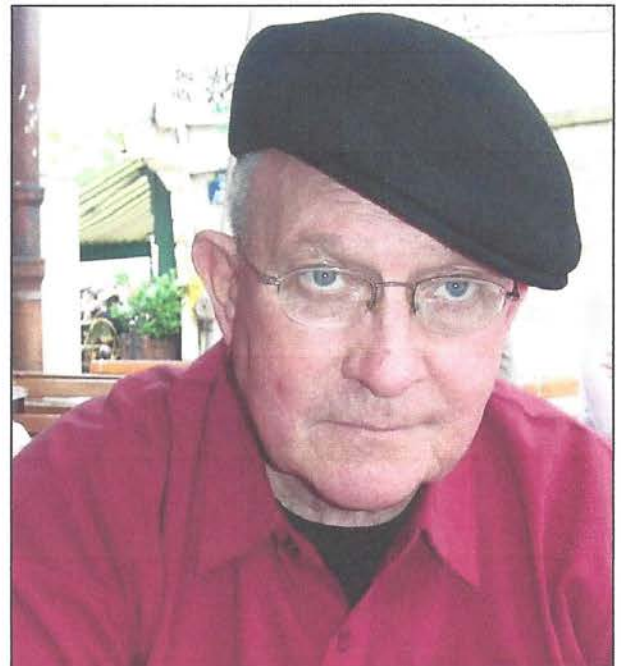
By Carole Robinson, Senior Staff Writer
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The Nashville area is known for its music, history and Southern hospitality, but author Tom Collins has uncovered a potential new layer of notoriety—the mysterious.

Collins' use of Nashville and its surrounding areas as the stage for his Southern murder mystery series—Mark Rollins adventures—may lead some who live in Middle Tennessee to look twice at their quaint Southern towns.

In this fourth novel in the series, *The Claret Murders*, Collins' superhero Mark Rollins is a wealthy, retired technology entrepreneur turned amateur sleuth and owner of an exclusive women's health club in Brentwood.

Rollins's newest case soon becomes more than just a job protecting a beautiful female



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attorney with a few secrets and a habit of making poor choices in men. Add to the situation a cache of forgotten and now priceless Claret, an inheritance at risk and a couple of murders, and Rollins is off on another adventure.

Beautiful attorney Ann Sims is preparing to put a derelict old mansion located in the Brentwood area of Hillsboro Road on the auction block.

Meanwhile, her personal life is shaken by her dog Churchill's death at the hands of a Belle Meade policeman and the surprise appearance of her husband, who she has been trying for five years to divorce because of his unpredictable violent outbursts. She hires investigator Mark Rollins to find the officer who killed her dog, but she ends up needing protection.

The book takes several twists and turns when an impersonator, an uncle from the past and other characters make protecting Sims more than a little challenging.

Although The Claret Murders is the fourth in the series, "each book stands on its own," Collins said.

Rollins is a creation drawn from Collins' own experiences as a pioneer entrepreneur in the information technology industry, where he worked closely with law firms.

"I've always been drawn to mysteries with recurring characters," Collins said. "But the challenge is to make the story believable."

He does that "by adding elements of truth and real things, like weaving the Nashville flood into the story. We did have someone die near Bell Road and I-24 in the flood."

Collins described his approach to writing as that of a caretaker.

"I just pick up the seeds of things that happen and adjust, adding a little water and fertilizer."

His writing career began in 2007 at age 66 after he sold his technology company and retired.

"I was hanging around the house and my wife suggested I find something to do," he quipped. "This is what I found."

Unlike many writers who make notes, create outlines and organize a flow chart, Collins said he "lets the stories take over."

"They don't always go where I want them to go, like the end of this book."

This strategy often leads to a surprise twist for the reader who just might say, "I didn't see that coming."

The Claret Murders and other Mark Rollins books may be found locally at Landmark Booksellers. It is also available on BarnesandNoble.com, Amazon and other online bookstores in hardcover, paperback and E-books for Kindle and Nook.

A signed copy can be requested by visiting www.markrollinsadventures.com.

"I really write for other people to read my books. I don't care how they get them,"

Collins said of his newfound passion.

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