



Small Presses vs. the "Big Houses" – Something for Everybody

by Diana Rubino

Writing for a small press can be a stepping stone to a career leap – or it can be your entire career. Since no author can plan on a best-selling career with a big house, pitching to the small presses can be your ticket to publication.

The small independent publishers are much more willing to take chances on new writers and cultivate their talents. Sure, their bottom line is important, as it is to any for-profit business, but they don't have the time constraints the big houses have.

This gives their editors the luxury of taking more time to work with authors, and spend much more one-on-one time with them on technical details such as point of view, character consistency, and basic grammatical and style issues.

Small presses also accept unagented material, so authors can avoid the Catch-22 of not being able to land an agent because they've not yet established a track record.

Most likely, your small press book will be POD (print on demand), which means copies will be printed only when a customer orders one. It's up to the author to visit her local bookstores, and some stores will order a few dozen copies, arrange for a signing, have posters designed and give your books a valuable promotional push.

Since small presses run on tight budgets, the author must take the necessary time and funds to finance most promotion; i.e., costs of designing a website and keeping it current, ads in magazines such as Romantic Times, business cards, bookmarks and other giveaways, travel expenses to various conventions, etc.

I always like to inspire aspiring authors by telling my unique story: I received my first publishing contract 18 years after writing my first novel.

I believe it was my ninth written novel that became my "first novel" (the first that got published) with British publisher Domhan Books. At the time I signed my first contract, it was the fastest-growing publisher in the U.S.

My five-year tenure there earned me many rave reviews and a Romantic Times Top Pick award. Unfortunately, the owner suffered health problems and could no longer actively run the company.

I never gave up on my dream of that "big house" contract, but continued submitting to more small presses, eventually landing contracts with Dreams Unlimited, Stardust Press, Eternal Press, the Wild Rose Press, and Moongypsy Press, where I'm now Acquisitions Editor.

The small houses have been very good to me. I've cultivated a following, and the ads I run in Romantic Times and their reviews have brought me sales that I'm happy with. My editor at The Wild Rose Press, Laura Hogg, is the best editor I've ever worked with, and we've become friends and critique partners. She makes my work sparkle.

There's a lot of talent out there in the small press world, and I advise any aspiring author to submit to them, because they offer great opportunities to start your writing career on the right path.

A few caveats to look out for are the vanity presses, which require that authors pay to have their books published. Some writers decide to go this route and self-publish. Of course, some of these books eventually become best sellers. But make sure you choose a royalty-paying publisher if you don't wish to go the self-published route.

[Moongypsy Press](#) accepts nearly all genres, and we consider unagented material. Our guidelines are on the website. We're open to new and established authors, and have a very talented staff of editors. We pay royalties based on net sales, and do not ask authors to pay any publishing expenses.

Small presses have always been around, but with the miracle of the internet, many more are thriving, and authors have the choice of a great variety of outlets for their work, something for every taste. Some publishers specialize in certain genres. You need to do your research to find the best fit for your work.

Now that the Kindle and e-book readers have come down in price and their sales are increasing, e-book sales are exploding. E-books have been around since the 1990s, but never before have they been so popular. Look around on a commuter train and you'll see many passengers absorbed in their e-book readers.

With the outlets that small presses have to offer, so many more writers than ever before can now share their talents with the world, a world that seems to be shrinking more and more every day!



Books by Diana Rubino, available at www.amazon.com

SMALL PRESS PUBLISHERS WORTH CHECKING OUT:

- [The Wild Rose Press](#)
- [Medallion Press](#)
- [Whiskey Creek Press](#)
- [Ellora's Cave](#)
- [Moongypsy Press](#)
- [Cerridwen Press](#)
- [Harlequin Submission Guidelines](#)

Diana Rubino has written several historical novels set in England and the U.S., two time travel romances, a chick lit vampire romance, and a fantasy romance which received a Top Pick award from Romantic Times.

She just completed a biographical novel about Alexander Hamilton and is now working on a biographical novel about Aaron Burr and his last wife.

She is a member of Romance Writers of America and the Richard III Society. She lives in New Hampshire with her husband, and they own an engineering business, CostPro, based in Cambridge.

She also has a condo at Ocean Edge in Brewster, and on many weekend nights you can find her dancing with her husband at the Irish Village in Yarmouth.

In her spare time, Diana bicycles, golfs, plays her piano and devours books of any genre. Visit Diana at www.dianarubino.com, www.DianaRubinoAuthor.blogspot.com and contact her at Diana@DianaRubino.com